

Civics Project APUSH

Sheptyck C Block



The Problem

Stats/Examples:

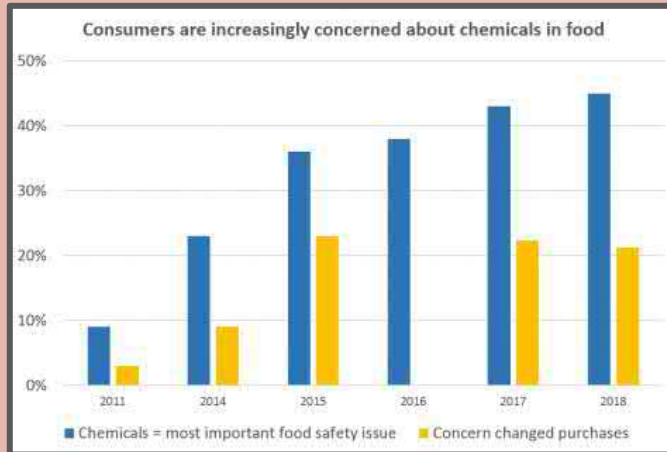
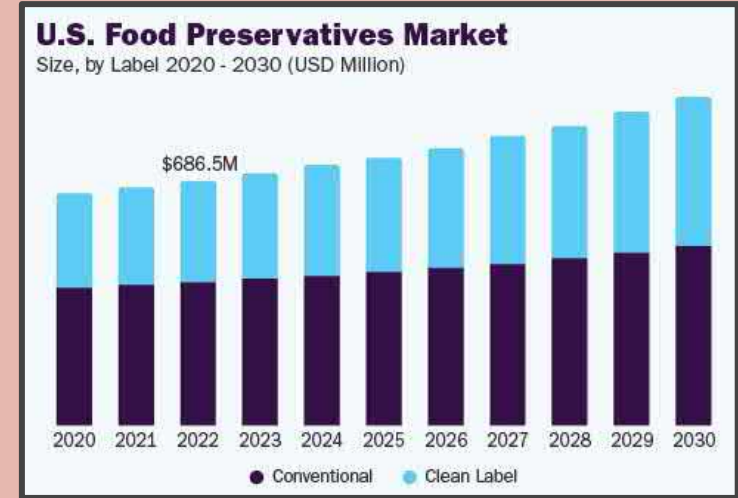
- According to the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, as of 2023, 60% of American foods contain chemical additives.
- About 3,000 of the 10,000 chemical additives allowed in food in the U.S. have not been reviewed as safe by the FDA.
- 48% of people believe chemical additives have no significant effect on consumer health
- Examples of these harmful chemicals are BPA(hormone disruption) and BHT(thyroid changes and tumor).

Over the years a problem in america that has only worsened is the amount chemical additives in food, these additives have been linked to cancer, developmental harm, reproductive harm, ADHD, obesity, and more. The problem is blatant, chemicals in our food have gotten out of hand, Americans portion of ultra processed foods containing harmful or under-researched chemicals had continued increasing. Part of this issue stems from the lenient stance that the U.S. takes in regards to these chemicals, especially in comparison to other countries. The list of chemicals and dyes banned in other countries and not the U.S. is still ever growing, while America is only adding more.

GRAS- is when chemicals are categorized as Generally recognized as safe

- Products can be recognized as GRAS if they were used before 1958 and or through scientific methods that determine them through generally available and common studies or data
- Companies can self determine the safety of their products
- Uses statistics and experiments that are generally believed to be true
- Misleads consumers into believing that the chemicals are safe for consumption on a regular basis.

The Problem (pictures)



Root Cause

The reason there are so many potentially harmful additives and preservatives in our foods is because of the benefits like enhanced flavor and a prolonged shelf life. They are also cheaper to add rather than organic ingredients. This is a big issue in schools because they have a limited budget and healthy foods cost more to buy for students.



Alternate Solutions

- Implement significantly more **restrictive** policies to prevent companies from using these dangerous chemicals.
- Introduce a **bill** in the senate terminating the **GRAS loophole** and requiring stricter federal regulation on food and drink production.
- Introduce **warning Labels** on all products containing possibly dangerous chemicals and additives. This would spread awareness while also lowering sales forcing companies to change their ways.
- Improve **education** on the dangerous effects of artificial additives

Why We did not Pursue These Solutions

- Getting a bill passed through congress is extremely difficult, time consuming, and costly, and overall, unrealistic for a high school civics project.
- Reaching out to federal representatives is challenging due to their busy workload and little free time, making their chances of noticing and pursuing our project extremely unlikely.
- Contacting large corporations and forcing implementation on their marketing and labelling is quite extreme and can have severe consequences on a companies finances



Policy

Work with local governments to implement town sponsored farmers markets, healthy eating workshops and spaces for indoor healthy eating facilities. Sources have found the federal government has limited protections against this problem, yet not enough. This serves as a way to improve the health of people on the Cape, and provoke them to be aware. Year round farmers markets promotes transparency and trust between farmers and customers. Unlike at a supermarket, consumers are able to talk with the farmers directly, ask questions about growing methods, and learned how their food is produced. This helps to encourage healthier and informed food choices.



Strengths and Limitations

Strengths

- allows for locally sourced food without harmful chemicals
- supports local farmers and businesses
- Provides jobs (maintenance of facilities, increased demand for farmers, advertising)

Limitations

- the town has to set aside part of their budget
- there needs to be a way to grow food in every season
- it is going to be costly

Counterargument

This is not an effective solution because of the possible cost of obtaining and maintaining a facility in which to hold year-round farmers markets as well as the decrease in production of fruits and vegetables in the winter.

Why is our solution better?

Our solution is ultimately the best option because it creates a way for people to get healthy alternatives to products that are loaded with chemicals. In the winter, there is still a market for fresh food, not necessarily fruits and vegetables but locally sourced products such as canned or frozen goods grown in the summer and spring.

Support

- Coordinate with health inspectors
- Hold workshops to educate businesses on healthy and sustainable foods
- Steer away from preservatives
- Work with towns and their board of healths
- Create a policy to ban use of chemicals or preservatives
- Create a Harwich-funded farmers market.

