

Hampton Creek – The “Vegan” Company That’s Just Not Vegan



Hampton Creek made news in 2014 when it was sued over its vegan “Just Mayo” by food giant Unilever (the maker of Hellmann’s mayonnaise). Unilever eventually dropped the lawsuit, but not before providing millions worth of free publicity for Hampton Creek.

The company again made headlines in 2015 when it was discovered that the USDA-overseen American Egg Board was waging a highly inappropriate (and arguably illegal) two-year secret campaign against Hampton Creek, which included attempted interference with its Just Mayo distribution and even internal emails about putting a “hit” on the company’s CEO Josh Tetrick (the latter presumably in jest).

Hampton Creek nonetheless persevered, with its vegan Just Mayo increasing in market share (even being sold at stores like 7-Eleven) and an expanded product line that now also includes salad dressings and cookies.

With its David and Goliath start-up story, Hampton Creek quickly became a beloved “vegan” household name. And, while we applaud and appreciate the company’s efforts introducing another vegan product into the market, we were recently surprised to learn that they are now selling nonvegan cookies made with cows’ milk (specifically, their White Chocolate Macadamia Nut cookies contain whole milk powder, nonfat dry milk and milk fat).

Why on earth would a supposedly “vegan” company ever do such a thing? Surely, with a knowledgeable (and presumably vegan) CEO like Mr. Tetrick, they are well aware that dairy production is terrible for the environment, every bit as cruel and unjustifiable as eggs, and otherwise easily avoidable with the plethora of viable plant-based substitutes.

While this is disheartening, it also stands as an important reminder that “corporations” are not necessarily vegan or nonvegan. They are, first and foremost, legal entities obligated to maximize profit and value for their shareholders. Ultimate responsibility to create a vegan world remains with each of us, as individuals. And, as more and more individual consumers like us choose to live vegan, companies will respond to the market by offering more and more vegan products that will increasingly displace the nonvegan ones. So, please do whatever you can to help educate and raise awareness of the important and urgent reasons to live vegan.

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