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## Being a lobbyist : accept to accuse sustainable agriculture in order to help develop profits of firms that fund you

Employed by the Brussels branch of the [Consumer Choice Centre](#), a pro-liberal lobby financed by [Altas Network](#), an organisation grouping more than 500 entities supporting market liberalisation, by the [Geneva Network](#), a lobby supported by the private sector that promotes a fully liberalised trade, by large companies marketing cannabis ([Wayland](#) and [Supreme Cannabis](#)) or tobacco ([Japan Tobacco International](#)), by financial operators ([Canaccord](#)) and by the Facebook Corporation, [Bill Wirtz](#) is a prolific author of articles in various media (La Tribune, Atlantico and others) on topics as diverse as the “*scientifically proven*” safety of pesticides and GMOs [\[read\]](#), a populist criticism of the movement combating climate change [\[read in French\]](#), the promotion of supersonic airplanes [\[read\]](#), the criticism of anti tobacco consumption campaigns in Europe [\[read\]](#), the “truth” on the disappearance of the bees and of biodiversity [\[read in French\]](#), etc.

It now happens that this person who works for an organisation that is proud of having helped to pass a law that will allow consumers to indulge without limits in the consumption of alcohol [\[read\]](#) and that seems more concerned by the turn-over of those companies that support it than by the health and well-being of consumers that it pretends to be defending (if we trust its denomination), it happens that this Mr. Wirtz publishes a paper entitled “[UN exacerbates global hunger](#)” - the French title says “*Exporting ecological agriculture to Africa is immoral*” - [\[read in French\]](#).



This emblematic spokesperson of the international movement promoting free enterprise and liberalised trade explains that the promotion of “*organic and non-GMO farming*” is “*A misguided and unscientific overhaul, [that] would devastate the parts of developing Africa that need innovation the most.*” To support this statement, he mixes freely carefully selected statistical, ideological, scientific and moral arguments to illustrate in defiance of any rigour his point of view accusing promoters of ecological agriculture of distorting “*scientific*” reality, which is precisely what he himself is doing freely in his article, with the hope, probably, that his accusations make less visible the dirty tricks he is using.

For example, he puts forward a scientific study demonstrating that *in Europe* the transition from an intensive agrochemical agriculture towards ecological agriculture would mean a decrease by 35% of yields, implying that the same would apply in the case of *Africa*, disregarding the fact that agriculture in this latter continent is much less intensive and productive than in Europe (which is the reason why this continent is seen as a potential market that agrochemical companies intend to develop to their profit). Let’s not forget to mention here that the expected decrease by 35% of yields assumes the fact that if in Europe intensive agrochemical agriculture were to continue, yields would remain stable for ever - an assumption that is rather outlandish, given what scientists tell us.

Following the same approach, he puts the spotlight on carefully selected supporters of ecological agriculture, blaming them for their “*anti-science activism, based on environmentalist fantasies*” - a classical trick of taking a few extreme examples to denigrate the mass -, while he himself could be accused of refusing to consider the mountain of scientific evidence demonstrating the unsustainability of agrochemical agriculture on the basis of his own technicist fantasies...

He concludes his article by stating that it would be a crime to prevent Africa from adopting a food and agricultural production model that has already proved elsewhere to be unsustainable from all points of view: economic (just consider the level of remuneration of the majority of farmers in Europe), social (see the suicide rate in the agricultural world in industrialised as well as in poor countries, such as India, that have adopted an intensive agricultural model based on the use of agrochemicals) [[read](#)] and environmental (degradation of the natural resources it uses, loss of biodiversity and risk of food crunch). There are many articles published on [hungerexplained.org](http://hungerexplained.org) that illustrate this unsustainability (see some references at the end of this article).

By making the promotion of the global generalisation of an agrochemical and industrial agriculture, this lobbyist jeopardises the future of world food - particularly in Africa - and of the mass of the more than 500 million small family farmers, simply to ensure huge short-term profits for the companies that fund him and whose activities he wants to contribute to develop in Africa. In doing this, he does not hesitate to attempt to undermining the only global multilateral organisation - the UN - that can help in coordinating the fight against some of the main ills that plague humankind hunger, poverty, climate change, environmental degradation, etc.).

Meanwhile, he happily forgets history and the grave responsibility of agronomists originating from colonial powers in the destruction of a complex but sustainable agriculture that was based largely on natural processes and synergies among plants and animals, precisely the kind of principles that should inspire us nowadays rather than persist in the trend of developing an increasingly controlled and “artificialised” food production process. This complex agriculture resting on natural processes existed before the time when

colonial regimes obliged farmers to adopt a monoculture of tropical products intended to be exported to the colonial mainland<sup>1</sup>.

In the case of Sahel, for example, the system associating millet, niebe (bean) and gao (acacia albida) using complementarities between grasses and leguminous plants and that supported a balanced diet in calories and proteins for humans and for animals (including a multiplicity of useful by-products), was forcibly replaced by the monoculture of cotton or groundnuts using large quantities of chemical fertiliser and pesticides.

It is ironical to see today that a growing number of small producers *in Europe* are again applying these complementarity principles in the framework of ... ecological agriculture, with, unfortunately for the moment, insufficient support from scientific research that will need to play a key role in the development of a sustainable agriculture, from the economic, social and environmental points of views [[read](#)].

We felt it important, at [hungerexplained.org](http://hungerexplained.org), to expose these agents that promote ideas - and so-called solutions - that are damaging for the future of world food.

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Selection of recent articles on [hungerexplained.org](http://hungerexplained.org) related to the topic:

- [Scientific research under the influence of private interests \(Season 2\) : sugar and physical exercise](#), 2019.
- [Life plagued by human madness: we must change our paradigms, objectives and values](#), 2019.
- [The global food crunch: myth or reality?](#) 2018.
- [The wheelings and dealings of the sugar industry revealed by three Californian researchers](#), 2017.
- Opinions : [Sweetened Research, Sugared Recommendations](#), by Jomo K. Sundaram and Tan Zhai Gen, 2017.
- [Food, Environment and Health](#), 2017.
- [Scientific research under the influence of private interests](#), 2016.
- [In the US, the industrial food and agriculture sector spent hundreds of millions on communication to influence the media, consumers and policy. What about in Europe?](#) 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> This is true for Africa, but also for Latin America where the use of mixed cropping was widespread as for example under the *Milpa* system.