

When Nature's Pantry co-owner Bob Perkins heard about the Campaign for Healthier Eating at the Natural Foods Expo West in March 2008, he wanted to get in on the action quickly. His store, located just outside Kansas City in Independence Missouri, had already been educating customers about genetically modified organisms (GMOs). For more than two years they had featured UNFI's six pack display of Jeffrey Smith's GMO Trilogy at all six registers, as well as at the customer service desk. At least two or three of the discounted 3-disc-sets were purchased everyday. But the new Campaign allowed the store to generate a much bigger non-GMO impact.

Each month for five months, the store ran an article by Jeffrey Smith in their newsletter. The series explored the health risks of GMOs, the Campaign for Healthier Eating in America, and a review of Marie-Monique Robin's outstanding documentary, *The World According to Monsanto*. The newsletter was sent to 16,000 customers, with an additional 3000 handed out in the store.

"After reading the articles," says store manager Michele Conway, "a lot of shoppers are now very aware of what they are eating. We have customers coming in specifically looking for labels that say non-GMO or organic, much more than before."

In October 2008, the store sponsored a free public showing of the feature-length Monsanto film. Michele says, "With other films or speakers, the audience usually fidgets and some get up and down, but not with this film." She recalls, "I was absolutely amazed at how still, absorbed, and focused our customers were when watching *The World According to Monsanto*. Nobody moved. Even when the movie was over, they just sat there. Then there were a lot of conversations in small groups, and some questions to our staff."

Of the 78 people in attendance, 13 bought the DVD. "I was surprised that so many people who had just watched the movie decided to buy it," says Michele. "They were really taken with it. They also bought books (e.g. *Seeds of Deception*, *Genetic Roulette*, and *Your Right to Know*). A lot of people thanked us."

The store also sponsored a lecture by Jeffrey Smith in late October. Jeffrey's presentation was announced in several monthly newsletters. In addition, says Bob, "Everyone who walked through the door got a bag stuffer announcing Jeffrey's lecture, and listing the companies who sponsored the talk." (The event was paid for by vendors, at \$250 each.) More than 20,000 stuffers were distributed over three weeks.

The store also included an announcement, along with a short article by Jeffrey, in their 20-page Kansas City Star yearly insert, that went to 190,000 homes. The page insert was paid for entirely by advertisers, solicited by the Kansas City Star to a vendor list supplied by the store. (Stores brokers also contacted their vendors.) The insert included 6 -7 pages of news stories, plus ads.

Jeffrey's lecture was also advertised in store posters and in the store events calendar. Sign up sheets were placed in customer service, with a display with Jeffrey's picture, his recent newsletter article, and a sign up sheet.

Everyone attending the free event was asked to RSVP the store. Then, on the Thursday and Friday before the Monday event, one or two staff from the store called everyone on the list to remind them in person or leave a message on their voicemail. (They used their customer service person, and an extra register, during their idle time over two days.)

They also arranged for Jeffrey to appear on Kansas City talk radio and a local NBC TV station before the presentation.

About 150 people attended, and many stayed for quite a long question and answer period. A large percentage (28%) bought GMO books and DVDs as well.

Bob says, "Our events are about educating customers. We hope to be the catalyst for GMO education in the Kansas City area, and our customers will help spread the news. They will take the story to their friends."

While his primary motivation is customer education and better health, he sees an impact on his bottom line as well. "We have the largest selection of organic and non-GMO in town, so we are getting more loyal customers who are seeking non-GMO."

Michele says, "People are shocked at what is in their food. We are looking at the long term effect of this education. People will tell their friends, who will tell their friends. It will snowball."