

## ConAgra, Heinz Are Tops In Banishing BPA

Siel Ju, 10.26.10, 06:00 AM EDT

### A new report grades companies on getting BPA out of cans. Whole Foods scores a D+.

Our [government may not have done much](#) to ban or regulate the use of BPA in our food packaging, but some companies are taking the initiative to banish the toxic chemical. These companies aren't just the mom-and-pop home kitchen jam shops or smaller eco-friendly food companies. Biggies like Hain Celestial, **ConAgra** and **H.J. Heinz** all got A's for their leadership in getting BPA out of their packaging.

Who awarded these grades? That would be [Green Century Capital Management](#), an investment advisory firm that administers the Green Century Funds, a family of environmentally responsible mutual funds. Green Century recently released a report, "[Seeking Safer Packaging](#)," that grades companies on their BPA-related actions and initiatives.

But before you open that can of [Chef Boyardee](#) (owned by [ConAgra \(CAG\)](#)), be aware that an A grade doesn't mean the company's products are BPA-free. To get an A companies only need to have started phasing out BPA from some of their packaging, while also committing to a concrete timeline for phasing out all the BPA.

Do you think Green Century graded on a curve? Perhaps the A's were generous, but keep in mind that most of the companies Green Century graded were total flunkies. [Coca-Cola \(KO\)](#), Del Monte, [Kraft Foods \(KFT\)](#) [Unilever](#), [Kroger \(KR\)](#), [Safeway \(SWY\)](#), [Supervalu \(SVU\)](#) and [Wal-Mart \(WMT\)](#) all scored F's. According to Green Century's report: "Most of these companies are exploring substitutes for BPA to some degree, but do not commit to phasing out the chemical, are not funding the exploration of substitutes and fail to sufficiently disclose information about how they are addressing consumer concern on the issue."

Somewhat surprising may be [Whole Foods' \(WFMI\)](#) D+ grade for its private-label brand--the same grade as less green-tinted companies [Kellogg \(K\)](#) and [Dean Foods \(DF\)](#). But that D+ still put Whole Foods in the top spot among retailers! The report says Whole Foods has "good transparency" on its BPA policies "but has not demonstrated that it is actively testing any BPA-free options for its private-label cans, despite a commitment to eliminate the chemical from packaging."

If you're wondering about the methodology behind the grading system, here's an explanation from the report. (With more on page 13 from the link above, if you're interested.)

Each company that responded to our 2010 survey reported using BPA in its food packaging. Green Century and **As You Sow** evaluated companies on how each is addressing this issue by analyzing 11 indicators in three categories: efforts to explore substitutes, commitment to eliminating BPA from product packaging, and transparency on BPA.

Companies were graded on a grade-point scale of 4. A "4" represents full points awarded and an "A." A "2" represents half-points awarded and a "C." A "0" represents no points awarded and an "F."

The highest-weighted category on which companies were graded was efforts to explore substitutes (55% of total score).

Green Century and **As You Sow** believe that actively exploring BPA-free packaging by entering into contracts with suppliers to test options, internally testing possible substitutes, funding testing and implementing BPA-free packaging are significant steps that companies should take to mitigate risks associated with the chemical.

Here's the full list of companies and grades from Green Century:

Hain Celestial: A

ConAgra: A

[H.J. Heinz \(HNZ\)](#): A

[General Mills \(GIS\)](#): B+

[Nestle \(NSRGY.PK\)](#): B

[Sara Lee \(SLE\)](#): C

McCormick: C

[Campbell Soup \(CPB\)](#): C

Kellogg: D+

Whole Foods: D+

[Dean Foods \(DF\)](#): D+

[Costco \(COST\)](#): D

[PepsiCo \(PEP\)](#): D-

[J.M. Smucker \(SJM\)](#): D-

Coca-Cola: F

Del Monte: F

Kraft Foods: F

SuperValu: F

Unilever: F

Kroger: F

Safeway: F

Wal-Mart Stores: F

Hormel: F

[Sysco \(SYI\)](#): F

[Delhaize Group \(DEG\)](#): F

[Hershey \(HSY\)](#): F