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What's with Big Chemical Getting into the Nutritional Supplement Business?

First, it was GlaxoSmithKline producing a prescription drug known as [Lovaza](#) a very expensive way to get EPA/DHA fish oil.

Then Monsanto comes out with a soybean oil, genetically modified to produce stearidonic acid, which the body can convert to [EPA](#) (but not [DHA](#))¹. Was I the only one outraged by Monsanto's "we're saving the oceans" claim? Fish oil is not on any ecological danger list. Yes, non-fish EPA/DHA is important, but how about producing RENEWABLE sources, such as krill, instead of more GMO crops?

Then BASF (the world's largest chemical company) says it is making progress towards genetically engineering rapeseed to produce EPA.

Today, DuPont (the world's second largest chemical company) announced the release of New Harvest (irony?) a form of EPA derived from genetically modified yeast. Says the company spokesperson: "We are using Facebook and Twitter and YouTube to reach a younger demographic," DuPont spokesperson, Michelle Reardon, told NutraIngredients-USA.com. "But we are targeting older consumers too through more traditional mediums."

Well, I am an older consumer; old enough to remember DuPont's checkered history. Yes, they have brought us amazing products including nylon, Teflon and Kevlar, but they also brought us CFC's² and C-8³. According to the University of Massachusetts, DuPont is the nation's largest corporate producer of air pollution.

I don't know about you, but this gives me the creeps. I'll continue to get my EPA/DHA from the source that has nourished humanity for 3.5 million years. Certain fish are being over-harvested, but not for the EPA/DHA. Fish oil is not on any ecological danger list, and when krill oil becomes affordable, I'll probably use that. But you won't find me turning to Monsanto, BASF, or DuPont for Frankenseed essential fatty acids.

~Stephen Cherniske

¹ [EPA](#) and [DHA](#) are omega-3 fatty acids. Both are important constituents of human brain and nerve tissue. Rich sources include fish oils and human breast milk. The human body can (inefficiently) convert dietary EPA to DHA. Clinical implications include lowering inflammation and supporting cognitive, nerve and cardiovascular functions.

² A [chlorofluorocarbon \(CFC\)](#) is an organic compound also commonly known by the DuPont trade name, **Freon**. Many CFCs have been widely used as refrigerants, propellants (in aerosol applications), and solvents. The manufacture of such compounds is being phased out by the Montreal Protocol because CFCs have been found to contribute to ozone depletion.

³ [Perfluorooctanoic acid](#) (PFOA, C8), is a synthetic surfactant. PFOA is toxic and carcinogenic in animals. In people, it has been associated with infertility, higher cholesterol, and thyroid disease. In highly exposed groups, studies have associated PFOA exposure with birth defects, increased cancer rates, changes to lipid levels, to the immune system and liver.