



## WASTE REPORT for June 20, 2016

### Some Like it Hot: The Taste of Waste

From red-hot to five-alarm, some people really like spicy foods, and yet others cannot stand the heat at all. Have you ever wondered why it is that people have different tastes in food and drink? What one person loves another hates? Well, turns out **The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is spending half a million dollars to find an answer.**

Since 2011, one researcher at the Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) has received approximately half a million dollars to study people's rejection threshold for spice and bitterness. **The results are incredible...as in it is incredible NIH took your tax dollars to fund this research.**<sup>1</sup>

One paper, published in 2013, explored how a persons' personality influenced their like for spicy foods. According to the study, "[a]s expected, a strong relationship was found between liking spicy foods and frequency of chili consumption." The study found people seeking sensation like spice, but generally personality has no relation to liking spicy foods.<sup>2</sup> As a follow up, a new study was recently released asking how gender influences ones' like for spicy foods.<sup>3</sup>

Another study sought to determine what level of bitterness was objectionable for chocolate milk consumers. **It seems people that like dark chocolate can tolerate 2.3 times more bitterness than those who prefer milk chocolate.**<sup>4</sup> Someone should let Hershey's know.<sup>5</sup>

A third paper explored bitterness in wine and how ones' wine expertise predicts willingness to try new wines and foods. What we learned is that, "wine expertise predicted willingness to try new wines and beverages but not food." **The study cautions the more casual wine consumer from taking the advice of experts as assessment of quality, "is dependent on both experience (and resulting expectancies) and liking..."**<sup>6</sup>

The wine study was partially funded from the same NIH grant as the other two, but also from a **\$629,942<sup>7</sup> grant from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.** You would think the objective of the study would be prevention of alcohol abuse, not how to aid people in selecting alcohol they like. What's worse is that according to the grant description, prevention is what the grant was for, when it was given to a completely different researcher at Brown University. But as the *Waste Report* has pointed out before, once the federal government issues a grant there is little downstream oversight and money can be sub-granted to others and used for completely different purposes.

**No matter what your tastes may be, one thing is clear, nearly 70 average Americans worked all year to pay the taxes that were needed to fund these studies; and none of that money went to research cancer, or Ebola, or the Zika virus.**

**And, that should put a bad taste in your mouth.**

<sup>1</sup> NIH Grants: DC01904-01A1, -02, & -03

<sup>2</sup> Byrnes, N. K., & Hayes, J. E. (2013). Personality factors predict spicy food liking and intake. *Food Quality and Preference*, 28(1), 213–221. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2012.09.008>

<sup>3</sup> Harwood, M. L., Ziegler, G. R., & Hayes, J. E. (2012). Rejection Thresholds in Chocolate Milk: Evidence for Segmentation. *Food Quality and Preference*, 26(1), 128–133. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2012.04.009>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> In fact other authors on this paper were supported by the Pennsylvania Manufacturing Confectioners' Association (PMCA)

<sup>6</sup> Hayes, J. E., & Pickering, G. J. (2012). Wine Expertise Predicts Taste Phenotype. *American Journal of Enology and Viticulture*, 63(1), 80–84. <http://doi.org/10.5344/ajev.2011.11050>

<sup>7</sup> NIH Grant #: 5T32AA007459-30