

A new smartphone app claims to help consumers support or fight against causes through the products they buy, whether it be over issues like genetically modified food (GMO) labeling, seed access, animal welfare, human rights, fair trade or chemical use in food products.



The Buycott app allows consumers to choose from a range of causes they support or stand against, with a corresponding list of companies whose products either match or clash with their views. Many companies associated with the produce industry will have reason for concern should the app disseminate widely, but others could potentially benefit from it.

"Scan a barcode with the Buycott app and it will try to determine what the product is and who owns it. Buycott will then trace the product's ownership back to its top parent company and cross-check this company against the campaigns that you've joined before telling you whether it found a conflict," Buycott Inc mentions on its [website](#).

"A campaign must have a goal, and a list of companies that it aims to either support or avoid (buycott or boycott)."

Users can create campaigns as well. One of the most popular campaigns is 'Demand GMO Labeling', which 52,561 people had joined at the time of writing. This campaign recommends boycotts of such companies as BASF SE, Bayer AG, Campbell's Soup, Cargill, Dole Packaged Foods, DuPont, General Mills, Monsanto, Ocean Spray Cranberries and Syngenta.

Monsanto is one of the most common names to feature in different campaigns, while major fast food retailers and meat processors also appear.

One campaign with a significant presence of produce companies - Dole, Chiquita, Del

Monte, Green Giant and Ocean Spray - claims to be "Promoting long-term health, sustainability and the care of our food systems and communities in Costa Rica". Fortunately for these businesses, it has very few people signed on.

Buycott Inc concedes that it has limited information to draw upon for company selections and that not all data is guaranteed to be accurate.

"Buycott has a rich, but ultimately limited knowledge base of corporations and products. When you scan a barcode that Buycott has never seen before, it will seek information on what it is and who owns it. If it can't determine the owner of the product, it will ask you for help in identifying the product name, brand name, and company name," the company said on the website.

"Corporate ownership structure is always changing and can sometimes be complex. Most companies in our database actually own more brands than we have on record for them. That's why we need your help maintaining and improving the integrity of the data.

"New users can add unknown products they scan, and also contribute contact and background information for existing companies or vote on the accuracy of information that's already been added. The most active users have the ability contribute more types of data to the database."

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