

Heinz, ConAgra Get High Marks for Cutting BPA, Walmart and Kraft Fail

By [GreenerDesign Staff](#)

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA — Hain Celestial, Heinz and ConAgra received passing grades from two groups that surveyed companies about their efforts to eliminate [bisphenol A](#) (BPA), an endocrine-disrupting chemical, from can linings.

BPA, which has been linked to numerous reproductive and development problems, is used in various products, among them the epoxy liners in metal cans. The [gender-bending](#) chemical has been [banned](#) in some products by a handful of countries and states, and Canada recently officially [declared it toxic](#), paving the way for future regulations. Many companies that make hard plastic water bottles and infant formula have already eliminated the chemical from their products.



Soup cans - CC license by Flickr user 2493™

Investment firm [Green Century Capital Management](#) and shareholder advocacy organization [As You Sow](#) surveyed 26 food, drink and retail companies, grading them based on their use of BPA-free alternatives, plans to phase out BPA and transparency. Their findings are details in the [Seeking Safer Packaging 2010](#) report.

The top scorers were Hain Celestial, H.J. Heinz and ConAgra, each of which received an A. Hain and Heinz removed BPA from their infant food cans, and ConAgra replaced it in canned tomatoes. Though those account for a fraction of the companies' overall products, all three have timelines for eliminating BPA from all their other product lines. Hain also makes Health Valley and Westbrae Natural, and ConAgra produces Chef Boyardee, Hunt's and Healthy Choice.

General Mills got a B+ for committing to remove BPA From its Muir Glen line of tomatoes, but the company has no timeline for replacing it in its other lines like Progresso and Green Giant.

Walmart, Coca-Cola, Del Monte, Kraft and eight others received Fs for various reasons, such as not having plans to eliminate BPA, not funding research into BPA alternatives and not responding to the survey.

Out of all the companies, eight are putting money into BPA-free liner research, while the rest are relying on suppliers to fund and test alternatives. Eleven intend to phase out BPA "when effective and feasible substitutes are available," but only seven have timelines.

Companies also shared what factors are driving the switch away from BPA. Twelve cited consumer concerns, eight said possible regulations, seven said it was to protect their reputation and five pointed to the [precautionary principle](#).

On the challenges side, 16 said a major hurdle is the lack of substitutes, two said they don't have enough influence over their supply chain and three cited conflicting research on BPA and consumer confusion. Only three said cost increases are a challenge.

All of the companies surveyed and their scores are:

- Hain Celestial - A
- ConAgra - A

- H.J. Heinz - A
- General Mills - B+
- Nestle - B
- Sara Lee - C
- McCormick - C
- Campbell Soup - C
- Kellogg - D+
- Whole Foods - D+
- Dean Foods - D+
- Costco - D
- PepsiCo - D-
- JM Smucker - D-
- Coca Cola - F
- Del Monte - F
- Kraft - F
- Supervalu - F
- Unilever - F
- Kroger - F
- Safeway - F
- Walmart - F
- Hormel - F
- Sysco - F
- Delhaize Group - F
- Hershey - F