



## ***The Workshop: CRN's Day of Science***

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### **OPENING REMARKS**

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At the Terranea Resort , Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

“Good morning. Well, it’s been a tough week for ‘the science behind the supplements.’ It’s hard to know what’s science, what’s hype and what is pure unadulterated policy agenda setting at work.

If we blindly believe what we have read in the mainstream consumer press over the past week, it’s enough to make consumers go running to their kitchen cabinets ready to toss all their dietary supplements down the drain. But not so fast.

Of course, you can’t believe everything you read. As one person recently reminded me, people believe everything they read in the newspaper is true except for those things of which they have personal knowledge. In those cases, they know what they read isn’t true, or at least not the whole truth. And in our case, we have personal knowledge of the science.

As CRN has pointed out repeatedly over the past seven days, no single study is the final answer on the benefits or lack thereof for any particular supplement.

Over the din of the negative stories; however, one piece did seem to stand out to me because it put the research in a larger context. That [piece](#) came from Washington Post.com Columnist/Blogger Jennifer LaRue Huget, who wrote:

‘A quick reminder about studies: Science is meant to proceed in increments, with each new finding contributing to our body of knowledge and to be assessed within the context of that body of knowledge. As Dr. MacKay pointed out to me on the phone yesterday, these days scientific studies are released to the media and shared with the general public the day they’re published, before the scientific community has a chance to cogitate over them. That accounts for the information whiplash we experience: One day, Vitamin E is a miracle nutrient, the next day, a demon that might do us in.’

So if the majority of reporters were rushing to hammer the final nail in the supplement coffin, at least pieces like this underscore the importance of holding these kinds of scientific workshops. Science is constantly evolving and we must not lose our resolve to its pursuit, even if the other side seems to have temporarily gained the upper hand.

And with that optimistic thought in mind, I’d like to welcome you to CRN’s 2011 Day of Science.

There is still so much that we don’t know about nutrition and how nutrients interact in the human body to prevent disease... to turn off one gene sequence but turn on another one...,and why some levels of a nutrient are beneficial when higher or lower intakes may produce harm. There is still a great deal more science that needs to be developed and then put, if you will, ‘behind the supplements.’

This industry can choose to sit back and let outsiders conduct the research on dietary supplements, or we can develop our own aggressive agenda of investigation. If we choose the first option, then weeks like the one we've just lived through will become more common. If we pursue the second option, the supplement industry can counter study with study, give consumers alternatives to what passes as science by our critics, and gain the upper hand by demonstrating the value of our products for maintaining good health and contributing to longer, healthier and more productive lives.

CRN's Day of Science is designed to challenge you and prepare you for that continuous task, and hopefully foster an eagerness to tackle it. We hope that the topics we have assembled for this conference will spark new research ideas for each of you. They may demonstrate what we know and what we still don't. Perhaps it will prompt you to consider that an apparent dead end in one area is only a distraction from an open highway ahead in another.

I view CRN's Day of Science as combination *microscope*, *telescope*, and *periscope*. Our discussions today will let you zoom into new avenues of research and examine them in greater detail with some of the top experts in their fields. It will make you step back and look at the body of evidence for particular ingredients or health conditions, allowing you to see the constellation of research and where it may be pointing collectively. And it will help you see around corners, and around obstacles. Perhaps it will invigorate you to ask 'why not?' Instead of accepting 'We can't.'

This morning's first topic couldn't be more timely: it asks the question whether the use of antioxidants is justified? As they say on *Law & Order*, 'ripped from the headlines.'

While Dr. Maret Traber unfortunately had to cancel her appearance due to illness, we have been able to persuade Dr. David Heber from UCLA to speak on this topic instead. I think you will find he is a worthy replacement. But we'll come back to Dr. Heber in a minute.

Later this morning you will hear about immunotoxicology, the safety of naturally-derived products, and the National Center for Complementary & Alternative Medicine's program to assure product quality in the supplement materials it uses in its own research studies.

The afternoon promises to be equally provocative with sessions on Lipid signaling, the role of nutrient intervention in the progression of metabolic syndrome, the path to DRI recognition for what are now considered 'non-essential nutrients' like lutein, and vitamin B-12's influence on homocysteine levels and cognitive function.

In each of these sessions, I'd encourage you to ask, what might I take from this session that can advance the research agenda in my own company? Can I find sparks to jumpstart scientific thinking that might lead to the development of new products? Can the current state of science in this area stand up to rigorous counter attacks and criticism? What might your company do to further the science?

If this *Day of Science* provokes these conversations, then this will not have been such a bad week after all. And the adversity will have made us stronger for the ultimate benefit of our consumers.

Which brings me back to our first speaker of the day, Dr. David Heber."

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