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## Ask Laura - The Green Kitchen Economist

By: Laura Bruzas

Since founding HealthyDining.org (an all-volunteer community outreach and education effort) in 2003, I have been helping consumers make smarter, more eco-friendly choices. Currently, I live in La Grange.

Ask me anything you like. If I don't know the answer, I know where to find it!

Below are two questions to kick things off.

Laura - What's your take on silicone bake ware? Mary C.

I'm not buying it, Mary. Silicone's potential health effects remain unknown. Food-grade silicone is made up of sand and oxygen, both OK, plus... Plus what? That's the question. There may be additional additives, including colorants, that aren't required to be on the label so manufacturers are not including them.

For the time being, I'm erring on the side of caution and sticking with my inexpensive, non-reactive Pyrex glass bake ware. Sure it's not perfect (sudden temperature drops can cause shattering) but what is.

If you do elect to use the silicone bake ware, please watch your oven's temperature. Silicone bake ware products can melt at temps as low as 428 degrees F, though often times home ovens are set to 500 degrees.

Laura - I don't get it. How can retailers who say they are committed to responsible and sustainable practices sell bottled water? What's your take? Julie

Julie - Actions speak louder than words - always have, always will. There's so much money to be had in the bottled water industry. I'm sure it's hard for many retailers to walk away from it, even those who want to be more eco-friendly.

I do believe that consumers need to shoulder some of the responsibility. If they didn't keep buying bottled water, retailers wouldn't sell it. 2 million plastic bottles are used in the U.S. every five minutes. We really do vote for the type of world we want to live in with our actions and this includes how we spend our dollars.

For a well written article on this important topic, go to [www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/features-message-in-a-bottle.html](http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/features-message-in-a-bottle.html)

You can ask your questions by sending an email to me at [laura@healthydining.org](mailto:laura@healthydining.org)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Laura Bruzas

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