

ORGANIC VIEW

A PUBLICATION OF THE ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION • www.organicconsumers.org • MEMBERSHIP UPDATE • WINTER 2010

ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION The Road Traveled and the Road Ahead

Since our founding in 1998, OCA's central focus has been to help a growing North American network understand why organic food and farming is better for our health, the environment, animals, small farmers, and businesses. We've helped the organic sector grow from a niche market into a multi-billion dollar powerhouse. We've exposed the hazards of industrial agriculture, factory farms, Monsanto, and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). We've pointed out the need to re-localize the economy by "breaking the chains" of mindless consumerism, by buying local, organic, and Fair Trade. We've organized boycotts, protests, teach-ins, and pressure campaigns against corporations and the government. We've filed lawsuits against the USDA and corporations and lobbied politicians from local city halls to Washington, DC.

For twelve years we've served as the "organic police," monitoring and enforcing organic standards and labels, and successfully reining in the USDA and industry when they've tried to lower standards. We've kept GMOs, pesticides, growth hormones, and most factory farming practices out of organics. We've stood up for exploited farmworkers and laborers throughout the global and domestic supply chain.

In recent years we've put significant pressure on leading industry producers, retailers, and wholesalers, such as Whole Foods Market and UNFI, pointing out that most so-called "natural" foods and products are nothing more than greenwashed conventional products, and calling for a substantial increase in sales of certified organic products. We've helped extend organic expectations and standards beyond food products to include body care, cosmetics, home cleaning supplies, clothing, and nutritional supplements.



The OCA is now moving to monitor and police the multi-billion dollar Fair Trade sector as well. Our new Fair World Project will insure that "Fair Trade" labels on consumer products really mean something, and that organics, social justice, and farmworker/labor rights go hand in hand (See the article on page 6).

We're also taking on what we consider to be the most serious threat that human beings have ever faced: climate change. In talks, articles, conferences, protests, media interviews, and in our publications we are explaining to a mass audience how the industrial food system is a major, if not *the* major, culprit in global warming,

and how organic food and farming can help significantly reduce greenhouse gases and cool the planet.

Seven words on the masthead of our popular website www.OrganicConsumers.org summarize our mission: "Campaigning for Health, Justice, Sustainability, Peace, and Democracy." A number of readers have asked us "why don't you just stick to food safety issues or attacking Monsanto, or do what you're most famous for, policing organic standards? What do social and economic justice, peace, and democracy have to do with healthy food?"

Our answer is that all of the major problems we're trying to solve are interrelated. We're threatened, not by a series of unrelated problems (food safety, GMOs, pesticides, unethical business practices, economic depression, corrupt politicians and regulatory bodies, Peak Oil, endless war, a broken-down health care system, and climate chaos), but by a System in Crisis. Health, justice, and sustainability go hand in hand.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we lay out this issue of *Organic View*, the media continues broadcasting non-stop bad news about the climate crisis, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, deteriorating public health, unethical behavior on Wall Street and in Washington, and what many now reluctantly admit may be a permanent economic recession.

Here at the OCA, we have a more positive message to share. A message of thanksgiving and hope. A pledge to step up our efforts. A steady resolve to keep on fighting and campaigning, no matter what the obstacles, for an organic and sustainable future. Drawing inspiration from the fact that we

***We're going to
bring together
the organic
community and
the Fair Trade
community,
peace groups
and the green
jobs movement***

have some very powerful allies on our side—Mother Nature and our billions of brothers and sisters around the world—we are happy to announce, that with your help and participation, we are going to turn things around, starting immediately.

Beyond the gloom and doom of 2010 we're going to emphasize the organic, grassroots alternatives that are taking root in thousands of communities across the globe. We're going to lay out the positive organic solutions to the public health crisis, the energy crisis, the Great Recession, and global warming. We're going to bring together the organic community and the Fair Trade community, peace groups and the green jobs movement. In a few weeks we're going to bring a delegation of organic consumers, farmers, and scientists to Cancun, Mexico for the Global Climate Crisis Summit. Together with 100,000 others, we intend to raise our voices loud and clear. We're going to tell the political leaders of the world that our demands for a Great Transition to organic agriculture, a full-employment Green Economy, and a stable climate are non-negotiable.

Out-of-control corporations and scientists, Wall Street speculators, and bought-and-sold politicians seem perfectly content to maintain business as usual, no matter the cost—even if the cost is human survival.

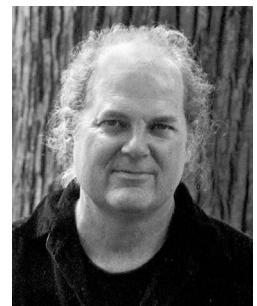
It's time to change the System, before the System destroys us all. We are the ethical and organic force that can save the planet. We are the antidote to hopelessness and fatalism. We are the messengers of hope.

OCA needs your help more than ever to broadcast our message and mobilize progressive forces for change. The funds to carry out our mission come from individuals like you, our grassroots supporters. Please use the enclosed reply envelope to send us a tax-deductible donation. Thank you for your support and for everything you do for a better world.

Regards & Solidarity,

Ronnie Cummins

Ronnie Cummins, OCA National Director



OCA's Ongoing Campaign to Require Mandatory Labels on Genetically Engineered Food and Food Ingredients

While most people in the US say they wouldn't eat GMOs, only 26% of people in the US are aware that they already eating them, since almost all non-organic processed foods contain genetically engineered soy, corn, canola, cottonseed oil, or sugar beets.

GMOs are laced into most processed foods, including everything made with trans-fats or high-fructose corn syrup, as well as the eggs, milk and meat from factory farmed animals that are reared on GMO feed, vaccines and growth hormones.

Now the FDA wants to push GMO fish and animals on to the market, with no labeling required unless the Obama Administration decides to overturn an old Bush-Quayle policy that established the legal fiction that genetically engineered foods are "substantially equivalent" to non-GE foods.

Under this bizarre policy, genetic engineering is considered a process, not a product. To the FDA, the fact that a crop or animal contains foreign DNA, viruses, bacteria, and antibiotic-resistant genes is not "material."

But a recent court decision suggests that the FDA might not get the last word on GMO labeling and the so-called "substantial equivalence" between GMOs and normal food.

In *IDFA et al. v. Boggs*, decided in September, a Federal Appeals Court overturned an Ohio state ban on label statements such as "rBGH-free," "rBST-free," and "artificial hormone-free" on milk from cows that have not been injected with the (genetically modified) recombinant bovine growth hormone (rBGH), a.k.a. bovine somatotropin (rBST). The court found that GMO milk is different from normal milk. The decision states:

"A compositional difference does exist between milk from untreated cows and conventional milk. The use of rBGH in milk production has been shown to elevate the levels of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), a naturally occurring hormone that in high levels is linked to several types of cancers, among other things. rBGH use induces an unnatural period of milk production during a cow's "negative energy phase." Milk produced during this stage is considered to be low quality due to its increased fat content and its decreased level of proteins. Milk from rBGH-injected cows contains higher somatic cell counts, which makes the milk turn sour more quickly and is another indicator of poor milk quality."

The Obama Administration needs to scrap the old Bush-Quayle policy, admit that GMOs and normal foods are radically different, and make GMO labels mandatory.

When polled, 80-95% of the public agrees that GMO foods should be labeled.

In 2009, OCA began working with the Truth in Labeling Coalition to demand a change from the FDA, and, if the FDA won't act, to get legislation passed in Congress that would direct the FDA to make GMO labels mandatory.

With GMO animals in the queue, public awareness of the need for GMO labels is at the highest level since Monsanto's Bovine Growth Hormone was approved as the first GMO to enter the food supply in 1994. The FDA needs to revise its policy on labels before GMO animals enter the food supply.

If the FDA approves Frankenfish, the first GMO animal could also bear the first mandatory GMO label.

The Road... continued from page 1

This means if we're going to replace our unhealthy food, farming, energy and transportation systems with organic and green systems, a critical mass is going to have to "get political" and change public policies and laws, not just our lifestyles. This means we can't just sit back and let the corporate-controlled media dominate

public discussion. Nor can we allow indentured politicians to continue to serve their rich corporate donors, while ignoring the aspirations and needs of the common people.

We can't spend trillions of dollars waging wars for oil and strategic natural resources in Iraq and Afghanistan, or bailing out Wall Street's gambling

debts, and still pretend we can simultaneously create the millions of new jobs we need for a green and organic economy. If we really intend to cool the planet and stop the climate crisis from metastasizing into a climate catastrophe, we'll need to subsidize what amounts to a Green New Deal, a wartime-like mobilization costing hundreds of billions of dollars. We can either have a highly-subsidized military-industrial complex and a "profit at any cost" health, agriculture, transportation, and banking system, or we can have a healthy, just, and sustainable society. We can't have both. Now is the time to decide. Now is the time to walk your talk and get active. Please join and support the Organic Consumer's Association as we move forward.



MEMBER COMMENTS

Thank you, pure and simple. -Charles, CA



Thanks for giving me a place to expre\$\$ my concerns! -Kathleen, MA

Thanks for fighting the good fight. You all are awesome! -Sarah, CO

Thank you for all you do to help me be an informed consumer. -Barbara, OR



Thanks for all the great work! People need a resource like the OCA to know what's happening in the farming industry and how to take action. -Ryan, WA

I would love to get the word out with a "Millions Against Monsanto" t-shirt! -Talisha, NC

I got a massive pay cut, and stopped giving to all charities and causes, but I couldn't hold out since OCA is doing such crucial work to protect our health and planet. -Joshua, MI

Keep up the good work! We are counting on you to get the word out about organics vs. mainstream foods, etc. -Della, OR

I love what you are doing. It is a true gift to humanity and the life of the planet. Don't be discouraged. Take refuge in the Light which you bring forth. -Jerry, CA



Thanks for all the good and challenging work you do! With love. -Laura, OH

SOS: Safeguard Organic Standards

Over the last 12 years, the OCA and the organic community have organized a series of national campaigns to safeguard organic standards. While we have been able to prevent standards from being significantly watered down, constant vigilance and mobilization have been necessary.



OCA'S ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO SAFEGUARD ORGANIC STANDARDS

► **1998** · The Organic Consumers Association forms in the wake of our successful campaign, sos (Save Organic Standards) to stop the USDA from allowing GMOs, irradiation, and sewage sludge in organic production. OCA builds a mass circulation website, newsletter, and nationwide consumer network.

► **October 2002** · National Organic Program (NOP) standards implemented.

► **February 2003** · A Capitol Hill back room deal puts a major dent in the organic standards when, with no prior notice, a major industrial poultry production corporation arranges to have a few sentences inserted into a 3,000 page appropriations bill that exempts producers from the organic feed requirement if the cost exceeds twice the conventional price. After extensive media coverage and a successful campaign by OCA and our allies to pressure Congress, the rider is removed and the organic feed requirement restored.

► **April 2004** · The NOP issues what it calls "guidance" and "directives" related to antibiotics in dairy production, livestock feed ingredients and allowable inert materials in pesticides. These policy interpretations are drawn up without input from the organic community and are seen as seriously degrading the standards. If implemented, they would allow a host of new synthetic materials into organic production without review and facilitate the recycling of dairy animals between organic and conventional operations. In the wake of a pressure campaign spearheaded by the OCA, Ag Secretary Veneman calls a meeting and announces that the guidance and directives have been suspended.

► **June 2005** · Fallout from the legal challenge to the NOP by Maine blueberry farmer Arthur Harvey turns the standards upside down once more and splits the organic community like nothing before. The court ruling declares there are technical inconsistencies between the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA), passed as part of the 1990 US Farm Bill, and the NOP standards, implemented in 2002. The ruling would prevent the use of 38 synthetic materials (such as baking powder, pectin and Vitamin C) in post-harvest handling and processing that had previously been approved by the NOSB. Congress steps in and amends OFPA to retain the national organic regulations implemented in October 2002. Under these standards no new synthetic substances may be allowed in organic production without the review and approval of NOSB, and synthetics originally approved by NOSB are all supposed to be "sunsetting" after five years, and then re-reviewed.

► **August 2005** · OCA steps up the pressure in our Coming Clean campaign to eliminate organic labeling fraud in the body care and cosmetics sector. A lawsuit filed by OCA and Dr. Bronner's Soaps shakes up the USDA so much that the agency partly gives in to OCA's demands and allows the "USDA Organic" seal to be displayed on certified organic body care and other nonfood products.

► **October 2006** · Multinational food manufacturers pressure Congress to pass an amendment to the 2006 Agricultural Appropriations Bill that undermines organic standards by allowing hundreds of non-organic “food processing aids” and “food contact substances” in organic food. After a massive mobilization led by the by OCA, Congress is deluged with 350,000 email letters and calls. Unfortunately, the House/Senate Conference committee ignores consumer objections and approves the rider, requiring OCA to fight a continuing battle against problematic food contact substances (such as BPA liners in cans) and processing chemicals.

► **August 2009** · The NOSB passes a recommendation for "Solving the Problem of Mislabeled Organic Personal Care Products." The recommendation urges the NOP to make sure that any use of the word "organic" on a personal care product is backed up by third-party certification to USDA organic standards.

The OCA sees this recommendation as a preliminary victory for its campaign to rid store shelves of products that are falsely advertised as "organic."

► **February 2010** · The USDA rules on Access to Pasture organic certification requirements for all organic livestock producers. National organic standards were designed to ensure that pasture and ruminant animals received adequate access to pasture grass, the primary food their bodies are designed to consume.

Unfortunately, the previous requirements were interpreted by industrial-scale dairy operators (Horizon and Aurora) in ways that clearly undermined the ability of these animals to receive the necessary amounts of outside access to pasture. These new rules directly address those earlier deficiencies.

The Pasture Rule becomes law on June 17, 2010. Existing operations will have to be in compliance by June 17, 2011. New operations certified after June 17, 2010 must be in compliance before certification. Animals must graze pasture during the grazing season, which must be at least 120 days per year and obtain a minimum of an average of 30 percent dry matter intake over the course of the grazing season.

The Pasture Rule is a major victory for the OCA and allies who have been campaigning against “organic factory farms.”

► **Future SOS work** · OCA continues to fight for strict organic standards. We are leading the charge in a movement to go beyond the existing standards and tighten up remaining loopholes in order to maintain the integrity of the organic label.

The new organic dairy regulations banning feedlots and requiring mandatory pasturing of cows are a good start, but we need to apply similar standards to poultry production. We need an independent NOP Peer Review Board. We need to officially ban nanotechnology from organic production. And we need a number of currently allowed non-organic substances or inputs to be prohibited in organic products, as there are now organic options available.

Over the next decade it will take constant vigilance and mobilization on the part of consumers, natural food stores, and farmers to uphold organic standards and prevent a takeover of the organic industry by corporate agribusiness.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Thank you for your relentless work for our planet... you are a fantastic organization!
-Laura, CA



I'm a poor college student so I can only do \$5/ quarterly but I love your work! -Emika, NY

I love OCA - I have learned so much reading your newsletters, information I share all the time with my students. I am grateful for the work you do. Keep it up. Together we can fight back against the corporate greed that poisons our environment and taints our food, all for unimaginable profits.
-Lisa, MA



I wish I could do more, but I am a teacher and summer is a tough time, I am breaking my promise to myself that I would not donate till Sept. to anything because your work is so critical, thanks, good luck, many silent people appreciate you. -John, WA

Thanks for all your hard work. We love you.
-Mary & Duane, TX



I love the mission you are on, I support you fully & I am grateful. I am doing my best here in the Eastern Sierra of CA as well. -Liz, CA

Stay informed at
organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm



OCA's New Fair World Project

The OCA launched the Fair World Project (FWP) in September to promote fair trade in commerce, especially in organic production systems in developing countries, and to protect the term "fair trade" from dilution and misuse for mere PR purposes.

The OCA's new project fills the critical need for a watchdog of misleading fair trade



claims, and a cheerleader for dedicated fair trade mission-driven companies. Through FWP, OCA will focus on promoting projects that connect the environmental and health benefits of organic agriculture with the social benefits derived from fair trade.

"As demand from conscious consumers expands the market for fairly traded products we must ensure that claims made by companies hold up to fair trade standards and that marketing and labeling of these products are accurate," says Dana Geffner, Executive Director of the FWP. "With new fair trade certifiers joining the movement, seasoned certifiers enabling questionable opportunistic fair trade claims and fair-washing practices more common, the Fair World Project aims to discuss and dissect," adds Geffner.

The FWP intends to encourage critical thinking rather than blind faith regarding fair trade claims and certification schemes. Through publications, events, and targeted campaigns the group articulates and advances the issues involved in fair trade, with the goal of helping consumers, business owners, employees and activists make informed decisions about where and on what to spend their money and resources—to build a better and more just world. The FWP's new website provides a space and forum where consumers can discuss issues within the Fair Trade movement, ask tough questions and share information.

According to Ryan Zinn of the OCA, "OCA's Fair World Project will highlight corporations that are truly implementing fair trade practices, but at the same time hold 'fair-washers' accountable and insist on safeguarding fair trade's integrity. We will put pressure on schools, institutions, and businesses, especially in the organic and natural products sector, to walk their talk and guarantee fair labor practices throughout the supply chain." www.fairworldproject.org

Stop Genetically Engineered Salmon!

President Obama's Administration has been lauded for its organic garden, farmers market, and recent pledge to put up solar panels on the White House. Unfortunately, the President's Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is still listening to Monsanto and the biotech industry instead of consumers. Proof of this "business as usual" attitude on the part of the FDA is their current attempt to allow a controversial genetically engineered salmon to go on the market, despite widespread opposition by the OCA and other consumer groups, as well as warnings by scientists that the GE salmon will likely harm human health and wild fish species.

This "Frankenfish," as OCA has dubbed it, contains the genetically scrambled genes of the eel-like ocean pout, a Chinook salmon, and an Atlantic salmon. According to leading scientists, GMO salmon is less nutritious, more likely to trigger a potentially fatal allergy, and contains higher levels of hormones linked to breast, prostate and colon cancer. Not surprisingly, most people tell pollsters they wouldn't eat GE salmon, but if the FDA continues on the path it's taking now, GE salmon is destined for grocery stores, restaurants and dinner tables across the United States.

That is, unless OCA's Stop Frankenfish campaign can mobilize hundreds of thousands of concerned citizens to take action before the end of the public comment period.

So far, nearly 15,000 OCA members have joined almost 200,000 activists in a coalition of over 30 groups to tell Obama's FDA to reject GE salmon.

The movement to stop GMO animals can succeed, but only if the millions of people who wouldn't eat Frankenfish raise their complaints with the Obama Administration.

If President Obama and FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg thought that approving Frankenfish would trigger a massive consumer backlash against GMOs, they probably wouldn't take the risk.

Get involved today: organicconsumers.org/gelink.cfm



FREE ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTER

OCA publishes a free electronic newsletter, *Organic Bytes*, with recent news stories, Action Alerts, quotes, and graphics. Sign up for a free subscription or read past issues at: organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.cfm

PLEASE HELP OCA WITH A TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION

- ▶ ONLINE: organicconsumers.org/donations.htm
- ▶ BY MAIL: Organic Consumers Association
6771 South Silver Hill Drive, Finland, MN 55603
- ▶ BY PHONE: 218-226-4164



From Copenhagen to Cancun

Join the Organic Consumers Association and Vía Orgánica at the Historic Global Climate Conference

In 1999 and 2003, the OCA helped organize protests and teach-ins against the World Trade Organization in Seattle and Cancun. These mobilizations were the coming of age of the global grassroots and the recognition that international crises demand global grassroots action. Now you have the opportunity to join OCA Director Ronnie Cummins and other OCA staff on an escorted delegation to the historic teach-ins and rallies for climate justice and organic agriculture at COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico.

Over 100,000 concerned citizens from North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia are expected to converge on Cancun, including leading farm, food, Fair Trade, climate justice, and anti-GE activists. They will attend a wide range of workshops, forums, and cultural events. Following up on the theme of the World Social Forum, "Another World is Possible," the emphasis in Cancun will be on presenting solutions and alternatives to the climate crisis.

The OCA delegation will include international experts on organic agriculture and climate justice, including OCA Directors Ronnie Cummins, Alexis Baden-Mayer, and Ryan Zinn; organic farm leader and author, Will Allen; noted anti-GMO scientist Dr. Michael Hansen; and author and food activist Jill Richardson. The delegation will include a workshop led by world-famous climate activists Bill McKibben and Maude Barlow.

DATES FOR THE DELEGATION:

November 29 - December 6, 2010: Hostel \$750, Ramada \$950

It is also possible to stay for the entire eleven day event from Nov. 29 through Dec. 10.

During the week of teach-ins and protests, November 29 - December 6, the OCA delegation will be housed in comfortable accommodations in the city of Cancun.

THERE ARE TWO HOUSING OPTIONS:

CHACMOOL HOSTEL: \$750

The hostel sits directly on the corner of Palapa Park, where all the corner activities are expected to take place. This is also where the OCA will host all of its conferences, speakers and workshops. Cancun's most famous taco stand is on the ground level of the hostel, serving up affordable, traditional Mexican food and drinks until 2 am. This is an ideal option for students or those on a tight budget. Rooms and beds are available on a first-come-first-served basis and will include dorm style beds, breakfast, welcome dinner, transportation to and from the airport and all speakers and conferences. They also offer economical tours to local attractions.

RAMADA HOTEL: \$950

The Ramada is only blocks away from Palapa Park. The hotel has a free shuttle to the beach, fitness center, pool, and restaurant/bar. Rooms can be booked at a double or single occupancy rate and include breakfast, dinner with the delegation at local restaurants, transportation to and from the airport, and all speakers and conferences. Guests at the Ramada are also welcome to book tours through the hostel, which offers affordable rates to all local attractions.

There are several day trips available to local attractions such as Playa Del Carmen, Isla Mujeres, Tulum, and Cozumel.

Call the OCA office at 415-307-8914 or email molly@viaorganica.org to pay your deposit & reserve your place on the delegation.



India's Independence Movement, based upon Mahatma Gandhi's principle of Satyagraha, the force of truth, began with boycotts of British salt and clothing.

Likewise the Organic Movement's truth telling and boycotts of GMO's, sweatshops, and factory farms are the beginning of a long march for food democracy, justice, and sustainability.



ORGANIC VIEW

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