



ORGANIC BYTES

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www.organicconsumers.org

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
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Alert: USDA and Leading Organic Dairies Conspiring to Degrade Organic Dairy Standards by Not Requiring Pasture Feeding

As *Organic Bytes* has reported, the most serious threat to us organic standards since 1998 is in the dairy sector. Two rapidly growing and profit-obsessed corporations, Horizon and Aurora Organic, are sourcing much of their milk from intensive confinement dairy feedlots, where the cows have little or no access to pasture. Now, in a secret letter obtained by the Cornucopia Institute, OCA has learned that three other major organic dairies, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley, and Humboldt Creamery have joined forces with Horizon and Aurora to lobby the USDA to keep dairy standards vague and unenforceable, by not requiring any specific percentage of the cow's feed to come from pasture. The National Organic Standards Board and the overwhelming majority of the nation's dairy farmers have repeatedly stated that at least 30% of an organic cow's feed during the growing season should be coming from pasture. Scientific studies have shown that milk and meat from pastured animals are qualitatively healthier than milk and meat derived from animals kept in unhealthy and inhumane concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

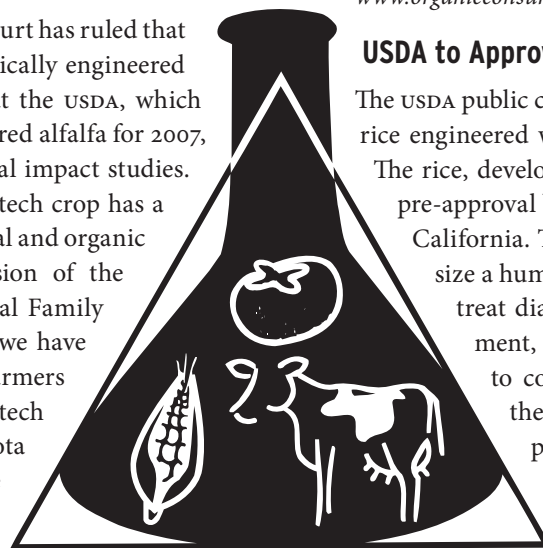
www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4549.cfm

To make your voice heard, learn more and take action at OCA's **Safeguard Organic Standards** web page: www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm

Federal Court Bans Monsanto's GE Alfalfa

For the first time in history, a Federal Court has ruled that the USDA has illegally approved a genetically engineered crop. A California judge has ruled that the USDA, which approved the sale of genetically engineered alfalfa for 2007, did not conduct adequate environmental impact studies. The judge said approval of this new biotech crop has a high potential of destroying conventional and organic alfalfa farms. "We applaud the decision of the Court," said Bill Wenzel of the National Family Farm Coalition. "It's unfortunate that we have to turn to judges to do what's right for farmers while the USDA carries water for the biotech companies." Pat Trask, a South Dakota alfalfa grower and plaintiff in the case stated, "It's a great day for God's own alfalfa."

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4492.cfm



GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS

STOP THE EXPERIMENT!

San Francisco May Regulate Grocery Bags

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors is considering a measure that would require grocery stores with annual sales of at least \$2 million to provide customers with grocery bags made of recyclable paper, plastic that can be turned into compost, or sturdy cloth or plastic that can be reused. Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who wrote the measure says, "By doing so, we will save millions of dollars for city coffers and for our refuse rate payers." Supervisors also note the reduction of fossil fuels needed to make plastic bags, litter in the streets, and refuse that chokes wildlife. If the measure passes, it will be implemented in as short as six months and will likely create a domino effect for other municipalities around the US. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4467.cfm

Antibacterial Hand Cleanser Warning

A new study published on the Environmental Science & Technology research website found that triclosan, a widely used ingredient in antibacterial hand sterilization products, combines with chlorine in tap water to make the toxin chloroform. The researchers found that people using these products would be exposed to chloroform levels 40 percent higher than that found in tap water. Chloroform is a toxic chemical and a probable carcinogen. Previous studies have shown that the overuse of antibacterial soaps produces "super bacteria" that are able to survive exposure to antibacterial products. It is recommended that such products be used on limited and minimal levels.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4535.cfm

USDA to Approve Rice Engineered with Human Genes

The USDA public comment deadline of March 30th regarding rice engineered with human genes is quickly approaching. The rice, developed by Ventria Bioscience has been given pre-approval by the USDA for planting and harvesting in California. The plants have been engineered to synthesize a human protein that would be used as a drug to treat diarrhea. When planted in an open environment, these biotech rice fields have the potential to contaminate conventional rice fields where the crops are being grown for consumer food products. According to Jane Rissler of the Union of Concerned Scientists, "This is not a product that everyone would want to consume. It is unwise to produce drugs in plants outdoors."

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4472.cfm

► MIND-BENDING SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF THE WEEK ♦

► Labeling Foods Truthfully is Actually Pretty Affordable

A new study from Canada has found that the food industry has heavily exaggerated the potential costs of labeling foods that contain genetically engineered (GE) ingredients. The study, commissioned by Quebec's Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, shows the actual cost is 99% less than what the biotech and food industries claim. Along with other similar studies, this report may help snuff out the argument that it's too expensive to implement labeling practices that allow consumers to identify foods with GE ingredients. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4554.cfm

► Starving By Choice

More than two-thirds of Americans are starving themselves of necessary nutrients says a new study published this week in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The study, conducted by Johns Hopkins University on 8,900 US citizens over the course of four years, found that less than a third of the study participants eat daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, even when foods like french fries are considered a "vegetable". www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4558.cfm

► Sugar and Obesity Have Nothing in Common?

The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (AJCN) has confessed to printing a bogus study that denies the links between soft drinks and obesity. The current issue of AJCN reveals the study was funded by the American Beverage Association, an industry trade group comprised of soda pop manufacturers. In addition, the lead author owns major stock in several beverage companies, and the co-author sits on the advisory board for McDonald's. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_4504.cfm

With Spring's Arrival Comes Organic Garden Planning

- ☞ When planning for the coming year's garden, think "biodiversity". Using many different kinds of plants will encourage many different kinds of beneficial insects to take up residence in your yard.
- ☞ When buying annuals or perennials, select plants that are budded but not yet in bloom, so their energy the first two or three weeks in your garden will be directed toward making larger and stronger plants with better-developed root systems.
- ☞ To take advantage of a bat's contribution to the environment, make your yard bat-friendly by providing food, water, and shelter. Insects, a bird bath, and a purchased bat house are all that's needed.
- ☞ The average household produces more than 200 pounds of kitchen waste every year. You can successfully compost all forms of kitchen waste, with the exception of meat, meat products, dairy products, and high-fat foods.

Source: 300 *Organic Garden Tips*: www.organicgardentips.com



Step It Up! National Day of Action on Climate Change

This April 14th, tens of thousands of Americans will gather all across the country at meaningful, iconic places to call for action on climate change. We will hike, bike, climb, walk, swim, kayak, canoe, or simply sit or stand with banners of our call to action: "Step It Up Congress! Cut carbon 80% by 2050." This is an invitation to help start a movement to take one spring day and use it to reshape the future. www.stepitup2007.org

Organic Bytes Readers Talk Back

Some of the Things You Can Do to Prepare Yourself for Peak Oil: Responding to one of the bullet points in our piece on BPA (Issue #104), Daniel writes: "Your answer to point 6 is exactly the opposite. Banks foreclose first on loans they can break even or profit from. The more you have paid off the more equity the bank will get. So to avoid fore-closer in hard times, it is actually better to be upside down in your loan, owning the bank more money than your property is worth. They will work with you and do everything they can to prevent the loss. The "pay off loan" thinking stems from depression era laws that gave banks more power to foreclose. The laws have changed, and the business models." www.organicconsumers.org/bytes/ob104.cfm

Health Tip Of The Week: How To Avoid BPA: In Issue #104, we ran a piece with quick tips on how to avoid toxic BPA. One of our bullet points mentioned avoiding SIGG water bottles (among other brands). We acquired that information from the Environmental Working Group. Unfortunately, the data was slightly dated. SIGG has since gone BPA-free, so it is now safe to purchase SIGG water bottles. www.organicconsumers.org/bytes/ob104.cfm

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Organic Consumers Association

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