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[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

# ORGANIC BYTES

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
Please forward this publication to family and friends, websites, print it, & post it. Knowledge is power!

## **Alert:** Monsanto & Big Food Attack Local Rights to Regulate Food & Crops

Since 1998, the biotech industry and industrial food corporations have unsuccessfully tried to take away local and states' rights to ban or regulate genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and other controversial foods and crops. For example, OCA and other public interest groups successfully generated a mass outcry in 2006 that blocked the passage of the National Uniformity for Food Act. This highly unpopular bill would have nullified 200 food safety and food labeling laws across the US.

Failing to suppress grassroots control over food safety laws and labels in the last session of Congress, industry has now called on their friends in the House Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry to slip a similar poison pill into an obscure section of the voluminous 2007-2012 Farm Bill.

The provision would give the White House appointed Secretary of Agriculture the power to eliminate local or state food and farming laws, such as those in four California counties banning genetically engineered crops, and set an ominous precedent undermining states' rights.

Tell Congress to repeal this provision before it becomes law:

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5424.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5424.cfm)

## **OCA's Boycott of Horizon Continues as Company's Stock Plummets**

April marked the one year anniversary of OCA's boycott of factory farmed dairy products produced by Horizon Organic and Aurora. Ninety-six percent of *Organic Bytes* readers, in an online survey in 2006, voted to launch a boycott of so-called "USDA Organic" brands sourcing dairy products from intensive confinement feedlots where the cows have little or no access to pasture, and where many of the calves have been purchased from conventional farms.

A loophole in the USDA Organic Standards has allowed two companies, Horizon and Aurora, to buy their milk from "organic" factory farms where as many as 10,000 cows are packed into feedlots. Although Horizon claims the OCA boycott has not affected sales, Executive Gregg Engles recently admitted to investors that profits for the year have been much lower than projected. The company's stock market price has recently dropped 11 percent.

In addition Wal-Mart, Wild Oats, Safeway, Costco, Woodstock Farms, Publix, and other private label vendors of Aurora's feedlot milk are coming under increasing criticism from consumers.

Learn more about this campaign and take part in the boycott:

[www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm)

## **Cancer-Causing Benzene in Soda Drinks**

The problem of cancer causing benzene turning up in sodas seems to pop up in the US with alarming regularity.

Last week, the FDA reported that it tested 100 sodas and found unacceptable levels of the known carcinogen five of the drinks. Some of these drinks had benzene levels nearly 100 times which is considered safe the EPA for drinking water.

The toxin is formed when a soda manufacturer uses two ingredients that can react to form benzene: ascorbic acid and sodium ate or potassium benzoate.

Soda companies found to have dangerous levels of benzene have vowed to reformulate their drinks. In the meantime, boycott the beverages listed in the above graphic, and consider avoiding any soda with the "toxic two" ingredients, found in an astoundingly high number of popular drinks. (As a note, beverages labeled as "organic" cannot contain these ingredients.)

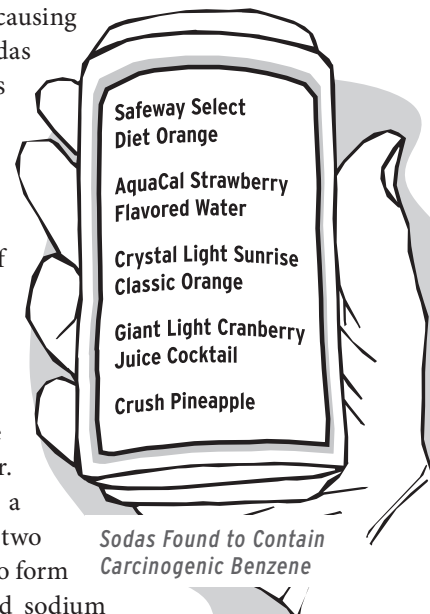
[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5422.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5422.cfm)

## **Watch Michael Moore's Interview and Take Action for Universal Health Care**

If you've been reading OCA's Health Page you're aware of the sorry state of the nation's health care system. In 2000, the World Health Organization ranked our system (which is the most expensive in the world) 37th, just after war-torn and drug-ravaged Columbia. In the last seven years, with cuts in employee health benefits and miserly HMO coverage, things have only gotten worse. A 2007 report by the Commonwealth Fund ranks the US last among other rich countries in health care access, patient safety, efficiency, and equity, despite the fact that it spends twice as much on health care. This is the subject of Michael Moore's new documentary, *Sicko*.

The difference between the US and countries with better health outcomes? Universal health care.

Watch a short interview with Moore and take action for universal health care at: [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5423.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5423.cfm)



*Sodas Found to Contain Carcinogenic Benzene*

## Venezuela Moves to Ban Frankencrops

Monsanto's plans to grow 500,000 acres of genetically engineered crops in Venezuela have been thwarted by the nation's popular President, Hugo Chavez. According to Chavez, when he learned about Monsanto's Plans, "I ordered an end to the project. This project is terminated." Chavez is now encouraging Venezuela's national legislature to pass some of the most sweeping restrictions on genetically modified organisms in the entire Western Hemisphere. [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5353.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5353.cfm)

## Planet's Population is Now More Urban than Rural

"So far, cities are getting whatever resource needs that can be had from rural areas. But given global rural impoverishment, the rural-urban question for the future is not just what rural people and places can do for the world's new urban majority. Rather, what can the urban majority do for poor rural people and the resources upon which cities depend for existence? The sustainable future of the new urban world may well depend upon the answer." -Dr. Ron Wimberley, Professor of Sociology at NC, addressing the fact that as of May 23, 2007, the world's population for the first time is primarily urban.

-[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5407.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5407.cfm)

## Canadians Make it Official: Tea is Good for You

Last week, the Canadian government officially deemed tea (black, green and oolong) as having medicinal qualities.

Although the news of tea's health benefits may not seem surprising, this story becomes particularly noteworthy when put in the context of the sheer difficulty of convincing us & Canadian governments to acknowledge specific health benefits of herbs.

After reviewing hundreds of studies conducted over the past few decades, the Canadian government stated there is enough evidence to prove that these particular teas are stimulants, support cardiovascular health and are an important dietary source of antioxidants.

Tea is second only to water as the healthiest beverage choice, according to healthy beverage guidelines that were developed by a panel of American nutrition experts and published in the March 2006 issue of the *Journal of American Clinical Nutrition*. According to experts like Dr. Carol Greenwood, a Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Toronto, "Tea is one of the highest sources of antioxidants in the diet."

The US FDA has rejected petitions similar to what Canada approved this week, saying there is no evidence supporting these herbal health claims.

-[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5401.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5401.cfm)



## Green Consumers Can't Find Green Goods

A new Hartman Group survey indicates that consumers have generated a greater demand for green and sustainably produced products than the market is able to provide. While the vast majority of consumers say they want to purchase a wide variety of products from companies with sustainability ethics, relatively few consumers actually know where to find those products.

- Nearly 3 out of 4 US consumers believe their purchases have significant impact on society.
- 71% say they would pay more for sustainably made products.
- Only 5% of consumers can name companies that they know have values based on sustainability.
- Only one in ten consumers know where they can buy sustainably made products.

-[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5400.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5400.cfm)

## Online Shopping for the Green-Minded

Although finding sustainably made products in your local strip-mall may be difficult, there are an increasing number of independently owned retailers, coops and online businesses where you can research and/or buy green products from green companies. The Organic Consumers Association has teamed up with [GreenPeople.org](http://GreenPeople.org) to bring you one of the world's largest directories of green and organic businesses.

Buy Green, Sell Green, Be Green. Find green products and services in your area and nationwide:

-[www.organicconsumers.org/btc/BuyingGuide.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/btc/BuyingGuide.cfm)

## Please Donate to the OCA

As a nonprofit, we need your donations so we can continue to move forward. You can donate online at:

[www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

Or mail your tax deductible donation to the OCA:  
Organic Consumers Association

6771 South Silver Hill Drive · Finland, MN 55603

Or by phone: 888-403-1007 (toll free).

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