



ORGANIC BYTES

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www.organicconsumers.org

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!

Congress Backs Off on Suppressing Local Rights to Regulate Food Safety

Thanks to everyone who has joined in on OCA's recent Farm Bill action alerts. Deluged with thousands of letters from consumers and organic advocates, Congress is removing language, so-called Section 123, from the Farm Bill that would have eliminated local and state governments' power to regulate genetically engineered crops and police food safety at the local and state level.

This is a significant achievement. The 2007-2012 Farm Bill is a massive, multi-faceted piece of legislation, so there is a lot of work to be done to move this multi-billion dollar colossus in a sustainable and equitable direction. If you haven't already done so, please take action on the following OCA Farm Bill alerts:

- **NAIS Alert: Keep 'Big Brother' out of Farm Bill**
www.organicconsumers.org/rd/nais.cfm
- **2007 Farm Bill Alert: Sustainable Agriculture or Corporate Welfare?**
www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5813.cfm

Organic Farming Can Feed the World

A new University of Michigan study indicates that organic farming is more productive than chemical and energy intensive industrial agriculture. Researchers noted 293 examples in previous studies that corroborate the fact that organic farming is better than conventional, but pointed out that biased studies funded by chemical producers have clouded the public's understanding of the issue. Corporate agribusiness has spent decades repeating the mantra that chemical intensive agriculture is necessary to feed the world. But according to the new report, "Model estimates indicate that organic methods could produce enough food on a global per capita basis to sustain the current human population, and potentially an even larger population, without increasing the agricultural land base." Ivette Perfecto, a professor at the University of Michigan, said of the study, "My hope is that we can finally put a nail in the coffin of the idea that you can't produce enough food through organic agriculture." www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5996.cfm



Scientists Reveal that Pesticides are Reducing Crop Yields by One-Third

The National Academy of Sciences dropped a bombshell on the agri-toxics lobby in June when it published a study indicating that pesticides are actually decreasing crop yields by one-third. Specifically, pesticides are killing important bacteria in the soil that naturally produce a usable form of nitrogen for plants, a necessary fertilizer. As the use of chemical pesticides has increased in the US, soil bacteria have been dramatically reduced, thereby creating an insatiable demand for petroleum-based fertilizers. In contrast, organic farming promotes a healthy living soil with increased crop yields.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5995.cfm

Web Videos of the Week

Organic Lawns

The *Wall Street Journal* takes an entertaining look at organic lawns. Watch one of the *Journal* editors convert her yard to organic. Learn about some of the new lawn weeding tools on the market as well as organic grass fertilizers. Also see a photo slideshow detailing how one homeowner achieved a lush green lawn with various organic techniques. Scroll to the bottom of the *Wall Street Journal* article to see a step-by-step guide for going pesticide free in your own yard.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6011.cfm

Harry Potter Takes On Waldemart

OCA's *Breaking the Chains* campaign has dedicated itself to reminding consumers of how Wal-Mart destroys local independent businesses, exploits workers, and undermines organic food and farming. This week, we are happy to share with you a humorous video that will appeal to all ages.


In a few weeks, the seventh and final installment of the *Harry Potter* book series will be released, and Wal-Mart stands to sell millions of copies. But in order to drive customers into their stores, Wal-Mart is selling the books dirt cheap — 50% below the suggested retail price.


This typical Wal-Mart move to destroy its competition will likely have a devastating effect on already struggling independent book stores across the country.


Watch this humorous web video and don't forget to boycott Wal-Mart and the chains:


www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5987.cfm


America's Chemically Dependent & Toxic Lawns

 67 million pounds of pesticides are applied to roughly 30 million acres of lawns in the US each year.

 The #1 most water intensive crop in the United States is lawn grass. The average lawn is doused with 10,000 gallons of water each year (in addition to rainfall).

 Synthetic fertilizers run off into streets and local waterways, choking aquatic life and polluting our water.

 The EPA estimates that a mower emits as much pollution in one hour as a car emits in driving 20 miles.

 Numerous studies have linked common household herbicides and pesticides to asthma, cancer, reduced fertility and neurological harm to fetuses, infants and children.

The Best Looking Organic Lawn on the Block

Relax Don't be afraid to let your average lawn height be higher than the local putting green. Taller grass has deeper roots, which requires less watering.

Seed You get what you pay for. If you need to seed bare spots in your lawn, be aware that cheaper grass seeds tend to have more weed contamination than higher-end products.

Weed Use a dandelion digging fork instead of purchasing dangerous pesticides.

Mulch Grass clippings can provide the majority of nutrients needed by a lawn.

Fertilize For yards that require fertilization, most garden centers now carry organic fertilizers that are better for your lawn and the environment.

Mow Use electric, rechargeable or push mowers. Mow grass when it's dry and make sure the blade is sharp to reduce damage to grass. Read *The Citizen's Guide to Organic Lawn Care* for more info.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5997.cfm



Your Online Organic Community is Waiting for You

In a matter of just two minutes from now, you could be posting your thoughts on OCA's website for thousands of people to read. OCA's new interactive web forum is now buzzing with green-minded folk, like you, from all over the world. Even if you are unfamiliar with web forums, this easy-to-use tool provides you with a place to post questions and comments about any OCA related issue... all the while building community and solidarity. Whether your passion is organics, food safety, sustainability, social justice issues, politics, or any other related topic, we welcome you to login today and start posting your ideas and questions for discussion. www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php

Dialing For Organic Dollars

Each year, Working Assets Long Distance (WALD) Company donates a portion of its revenue to national non-profits—doing front line work on progressive issues, such as the Organic Consumers Association (OCA).

If you are a current Working Assets customer, you can help the OCA receive a portion of these funds by sending a quick online letter, nominating the OCA for donations. Thanks! WALD customers can vote for OCA at:

www.workingassets.com/voting/

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

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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www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

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