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www.organicconsumers.org

ORGANIC BYTES

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
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Alert: Put an End to Organic Dairy Fraud Once and for All

Success Story: Thanks to pressure from organic consumers, Cornucopia Institute and the OCA, the USDA has finally taken preliminary enforcement action against Aurora Organic for falsely labeling factory farmed milk as “organic”. Aurora is the nation’s largest supplier of “private label” organic milk to large retail chains and wholesalers including Wild Oats, Wal-Mart, Costco (“High Meadows”), Safeway (“O” Organics), Target, Giant (“Natures Promise”), UNFI (“Woodstock Farms”), and others.

Part of USDA’s long overdue slap on the wrist of Aurora includes a legally binding Consent Agreement by Aurora to stop labeling some (but not all) of its milk as “USDA Organic” and to sell off hundreds of conventionally raised cows from their massive feedlots. In effect the USDA has forced Aurora to admit that they have deliberately and willfully defrauded organic consumers since 2003 by selling millions of dollars of cheap feedlot milk as organic, utilizing intensive confinement of their milk cows and illegally importing calves from non-organic dairy farms. For more information on this issue see:

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6912.cfm

The Next Step: For more than a year, the OCA has called for a boycott of Aurora’s bogus organic milk. While we are happy to see USDA bureaucrats finally get off their butts and at least do something to protect organic dairy standards, concerned organic consumers are outraged that the USDA has not done all that federal law requires.

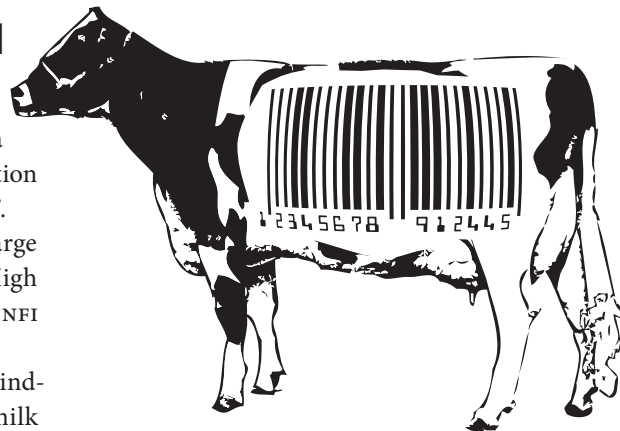
Although this multimillion dollar corporation was found to have “willfully” violated federal law in misrepresenting their milk as organic and defrauding consumers around the country for over three years, they have been allowed to remain in business and have seemingly gotten away without being fined a single cent. We’re sick and tired of greedy corporations like Aurora degrading organic standards.

It’s time for grassroots Organic Consumers to prepare for legal action and stop this fraud once and for all. But to do this we need your help. If you feel you have been defrauded by purchasing “organic” milk from any of the retail chains or wholesalers listed above (i.e. those that get their milk from Aurora), and you are willing to work with a team of OCA-allied legal researchers to stop this organic labeling fraud, please contact us with the information requested below, and our legal research team will contact you by email or telephone.

You Can Help

If you purchased any storebrand organic milk or butter from the retailers listed above or from other stores, from January 2004 through today, by dropping us a note at ronniecummins@organicconsumers.org or calling the OCA office at 218-226-4164 and letting us know:

1. Your name and phone number
2. Name and brand of purchase
3. Name of store
4. City, state and addresses available
5. Approximate timeframe of purchase (ex. 2004-2006)



Alert: GE Sugar to Hit Stores in 2008

American Crystal, a large Wyoming-based sugar company, and several other leading US sugar providers have announced they will be sourcing their sugar from genetically engineered (GE) sugar beets beginning this year and arriving in stores in 2008.

Like GE corn and GE soy, products containing GE sugar will not be labeled as such. Since half of the granulated sugar in the US comes from sugar beets, a move towards biotech beets marks a dramatic alteration of the US food supply. These sugars, along with GE corn and soy, are found in many conventional food products, so consumers will be exposed to GE ingredients in just about every non-organic multiple-ingredient product they purchase. The GE sugar beet is designed to withstand strong doses of Monsanto’s controversial broad spectrum Roundup herbicide. Studies indicate farmers planting “Roundup Ready” corn and soy spray large amounts of the herbicide, contaminating both soil and water. Farmers planting GE sugar beets are told they may be able to apply the herbicide up to five times per year. Sugar beets are grown on 1.4 million acres by 12,000 farmers in the US from Oregon to Minnesota. Meanwhile candy companies like Hershey’s are urging farmers not to plant GE sugar beets, noting that consumer surveys suggest resistance to the product. In addition the EU has not approved GE sugar beets for human consumption. Take action now to stop GE Sugar:

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7031.cfm

180 Degree Turn in Three Months

May 2007: “American Crystal Sugar Company, has no plans to grow GM sugar beets. Herbicide resistant varieties developed using biotechnology will not be allowed to be sold, given away, distributed, or planted in year 2007.” -Source: Statement released by American Crystal

August 2007: “Here at American Crystal, we believe biotechnology is the current wave that will help feed the world.” -Source: American Crystal President David Berg

Starbucks Boots Monsanto's Growth Hormone from its Cafes

After six years of pressure from the OCA and its allies, Starbucks has announced it will completely phase out recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH/rBST) in all of its company-owned coffee shops by early 2008. The coffee-chain's decision comes on the heels of an announcement from food retail giant, Kroger's, who announced they will ban rBGH in all of their supermarkets by February 2008. Since 2001, OCA's *Starbucks Campaign* has been calling on the company to discontinue serving rBGH milk and to ensure that at a significant proportion of their coffee and chocolate is certified Fair Trade and Organic. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6974.cfm

Industrial Agriculture Driving Livestock Breeds to Extinction

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization released a study last week revealing that an over-reliance on some breeds of livestock imported from the US and EU is causing the loss of at least one indigenous livestock breed a month. Researchers found at least 2,000 local breeds to be at risk of extinction to over-reliance on imported breeds such as the high-milk-yielding Holstein-Friesian cows, egg-laying White Leghorn chickens, and fast-growing large white pigs. 90 percent of cattle in industrialized countries come from only six specific breeds. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6982.cfm

Organic Farmers & Consumers Call for Farms Not Arms

Last weekend, in conjunction with the annual Farm Aid concert, family farmers and veterans from around the US gathered for a “Farms Not Arms” public forum and protest in Manhattan that focused on changing our nation's priorities from war and world domination to support for family farmers, organics, regional agriculture, alternative energy, global justice, and job opportunities on organic farms for returning veterans. Ronnie Cummins, OCA's National Director, passionately reminded the assembled farmers and veterans that “we will never have an organic future and a stable climate until we pull all the troops out of Iraq and redirect our annual \$650 billion military budget to greening the economy and guaranteeing a sustainable environment and economic justice for everyone.” For anti-war news and info on OCA's Planting Peace Campaign go to: www.organicconsumers.org/plantingpeace/index.cfm



How the Food Industry Brainwashes Americans

This five part *YouTube* series with now deceased TV newscaster Peter Jennings explores how the food industry spends billions of dollars to sabotage your health. Jennings also takes a critical look at our government's agricultural subsidy programs, and the consequences of misguided government policies on our diet and health. For example, sugar and fat receive 20 times more government farming subsidies than fruits and vegetables. The food industry spends \$34 billion per year marketing their products, \$12 billion of which is spent marketing unhealthy foods to children. Learn how misleading advertising, food additives, and a corrupt subsidy system have undermined public health. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6933.cfm

Your Story is Needed in OCA's Web Forum

Have you or someone you know had experiences with chemical sensitivities? OCA is looking to collect stories from thousands of citizens regarding such sensitivities related to foods, pesticides, additives, genetically engineered ingredients, and any other consumer-related product. Simply follow the link below to OCA's web forum where we have set up a special section to collect these stories. These anonymous stories will be a valuable tool for helping us win support from policy-makers and industry decision-makers in further protecting consumer health. (If you haven't already done so, you will need to register to post to the OCA forum, which is quick and easy). Please share your story here: www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=361

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Organic Consumers Association
6771 South Silver Hill Drive · Finland, MN 55603
Or by phone: 888-403-1007 (toll free).

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