



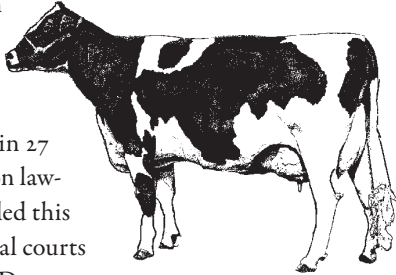
# ORGANIC BYTES

Please forward this publication to family and friends, websites, print it, & post it. Knowledge is power!



## Organic Consumers Sue Aurora Dairy in 27 States

**A**cting on behalf of organic food consumers in 27 states, class action lawsuits are being filed this week in US federal courts in St. Louis and Denver,



against one of the nation's largest organic dairies. The suits charge Aurora Dairy Corporation, based in Boulder, Colorado, with allegations of consumer fraud, negligence, and unjust enrichment concerning the sale of organic milk by the company. This past April, Aurora officials received a notice from the USDA detailing multiple and "willful" violations of federal organic law that were found by federal investigators, specifically not providing mandatory pasture access and bringing non-organic cows onto their massive feedlots.

Unfortunately, the USDA gave Aurora what the OCA considers a "slap on the wrist," rather than taking away the corporation's USDA Organic certification. Commenting on this week's class action lawsuit, Ronnie Cummins, National Director of the OCA stated: "If the USDA refuses to properly enforce organic standards, then organic consumers have no choice but to act as their own enforcement body, using the courts to punish those corporations, like Aurora, that put profits ahead of organic integrity."

Two weeks ago Aurora threatened to sue the OCA, Cornucopia Institute, and the Center for Food Safety if we didn't back off. Now it looks like Aurora will have to face the consequences of their "willful violations" of organic standards in court. OCA would like to thank the hundreds of organic consumers across the country who have joined in on this class action lawsuit. We would like to also thank the several hundred OCA network supporters who have sent us over the past two weeks more than \$15,000 to carry on this important legal battle.

If you can afford to help us fight this David versus Goliath battle over organic integrity, please send us a donation now. **Donate online at:** [www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm) **For more information:** [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7757.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7757.cfm)

## EPA Approves Pesticide Known to Cause Cancer

On October 5, the EPA approved a new chemical fumigant for use on strawberries and other food crops across the US. The pesticide, methyl iodide, vaporizes quickly, causing it to drift far distances. Although the state of California has categorized it as cancer causing, and the EPA admits it causes thyroid tumors, the Bush Administration has been advocating approval of the fumigant for two years.

In a letter to EPA Administrator Stephen Johnson on September 25, the nation's leading chemists asked EPA not to approve methyl iodide without further scientific review. The chemical has been used to induce cancer in laboratory experiments and causes neurological and thyroid problems, as well as miscarriages in studies with laboratory animals. Farm workers, families, rural workers, and the food supply will now be subjected to exposure to the carcinogen unless the EPA revokes the approval immediately.

**Take action now:** [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7580.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7580.cfm)

**Who Advised the Approval of this Pesticide?**  
James L. Connaughton was appointed by George W. Bush as the Senior Environmental Advisor and Chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Before being appointed to this position, Connaughton was one of Capitol Hill's most successful lobbyists... for the mining, chemical, industrial and asbestos industries.

## USDA Approves Chip Implants that Cause Cancer Tumors

For the past few years, the OCA has reported on the National Animal Identification System (NAIS), a set of controversial, mandatory regulations the US federal government claims to have abandoned to the states, but in fact is still pushing, specifically, in the 2007 Farm Bill.

NAIS would require that all farmers and farm animal owners implant their animals with a computer chip, even those who just own a single cow, horse, chicken or other farm animal.

Last week, the USDA approved the use of two new types of chips for the NAIS program. These same chips have already been planted in millions of pets and marketed to pet owners as an ID device to help find lost pets. Increasingly, these same chips are being marketed and implanted into humans. Evidence has now surfaced that a significant number of studies done in the 1990s revealed that lab animals implanted with the devices developed tumors.

When the FDA approved the use of the chips for human implanting, these reports were never made public. In an interview with a retired toxicologic pathologist who studied the chips for Dow Chemical, "The transponders were the cause of the tumors."

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7570.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7570.cfm)

**Who Approved These Chips?**  
The FDA is overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services, which, at the time of the original RFID chip's approval, was headed by White House appointee Tommy Thompson. Two weeks after the device's approval took effect on 1/10/05, Thompson left his Cabinet post, and within five months was a board member of VeriChip Corporation, the company who designed the RFID chip. He was compensated by VeriChip with cash and stock options. In his public appearances, he continues to claim the chips are completely safe and urges all citizens get the implants for the sake of the health and safety of their families. To date, neither Thompson nor any member of his family has had the chip implanted.

Source: Associated Press -9/8/07

## GE Corn Toxin Affecting Aquatic Ecosystems

A new study in the recent issue of the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* indicates that a toxin in genetically engineered (GE) Bt corn is contaminating waterways near farm fields. The toxin is killing caddisflies which is a valuable food resource for higher organisms like fish and amphibians. This GE corn was approved for use by the US EPA a decade ago, but the agency never tested its impact on caddisflies, which are common insects in areas where these crops are grown. According to one of the study's researchers, Todd Royer, "I think probably the risks associated with widespread planting of Bt corn were not fully assessed."

Since its inception, the OCA has called for a moratorium on GE crops, based on a current lack of data regarding environmental and health safety. Learn more:

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7558.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7558.cfm)



## Pro-Organic Draft Farm Bill Under Attack

After a number of delays, the Senate Agriculture Committee is scheduled to take action on their version of the Farm Bill on Tuesday, October 23. Many confidential negotiations and back room deals are underway in preparation for the Committee's Farm Bill mark-up next week.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Tom Harkin (D-IA) announced today that his draft Farm Bill includes strong provisions to promote organic and sustainable agriculture, conservation, beginning farmers and better nutrition. However, various sources have indicated that funding levels remain low for many of these crucial programs. With the Agriculture Committee set to vote next week, and the full Senate vote as early as the week of October 29th, now is the time to act.

Please contact your Senators and ask them to support increases in funding for conservation, organic agriculture, healthy food and beginning and minority farmer programs.

**Take Action:** [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7765.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7765.cfm)

## Alert: Raw Almonds Pasteurization Rule Goes into Effect

Despite massive opposition from almond producers, retailers and organic consumers, the USDA has implemented its ruling to require that raw almonds be pasteurized. The rule went into effect on September 1st, and since then, all retail outlets have been forced to remove truly raw almonds from store shelves. Consumers will be misled by this action as there will still be almonds on store shelves labeled as "raw", but they will actually be pasteurized. One of the FDA-recommended pasteurization methods requires the use of propylene oxide, which is classified as a "possible human carcinogen" by the International Agency for Research on Cancer and is banned in Canada, Mexico, and the European Union. Since the decision about the rule was made, Secretary of Agriculture, Mike Johanns, has stepped down. He is temporarily replaced by Chuck Conner. This may provide a new opportunity for reversal.

Please contact Conner today to ask that the rule be suspended for 6 months while the public comment period is re-opened:

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_5227.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5227.cfm)

## Quick Tidbits

**EU BLOCKS NEW GE CROPS** The EU has blocked the approval of a genetically modified potato and three genetically modified varieties of corn. Health regulators in several European countries expressed serious concerns about scientific data suggesting possible problems with the biotech plants. All of the proposed plants are already approved for use in the US. [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7617.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7617.cfm)

**US APPROVES NEW GE CROPS** The USDA has announced its plans to deregulate another variety of GE soybean. This will be the 71st GE plant the USDA has determined can forgo any and all safety and environmental regulations. The USDA will be taking comments on the proposal until December 4th. Please comment here: [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7743.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7743.cfm)

## Survey of OCA Readers: Is it OK to Eat Meat?

Researchers from Cornell have published a study that reopens the debate over whether it's better for the environment to be an omnivore or a vegetarian. According to the study, a low fat carnivore diet with a limited amount of meat, dairy and/or eggs is actually a more efficient use of the land. The explanation is relatively simple: if you are trying to sustainably produce the maximum amount of food nutrients on a plot of land, the high value soil is better suited for food plants, whereas low value land can create more food via grazing livestock or wild game than by planting crops. Researchers

noted that the average modern meat eater consumes levels of meat and dairy that are nearly three times what would be considered "efficient". Although specific geographical areas may result in varying equations, the study's land analysis found that the amount of omnivore intake for environmental efficiency is 2 cooked ounces per day. That amounts to around the size of two decks of cards every three days. Share your opinions about this study and take our quick poll in OCA's web forum, so we can determine how many readers are vegan, vegetarian, omnivore and carnivore: [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=447](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=447)

### Your Diet Impacts Environment More than Your Car

**13%** = The percentage of greenhouse gases created by all trucks, SUVs, cars, airplanes, trains and other transportation.

**18%** = The percentage of greenhouse gases created by livestock production. *Moral of the story: If you are an average US meat eater, reducing your meat consumption to 2 oz. per day is roughly equivalent to doubling your vehicle's fuel efficiency, in terms of greenhouse gas reduction.*

## Find Out What's Happening in Your State

The state pages on the OCA website are now more accessible, so people can learn and share information about events, news, groups, and campaigns in their state. This week we've added an RSS feed so you can receive your state's health, justice & sustainability news as soon as we post them. You'll find an RSS link at the top of the news section. Help us make your state page dynamic and lively! Take a moment to add an event, news story or green business by visiting your state page and clicking the *Become a News Scout* link. To find your state page, go to any OCA webpage and choose your state from the dropdown menu on the left hand navigation bar: [www.organicconsumers.org/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/)