



ORGANIC BYTES



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Alert: Senate Prepares to Rubber Stamp Farm Bill

The Senate Agriculture Committee approved its draft of the \$300 billion 2007-2012 Farm Bill last week. The 1300-page bill, now headed to the main Senate floor, includes, as usual, billions of dollars of taxpayer subsidies for chemical and energy-intensive crops, factory farms, and junk food purveyors, while “nickle and dime-ing” organic agriculture, conservation, nutrition, and alternative energy programs. Let your Senators know you want to eliminate all taxpayer subsidies, other than those designed to make our food and farming system healthier and more sustainable, and specifically you want a “Fair Share” for organics commensurate with our current 3% market share. Besides billions in corporate subsidies, this version of the Farm Bill includes implementation of the controversial National Animal Identification System (NAIS). NAIS would require that all farmers, even those with just one cow, horse, or chicken, to implant their animals with an electronic tracking device and permanently report their movements to the USDA. This expensive Big Brother procedure, which lobbyists crafted so as to exempt factory farms, could put many small family farms out of business. Please contact your Senators to cut corporate subsidies, eliminate NAIS, and support increases in funding in the Farm Bill for conservation, organic agriculture, healthy food and beginning farmer programs. Take Action:

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7765.cfm

Related Dumb Quote of the Week:

Congress Ag Chair Collin Peterson: “Paying More for Organic or Local Food is Dumb” -From an MSNBC.com *Financial Times* October 17, 2007 www.msnbc.msn.com/id/21349573/

Collin Peterson, chairman of the House of Representatives agricultural committee, says the farm sector that raises organic produce and grass-fed beef for local consumers needs little federal help. “It is growing, and it has nothing to do with the government, and that is good,” he told the FT. “For whatever reason, people are willing to pay two or three times as much for something that says ‘organic’ or ‘local’. Far be it from me to understand what that’s about, but that’s reality. And if people are dumb enough to pay that much then hallelujah.”

To send a message to Collin Peterson (Democrat, MN) congratulating him for getting the Organic Consumers Association award for the dumbest quote of the week:

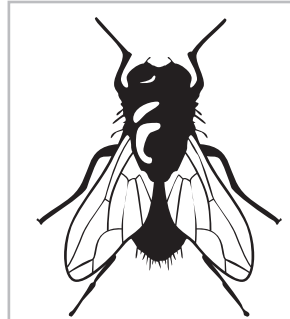
www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_8104.cfm

Please Donate

We need your support today to protect the rights of organic consumers and family farmers. Donate Online:

www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm

Aurora Feedlot Draws Heat over Bumper Crop of Insects



Reminder: Aurora’s “organic” milk is sold under the following private labels:

- Costco’s Kirkland Signature
- Safeway’s O organics brand
- Publix’s High Meadows
- Giant’s Natures Promise
- UNFI’s Woodstock Farms

The recent class action lawsuit launched by organic consumers in 27 states against Aurora “Organic” Dairy isn’t all the controversial dairy giant has to contend with. Last week, one of Aurora’s 4,500-head “organic” dairy feedlots came under scrutiny by the Weld County, Colorado board of commissioners. It seems that Aurora’s malodorous operation has generated a literal bumper crop of cow manure along with millions of flies. “I would like this dairy to disappear,” said Wendy Rogers, who owns a farm next to the dairy. “The dairy is too big to manage naturally.” In a four-hour hearing, County Commissioners threatened to revoke Aurora’s permit or limit the number of cattle allowed on the feedlot. According to Aurora’s CEO, Marc Peperzak, reducing the thousands of cows on the factory farm would be “impossible,” costing Aurora “millions.” County Commissioners cast a split vote offering the factory farm a second chance. If the fly problem is not mitigated by August, 2008, Aurora will lose its organic dairy farm permit.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_8003.cfm

Monsanto Again Tries to Force-Feed Consumers rBGH

The good news is that dairies and supermarket chains are banning Monsanto’s Bovine Growth Hormone, bowing to consumer pressure. The GE cow hormone is banned in most industrialized nations, due to its negative health impacts on cows and cancer risks to humans, but Monsanto Corporation, the manufacturer of the drug, is apparently still determined to force-feed rBGH to US consumers. Under pressure from Monsanto, the notoriously pro-agribusiness Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has recently announced new regulations outlawing the labeling of dairy products as rBGH-free. The twisted rationale for the ruling is that truthfully labeling dairy products as rBGH-free is “making it hard for consumers to make informed decisions.” In other words, allowing consumers freedom of choice is bad for Monsanto’s profits, and the profits of Pennsylvania’s factory style dairy feedlots who continue to inject their animals with the drug. PDA listed 16 companies that will be required to remove rBGH-free labels by December 31, 2007. In the meantime, Monsanto is working to pass similar anti-consumer laws in other states. OCA plans to join our allies and stop this latest episode of biotech bullying.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7941.cfm

Brief History of Monsanto and the US Government

1991 · Margaret Miller appointed Deputy Director of FDA by George Bush Sr. She oversaw the approval of the GE growth hormone rBGH. Prior to the appointment, she was one of Monsanto's top scientists developing rBGH. At the FDA, she approved the same rBGH studies she previously led at Monsanto.

- A right-wing extremist, Clarence Thomas, appointed to the Supreme Court, despite nationwide opposition. Prior to his appointment, Thomas was a lawyer for Monsanto, a notorious chemical polluter and ag biotech promoter. Thomas would later cast the decisive vote in 2000 on the Supreme Court, ratifying the stolen election that put George Bush Jr. into office.

“Fascism should more appropriately be called Corporatism because it is a merger of state and corporate power.”

-Benito Mussolini

1992 · Michael Taylor appointed FDA's Deputy Commissioner for Policy, a role created to expedite the approval process of GE foods. Prior to his appointment, Taylor was an attorney for Monsanto. Taylor went on to become Monsanto's VP.

1993 · Rufus Yerxa nominated as US deputy to the WTO. Prior to his appointment as one of the most powerful bureaucrats in the world regarding international trade policies, Rufus was Monsanto's Chief Counsel.

1996 · Michael Kantor appointed US Secretary of Commerce. At that time, Kantor was also on the Board of Directors of Monsanto.

2000 · White House appoints Carol Tucker Foreman as the sole “consumer advocate” on an international committee assessing genetically modified foods. Prior to her appointment, Foreman was a lobbyist for Monsanto.

2001 · Anne Veneman appointed head of the USDA, in charge of regulating, among other things, GE crops. Veneman previously served on the Board of Directors of Calgene, a Monsanto biotech subsidiary.

- Donald Rumsfeld sworn in as Secretary of Defense. Rumsfeld was previously the CEO of the Searle pharmaceutical corporation, acquired by Monsanto.

- Linda Fisher appointed Deputy Administrator of the EPA. Her regulatory chores included “enforcing” pesticide regulations, such as Monsanto's herbicide, Roundup, commonly sprayed on GE crops. Fisher was previously Monsanto's VP of Government Affairs. Previously Fisher served as a high-level staffer for another biotech cheerleader, President Bill Clinton.

2002 · George Poste was appointed head the bioterrorism division of Homeland Security. Previously, Poste was a Monsanto animal specialist.

www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.cfm

Web Video: Fascism—It Could Happen Here

Award-winning author, Naomi Wolf, delivered a riveting and alarming lecture at the University of Washington on October 11, reviewing the tell-tale signs of fascism in modern history. Wolf analyzes ten fundamental manifestations of Fascism institutionalized in Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and Stalinist Russia, that are unfortunately rearing their ugly head again today in the USA. Watch the video and share your comments here:

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7963.cfm

Sunlight Cuts Risk of Many Cancers

Two new studies indicate exposure to the sun may actually be beneficial in regards to fighting cancer. Researchers from Stanford University reported their findings in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* last week indicating that women who had higher sun exposure had their risk of advanced breast cancer reduced by almost half. According to a second research team who studied more than four million people in 11 countries, the risk of internal cancers except for skin cancers was lower among people living in sunny countries. According to the researchers, “Vitamin D production in the skin seems to decrease the risk of several solid cancers, especially stomach, colorectal, liver and gall-bladder, pancreas, lung, female breast, prostate, bladder and kidney cancers.” Although food provides some vitamin D, nearly 90% comes from exposure to sunlight. www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7956.cfm

Carnivorous or Not?

In the last issue of *Organic Bytes*, we invited readers to take part in an online poll to find out where they stand on the issue of meat-eating. Thousands have read the poll, dozens have posted comments, and many have taken the quick poll. The current results indicate that 25% of you are vegan, 12% are vegetarian, 57% endorse eating humanely raised meats, while the rest apparently eat any and all meats. Please post your thoughts and take the poll (you will need to register for the OCA forum):

www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=447

France Bans Frankencrops

France has announced a ban on the planting of GE crops until the safety of the crops can be further assessed. French President Nicolas Sarkozy indicted that the decision was based on the desire to err on the side of safety. “I don't want to be in contradiction with EU laws, but I have to make a choice. In line of the precautionary principle, I wish that the commercial cultivation of genetically modified pesticide GMOs be suspended,” he said.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7944.cfm

Answer the “OCA Challenge”

The Backbone Campaign is inviting you to help them make the “Procession for the Future” a reality. Since the OCA is a leader in ecological stewardship and fair trade, we hope that you'll pitch-in to commission those images from Puppetista Chris Lutter, of the Minneapolis Puppet Farm. Please help them hire Chris to build the Giant Polar bear and a pair of Bigger-than-Life Organic Farmers making a fair trade of their organic harvest. The cost to build both is approximately \$5,000. There's a lot of us, and only a few of them, please lend a helping hand today. Contribute now to set the Procession for the Future into motion, animating the future we all want to hand our children. And don't forget to check out their plans for the Procession for the Future. Consider hosting it in your town!