



ORGANIC BYTES

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Quick Agro-Fuel Facts

Increasing fuel efficiency by just 3% would reduce US dependence on foreign oil more than all of the agrofuels combined.

The amount of grain it takes to fill an average gas tank with ethanol would be enough to feed a person for a year.

-Foreign Affairs

If the US stopped growing food and converted its entire grain harvest into ethanol, it would satisfy less than 16% of its automotive needs.

-Earth Policy Institute

The majority of US biofuels are produced from pesticide intensive genetically engineered crops (soy, corn).

Monocultures of soy and sugar cane in Latin America and palm oil in Indonesia and Malaysia have led to massive deforestation and the loss of invaluable biodiversity.

Current methods of industrial-scale biofuel production worsen global warming by increasing deforestation and degradation of peatlands and soils, while also creating more nitrous oxide emissions from fertilizer use.

ALERT: THE DARK SIDE OF ETHANOL AND BIODIESEL SUBSIDIES

Americans now understand that climate-destabilizing greenhouse gases are a major threat to our survival. Unfortunately, large corporations have convinced Congress to ignore real solutions to the crisis (like significant advances in fuel-efficiency), while providing billions of dollars per year in subsidies to big-agribusiness for agrofuels.

More than a hundred us based and international organizations, including the Organic Consumers Association, are calling for a moratorium on the more than \$8 billion of annual government subsidies paid to large corporations producing agrofuels from *industrial-scale genetically engineered crops*.

Family farmers currently receive only a small portion of annual funds allocated to agrofuels. While billions of dollars in subsidies for corn, soy and palm oil-based agrofuels certainly result in higher profits for corporate giants such as Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, and Monsanto, their overall contribution to reducing reliance on foreign oil and greenhouse gases is negligible (see facts in sidebar).

Government support for agrofuels in the us costs taxpayers roughly \$2 per gallon in subsidies at the gas pump. These misguided funding priorities have taken tens of billions of dollars of funding away from essential greenhouse gas reduction policies, such as energy conservation, solar and wind power, fuel-efficiency technologies, and mass transit.

While the OCA supports the production of biofuels from recycled waste (such as used vegetable oil, manure or sewage) and biomass sustainably grown and harvested for the benefit of local communities, the current focus is a recipe for disaster. Learn more and sign the Agrofuel Moratorium Petition today:

organicconsumers.org/articles/article_9980.cfm

Related Quotes

"Farmers are seeing little of the huge profits ethanol refiners like Archer Daniels Midland (ADM) are banking... ADM will earn an estimated \$1.3 billion from ethanol alone in the 2007 fiscal year." -from the *New York Times* article: "How ADM makes a killing on ethanol"

"The United States, in a misguided effort to reduce its oil insecurity by converting grain into fuel for cars, is generating global food insecurity on a scale never seen before." -Economist Lester Brown, speaking to the *Des Moines Register* 1/25/08

What Is the Future of Bio-Fuels?

OCA's web forum provides an online discussion space for like-minded folks. Over 1500 people have registered to the forum and are posting thoughts about everything from organic gardening to food safety to sustainability issues.

This week's feature topic is on bio-fuels. What's good about them, what's bad about them, and what role do they have in the future of the sustainability movement? To read what other people think, and to join in the discussions, visit www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php

Unchain Your Heart this Valentine's Day: Break the Chains of Toxic Pesticides and Child Slavery

Tis that time of year when more than 20 million Americans are buying sweets and flowers for their loved ones on Valentine's Day. Unfortunately, these tokens of love aren't as sweet or pure as they may appear.

Over 40% of the world's conventional chocolate (i.e. non-organic and non-Fair Trade) comes from Africa's Ivory Coast, where the International Labor Organization and us State Department have reported widespread instances of child slavery. Meanwhile, commercial flowers, most of which are produced in countries such as Colombia, are the most toxic and heavily sprayed agricultural crops on Earth.

In order for you to deliver your bouquet to your beauty, poorly paid workers in Third World countries put in up to 18 hour work days for poverty wages during peak flower buying times such as Valentine's Day.

But don't let the bad news squelch your Valentine's plans. Show your love by choosing Fair Trade and organic flowers and chocolate for your Valentine's Day gifts.

Check out OCA's Buying Guide, watch an entertaining flash movie and take action against the 5 major chocolate and flower corporations: www.organicconsumers.org/valentines/

Food Safety Alert: Unlabeled Allergens in Food Threaten Children's Health

In the last issue of *Organic Bytes*, we highlighted Robyn O'Brien as the activist of the week. Robyn's organization, *AllergyKids.com*, is working with the OCA to close a loophole in US food labeling regulations that is allowing common foods to contain dangerous new allergens without labeling.

Specifically, the us Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act fails to highlight and require labels for the now commonplace foreign or "novel" gene-spliced proteins and allergens in soy, corn, canola and other food products.

According to Daniel Sheehan, an FDA scientist, American children are part of "a large, uncontrolled and basically unmonitored human infant experiment." Contact your Congress-members to require labels on gene-spliced foreign proteins and allergens in food products, which are contributing to the epidemic of food allergies, autism, ADHD and asthma in our children. Learn more and take action:

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_9979.cfm



Who in the World Loves Fast Food the Most?

Last week, the polling body Synovate and the BBC released results of a survey analyzing how people around the world view fast food, dieting and exercise.

One of the questions of the survey was "I like the taste of fast food too much to give it up." 44 percent of Americans agreed with the statement while only 19 percent of the French agreed. For the first time, the UK gained the dubious honor of being the fast food capitol of the world with 45 percent of people saying they couldn't give up the greasy grub.

When it comes to weight loss, over half of surveyed American, French and British people said they cut down on food to shed pounds, while Malaysia had the highest percentage of people connecting weight loss to herbs and supplements.

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are among the top users of low-fat products and meal replacements, but also gym memberships and home exercise equipment.

Learn more: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_9928.cfm

ABC Told Not to Air Program Highlighting Vaccine Problems

The American Academy of Pediatrics is calling on the ABC television network to cancel the premiere episode of *Eli Stone*, in which a mother wins a \$5.2 million lawsuit charging her son got autism from a vaccine.

The Academy claims airing the program may cause more people to question the safety of vaccinations. In related news, a recent poll in OCA's web forum found that 72% of the survey participants avoid all vaccinations, 11% avoid some vaccinations, 12% get all of their vaccinations, and 4% believe vaccinations should be required by law.

www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=679

Featured Web Video: Sweet Misery - a Poisoned World

If you're still eating foods containing the artificial sweetener aspartame (NutraSweet, Equal, diet drinks, etc.), you need to watch this documentary. Aspartame was approved for widespread use in the US in July of 1983. Within six months, brain tumor rates climbed 10%, diabetes went up 30% and brain lymphoma tumors skyrocketed 60%.

Learn how this toxic chemical was scandalously approved by the FDA and is now one of the most widespread food additives in the US: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_9978.cfm

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