



# ORGANIC BYTES



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## **ALERT** Mainstream Media Attempts to Bury Homeopathy

*Consumer Reports* journalist Doug Podolsky took a stab at homeopathy in the recent issue of *Consumer Reports*. Despite hundreds of years of successful use for a variety of ailments, homeopathy is quackery, according to Podolsky who writes, "Check whether over-the-counter products are labeled homeopathic. If they are, we think you should put them back on the shelf." Podolsky's piece references a 2005 study indicating homeopathy is ineffective, but he fails to mention the study has since been debunked.

Unfortunately, due to the prestige of *Consumer Reports*, the article has already gone viral, as marketing firms and pharmaceutical companies spread it far and wide in an attempt to snuff competition from the natural health world. Learn more and take action:

[organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12475.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12475.cfm)

## **Consumer Groups Pressure USDA to Launch Investigation of Horizon "Organic" Factory Farms**

The Organic Consumers Association (OCA) filed a letter with USDA this week supporting a legal complaint that calls for an investigation of the two factory farms that the Horizon organic dairy company manages and sources for a significant portion of their "organic" dairy products.

As discussed in previous issues of *Organic Bytes*, since 2006, the OCA has called for a boycott of Horizon's (Dean Foods) dairy products, due to the corporation's practice of packing as many as 8,000 cattle onto feedlots, with little or no access to pasture, and then misleadingly labeling these products as "organic".

OCA's ally, The Cornucopia Institute, has filed several legal complaints with the USDA, demanding an investigation of the factory farms, but such requests have, thus far, fallen on deaf ears. Serving as a representative for our 850,000 members, volunteers and subscribers, the OCA is putting heat on the USDA to investigate and sanction the Horizon factory farms. [www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm)

## **Alert: Stop Bush's Biotech Bullying!**

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, the White House is attempting to force famine stricken countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, to plant GE crops, as part of a \$770 million aid package. Untested and largely unregulated GE crops are controversial, not only in Europe and other industrialized countries, but in the developing world as well. At least 40 countries around the world have restricted GE farming and ingredients in foods

by requiring mandatory labeling, while a number of nations and regions have banned genetically modified organisms in agriculture altogether. Beyond health and environmental concerns, GE crops have not proven to significantly increase yields, but rather force farmers to stop saving their seeds and instead buy toxic chemicals and highly priced patented seeds from biotech companies such as Monsanto, Syngenta, Bayer, Dupont, and BASF. Please take action today and urge your members of Congress to reject the Bush Administration's force-feeding of biotech crops to impoverished nations: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12463.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12463.cfm)

### **Quote: Biotech Corporations Prepare to Profit off Climate Crisis**

"In the face of climate chaos and a deepening world food crisis, the Gene Giants are gearing up for a PR offensive to re-brand themselves as climate saviors. The companies hope to convince governments and reluctant consumers that genetic engineering is the essential adaptation strategy to insure agricultural productivity. Globally, the top 10 seed corporations already control 57% of commercial seed sales. This is a bid to capture as much of the rest of the market as possible."

Source: Hope Shand, Research Director of ETC Group, speaks of the recent research indicating that the world's largest biotech companies are developing and patenting hundreds of varieties of new "climate ready" GE crops designed to supposedly endure the worst of

global climate change. The ETC Group is mobilizing people around the world to censure these companies for focusing on profitable ways of taking advantage of the climate crisis, rather than looking for solutions to the actual problem.

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12278.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12278.cfm)



## **CBS, New York Times Poll Consumers About GE Foods**

53%: Percentage of polled Americans who say they won't buy food that has ingredients from genetically engineered (GE) plants.

65%: Percentage of products on grocery store shelves that contain unlabeled GE ingredients (usually soy or corn derived).

90%: Portion of US grown soybeans that are GE.

99%: Estimated likelihood that the US sugar supply will start to be sourced from GE plants this year.

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12246.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12246.cfm)

Take action: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7031.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7031.cfm)

## A Look at the Future of Laboratory-Grown Meat

For many years, scientists have been capable of culturing cells in laboratories in order to grow skin and tissue for medical purposes. The process is now becoming inexpensive enough to consider growing meat in laboratories for consumer use.

Organizations like PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) are all for it. It's not a biotech process, and it's not cloning, it's just a matter of giving cells the nutrients they need to replicate and create the tissue and muscle that makes up what carnivores call "meat".

But other experts are concerned about the amount of energy consumption required by the process. So is it good or bad? Listen to this *National Public Radio* special program on synthetically grown meats and decide for yourself: [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12464.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12464.cfm)

Talk about it in OCA's web forum (*Topic of the Week*): [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/)

## Web Forum Topic: Whole Foods Market... Again

In the last issue of *Organic Bytes*, we invited you to share experiences you've had with Whole Foods Market and/or opinions you have about the good and bad elements of the natural foods chain in comparison to locally owned co-ops and natural products stores. Unfortunately, our web forum crashed shortly after *Organic Bytes* was sent out to our list, and many of you wrote to us expressing that you'd like to post your thoughts once the web forum was fixed. Well, it's fixed.

So let's give this another shot. If you are new to our forum, it's a place where thousands of like-minded folk are having online discussions about everything from gardening, to natural health, to politics. Check it out: [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/)

## Please Donate

We need your support today to continue to our work fighting for the rights of organic farmers and organic consumers! [organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

## Organic Bytes Readers Talk Back:

### Are There Any Recycled Home Water Filtration Systems?

**Reader's Question:** A reader writes to us regarding our article calling on readers to pressure Brita to begin recycling their water filters, as they do in Europe: "I do happen to use the Brita filter system. It would be wonderful if the Brita company did do recycled water filters. However, I do not know of any other water filtration, or water filter systems who do have a recycled filter system in place. Are you aware of any? Frankly, I felt I was doing so well with water filter systems as opposed to packaged bottle water, that I did not really think about how the filters could be 'recycled manufactured'."

**OCA Response:** Yes, as noted in our article, using the Brita water filtration systems is a much better option, environmentally speaking, than buying bottled water. As for companies that offer home water filter recycling, you could check out [terraflo.com](http://terraflo.com) or [abundantearth.com/store/countertopfilter.html](http://abundantearth.com/store/countertopfilter.html) If you have a Brita system already, you can send those used filters to [www.takebackthefilter.org](http://www.takebackthefilter.org)

### Are Any Plastics Safe for Use With Food?

**Reader's Question:** In the last issue of *Organic Bytes*, we published a "Users Guide to Plastics" to help consumers understand what those little numbers on the bottom of plastic products mean. Here is what one reader had to say: "My comment was to the list of plastics published in your last bulletin. You say that PET (#1) "poses low risk of leaching breakdown products". But one of the substances of the PET is phthalates, which is a hormone disruptor. It leaches into the liquid and poses a health risk."

**OCA Response:** Yes, you are correct. As a note, the posted plastics guide is relative. We always recommend consumers look for glass, aluminum or tin as an option over any plastic packaged product. If you need to buy plastic, PET (#1) is one of the safest options over some of the other plastics, but all plastics demonstrate varying levels of leaching, particularly when heated. Avoid hot liquids in plastic containers. Also avoid microwaving plastics or placing them in dishwashers.

## SUSTAINABILITY FACTS



### Small Farms are More Productive and Profitable

- ✦ A 1,000 acre US corporate farm growing GE crops nets an average of \$39 an acre.
- ✦ In contrast, a four-acre family farm nets, on average, \$1,400 per acre.
- ✦ Small organic farms are proving to be even more profitable. With oil prices on the rise, growing food without petroleum-based pesticides/fertilizers, and delivering that food to local markets will quickly prove to be the most affordable food available.

**Source:** *New York Times*  
[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_12216.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_12216.cfm)

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