



www.organicconsumers.org
June 27, 2003 · Volume 1, Issue 16

Quote of the Week

"Agricultural biotechnology in its present form is a vast scientific and commercial error. The people who have invested their money, time and reputations in it cannot afford to admit this. Unfortunately, they will not be the ones that end up paying the heaviest price for their incompetence, greed and hubris. As usual, the bill will be met by those least able to afford it, and the currency in which it will be denominated will not be dollars or euros alone, but the health and livelihoods of human beings and the environment in which we live."

-*Planting Lies* by Steve McGiffen, an environmental adviser to the European Parliament.
www.spectreazine.org/environment/GMO2.htm

Fixin' for Sugar

New York City school officials are getting rid of junk food machines and many cafeteria menu items, in response to an obesity epidemic among youth. In addition, sugar, fat and salt will be trimmed from the city's 800,000 daily lunches. A Center for Disease Control study showed that 20 percent of elementary kids are unhealthily overweight. In poor neighborhoods, 15 percent of the total population has diabetes, which can be caused by poor diet.

www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/062603_junk_food.cfm

Whacky GE Food

Anthony Trewavas and his colleagues at Cambridge University have mixed the genes of a jellyfish and potato, creating a new potato that they say can help conserve water. Apparently a farmer can hold a black light up to the plant, and if it glows, it means it needs water.

www.organicconsumers.org/ge/jellyfish_potato.cfm

ORGANIC BYTES

Organic News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association

Protest in Sacramento

Standing up to what can only be described as an army of riot police, highway patrol, and county sheriffs, representatives of family farm groups symbolically dumped bushels of genetically engineered (GE) corn at last week's World Conference on Agricultural Science and Technology in Sacramento, CA. Joined by approximately 3,000 spirited consumer, environmental, and Fair Trade activists, members of the National Family Farm Coalition marched and participated in rallies and teach-ins in Sacramento, denouncing GE crops and USDA policies that promote the corporate takeover of our food supply. According to California dairy farmer Walter Kessler, "Family farmers have



Protest mask in Sacramento

suffered significant economic losses from the use of GE products, but the truth about GE crops and their impacts on family farmers is being buried in the slick multi-million dollar public relations campaign being waged by the biotechnology industry and promoted by the USDA."

The Organic Consumers Association was in the thick of the action at

Sacramento, staging a colorful protest and press conference outside a Safeway supermarket on June 24, featuring costumed performers including Dr. Monsanto, Captain Organic, and George Bush. Before a bank of TV cameras and news photographers, under the watchful eyes of a dozen police patrol cars, the OCA demonstrated, with both science and satire, that neither humans nor canines will willingly consume Frankenfoods. The Sacramento teach-ins and protests were a warm up for the September WTO meetings in Cancun, Mexico, where 150,000 people are expected to rally against worldwide GMO contamination and corporate-powered globalization. Attend the WTO teach-ins and protests in Cancun on an escorted delegation with Ronnie Cummins and the OCA: www.organicconsumers.org/corp/0624_wto.cfm

McDonald's Running Scared on Antibiotics Issue

The McDonald's chain, responding to pressure from public interest groups such as the Union of Concerned Scientists, announced last week that they will begin to phase-out the purchase of meat products laced with growth-promoting antibiotics (a standard practice on non-organic farms). The announcement is in response to warnings of how the routine feeding of antibiotics to livestock is leading to antibiotic resistance in humans, whereby meat eaters and dairy consumers are developing resistance to important antibiotics such as penicillin and tetracycline. According to the USDA, McDonald's move could lead to a significant shift in livestock management practices, given that McDonald's is one of the largest purchasers of beef, chicken and pork in the US. Seventy percent of all antibiotics in America are used in animal feeds, but of course this practice is prohibited on organic farms. www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/antibiotics062303.cfm

Congress Finally Does Something Organic

Last week, a bipartisan (yes, that means both republicans and democrats) legislative gathering proved that Congress can occasionally do something right, in this case forming a new US Congressional Organic Agriculture Caucus. "The formation of this caucus is a major step towards getting organic farmers their fair share of federal agricultural resources," said Bob Scowcroft, Executive Director of the Organic Farming Research Foundation. "Organic farmers and their supporters should call their representatives and ask them to join the caucus. When it comes to Capitol Hill, there is strength in numbers." Get involved: www.organicconsumers.org/organic/organic_caucus.cfm

Europe Is So Cool

Switzerland may be the first nation in the world to ban genetically modified crops and foods by popular vote. A petition with well over 100,000 signatures was recently submitted to the Swiss government, thereby mandating that the issue be placed on the general election ballots. Although Syngenta, a Swiss based biotech corporation has promised to sway the vote in its favor, with a heavily financed pro-GMO campaign, polls show that over 70% of Swiss citizens refuse to eat GE foods. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/swiss_moratorium.cfm

A Weird Food Story, Just for the Fun of It

In the process of transporting honeybees from Iowa to Wisconsin, a truck driver lost control of his vehicle and rolled his trailer. The driver was not hurt, but over 25 million honeybees escaped into the area, forcing residents to strongly consider adjusting the amount of time they plan on spending outdoors this summer. Source: *KMBC-TV9* - 6/12/2003

New Study: Sewer Sludge Stinks

According to the *New York Times*, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has finally decided to research the toxicity issues associated with the common practice of using sewer sludge as fertilizer on conventional farms. The decision was sparked by a recent catastrophe on a family farm in Georgia, where hundreds of cows died from eating hay that was fertilized by sewer sludge. Andy McElmurray, the owner of the farm said the cows wasted away, due to toxic pollutants within the sludge that ultimately ended up in the plants. McElmurray said, "They wouldn't respond to antibiotics. They wouldn't respond to IV fluids. They wouldn't respond to anything. They just ended up dying." EPA scientists, including Dr. David Lewis, who won the agency's top science award in 2000, are gravely concerned about sewer sludge contaminating the nation's food supply. "To me, of all the environmental issues, this is Mount Everest," said Dr. Lewis. Unfortunately, the otherwise excellent *Times* story incorrectly stated that sewage sludge was used by organic farmers. Although the USDA tried to degrade organic standards in 1998, by allowing sewage sludge to be used on organic farms, a mass consumer backlash forced the USDA to back off on this issue. Read all about it: www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/062603_sludge.cfm

Coming Clean Update

The OCA recently launched a massive media and advertising campaign to educate consumers about an organic labeling scam a few major bodycare product companies have been messing around with. Companies like Avalon, Kiss My Face, Jason's, and Nature's Gate are advertising their bodycare products to be at least 70% organic, when the vast majority of "organic" ingredients are nothing more than tap water, collected from recaptured steam in diluted floral waters and hydrosols. In regards to this issue, the OCA will be submitting reports to the National Organic Standards Board in the coming weeks. Look for OCA's

Help Us Protect Organic Consumers from LABEL FRAUD

IS YOUR SHAMPOO REALLY 70% ORGANIC? Floral Water
 Floral waters (or hydrosols) are the water by-product of essential oil distillation after all the essential oil has been removed, and are basically a complicated way of making tea. Companies mislead consumers by listing floral waters and botanical water extracts and infusions first, burying the synthetic surfactant ingredients that in fact make up the core of the product further down. The substantial amount of non-agricultural water (i.e. not coming from the plant itself) in "floral waters" is deceptively counted as "organic", which is forbidden under the National Organic Program. This scheme artificially inflates the organic content in order to make a deceptive "70% organic" claim.

Core Ingredients
 The core ingredients include synthetic surfactants in part or wholly derived from petroleum, such as olefin sulfonate, cocamidopropyl betaine, sodium myreth sulfate, as well as parabens preservatives. Surfactants like Sodium Myreth Sulfate (and any other surfactant with "ethr" in its name) are ethylated with ethylene oxide from petroleum and contain traces of dioxin, a highly toxic carcinogenic substance.

Organic body care should mean:

- ✓ Certified organic materials only to make cleansing and conditioning ingredients
- ✓ No petroleum derivatives
- ✓ Simple and ecological manufacturing processes
- ✓ Non-agricultural water is not used to inflate the percentage of organic content

Join the Coming Clean Campaign and help the Organic Consumers Association stop unscrupulous body care industry reps from pressuring the USDA's National Organic Program and the Organic Trade Association into accepting these misleading practices in the national organic standards.

www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare

"Sham-Poo" ads in the current issues of magazines such as *Mother Jones*, *Utne*, *E Magazine*, *Mothering*, *Conscious Choice*, and *Coop Grocer*. Stay tuned: www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/oca_organic_bodycare.cfm

For many more food issue daily headlines: www.organicconsumers.org/log.html
Organic Bytes is a publication of the Organic Consumers Association
 6101 Cliff Estate Road · Little Marais, MN 55614 · 218-226-4164 · fax: 218-353-7652
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