



## Alert: The New Administration & Frankenfoods

It is a new year, we have a new administration, and the time is now to rein in genetically engineered (GE) foods and crops once and for all. Recent news and scientific research has underscored the urgent need to take action. For example, the USDA recently admitted that genetic contamination of organic and non-GE crops was 'inevitable,' while the *New York Times* reported that biotech corporations are thwarting research and that Monsanto is in line to receive millions of dollars in tax credits this year. Meanwhile, family farmers declare bankruptcy in staggering numbers.

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Contact your Congresspersons today and urge them to:

- ✦ Require mandatory labeling of all GE plants and animals
- ✦ Place a moratorium on all efforts to deregulate or approve new GE plants or animals.
- ✦ Protect non-GE and organic farmers by assigning liability for injury caused by GE organisms.

Take action: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_17040.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17040.cfm)

## Retrofit Your Home and Receive Big Tax Credits

President Obama's new stimulus package is now signed into law. Here's how it affects the green-minded home owner:

- ✦ New incentives and tax credits are now available for households for energy conservation and alternative energy. Homeowners investing in energy-saving insulation, replacement windows, duct seals, or high-efficiency heating and cooling systems can now receive a tax credit worth 30% of the upgrade cost (maximum credit value: \$1,500). The previous tax credit was 10% of an upgrade cost, up to a maximum of \$500.
- ✦ Solar panels, geothermal heat pumps, and windmills qualify for a 30% tax credit. A \$24,000 investment to make a home solar-powered would generate a federal tax credit worth \$7,200. Previously, the cap was \$2,000 for geothermal and solar; \$4,000 for wind. Add state and utility credits and consumers will see significant discounts in these purchases.
- ✦ New hybrid cars now qualify for tax credits worth anywhere from \$2,500 to \$7,500, while plug-in conversion kits for old hybrids, now generate tax credits worth 10% of the kit's cost (maximum credit value: \$4,000).

For questions about home energy conservation and renewable energy options, you can contact a contractor trained by the federal Home Performance with Energy Star program. [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)

## Headlines and Articles of the Week

A SAMPLE FROM THIS WEEK'S OCA HEADLINES:

- ✦ **The Hidden Link Between Factory Farms, Toxic Chemicals and Human Illness:** A 2008 report from the Pew Commission indicates factory farm production is intensifying worldwide, and rates of new infectious diseases are rising. Of particular concern is the rapid rise of antibiotic-resistant microbes, an inevitable consequence of the widespread use of antibiotics as feed additives in industrial livestock operations.
- ✦ **USDA Toughens Oversight of Organic Fertilizer:** Federal regulators on Friday announced a new enforcement strategy meant to stop manufacturers from passing off synthetic fertilizers as organic.
- ✦ **Study—Conventionally Grown Vegetables Have Significantly Lower Nutrient Value Than Organics:** The February issue of the *Journal of HortScience* reports the average vegetable found in today's supermarket is anywhere from 5% to 40% lower in minerals than those harvested just 50 years ago. As Davis points out, more than three billion people around the world suffer from malnourishment and yet, ironically, efforts to increase food production have actually produced food that is less nourishing. If you're still not buying the whole "organic-is-better" argument, this study might convince you otherwise.

Let OCA sift through the media smog and bring you the top new and analysis of the day. The OCA website has 10 or more news articles posted each day, and a library of over 40,000 articles covering issues including health, justice, food and farming, politics, and the environment. Bookmark [OrganicConsumers.org](http://OrganicConsumers.org)

## Another OCA Victory - Dannon Will Dump rBGH

Dannon (or Danone), the French-based multinational that owns Activa and the popular organic brand Stonyfield Farm, has announced it is committed to eliminating rBGH (recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone) by the end of 2009. This controversial GE growth hormone was originally developed by Monsanto and is injected into cows to force them to produce more milk. Dannon joins a host of other companies, like Starbucks and Yoplait, that have recently responded to your emails and pressure by removing rBGH from their products.

Together with our allies, we are making progress driving rBGH off the market and educating the public about the health and environmental hazards of GE foods, and the benefits of organics. Unfortunately, hazardous rBGH-tainted dairy products are still force-fed to our children and low-income consumers as part of the national school lunch program and federal nutrition programs such as Food Stamps and the WIC program. But you can change that. Tell Congress to mandate that school lunch and other taxpayer-funded federal nutrition programs purchase only rBGH-free milk and instead supply our children and low-income communities with certified "USDA Organic" milk. Learn more and take action:

[organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_17044.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17044.cfm)

## Share Your Vision for a National Organic Action Plan

This week, OCA's Alexis Baden-Mayer is in LaCrosse, WI at the US National Organic Action Plan summit where a grassroots group of organic producers and consumers discussed the creation of a coordinated plan articulating a shared vision, set objectives and benchmarks for measuring organic agriculture's social and environmental benefits, and proposals for the future growth of US organic food and agriculture for the next decade and beyond. Countries all over the world have developed and implemented national organic action plans with clear targets, benchmarks, and protocols to facilitate public accountability of agricultural policies. The US National Organic Action Plan builds on this experience, but it is driven by a non-governmental group of grassroots participants. *Read more and share your vision for the National Organic Action Plan:* [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_17034.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17034.cfm)



tate public accountability of agricultural policies. The US National Organic Action Plan builds on this experience, but it is driven by a non-governmental group of grassroots participants. *Read more and share your vision for the National Organic Action Plan:* [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_17034.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17034.cfm)

## Meet the Farmer

This new program looks at the links between eating local and the costs of 'not doing so. Explore the business of small family farms, and the health benefits derived from eating organic, not to mention the economic benefits to the community from supporting local farms. We've posted two of these half-hour programs to our website for your viewing. Watch how one family starts up their own small farming operation from scratch. In the second episode, watch how this group of people fulfills Obama's request to us citizens to begin volunteering one day per week when they start getting involved helping out at a local sustainable farm. [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_17025.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17025.cfm)

## Please Donate

The work of the OCA, is all due to the generous contributions of our supporters. If you enjoy our work, please donate today!

[organicconsumers.org/donations.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/donations.cfm)