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Welcome to the second issue of **Organic Bytes**, a free electronic information service provided by the Organic Consumers Association, designed to give you an overview on some of the latest developments in food and agriculture. **Organic Bytes** provides up-to-date information on organic and genetically engineered foods, irradiation, factory farms, fair trade, labeling, and more, in a convenient and accessible format. Back issues of **Organic Bytes** are posted on the OCA website.

By 2003 We'll Be Eating Cloned Animals

It may be just a matter of months before US consumers are unwittingly purchasing milk and meat from cloned cows and pigs. Although the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has asked producers to hold off on selling food products from cloned animals, there are currently no laws or regulations officially prohibiting the sale. In October, the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) issued a letter to the FDA requesting that these sales be blocked, based on the fact that cloning causes unnecessary animal suffering. HSUS said cloning involves painful reproductive practices and often results in "abnormalities such as brain lesions, skeletal malformations and incomplete development of the vascular tract." The letter also stated that the cost of cloning gives further advantages to large corporate farms, thereby increasing the plight of the small family farmer. Dr. Michael Appleby, HSUS Vice President added "A single pathogen could wipe out countless numbers of genetically identical animals, putting animal safety and the world's food supply at risk." (*Environmental News Service* 10-9-02)

Read the full article:

www.organicconsumers.org/Patent/cloningHSUS.cfm

OCA's Cloning & Patenting library:

www.organicconsumers.org/patlink.html

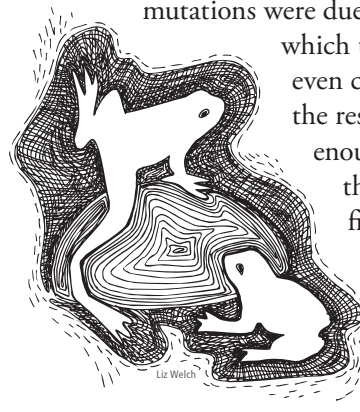
ORGANIC BYTES

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

Is the Frog a Prince or a Princess?

According to a report in a recent issue of the journal *Nature*, the most commonly used pesticide in the US, Atrazine, has been shown to cause sexual deformities in frogs. Atrazine, the pesticide now known to cause these mutations, has been used widely since the 1950s on just about everything, including corn, soybeans, orchards, lawns, and playgrounds. Atrazine is produced by the Swiss-based transnational Syngenta, the largest biotech corporation in the world. Over 80 million gallons of the toxic herbicide, a known carcinogen, are sprayed on farm crops, lawns, and playgrounds across the US each year.

Unfortunately Atrazine not only kills weeds, but also ends up as a dangerous residue in the meat and dairy products of animals that have eaten Atrazine-sprayed corn. Atrazine, along with its companion pesticides, have also polluted wells and drinking water in 97% of the communities in the American Corn Belt. The *Nature* article underlines research on Atrazine coming out of UC Berkeley, that draws conclusive connections between levels of Atrazine in waterways and the rate of amphibian deformities and population declines. The most shocking



mutations were due to Atrazine causing hormonal changes in frogs,

which ultimately lead to deformation of the gonads or even complete feminization of male frogs. According to the research, you could poison a sample of water with enough Atrazine to begin causing mutations, multiply that concentration of the pesticide times 30, and the final result is equivalent to the amount of Atrazine the EPA currently allows in our drinking water.

(*San Francisco Chronicle* 10-31-02) Read the full article: www.organicconsumers.org/gefood/frogs110402.cfm OCA's library of organic foods articles: www.organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm

Banned Toxic Chemicals —it's What's For Dinner

Everyday, consumers of non-organic foods are ingesting toxic levels of pesticides, some of which were banned decades ago, says a new article in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*. According to the report, an average diet consists of 60-70 hits a day of toxins like DDT, Dieldren and Dioxin. These poisons, known as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) are categorized among a class of chemicals that are "among the most insidiously dangerous compounds ever produced", says the report. The article goes on to say that an adults eating a balanced diet of conventional foods receives as much as 90 times the acceptable exposure of POPs. The top ten foods containing the highest levels of these banned chemicals are butter, cantaloupe, cucumbers, meat loaf, peanuts, popcorn, radishes, spinach, summer squash and winter squash. (*Toronto Globe and Mail* 10-15-02)

Read the full article: www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/conventional101502.cfm

OCA's toxic food & food safety library: www.organicconsumers.org/toxiclink.html

88% of Consumers Want GE Labeling

A new national poll shows that 88% of consumers want labeling on Genetically Engineered (GE) foods. Despite this, Oregon's Nov. 5 ballot initiative to label GE foods failed, 70% against labeling, 30% in favor, due to a \$5 million PR blitz in the state by the biotechnology industry and corporate agribusiness. The multi-million dollar campaign by Monsanto and the Farm Bureau successfully brainwashed the public into believing that a mandatory labeling law would hurt Oregon businesses and bankrupt family farmers. The biotech's campaign claimed the labeling of these foods would cost the average family an additional \$550 per year. In stark contrast, a study out of Oregon State University found that the actual cost would be only \$4-\$10 per person per year. Mel Bankoff of *Yes on 27*, the group leading the fight for mandatory GE labeling in Oregon, cited the fact that poll after poll consistently shows that the vast majority of consumers want GE foods to be labeled. "This is not the end, only the beginning of the debate in both Oregon and nationwide," said Bankoff. (*Center for Food Safety 11-5-02*)

Read the full article: www.organicconsumers.org/gefood/labelswanted110702.cfm OCA's library of GE food articles: www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html

A Rose By Any Other Name...

The Food and Drug Administration is constantly coming up with euphemisms for product labels in order to keep consumers comfortable with the [increasingly contaminated industrial] food they're buying. The latest intentional misnomer relates to the process of bombarding foods with doses of radiation to reduce bacteria levels, especially on feces-contaminated beef, poultry, and pork. The process, known as irradiation, has alarmed many consumers, but has been approved by the FDA for use on meats, imported produce, and even school lunches. Agribusiness has felt a pinch in the sales of its food products bearing the "irradiation" label, as many consumers are uncomfortable with the idea that their food has been "nuked" with radiation levels equivalent to 10,000 chest x-rays. In an unadulterated capitalist system, the refusal of consumers to purchase products involving processes felt to be a threat to human health would, by the laws of supply and demand, lead to the removal of that process. However, in this case, the FDA has decided to permit the continuation of food irradiation, despite consumer squeamishness, and is blatantly allowing America's food companies to defraud consumers by mislabeling irradiated foods with the term "cold pasteurization." Of course, organic standards prohibit the use of food irradiation, which is another reason why more and more consumers are saying no to industrial chow and looking for the organic label. (*Reuters- 10-9-02*)

Read the full article: www.organicconsumers.org/Irrad/deceptivelabeling02.cfm
OCA's library of Food Irradiation articles: www.organicconsumers.org/irradlink.html

Peaceful Atoms?

The original cheerleader for food irradiation in the US was the Department of Energy, which wanted to create a favorable image of nuclear power as well as dispose of radioactive waste.

For an excellent overview of this see *Rachel's Environment & Health News* #513 - *Fallout From the Peaceful Atom*, (9-26-96) at: www.rachel.org/bulletin/index.cfm?issue_ID=610

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