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A Holiday Meal with Good Conscience

The push towards globalization has resulted in the bankruptcy of millions of small family farmers, according to a recent Worldwatch Institute (WWI) report. In contrast to locally grown meals of yesteryear, this holiday season, the average distance an American family's meal has traveled from field to dinner table is a shocking 2,000 miles. This kind of excessive food transport means the small family farmer gets paid less, while the packager and shipper cut into the profits. According to WWI associate researcher Brian Halweil, "Agricultural policies, including the new Bush administration backed farm bill, tend to favor factory farms, giant supermarkets, long distance trade, and cheap, subsidized fossil fuels that encourage long distance shipping. The big losers are the world's poor." For example, out of the \$2-\$4 a consumer pays for a box of cornflakes in a conventional supermarket, the farmer receives only an average of about nine cents.

Acknowledging that some levels of food trade and transportation are necessary, Halweil added that we are becoming overly dependent on this system. "Money spent on locally produced foods stays in the community longer, creating jobs, supporting farmers, and preserving local cuisines and crop varieties against the steamroller of culinary imperialism." The Worldwatch report gives consumers a number of ways of supporting a localized food market, including buying produce and meats at farmers markets and co-ops, rather than conventional supermarkets.

Read all about it:

www.organicconsumers.org/corplfoodtravel112202.cfm

Also check out OCA's extensive online library of articles about Globalization:

organicconsumers.org/corplink.html

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Notes to co-ops and natural food store subscribers: Educate your staff quickly and easily by printing each issue of Organic Bytes and placing on break tables and bulletin boards! Also, please be sure to keep mailing in your Food Agenda 2010 petitions to the address noted above!

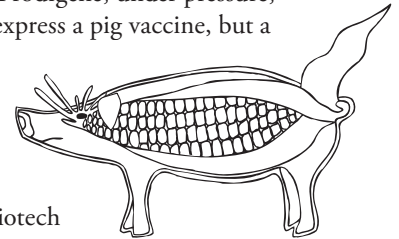
ORGANIC BYTES

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

Aids Drugs: Coming to a Dinner Table Near You

How would you like a pig vaccine or an experimental AIDS drug spliced into your corn flakes? This nightmare scenario could become a reality, due to the reckless "business as usual" practices of US regulatory agencies and ag-biotech corporations such as Prodigene. According to the USDA and an FDA memo, Prodigene didn't take the necessary precautions to contain its test plots of corn in Iowa and Nebraska, which had been genetically engineered to create a pig vaccine and an experimental AIDS drug called HIV glycoprotein gp120, a blood-clotting agent (aprotinin).

As a result, Prodigene's mutant pharm plants contaminated over 500,000 bushels of soybeans in Nebraska and 150 acres of corn in Iowa. Prodigene, under pressure, admitted that some of their plants were designed to express a pig vaccine, but a November FDA memo indicated that a controversial and likely dangerous AIDS drug was being grown by Prodigene in Nebraska. The company is being fined roughly \$3 million to compensate for the damage, and the Bush Administration is under pressure to strengthen the USDA's control of the ag-biotech industry. (*Des Moines Register Washington Bureau 12-18-02*)



Read all about it: organicconsumers.org/gefood/121002_genetically_engineered.cfm
OCA's extensive library of articles on Genetically Engineered Food is at:
www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html

Poisoning Kids With Nerve Gas

A groundbreaking new study from the University of Washington has provided more evidence that organic foods are safer for children than conventional, non-organic foods. The study found residue levels of organophosphate (OP) pesticides in the bodies of children fed mainstream foods that were 6 to 9 times higher than children fed organic foods. OP is a developmental neurotoxin also used in nerve gas, and it has been targeted by the USDA as one of the most dangerous pesticides threatening children's health. Despite the disturbing results of this peer-reviewed research, the Bush led USDA continues to claim that organic foods are no safer than those treated with toxic pesticides.

Read all about it: organicconsumers.org/Organic/120702_organic.cfm

OCA's extensive library of articles on Organic Food: organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm

Truth Is Stranger Than Science Fiction

Why worry about protecting the environment to slow the current catastrophic rate of plant and animal extinctions, if you can simply create new life forms to replace them? That is the logic of a new "evolution accelerating" procedure, developed by the biotech corporation Morphotech. Researchers for the company have announced they will be splicing human cancer-causing genes into various animals. The company claims the offspring of these animals will suffer incredibly high levels of deformations. Although most of these mutated life forms will ultimately die, those that survive may have unusual characteristics that could benefit humankind.

The announcement of this new procedure has thrown scientists, environmentalists and animal rights groups into an uproar. Concerns range from the probability of highly deformed animals suffering unusually painful deaths, to the possibility of one of these mutation prone animals escaping into the wild and breeding. Despite the backlash, Morphotech claims the procedure is completely safe and is continuing the process.

Read all about it: organicconsumers.org/Patent/cancergenes02.cfm

OCA's cloning & patenting library is at: organicconsumers.org/patlink.html