



ORGANIC BYTES

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www.organicconsumers.org

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
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EPA Study of Toxic Chemicals on Children

The Organic Consumers Association blew the whistle on the Environmental Protection Agency in late 2004 for taking money from chemical corporations to launch a study of toxic chemical exposure on children. OCA's alert stimulated massive public response and the study was ultimately delayed "for further review." Last week, under intense pressure from Democratic senators, the study was finally terminated. We'd like to thank and congratulate everyone who took part in this action! www.organicconsumers.org/epa-alert.htm

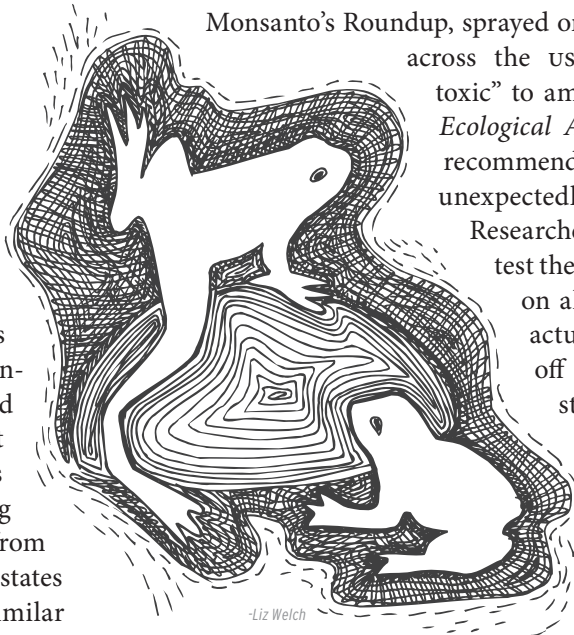
Obesity Epidemic Costs US Several Hundred Billion Dollars a Year

Last week, the California Department of Health Services reported that obesity related health problems are costing the state \$21.7 billion per year. "This is money out of California's economy," said report author David Chenoweth, who estimates that about eight percent of the state's health care dollars are now being spent on ailments stemming from obesity and inactivity. Other states are likely staggering under similar costs, since California's obesity rates are near the national average. In the meantime, over the course of the next 75 days, the FDA is seeking comments on how US food labeling laws should be modified to help consumers better understand total caloric quantity of the food products they are eating. Learn more and submit your comments to the FDA: www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/obesity-ca.cfm

Organic Foods Emerging on Chicago's West Side

Six years ago, in a working class African-American neighborhood on Chicago's West Side, LaDonna Redmond was feeling frustrated about the total absence of healthy and organic foods in her area. "Folks say black people won't buy organic food—that all we want to eat is Cheetos," says Redmond. "You could buy \$200 sneakers, semiautomatic weapons and heroin, but you couldn't get an organic tomato." In response, Redmond volunteered her time to start a weekly organic farmer's market at a local school playground, organized local residents to transform vacant lots into neighborhood organic gardens, and brought nutrition classes and salad bars into area schools. LaDonna is not only teaching Chicago residents how to buy and grow local and organic foods, she is also teaching all of us a valuable lesson: Never underestimate the amount of positive change that one person can inspire.

Widely Used Pesticide Killing Frogs – What's it Doing to Us?



Monsanto's Roundup, sprayed on millions of acres of crops and weeds across the US has been found to be "extremely toxic" to amphibians. A new study in the journal *Ecological Applications* reveals that applying the recommended manufacturer's dose of Roundup unexpectedly caused an 86% decline in tadpoles.

Researchers initially conducted the experiment to test the effectiveness of Roundup, an herbicide, on algae, but discovered that the chemical actually promoted the algae growth by off the frogs. According to Rick Relyea, study's lead biologist, "The most shocking out of this was that Roundup, something designed to kill plants, was extremely lethal to amphibians." Learn more and take part in the OCA's Millions Against Monsanto Campaign: www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.html

Junk Food Diets Promote Youth Violence and Aggression

The American Journal of Psychiatry has published a new study connecting nutrient deficiencies to aggressive behavior in children. Children who suffered deficiencies of zinc, iron, B vitamins and protein demonstrated a surprising 41% increase in aggression at age eight, and by age 17, they demonstrated a 51% increase in violent and antisocial behaviors. The study noted that 80% of the US population now has deficiencies in one or more of these nutrients, due in major part to increasing consumption of junk foods and beverages. www.organicconsumers.org/school/aggression040405.cfm

Industrial Hemp Gains Ground in Four States

Industrial hemp was a cornerstone crop in early America. In fact, due to its versatility, Americans were legally bound to grow it during the Colonial Era and Early Republic. Often confused with marijuana, industrial hemp is actually a very different plant and contains insignificant levels of THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the chemical in marijuana that results in psychotropic effects. Industrial hemp, which can be grown easily without the use of pesticides or synthetic fertilizers, can be used to make paper, textiles, bio-fuel, nutrition supplements and fiberboards. Although the domestic hemp industry was decimated by new government regulations after WWII, it may be on the threshold of enjoying a new renaissance:

NORTH DAKOTA:

On March 9, Governor John Hoeven signed House Bill 1492 which directs the North Dakota State University to start storing "feral hemp seed" in preparation for the day in which it becomes legal to grow industrial hemp under federal law.

NEW HAMPSHIRE:

On March 23, House Bill 55-FN-A passed, which would let farmers apply for a state license to grow industrial hemp. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

OREGON:

On April 6, a hearing was held for Senate Bill 294, which permits production and possession of industrial hemp and trade in industrial hemp commodities and products.

CALIFORNIA:

On April 27, a hearing for Assembly Bill 1147 will be held. If passed, AB 1147 would give farmers the right to apply for state licenses to grow industrial hemp.

www.organicconsumers.org/politics/hempgrowing32905.cfm

Quick News Tidbits

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

The Environmental Protection Agency has announced new stricter regulations on a number of carcinogenic chemicals. The adjusted standards finally take into account the fact that children are far more vulnerable to toxic chemicals, such as pesticides, than adults. www.organicconsumers.org/school/epatoxico40605.cfm

FISH FARMS SPREAD LICE

Canadian researchers have discovered farmed salmon are spreading sea lice to wild salmon. The scientists found unusually high levels of lice in a 19 mile radius surrounding a salmon farm. "Conservatively, this means that the parasite footprint of the farm is 150 times larger than the farm itself," said study co-author John Volpe. www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/salmon33105.cfm

NEW YORK FIREMEN EAT MAD DEER

Mad Deer disease has spread across the country to New York, where scientists report that the state's first confirmed infected white tail deer was donated to the Verona Fire Department and eaten at a banquet. Although the Oneida County Health Department claims it is "unlikely" a deer infected with Chronic Wasting Disease can transfer the fatal illness to humans, they are recommending that everyone who attended the event contact the New York State Health Department immediately. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/firemeno40505.cfm

TRUTH IN LABELING

Thanks to consumer pressure, the Whole Foods Market grocery chain has finally announced it will begin to label its private label products in a manner that allows consumers to see which ingredients may contain genetically modified organisms. CEO John Mackey said of the policy, "If we don't do this, who will?" Noting the possibility that labeling could invite legal actions, Mackey stated that it would be a "lawsuit worth fighting." www.organicconsumers.org/ge/wholefoods040705.cfm

THIRTY MILLION ORGANIC CONSUMERS IN USA

The organic market is exploding! The Natural Marketing Institute has released a report indicating that 23% of us shoppers are now organic consumers. In 2004, the organic market grew by a full 18%, due to consumer concerns about their health and the environment. www.organicconsumers.org/organic/23percent32905.cfm



TRAPPIST MONK OFFERS TIPS FOR BEGINNING ORGANIC GARDENERS

As the spring of 2005 warms sleepy soils and gardeners' spirits, alike, Master Gardener Brother Placid of New Melleray Abbey offers some quick tips from his 12 acre organic garden situated at a Buddhist Monastery in Iowa.

- Feed the soil, not the plants
- Vigilance is the best form of pest control.
- Learn the secrets of companion planting.
- Compost, both the noun and the verb
- Embrace balanced mulching.
- Remember that gardening is hard work, but good work.

More organic gardening tips:

www.organicconsumers.org/ofgu/trappister32805.cfm

For many more food issue daily headlines: www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

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