



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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Europe Debates Chemical Ban

The European Parliament is set to debate new regulations that would dramatically increase the number of banned chemicals in the EU. The law would require manufacturers of some 30,000 currently legal chemicals to provide scientific evidence that their products are safe for human health and the environment.

If the legislation passes, it would have a major impact on thousands of chemicals and products manufactured and sold in the US. Despite much weaker regulations in the US, many American companies have no choice but to adhere to European regulations, given that the EU, with 25 countries and 460 million people, represents an even larger market than the US. www.organicconsumers.org/Politics/strict051805.cfm

Avian Influenza Deemed Most Serious Global Health Threat

World Health Organization Director, General Lee Jong-Wook opened the 58th World Health Assembly last week by saying avian influenza is the most serious health threat facing the world. "The timing cannot be predicted, but rapid international spread is certain once the pandemic virus appears," Lee said. "This is a grave danger for all people in all countries." Lee strongly advised leaders of every nation to implement, as a top priority, systems for responding to the onset of the virus. www.organicconsumers.org/Politics/aviano51805.cfm

Explosive Monsanto Documents Reveal Serious Hazards of GE Corn

A May 22 headline news story in the London Independent has rocked Monsanto and the biotech industry and fueled the controversy over the safety of genetically engineered food. The story reveals that internal Monsanto documents, reviewed by EU scientists, show serious health damage to laboratory animals fed Monsanto's new genetically engineered "rootworm-resistant" corn. Rats who consumed the mutant corn developed smaller kidneys and exhibited blood abnormalities. Scientists say these are "red flags" for immune system damage and/or cancer tumor promotion. Although the EU will now likely ban Monsanto's new GMO corn, this same rootworm-resistant corn is already being grown and consumed on a major scale in the United States. Monsanto has denied that the corn can harm humans, but nonetheless refuses to turn over its data to the media, claiming that the lab studies are "Confidential Business Information."

Learn more & take action: www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.htm



California Man's Death May Be Linked to Mad Cow Disease

The USDA has recently been accused of been covering up cases of mad cow disease for over a decade. Now a deceased California man's family and doctor have announced they believe Patrick Hicks, aged 49, died late last year from variant Creutzfeldt Jakob disease, or vCJD. The fatal disease is contracted from eating beef contaminated with mad cow disease. Dr. Ron Bailey, a neurologist at Riverside Medical Center, believes this will be the first documented case of vCJD in the US, and in order to bypass the hand of the USDA, is sending brain samples overseas for testing in an independent laboratory. Over 150 Europeans have died from vCJD, with thousands more believed to be incubating the disease.

www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/CAmanto51605.cfm

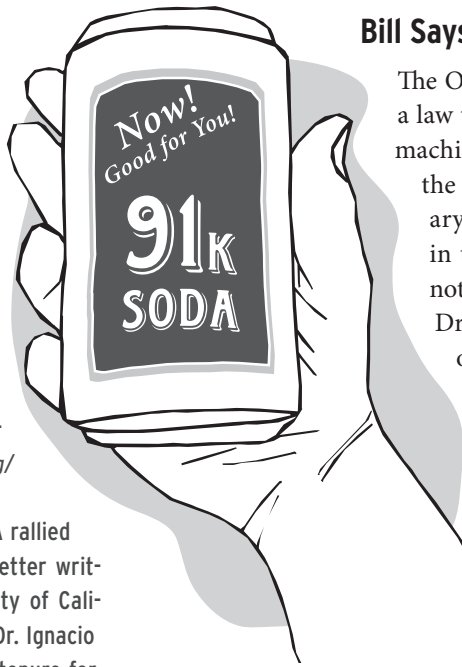
Corporate Dollar Overpowers Science...Again

The American Diabetic Association (ADA) is suddenly countering decades of scientific studies that have consistently linked diets high in sugar to diabetes. In a May 16 interview, Richard Kahn, the chief scientific and medical officer with the ADA said "What is the evidence that sugar itself has anything to do with diabetes? There is no evidence." Coincidentally, last month, the ADA announced a "three-year, multi-million dollar alliance" with Cadbury Schweppes, which is the third largest producer of soft drinks in the world.

www.organicconsumers.org/school/diabetes051705.cfm

Quick News Tidbits

- The European Union has, once again, rejected Monsanto's genetically engineered sweet corn. Under pressure from the US, the EU lifted its ban on GE foods last year, but has since only approved two GE products for import. The US claims the EU's precautionary stance on GE foods is a violation of free trade agreements. www.organicconsumers.org/monsanto/sweetcorn052305.cfm
- In December of 2004, the OCA rallied its supporters in a massive letter writing campaign to the University of California Berkeley. At the time, Dr. Ignacio Chapela had been denied his tenure for speaking out on the issue of GE crop contamination. Thanks to everyone who took action, the University has announced it will reverse its prior decision and grant Dr. Chapela his well deserved tenure. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/ignacio052305.cfm
- New Chapter Inc. has become the first company to prove that vitamins can be made 100% organic, following the guidelines of the USDA National Organic Program (NOP). The USDA currently refuses to regulate products such as vitamins and body care, based on their argument that the NOP should only regulate food, despite the fact that the NOP regulations specifically oversee how a product is created, not how a product is consumed. www.organicconsumers.org/organic/supplements051805.cfm
- Alaska has become the first state to pass a bill that will require the labeling of genetically engineered fish. Senator Gary Stevens said of the bill, "The message that Alaska seafood is more natural than seafood that has been engineered in a lab is a highly important marketing tool." There were no discussions as to how that same regulatory labeling philosophy should apply to other genetically engineered foods. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/alaskabil051105.cfm



Bill Says Soda Pop in Schools is Good

The Oregon Senate Education Committee has rewritten a law that would have banned soft drinks from vending machines in the state's schools. In a complete turnabout, the new law actually gives the green light to sugary beverages in schools. Lawmakers instrumental in the rewrite process claim the change of heart has nothing to do with the fact that the Oregon Soft Drink Association, a powerful industry lobby group opposed to banning junk foods in schools, contributed \$91,000 to their election campaigns in 2004. www.organicconsumers.org/school/coke050905.cfm

Remote Control Hunting

Texas entrepreneur John Lockwood, whose new internet business advertises a "real time on-line hunting and shooting experience," has spurred emergency proposed legislation in 14 states. Lockwood's website charges a monthly fee to subscribers who can then sit at their computers, anywhere in the world, watch live web cameras situated on Lockwood's game farm, and remotely shoot guns at real-life animals with the click of a mouse. Animal rights groups, the National Rifle Association and legislators across the US are teaming up to pass laws that would ban such activity, referencing dangers of the spread of remotely fired guns, while Lockwood argues that this is a more ethical way of harvesting food than buying factory farm meats from the slaughterhouse. www.organicconsumers.org/corp/hunt.cfm What do you think? Share your thoughts on this issue in OCA's web forum: www.organicconsumers.org/chat/index.php

New "Monsanto Laws" Aim to Mute Community Rights

Responding to the growing number of localities whose citizens are voting to regulate or even ban genetically engineered crops, the biotech industry, led by Monsanto and Syngenta, has brought new legislation to ten states in the US that would remove the rights of communities to have any control of agricultural regulations in their area. On one side of the issue, citizens and farmers in counties that have banned GE crops, like Mendocino, California, say they have a right to protect their predominantly organic county from contamination by GE pollen from neighboring crops. On the other side of the issue, the biotech industry is investing tens of millions of dollars to remove these local rights, saying anti-GE citizens and farmers "lack the education to make these kinds of decisions."

www.organicconsumers.org/monsanto/laws052005.cfm

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

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6771 South Silver Hill Drive · Finland, MN 55603 · 218-353-7454 · fax: 218-353-7652

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