



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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More News on USDA Mad Cow Cover-up

US government officials are apparently blocking efforts to allow a French lab to analyze and carry out tests on the brain tissue of a US man who is strongly suspected to have died of the human variant of mad cow disease. 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. Patrick Hicks would be the first confirmed case in the US of someone dying from the vCJD disease who had never traveled or spent time in Europe. Despite efforts by the deceased man's family and doctors to have his brain tissue thoroughly tested at a lab in France, US officials have bungled tests and repeatedly dragged their heels on sending brain samples overseas. "I don't know what's going on here," said Dr. Bailey, the physician who attended Patrick Hicks. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/delayed060305.cfm

The Real Drug War is Vioxx

New statistics reveal a mounting death toll from the blockbuster pharmaceutical drug Vioxx. The highly touted pain killer is estimated to have caused roughly 140,000 heart attacks, 44% of which led to death. The total number of US deaths from this pharmaceutical drug that the FDA had claimed was "safe", is over 60,000, which is about the same as the combined number of deaths of all US soldiers killed in the Vietnam war, Desert Storm, and the current Iraq quagmire. www.organicconsumers.org/Politics/medicine052605.cfm



Mad Cow USA: Stop the Madness!

The OCA and the Center for Media and Democracy will be staging a press conference and "Mad Cow Milkshake Demonstration" outside a USDA PR event in St. Paul, Minnesota on June 9. While USDA national head Mike Johanns tells a carefully selected audience of beef industry boosters at the University of Minnesota that all is well with the USDA's "Don't Look, Don't Test" policy on Mad Cow Disease, consumer and farmer representatives outside will graphically demonstrate how American cattle on non-organic farms are still being fed cow blood, slaughterhouse waste, and poultry manure—practices banned in Europe and Japan because they spread Mad Cow Disease. OCA will also call attention to the fact that the USDA is still refusing to test all animals at slaughter, despite repeated pleas by American consumers and the overseas customers for US beef. In addition, the USDA has threatened to arrest and jail US meat producers and ranchers if they dare to contract with leading Mad Cow detection labs and start to do their own testing. The OCA will be delivering "Stop the Madness" petition signatures to USDA Secretary Johanns this week, so please sign now!

www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/MadCowRelease060605.htm

Trust in a Bottle

The June 2005 edition of the journal *Nature* reports a new study linking a chemical that can be inhaled to increased levels of the feeling of trust. By whiffing an inhalant of an oxytocin potion, study participants exhibited notably higher levels of trust with strangers. Scientists say the chemical inhalant increases "trust" hormones in the brain in a manner similar to what advertisers seek to do to consumers' brain chemistry with the use of effective marketing techniques. With traditional advertising, consumers are mesmerized by stunning imagery and sounds, ideally resulting in the production of the same types of chemical responses that result in consumers trusting sales pitches enough to purchase the advertised product. The study did not address whether or not the new chemical inhalant could be effectively used on a commercial level to excite a similar consumer response without the expense of the actual advertising. www.organicconsumers.org/corp/trust.cfm

Pediatricians Recommend Organic Milk

According to Dr. Alan Greene, one of the nation's leading pediatricians, kids should be drinking organic milk. Dr. Greene gives seven reasons for his strong organic dairy dietary recommendation:

- Produced without antibiotics
- Produced without synthetic hormones
- Produced without harmful pesticides
- Higher levels of calcium per glass
- Higher levels Conjugated Linoleic Acids (good fats)
- No harmful additives like corn syrup, aspartame or synthetic dyes.
- More humane animal treatment.

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/seven052505.cfm



Massive Demand for Organic Milk Outstrips Supply

The consumer demand for organic dairy products in the us now exceeds the supply by at least 15%. As an example, Organic Valley Coop, the second largest organic dairy company in the us, experienced a 36% growth in sales in 2004, but says it would be growing even faster if it wasn't for supply limitations. There simply are not enough organic dairy farmers. While the USDA gives out \$25 billion a year in taxpayers money for crop subsidies to large farms engaged in chemical intensive agriculture and genetic engineering, family farmers wishing to make the transition to organic get nothing. Bruce Ellis, CEO of Wisconsin Organics, says the shortage of organic milk has severely limited his company's growth. If more conventional dairy farmers converted to organic, Ellis says his company could "certainly grow several hundred times."

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/cheese052705.cfm

USDA OKs Label Fraud on Body Care Products While Penalizing Honest Companies

Despite consumer and industry objections to rampant labeling fraud, the USDA has announced it will no longer take steps to monitor or police organic label claims on body care products, nor will it allow companies that utilize 100% certified organic ingredients to display the "USDA Organic" seal. This means that unscrupulous body care companies will be allowed to continue labeling their products as organic—even when they are not—while honest companies that are actually using all organic ingredients will not be able to differentiate their products in the marketplace. Thumbing their collective organic noses at the USDA, a number of companies including Dr. Bronners and Sun Dog, have now publicly stated that it is their legal right to keep on displaying the USDA Organic seal on products that conform to National Organic Standards. Learn more... www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/

Monsanto Is Poisoning Us: How Many Studies Does it Take?

New research from France has confirmed previous studies that Monsanto's Roundup, the most commonly used herbicide in the world, is much more toxic than Monsanto admits. The study indicates that at levels 100 times lower than the recommended use in agriculture, Roundup herbicide causes reproductive damages and endocrine disruption. In other related news, the FDA Office of Plant and Dairy Foods has stated that half of the non-organic produce they have tested in grocery stores contains traceable residues of various pesticides, including Roundup.

www.organicconsumers.org/monsanto/pregnancy060305.cfm

McClothes and McBasketball

McDonald's is looking to expand its revenues and advertising outreach with a new chain of "McKid's" stores. With its own clothing line, the company plans to sell garments for children emblazoned with the image of the golden arches, in a manner similar to Old Navy or Nike. The company is also working to strike a deal with the National Basketball Association to have the company's five-note musical tagline ("I'm lovin' it") sound off every time a player makes a three-pointer.

www.organicconsumers.org/school/supersize052405.cfm

States Debate Restrictions on School Junk Food

In an effort to address the childhood obesity epidemic, 17 states are debating laws that would limit or ban junk foods in schools. The most far reaching law under consideration is in Connecticut. Last week, lawmakers in the house voted 88-55 to ban junk food and soda from school lunches and vending machines and require 20 minutes of physical activity outside of gym.

www.organicconsumers.org/school/CT052405.cfm

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

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