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# ORGANIC BYTES

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

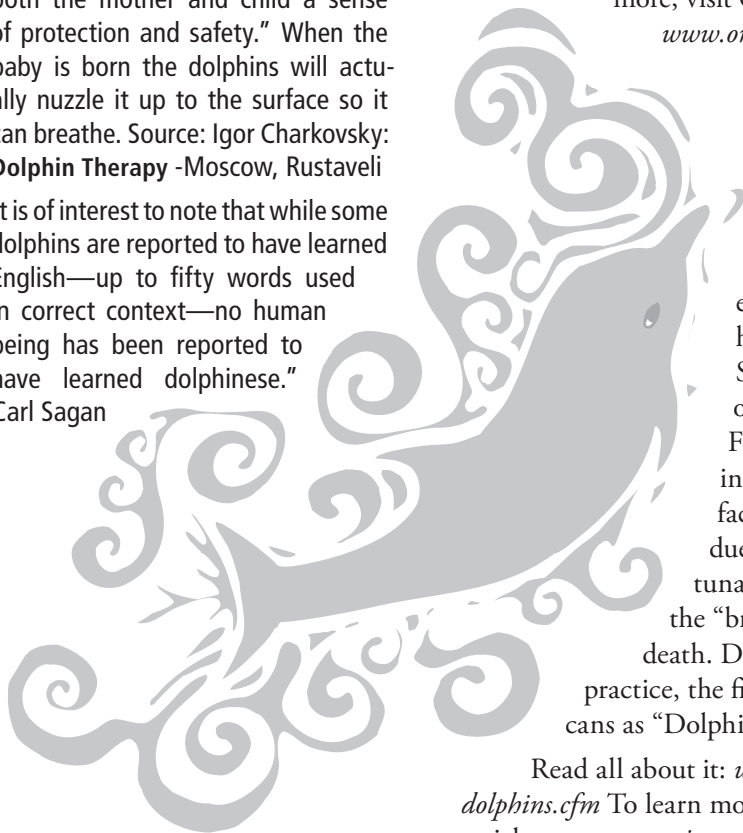
## Quote Of The Week

"The ultimate measure of a person is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy." -Martin Luther King, Jr.

## Weird Fact Of The Week

In Russia's Black Sea, dolphins are used as a sort of "midwife" for human births. According to dolphin researcher Igor Charkovsky, "Dolphins have an affinity with the baby in the womb and are automatically attracted to pregnant women. They sense when a woman is about to give birth and gather round. They give both the mother and child a sense of protection and safety." When the baby is born the dolphins will actually nuzzle it up to the surface so it can breathe. Source: Igor Charkovsky: **Dolphin Therapy** -Moscow, Rustaveli

"It is of interest to note that while some dolphins are reported to have learned English—up to fifty words used in correct context—no human being has been reported to have learned dolphinese."  
-Carl Sagan



## Liar, Liar (EU vs. US)

Representatives of the European Union (EU) are accusing the US of spreading lies about the EU's stance on genetically modified foods. The United States government has long been frustrated with the EU's de facto moratorium on these foods, and its mandatory labeling policy. When African countries facing famine recently rejected US food aid because it was genetically mutated, US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick asserted that these impoverished nations had been pressured into this decision by the EU. Zoellick claimed that the EU had threatened to withdraw its own food aid if they accepted the Frankencorn.

The EU has repeatedly denied that it attempted to influence the African ministers' decisions, but Zoellick continues repeating the charge. He called the EU's rejection of GE food "Luddite" and wants the US to file for a WTO tribunal on the matter. "This is a strange discussion," said European Union's overseas aid chief, Poul Nielson. "We are approaching a point where I would be tempted to propose a deal to the Americans...if the Americans would stop lying about us, we would stop telling the truth about them."

Read all about it: [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/lies012403.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/lies012403.cfm)  
Also check out *Newsweek's* story on the world's rejection of GE foods: [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/reject012403.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/reject012403.cfm) To learn more, visit OCA's online library of GE Food articles: [www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html)

## Something Smells Fishy

Pressured by the tuna industry, the Bush Administration has weakened pertinent fishing laws that protect dolphins. On December 31, an announcement was made that the procedure of encircling mile-long nets around pods of dolphins has "no significant adverse impact" on the dolphins. Scientific data and historical evidence suggests otherwise. According to the National Marine Fisheries Service, this netting process has resulted in the fatality of tens of thousands of dolphins. In fact, a full 10-15% of Spotted Dolphin deaths are due to baby dolphins being caught in these colossal tuna nets. Because dolphins are mammals, separating the "breast-feeding" babies from their mothers results in death. Despite the reinstatement of this devastating netting practice, the fishing industry will still be allowed to label its tuna cans as "Dolphin Safe".

Read all about it: [www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/012203\\_tuna\\_dolphins.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/012203_tuna_dolphins.cfm) To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Food Safety articles: [www.organicconsumers.org/toxiclink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/toxiclink.html)

## Food Fight!!

Mexico's small farmers are threatening a nationwide protest in February if the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is not renegotiated. The second phase of NAFTA, activated on January 1, effectively lifted import duties on several agricultural crops. The resultant surge in imports is expected to drive many Mexican farmers out of business. Mexican farmers receive little or no subsidy, and thus can't compete with US and Canadian farmers who are heavily subsidized by their governments. According to official figures, nearly all of Mexico's rural residents live below the poverty line. Chanting "The countryside can't take it anymore," protesting small family farmers are facing up against the Mexican government and the Confederation of Industrial Chambers, whose members benefit from cheap imports and easy exports.

This situation is not unique to Mexico. Last year at the World Social Forum in Brazil, a spokesperson for the global farmer's group Via Campesina said, "the destruction of food security and culture everywhere is a world crisis; it's not a conflict between North and South. All over the world, agricultural products' prices are below the cost of production."



Read all about it:

**[www.organicconsumers.org/corn/nafta012403.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corn/nafta012403.cfm)**

Check out OCA's extensive online library of articles about Globalization, as it relates to food and farming:

**[www.organicconsumers.org/corplink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corplink.html)**

## Organic Big Mac?

The McDonalds Corporation has announced it will be providing organic foods for customers at its fast-food restaurants in the UK. The company will be replacing all standard carton milk with organic milk and will offer organic produce. The massive chain already uses free-range eggs in its breakfast foods in the UK, and most of its European restaurants offer vegetarian alternatives to beef burgers. The company said it is providing these foods in response to consumer demands, which are far more intense in the UK and across Europe than in the US.

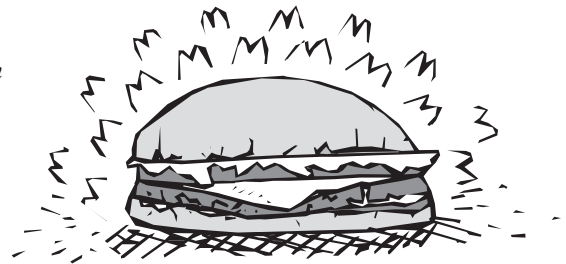
Read all about it:

[www.organicconsumers.org/Organic/mcdsmilk011703.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/Organic/mcdsmilk011703.cfm)

To learn more, visit

OCA's online library of Organic Food articles:

[www.organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm)



## The Name In Maine Is Plainly Insane

In Maine, if you buy dairy products bearing the state's Quality Trademark Seal, you know the producer has stated that none of the milk came from cows injected with Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH). But in December Monsanto, joined by the Biotechnology Association of Maine and three dairies, asked the Attorney General and the Agriculture Commissioner of Maine to suspend the use of the Seal on milk products. They also asked the Attorney General to initiate law enforcement proceedings against the two major processors using these labels, for "unfair trade practices." The rationale, of course, is that milk from cows injected with rBGH is "equivalent in all respects" to any other milk—except for the higher levels of pus, antibiotics, and Insulin-like Growth Factor-1.

The lawyer in the Attorney General's office who is handling the case is Mark Randlett. You can call him at 207-626-8588, or email at [mark.randlett@maine.gov](mailto:mark.randlett@maine.gov), to find out what's in the letter his office is sending Monsanto, et al.

Read all about it: [www.organicconsumers.org/rbgh/012203\\_rbgh.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rbgh/012203_rbgh.cfm)

To learn more, visit OCA's online library of rBGH/rBST articles:

[www.organicconsumers.org/rbghlink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rbghlink.html)

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Important 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, be sure to keep mailing in your Food Agenda 2010 petitions to the address noted above!