



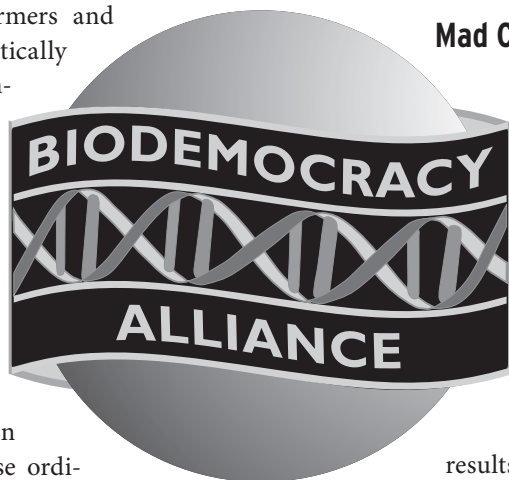
# ORGANIC BYTES

July 12, 2005 · Issue 61  
[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
Please forward this publication to family and friends, websites, print it, & post it. Knowledge is power!

## Banning Local Democracy

Consumers and farmers in California and New England have been taking action over the past year to protect their local communities from genetic pollution by passing local, city, and county ordinances banning genetically engineered (GE) crops. Cities, counties and townships that have passed such laws say this regulatory need stems from the fact that organic farmers and non-GMO (genetically modified organisms) farmers have been increasingly losing money every year as GMO pollen from neighboring fields contaminates their crops. In response to these ordinances, the biotech industry and corporate agribusiness are striking back with a vengeance. At least 12 states have recently passed "Monsanto laws" taking away the rights of cities and counties to ban GE crops. Now legislators in California, the nation's most important agricultural producer, are responding to the lobbying power of the biotech industry and are threatening to pass a controversial law that would take away local rights to regulate GMOS. The OCA is actively involved in trying to stop these "Monsanto Laws" from being passed. Get involved:  
[www.organicconsumers.org/ge-free.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge-free.htm)



## Consumers Beware: Teflon Can Give You Cancer

After ignoring numerous warnings from independent scientists for years, the "nonstick" chemical used in Teflon has now officially been categorized as a "likely carcinogen" by the US government's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). EPA scientists found four different types of tumors in lab animals exposed to the chemical. The agency announced it plans to collect millions of dollars in fines from DuPont, the maker of Teflon, for concealing studies indicating related health and environmental risks for over two decades.

[www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/duponto70105.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/duponto70105.cfm)

## Mad Cow USA: Shooting the Messenger

In the wake of recent news reports that the government had attempted to cover-up another case of Mad Cow disease, an internal feud has erupted inside the USDA. The most recent case of Mad Cow Disease was detected in a Texas cow that was slaughtered in November of 2004. At that time, the USDA claimed tests for the disease on the suspect cow were negative and that the cow was healthy. But several weeks ago, after a public outcry by the OCA and other public interest groups and internal USDA accusations of improper testing, USDA Inspector General Phyllis K. Fong reopened the case and ordered new tests on the remains of that cow, the results of which turned out to be positive. The USDA has since admitted that its testing procedures are not stringent enough, but instead of creating policy that would upgrade testing for Mad Cow, the agency has begun to focus its energies on attacking Fong. This week, USDA Secretary Mike Johanns, who was appointed to his position by President Bush earlier this year, said Fong had no right to reopen this case and should not have implemented further tests for Mad Cow disease. According to Johanns, Fong's discovery of the second case of Mad Cow disease in the US is behavior that will not be tolerated within the agency.  
[www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/coverupo70605.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/coverupo70605.cfm)

## OCA Supporters Talk and Congress Listens

In the last issue of *Organic Bytes* (#60), the OCA reported that the EPA was allowing pesticide companies to conduct toxic chemical testing on low-income Americans. We provided you, our 250,000 subscribers, with an action alert to contact your Congressional representatives. Thanks, in part, to a landslide of thousands of emails and letters generated by the OCA online community and our allies, Congress voted last week to place a moratorium on these practices. Congratulations to everyone who took part in this action!

[www.organicconsumers.org/Politics/humanso70105.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/Politics/humanso70105.cfm)

## Quick Tidbits

US researchers at the University of Texas Cancer Center say turmeric, the spice that makes curry yellow, could help fight skin cancer. Scientists discovered the ingredient interferes with a process in melanoma cells that leads to cancer. Researchers noted that related studies show that people with a diet high in turmeric have lower rates of some cancers.

[www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/curry.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/curry.cfm)

Despite protests from conservationists, a Japanese fast food chain has begun to offer whale burgers. The sandwich is made from deep fried minke whale meat, a globally threatened sea mammal. Although most nations have banned whale hunting, Japan claims it must kill the animals in order to study them. [www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/whale.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/whale.cfm)

More than 70% of the world's fish stocks are overfished. Confused about what fish are okay to eat? According to the California Academy of Sciences, the best fish to eat are "fast-growing, abundant, sensibly managed, with minimal bycatch and ecological impacts, or with minimally polluting farming methods." Download your pocket seafood guide here: [www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/seafood-guide.pdf](http://www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/seafood-guide.pdf)

Consumer demand for organic milk has exceeded what organic farmers are able to supply. In response the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service has launched a "Help Wanted: Organic Farmers" campaign to help increase the number of organic dairy farmers. [www.mosesorganic.org/](http://www.mosesorganic.org/)

## The Great Debate Over Corn-based Ethanol Fuel

Scientists have found that the amount of energy that corn-based ethanol provides is actually less than the amount of energy it takes to grow the corn and manufacture the ethanol in the first place. In contrast, sugar beets produce two times as much energy, and sugar cane yields eight times as much energy as is needed to produce the ethanol. Legislation has passed in the US that subsidizes corn-based ethanol production. Should this legislation be revoked in favor of other types of biofuels, or should it stay in place to support US corn farmers?

Talk about it in OCA's web forum: [www.organicconsumers.org/chat/index.php](http://www.organicconsumers.org/chat/index.php)



## The Candy Drug

The candy industry is setting its sights on fitness buffs and kids. At this summer's largest candy trade show, several new lines of "energy enhancing" candies were released in an effort to capture a piece of the \$3 billion/year consumers spend on performance boosters. New product lines included jelly beans packed with 120 milligrams of electrolytes and taffy pieces containing the equivalent of one coffee cup worth of caffeine in each bite. "I don't think that the new products belong in the candy aisle," said Cynthia Sass, a registered dietitian and spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association. "The use of stimulants is an even greater concern because they can cause dangerous increases in a person's heart rate and blood pressure." Larry Graham, president of the National Confectioners Association, disagrees, saying the candy industry has every right to "build healthful benefits into their candy." [www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/candy.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/candy.cfm)

For many more food issue daily headlines: [www.organicconsumers.org/log.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/log.html)

Organic Bytes is a publication of the Organic Consumers Association

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

Subscribe to Organic Bytes: [www.organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.htm)

DONATE TO THE OCA: [www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

Note to co-op and natural food store subscribers: Organic Bytes is a great tool for keeping your staff and customers up to date on the latest issues.

Feel free to print Organic Bytes for posting on bulletin boards and staff break tables.

You are welcome to use this material for your newsletters.