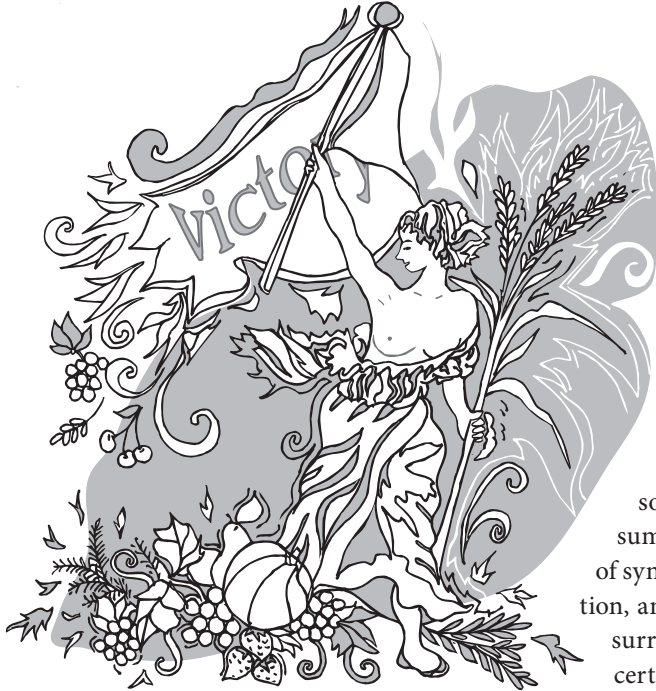




# ORGANIC BYTES

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[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!



## VICTORY! USDA Yields to OCA's Demands

The Organic Consumers Association (OCA) is proud to announce a major victory this week. Following a June 14 lawsuit filed by the OCA and Dr. Bronner's, a leading organic body care and hemp food company, and a nationwide OCA grassroots pressure campaign, the USDA has agreed to allow certification of qualifying organic body care products, pet foods, and nutritional supplements. Since last summer, the USDA National Organic Program has been telling certified organic companies to remove the "USDA Organic" seal from all non-food products. Taking advantage of the lack of regulatory oversight, some body care and supplement companies have been misleading consumers with fraudulent "organic" labeling claims on products with a host of synthetic ingredients. Thanks to thousands of consumers signing our petition, and over 400 businesses signing on to support our campaign, the USDA surrendered to the OCA's demands on August 23, saying they will accept certification and allow use of the "USDA Organic" seal on all organic non-food products that meet the national standards. The "USDA Organic" seal will help consumers find real organic products while substantially boosting the market for organic farmers. This is a major victory for consumers and the organic community!

[www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/)

### Beyond Misleading Labels & Greenwashing

OCA's advice to consumers, from this point forward, is to look for personal care, pet food, and herbal supplement products that carry the "USDA Organic" seal. As with food products, this is now the best way for consumers to be able to distinguish true organic products with the highest percentage of organic ingredients from those products with lower organic ingredient content and/or those containing any range of synthetic ingredients.

### Your Donations Will Help OCA Continue to Win Important Battles

OCA's lawsuits, network building, and grassroots pressure campaigns all require funding. We depend upon grassroots donations from conscious consumers like you for the overwhelming majority of our funds. Although the OCA network has racked up some important victories in the past few months, we can only continue to move forward with your support. Please donate today!

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

### Gene Giant Claims Ownership of World's Rice

The Swiss biotech corporation Syngenta has filed patent applications on much of the genetic material found in thousands of varieties of rice, the staple crop of more than half of the world's population. Syngenta is also attempting to patent the use of rice in plant and animal feed. "With these patents Syngenta is claiming the work of breeders and farmers from the past centuries as the company's own invention. The attempt to monopolize thousands of gene sequences from most important crop plants in one rush is nothing less than a theft of common goods," says Tina Goethe from Swissaid.


[www.organicconsumers.org/ge/syngenta081605.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/syngenta081605.cfm)

### Take OCA's Organic Harvest Challenge: Buy Local and Organic


During September, Organic Harvest Month, OCA is calling on consumers to begin to relocalize the nation's food system and drastically reduce food miles by serving local and regional organic foods at your holiday BBQ or potluck dinner. Try to restrict your menu to organic items grown or produced within a 150 mile radius of your home. Share your story and favorite recipes in the OCA's "Breaking the Chains" Blog, and we will award the most compelling story and tastiest recipe with a complimentary copy of the movie *Food for the Future*. For help finding local and organic food options visit [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) Host a house party with the inspirational DVD, *Food for the Future*, a movie about the Floyd Boulevard Local Foods Market which highlights ordinary people doing extraordinary things, *Breaking the Chains*!

[www.organicconsumers.org/HouseParty/fff.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/HouseParty/fff.cfm)


## Quick Tidbits

 Fast food chains are now commonly building restaurants near schools, according to a new study in the September issue of the *American Journal of Health*. The study found 80% of schools have a fast food restaurant located within a half mile walking distance. Previous studies have shown that on a typical day, almost one-third of American youngsters eat fast food.

[www.organicconsumers.org/school/fast-food.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/school/fast-food.cfm)

 The *International Journal of Cancer* has published a new study indicating women who ate french fries regularly as children were more likely to get breast cancer later on in life. For every extra weekly serving of french fries that the women in the study reportedly ate in their youth, their risk of breast cancer as adults rose 27 percent.

[www.organicconsumers.org/school/french-fries.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/school/french-fries.cfm)

 Responding to consumer group requests made under the Freedom of Information Act, the USDA has released documents revealing that, in the last year, US meat plants have made over a thousand violations of safety regulations designed to prevent the spread of mad cow disease. The Bush Administration is not responding to these violations or to the new confirmed cases of mad cow disease in the US. [www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/violations081605.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/violations081605.cfm)

## Introducing African Wildlife to US Breadbasket

The Great Plains may be donating a portion of its ranching and farming space to wild roaming elephants, lions, and other African species. Last week's issue of the journal *Nature* highlights a proposal from a group of prominent ecologists, backed by major sponsors like Ted Turner, who believe an important way to save threatened African species is to introduce them to North America. The study claims the process would restore North America to the state of rich biodiversity it enjoyed over 10,000 years ago, before over-hunting took away native wildlife like the mastodons, camels and saber-toothed cats. "Just when you think the world has gotten as weird as it can get, something like this comes along," said Steve Pilcher, executive vice president of the Montana Stockgrowers Association. "I wonder how many calves or lambs it would take to feed a family of lions for a month?"

[www.organicconsumers.org/corp/elephant.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/elephant.cfm)

## A Coca-Cola Story

Once upon a time (in 2001, to be specific), the Coca-Cola corporation built a bottling plant in a small and remote Indian village in the state of Kerala. In exchange for sucking vast amounts of water out of the local land, the mighty corporation promised to bring the people great wealth. But within a few short months, the village people began to notice their wells were running dry, so they complained to the corporation. Coca-Cola calmed the concerns of the people and attempted to win back their favor by giving them vast amounts of free fertilizer, saying it would grow bountiful crops beyond their wildest dreams. After several years of use, we arrive at the present day when the village people have suddenly discovered the fertilizer is actually the bottling plant's waste sludge and is laden with cadmium, a highly toxic, cancer-causing heavy metal. The village soil and water are now too heavily contaminated to safely occupy human life, so the plant was shut down last week. Moral of the story: Don't drink Coke... drink Pepsi! Just kidding, Pepsi is actually in the process of being thrown out of India for similar crimes.

[www.organicconsumers.org/BTC/cocacola082405.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/BTC/cocacola082405.cfm)



## Soft Drink Industry Announces Plans for Selling Soda in Schools

The junk food industry has drawn increasing public criticism as the obesity and diabetes rate in American youth approaches epidemic levels. Under pressure from millions of concerned parents, the soft drink industry claims it has "new" plans to adjust the manner in which it markets and vends beverages to children in schools. The American Beverage Association, which includes business members like Coca-Cola and Pepsi Co., boasted to the press last week that it will no longer sell soda drinks in elementary schools, will only sell diet sodas and juices in middle schools, and will continue to market and sell sodas in high schools. The announcement received much fanfare in mainstream media, but critics say little has changed. Even Dave DeCecco, spokesperson for Pepsi-Cola North America, admits the changes are actually quite minor: "It's pretty similar to our preexisting school model, but it does go a little farther." Nutritionists contest that this measure is not enough, pointing out that most beverages that will continue to be sold in elementary schools are misleadingly labeled as "juices" and "sports drinks" but have as much added sugar and nutritional deficiencies as soda pop. Join OCA's campaign to kick junk food out of schools: [www.organicconsumers.org/sos.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.htm)

## Pesticides Spawning Superweeds

A study in the recent issue of the journal *Outlooks on Pesticide Management* reports that there are now 15 weed species that have complete resistance to the world's most widely used herbicide, Monsanto's glyphosate. Researchers say most of these "superweeds" have developed resistance over time, due to long-term overuse of the chemical. Glyphosate, most commonly applied as Monsanto's Roundup, has been in heavy use globally for over 30 years. The study warns these superweeds pose "serious" problems to farmers if new control strategies are not developed. Of course the best way to avoid spawning superweeds is to ban genetically engineered crops and to adopt organic farming practices. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/superweedo81905.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/superweedo81905.cfm)

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

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