



# 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!

## Where Does Your Organic Food Come From?

Increasing numbers of food companies, including Brand Name organic companies, are outsourcing their ingredients from overseas in order to increase their bottom-line profits. Suppliers in places like China, where prices and wages are rock-bottom, are gaining market preference over "Made in the USA" products, where wages and environmental regulations are more strictly regulated. Consumers are left guessing which products to buy, due to a lack of "country of origin labeling" on grocery items (except fish). Congress passed a mandatory country of origin labeling law two years ago, in the wake of massive consumer pressure, but has not yet funded or implemented this law. Now transnational food giants and supermarket chains, like Wal-Mart, are pressuring congress to rid of mandatory country of origin labeling laws and make the labels strictly voluntary for industry. Learn more: [organicconsumers.org/organic/imports101005.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/organic/imports101005.cfm) Petition Congress to make country of origin labeling mandatory: [organicconsumers.org/Politics/cool091605.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/Politics/cool091605.cfm)

## Just Plain Old Soap is All You Need

Good news for old fashioned soap lovers: US health experts and scientists asked the FDA to pass restrictions on antibacterial soaps last week. Scientists referenced a mounting body of studies showing that standard soap removes bacteria as effectively as soaps with antimicrobial chemical additives. Experts said that, due to the overuse of antibacterial soaps, bacteria are developing resistance to antimicrobial disinfectants & medicines. The panel recommended that antibacterial soaps only be used in medical facilities or in homes of the elderly and sick. As a related note, USDA Certified Organic soaps are now available at your local natural products store. [organicconsumers.org/bodycare/fda-soap.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/bodycare/fda-soap.cfm)

## Industry Sneak Attack on Organic Standards Rammed Through Congress

Despite receiving over 350,000 letters and phone calls from OCA members and the organic community, Republican leaders in Congress October 27 attached a rider to the 2006 Agricultural Appropriations Bill to weaken the nation's organic food standards in response to pressure from large-scale food manufacturers. "Congress voted last night to weaken the national organic standards that consumers count on to preserve the integrity of the organic label," said Ronnie Cummins, National Director of the OCA. "The process was profoundly undemocratic, and the end result is a

serious setback for the multi billion dollar alternative food and farming system that the organic community has so painstakingly built up over the past 35 years.

As passed, the amendment sponsored by the Organic Trade Association allows: numerous synthetic food additives and processing aids, including over 500 food contact substances, to be used in organic foods without public review; young dairy cows to continue to be treated with antibiotics and fed GE feed prior to being converted to

organic production; loopholes under which non-organic ingredients could be substituted for organic ingredients without any notification of the public based on "emergency decrees." OCA will work to reverse this rider with an "Organic Restoration Act" in Congress in 2006. [www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm)

## Alert: Stop Factory Farm Dairy Feedlots from Labeling Their Products as Organic

Organic consumers assume that when they're buying "USDA Organic" milk or dairy products, that the animals have access to pasture, and have been raised organically for their entire lives on sustainably-sized farms. Unfortunately, as the Cornucopia Institute has pointed out, companies like Dean Foods (Horizon) and Aurora have become leaders in the organic dairy sector by producing cheap milk on factory farm feedlots, feeding the cows organic grains, but providing no access to pasture, as organic standards require. The National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) has pleaded with the USDA for four years to clarify federal regulations requiring pasture access and to put an end to factory farm dairy feedlots calling themselves organic.

Unfortunately, the USDA, no doubt under pressure from "industrial organic" lobbyists, has failed to act. Loopholes in federal organic standards are allowing unscrupulous organic dairy operators to increase their herd size by importing young calves from conventional farms. These calves are routinely weaned on cattle blood, injected or medicated with antibiotics, and fed genetically engineered grains, laced with slaughterhouse waste and tainted animal fat. The NOSB will be meeting on November 16, to review public comments on this issue.

Please sign OCA's petition to the USDA, calling on the agency to close loopholes in federal regulations that are allowing factory farms to produce milk labeled "organic." Please call the USDA at 202-720-3631 and ask them to stop allowing factory dairy farms to use the "USDA Organic" Label. [www.organicconsumers.org/organic/alert102505.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/alert102505.cfm)





## Sign Up to Organize a *Breaking The Chains* Event


This holiday season, Organic Consumers Association (OCA) is calling on consumers worldwide to take part in a series of events to help spread the good news about buying “Local, Fair Made, and Organic.” Between November 13 and December 31 the OCA will be organizing hundreds of events, working with a critical mass of global citizens to “Break the Chains” and take back control of our communities, our food and commerce, and our future. We ask you to please consider organizing an event near you. The OCA will help you organize your event and provide materials for the type of event that is most appropriate for you. You could throw a *Breaking the Chains* house party, organize a film showing, hold a leafleting event, picket an area Wal-Mart, or coordinate a “buycott” (helping others find


local independently owned businesses). This campaign is fun, it’s effective, and it’s one of the best ways to help health, environmental, and justice minded consumers stop the Wal-Martization of their community and the planet by supporting local products from independent grocers, restaurants, coffeehouses, bookstores, and farms.


Learn more and sign up: [www.organicconsumers.org/btc.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/btc.htm)

## Quick Tidbits

 During Halloween, chocolate sales to children are at their highest. This is a great opportunity to show your support for Fair Trade practices and take steps towards ending the production of chocolate by hundreds of thousands of child cocoa laborers. Global Exchange, the International Labor Rights Fund, Oxfam America, Co-op America, and United Students for Fair Trade are promoting a campaign to help you serve Fair Trade Certified Chocolate this Halloween. [www.globalexchange.org/halloween](http://www.globalexchange.org/halloween)

 The city of Madison, Wisconsin is going sweatshop free. The City Council voted unanimously to pass an ordinance that requires that all city worker clothing apparel be made in conditions “that respect the economic dignity and human rights of workers, including the right to organize.” [organicconsumers.org/cfac/madison101805.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/cfac/madison101805.cfm)

 A new Russian study found that genetically modified (GM) soy negatively affects the offspring of rats. A group of mother rats with newborn babies who were fed standard soy had three of their offspring die in three weeks. A similarly sized group of mother rats who were fed GM soy had 25 of their babies die in the same period. [organicconsumers.org/ge/deadrats101805.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/ge/deadrats101805.cfm)

 **Tip of the Week:** Feel like you have money problems? This little link can fix your financial frustrations in a matter of seconds. In comparison to the rest of the world’s population, you might not have it so bad. Now you can find out exactly how you rank among the world’s richest and poorest people. Just type in your annual income and this website will calculate specifically how you compare with the rest of the world. [www.globalrichlist.com](http://www.globalrichlist.com)

## Teenage Girls Make the Sale

“Buzz Marketing” is the new rage in corporate advertising and marketing. Kids are being “hired” by the hundreds of thousands to coax their peers into buying certain products. Marketers are getting a much bigger bang for their buck with this technique, since people trust what their peers have to say over an advertiser’s voice on the TV or radio. A full 85% of the nation’s top 1,000 marketers now use the technique. Procter & Gamble alone has a force of 250,000 kids, 75% of whom are girls, age 13 to 19, who are mailed free products in return for suggesting those products to friends. Tremor, one of the largest firms employing this marketing technique, says it’s completely ethical. “To be a member is empowering for a teen,” says Steve Knox, CEO of Tremor.

[www.organicconsumers.org/school/nabbing102005.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/school/nabbing102005.cfm)

## Disassembling the Family Farm: Congress Cuts More Programs

A big thanks to all of you who responded to the OCA’s Alert two weeks ago regarding impending agriculture appropriations cuts in Congress. The original proposed Budget Reconciliation bill would have cut \$3 billion in conservation programs and food stamps to low-income Americans. Your letters helped stop Congress from cutting food stamps. Unfortunately, corporate agribusiness lobbyists got most of what they wanted, slashing funds for sustainable agriculture and farm conservation programs, while maintaining \$20 billion in annual taxpayer subsidies to the nation’s largest chemical-intensive and genetically engineered farms. According to Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), the Conservation Security Program, which helps family farmers protect the land and reduce pollution, received the bulk of the cuts, while the 2006 Federal Budget “authorizes additional tax breaks of \$70 billion—the lion’s share of which will go to the very wealthiest Americans.” [www.organicconsumers.org/corp/agbill102105.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/agbill102105.cfm)

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

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