



ORGANIC BYTES

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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!

Update on the "Sneak Attack" on Organic Standards

Thanks, again, to all of you who contacted Congress to try to stop the industry and Organic Trade Association (OTA) rider to weaken organic standards. Together, OCA and our allies generated over 320,000 letters to Congress. Despite a closed-door Conference Committee meeting of House and Senate Republicans that rammed the rider through in late October, we are optimistic about the future of organics. We are currently working with our allies in the organic community to try to reduce or eliminate the damage to organic integrity created by this rider. Once the balance of power in Congress changes, it may be possible to pass an "Organic Restoration Act" that can strengthen, rather than weaken, organic standards. In the meantime, OCA recommends that you buy more and more non-processed organic foods, especially locally and regionally produced organic foods, and look for the "100% organic" label on organic processed foods. Please consider supporting our *SOS/Safe-guard Organic Standards* campaign by donating at: www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm

Also, listen to the online and satellite radio show *Beyond Organic* this week to hear OCA Director Ronnie Cummins and OTA Director Katherine DiMatteo debate this issue: www.beyondorganic.com

Related Quote

"Again, behind closed doors and without a single debate, the Organic Foods Production Act was amended at the behest of large food processors without the benefit of the organic community reaching a compromise. To rush provisions into the law that have not been properly vetted, that fail to close loopholes, and that do not reflect a consensus, only undermines the integrity of the National Organic Program."

-Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), speaking on the Senate floor about the passage of the "Sneak Attack" rider weakening organic standards. November 2, 2005

Alert! EPA Proposes Chemical, Pesticide Testing on Orphans and Mentally Handicapped Children

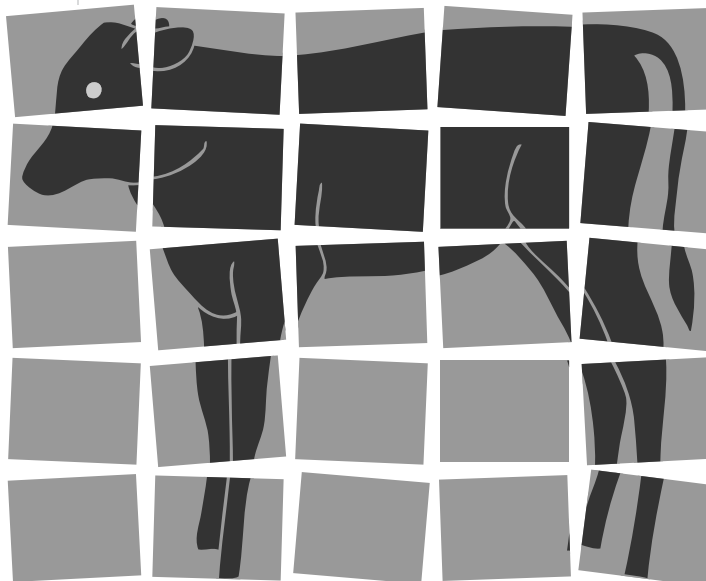
Public comments are now being accepted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on its newly proposed federal regulation regarding the testing of chemicals and pesticides on human subjects. Earlier this year, Congress had mandated the EPA create a rule that permanently bans chemical testing on pregnant women and children, but the EPA's newly proposed rule puts industry profits ahead of children's welfare.

Learn more and take action now: www.organicconsumers.org/epa6.cfm

The rule allows for government and industry scientists to treat children as human guinea pigs in chemical experiments in the following situations:

- Children who "cannot be reasonably consulted," such as those that are mentally handicapped or orphaned newborns may be tested on. With permission from the institution or guardian in charge of the individual, the child may be exposed to chemicals for the sake of research.
- Parental consent forms are not necessary for testing on children who have been neglected or abused.
- Chemical studies on any children outside of the US are acceptable.


Alert Update: Stop Factory Farm Dairy Feedlots Labeling Their Products Organic




We'd like to thank all of you who responded to our action alert two weeks ago to write or call the USDA to stop factory farm feedlots, such as those operated by Horizon and Aurora Organic, from labeling their dairy products as "organic." OCA supporters have already generated over 30,000 letters to the USDA on this issue in the past few weeks. We still have a few more days before the November 16 meeting of the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) in Washington, DC

to take action on this issue. If you haven't done so already, please tell the USDA to stop allowing this blatant violation of organic standards and inhumane treatment of dairy cows. www.organicconsumers.org/organic/alert102505.cfm

Quick Tidbits

 A recent USDA Food Security report shows hunger is on the rise in the US. From 1995 to 1999 the number of food-insecure households, due to inadequate resources, actually fell by 28 percent. Since 2000, however, the number of households where at least one member experienced poverty-induced food deprivation, rose by over 43 percent. According to the report, that figure includes over 14 million children. www.organicconsumers.org/corp/hunger.cfm

 Trader Joe's has responded to pressure from the Humane Society of the US and will now provide "cage-free" eggs under its private label products. Presently, the company sells 100 million eggs produced by hens held in cages so small the birds cannot spread their wings. The new policy decision will positively affect over 380,000 birds. Whole Foods Market and Wild Oats have also announced they will be going cage-free. Organic poultry and egg farms are required to provide access to the outdoors for all animals. www.organicconsumers.org/corp/eggs.cfm

 A Harvard Scientist and his team claim to have developed a major breakthrough in the realm of sustainable energy. Backed by 50 independent validation reports, and 65 peer-reviewed journal articles, the discovery, which uses tiny amounts of water for fuel, seems to create 1,000 times more heat than any other fuel and costs 80% less than coal. While many mainstream scientists are questioning the validity of this discovery, major industry players are already investing tens of millions into bringing this "hydrino" energy into a useable form for the consumer market within four years. Could it be true? Keep your fingers crossed and stay tuned... www.organicconsumers.org/corp/110705.cfm

 **Tip of the Week:** Just because winter is on its way doesn't mean you have to stop composting. Bring it inside! It's really quite easy to set up a small, clean and effective indoor composting system that will turn your food waste into the best organic fertilizer on the planet. Plus, you'll be the life of every party when people find out you have worms for pets! The landfills are overflowing and so are the water treatment facilities. Turn your food waste into black gold. Learn how to set-up an indoor composting system here:

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/compost.cfm

Breaking The Chains: Buy Local, Organic, & Fair Made

This week marks the kick-off of OCA's **Breaking the Chains** holiday season of action November 13 - December 31. From rallies and pickets to film screenings and community education events, people across the country will be organizing events that encourage consumers to boycott the chains and Brand Name Bullies this holiday season, and instead buy local, organic and Fair Trade products from local coops, bookstores, coffee shops, grocers, and independent businesses. If you can't find what you need locally, many organic and Fair Trade/Fair Made products are now available over the internet. OCA's **Breaking the Chains** Campaign is focusing consumers' attention on how each purchasing decision we make can lead to a healthier, greener, and more just society.

The campaign extends through December 31. Organize or take part in an event near you: www.organicconsumers.org/btc.htm. Read the *Breaking the Chains Buying Guide* at: www.organicconsumers.org/btc/BuyingGuide.htm

Progressive Film Club

Are you bored silly with the brain-numbing drivel coming out of Hollywood these days? Do you love to watch movies but struggle to find what you want at the local theater or video store? The OCA is teaming up with Ironweed Film Club to provide our supporters with an affordable opportunity

to receive a thought-provoking progressive DVD in the mail every month that contains an award-winning independent feature film, a short film, and free extras. The club also provides resources to help members build and strengthen the progressive movement at the local level — a critical step in rebuilding a progressive majority. Learn more and subscribe here: www.ironweedfilms.com/subscription?viapc=EM01COC

Congress Finishing Up Some Last Minute Paperwork

Congress is currently finalizing the Ag Appropriations & Budget Reconciliations Bills, both of which contain a wide range of highly contentious subsidy and cutback proposals for the next few years.

Here's a quick summary of where the bills currently stand:

- \$11.9 billion in Medicaid cuts, affecting some 6 million children
- \$645 million cut from federal food stamps, affecting 275,000 people
- \$14.3 billion cut from student loan programs
- \$821 million cut from farm conservation programs
- \$19 billion in annual farm subsidies, 80% of which will go to the wealthiest agribusinesses
- \$70 billion in additional tax cuts for upper income brackets.

Learn more at: www.organicconsumers.org/corp/budget.cfm

You can also make citizen comments to Congress by phone at: 202-224-3121

For many more food issue daily headlines: 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

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