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Quote Of The Week

"To Do Is To Be." -Socrates

"To Be Is To Do." -Sartre

"Do Be Do Be Do." -Sinatra

Good News: Whoever Said Life Isn't Fair?

Organic Bytes #4 reported on the outrageous demand by the Nestle Corporation for \$6 million in settlement money from Ethiopia, even as that poor country faced massive famine. We're happy to report that Nestle has caved, accepting Ethiopia's offer of \$1.5 million and donating it to hunger relief. This was a victory for the campaigners who highlighted the issue, but it's also a testimony to the growth of the ethical consumption movement. While Fair Trade producers are still a very small percentage of the market, they're growing rapidly, especially in the UK. For example, The Co-Op company now gets all their cocoa for their brand-name products from Fair Trade suppliers—and their

Fair Trade sales have expanded from \$160,000 to \$12 million in just four years.

The head of brand marketing for Co-Op, Terry Hudghton, claims "If you are competitive at the quality and price thresholds, the social side is a great differentiator. It also strengthens our overall brand stance of responsible consumption against the other chains, which seem hell-bent on competing on price and squeezing suppliers to the limit."

Read all about it:

www.organicconsumers.org/Starbucks/020903_fair_trade.cfm

To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Fair Trade articles:

www.organicconsumers.org/starbucks/



ORGANIC BYTES

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

Nano Nano!

Homo Sapiens first learned to manipulate plant characteristics via physically forcing cross-pollination between different breeds. Within the past two decades, we progressed to the molecular level, where we learned to alter plant traits by actually changing the genetic structure. Now there's a new technology that takes us one step deeper—modification of plants by manipulation of their atoms, known as "Nanotechnology". A new 80 page report from ETC Group attempts to educate citizens and policymakers about this groundbreaking technology. "The world's most powerful



emerging technology is developing in an almost total political and regulatory vacuum," says Pat Mooney, Executive Director of ETC Group. According to ETC, nanotechnology products are being released into the market with no review of effects on human health or the environment. The report says that within the next two years, nanotechnology will be bigger than genetic engineering, as it will be a major part of virtually every industry, including agriculture. **Read all about it:** www.organicconsumers.org/ge/atomtech020303.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of GE Food articles: www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html

Our Polluted Bodies

Volunteers recently gave blood and urine samples to researchers investigating the "body burden" of toxic chemicals carried by Americans. Some of these people live in upscale, clean neighborhoods, eat a healthy diet, and avoid exposure to industrial chemicals. But the results came as a nasty shock: on average, each person had 50 chemicals suspected of causing cancer, or considered toxic to the nervous system, or known to disrupt the hormone and endocrine systems.

One of the subjects was Michael Lerner, president of *Commonweal*, which was one of the partners in the research. More than 100 toxins were found in his body, including high levels of mercury and arsenic. He's had hand tremors for years; now he has an idea why. "Being tested yourself brings the body burden home," he says. "Mercury and arsenic both cause tremors, so I've stopped eating all fish that have high mercury levels."

Lerner wants such testing to be available to everyone; but the tests only provide information, they don't reduce the contamination. Says Lerner, "the truth is, we are unwilling participants in a huge chemical experiment, which would never be permitted if these chemicals came to us as drugs. But because these chemicals enter us from industrial and agricultural sources, they are not subject to testing that would ensure our safety." The report calls for the reform of the Toxics Substance Control Act, so that chemical companies would have to safety test chemical products before putting them on the market. **Read all about it:** www.organicconsumers.org/toxic/ourbodies020503.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Food Safety articles: www.organicconsumers.org/toxiclink.html

Annihilation Of Pollination Contamination Legislation



"Now, if they own the gene, shouldn't they be responsible for what that gene does?" So states Senator Bill Bowman of North Dakota in support of a new bill that would hold companies like Monsanto liable if their genetically engineered wheat spread into a nearby conventional wheat field. As an example, Bowman's proposed bill would force Monsanto to provide monetary compensation to an organic farmer whose organic wheat crops were rejected for sale due to contamination by cross-pollination from a neighbor growing Monsanto's genetically engineered wheat. Upon hearing about the bill, Monsanto invested in a slew of professional lobbyists focused on North Dakota policymakers. This ultimately led to the rejection of Bowman's bill, thereby leaving organic farmers unprotected.

Read all about it:
www.organicconsumers.org/monsanto/wheatdefeat021003.cfm
To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Monsanto articles:
www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.html · For many more food issue daily headlines:
www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

Tasty Tidbits - Fun Facts For The Dinner Table

Over 75,000 new synthetic chemical compounds have been developed and dispersed into the environment; fewer than half of these compounds have ever been tested for their potential toxicity to humans.

(Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.)

An estimated 80 to 90% of all cancer in children is caused by exposure to carcinogens found in the environment.

(Source: Philip Landrigan, M.D. & Herbert Needleman, M.D., *Raising Children Toxic Free* 1996)

USDA- Fox Watching the Organic Henhouse?

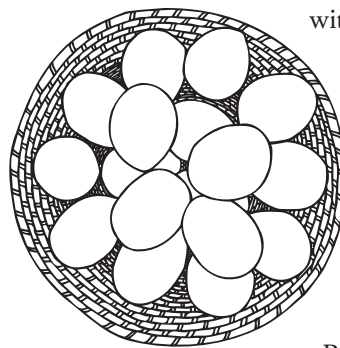


Implementation of USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) officially began October 21, 2002. Now consumers anywhere in the world can look for that green-and-white label and know what it means. Or can they? Perhaps the battle for the integrity of organic standards is not yet over.

According to Joe Mendelson of the Center for Food Safety, the USDA has been less than forthcoming about the processes by which it has accredited 70 certifying agents so far—some of them previously unknown. Anticipating that a government agency that has so many former chemical company employees on its payroll might need a little oversight, the Organic Food Production Act called for a Peer Review Panel for this accreditation process. But the NOP still has not set up the Panel; and when the Center for Food Safety sought public release of all documents used in accreditations, it met with resistance.

Does it really matter? Consider the henhouse: United Egg Producers, an agribusiness consortium, has openly sought to overturn the requirement that organic poultry have access to the outdoors. This fall, when a certifier in Massachusetts turned down a producer that didn't meet this requirement, the producer appealed to the USDA—which ruled in its favor. This episode illustrates why the Review Panel is critical to the integrity of the organic label. The Center for Food Safety and others have filed a legal petition, threatening to sue if the Panel is not set up

within a year. Stay tuned... Read all about it:
www.organicconsumers.org/Organic/020903_organic.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Organic Food articles:
www.organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm



Related Quote

"Animals can be driven crazy by placing too many in too small a pen. Homo Sapiens is the only animal that voluntarily does this to itself."

-Robert Heinlein. 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

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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!