



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!

Breaking the Chains: Join OCA in Celebrating Buy Local Month



Over the past few weeks, OCA members in over 100 cities and communities across the globe have come together with labor, environment, consumer, and independent business groups to put our consumer dollars where our values lie, and to support healthy and sustainable local businesses and producers.

As part of a growing international movement for Fair Trade, health, justice, and sustainability, organic consumers are saying "No" to Wal-Mart and the other big box chains, while promoting locally or regionally-based green and organic alternatives. As part of Buy Local Month, we are asking our network volunteers to "Break the Chains" by organizing rallies, house parties, educational events, and film showings. Buy Local Month coincides with the busiest shopping season of the year, running from now until the end of December. Please let us know if you are interested in planning an event for your community for Buy Local Month. We will provide event planning and media support.

Sign up at www.organicconsumers.org/rd-btc.htm

New Law Forces Genetic Polluters to Pay

Following the example of Germany, Denmark has passed a law that will punish farmers planting genetically engineered (GE) crops if they contaminate the crops or fields of organic or non-GE farmers. Because GE crops sell for less than organic or conventional crops, farmers whose fields are contaminated by drifting GE pollen undergo major financial losses. Under the new law, if a farmer is growing conventional or organic crops, and their field is contaminated by drifting GE pollen, the farmer will be compensated for their losses by the government. The Denmark government will then recoup those costs from the farmer whose field the GE pollen originated in.

www.organicconsumers.org/ge/denmark112805.cfm

Alert Update: EPA Proposed Rule Allows Chemical and Pesticide Testing on Kids

Thanks to everyone who responded to the OCA Alert in the last issue of *Organic Bytes*. So far, the EPA has been deluged with over 20,000 comments from OCA supporters demanding changes in the EPA's controversial proposed rule on human chemical testing, which contains loopholes that would allow the testing of chemicals and pesticides on children. EPA's proposal flies in the face of massive public opposition and directives from Congress and the National Academy of Sciences to stop industry from carrying out unethical studies on children. In the wake of this strong citizen backlash, the EPA is frantically trying to discredit the OCA and other organizations working on this issue (such as the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Center for Health and Environmental Justice, and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, etc.) by flat out denying that the proposed rule contains exceptions for testing toxics on children. Unfortunately for the EPA PR greenwashing efforts, the actual proposed rule is still posted on the EPA website, where the public can look beyond the agency's rhetoric and read the rule themselves.

We invite you to read these sections of the proposed regulations, which allow chemical or pesticide testing on children under the following circumstances:


- 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.


To learn more and send an instant letter to the EPA, visit www.organicconsumers.org/epa6.cfm
The public comment period expires December 12.


Animal Antibiotics Discovered in Common Vegetables

Researchers at the University of Minnesota have found residues from animal antibiotics in common produce, says a new study. Spreading raw manure on fields from animals treated with antibiotics is a common practice on conventional farms. Unfortunately, scientists have now discovered that vegetables like corn, cabbage and green onions absorb those antibiotics, which are then ingested by consumers. "Vegetarians may think the huge overuse of antibiotics in livestock and poultry will not affect them, but that's not true," stated Margaret Mellon, the director of the Union of Concerned Scientists. "Consumers eating vegetables grown on soil fertilized with manure may be unknowingly ingesting antibiotics." Regular consumption of these antibiotics can then cause bacteria in the body to become resistant. www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/antibiotics112305.cfm

Quick Tidbits

 New studies indicate grass-fed beef (cattle raised in pasture) is much healthier to eat than grain-fed beef (cattle raised in confinement). Grass-fed beef is up to 3 times leaner than grain-fed beef, and can have up to 15 fewer calories per ounce than meat from a grain-fed cow. Grass-fed meat also provides more balanced omega-3s, omega-6 fatty acids, beta carotene, vitamin E and folic acid. Mad cow disease has never been found in a 100% grass-fed cow. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/grassfed111505.cfm

 The second confirmed US case of the human form of mad cow disease has been discovered in Texas. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease is caused by eating beef tainted with the fatal disease. In this case, it is assumed the man caught the disease during the UK outbreak, rather than from US beef, as he is originally from England. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/variant112305.cfm

 **Tip of the Week:** Produce with the lowest pesticide levels: asparagus, avocados, bananas, broccoli, cauliflower, sweet corn, kiwi, mangoes, onions, papaya, pineapples and sweet peas. Produce with the highest pesticide levels: apples, bell peppers, celery, cherries, imported grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, potatoes, red raspberries, spinach and strawberries.

Artificial Sweetener Aspartame Causes Cancer in Rats

Scientists are calling for an urgent reevaluation of the artificial sweetener aspartame. The ingredient, commonly found in sugar-free beverages and candies, has been shown to cause cancer in rats, according to a new study in the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*. "Our study has shown that aspartame is a multi-potential carcinogenic compound whose carcinogenic effects are also evident at a daily dose of 20 milligrams per kilogram of body weight (mg/kg), notably less than the current acceptable daily intake for humans," the authors write.

www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/aspartame112805.cfm

Gas Guzzling Food: How to Create an Energy Efficient Diet

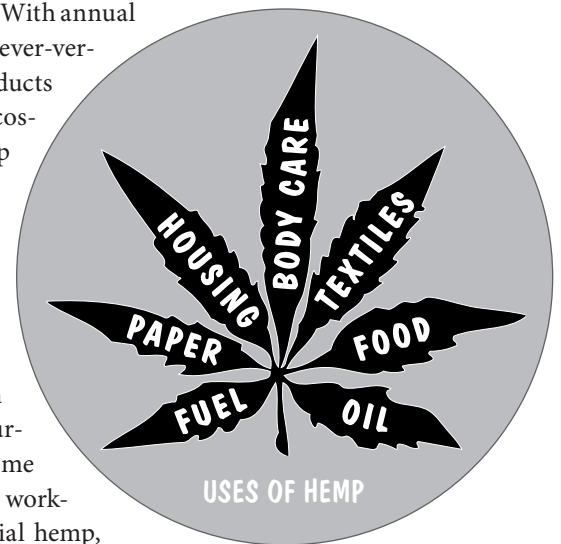
"It takes about 10 fossil fuel calories to produce each food calorie in the average American diet. So if your daily food intake is 2,000 calories, then it took 20,000 calories to grow that food and get it to you. In more familiar units, this means that growing, processing and delivering the food consumed by a family of four each year requires the equivalent of almost 34,000 kilowatt-hours (kwh) of energy, or more than 930 gallons of gasoline (for comparison, the average us household annually consumes about 10,800 kwh of electricity, or about 1,070 gallons of gasoline). In other words, we use about as much energy to grow and transport our food as to power our homes or fuel our cars." (*Buy locally grown foods.*) -Thomas Starrs, Chair of the American Solar Energy Society

www.organicconsumers.org/btc/gasfood112105.cfm

Drug Warriors Still Confused About Hemp and Marijuana

The hemp product industry is booming. With annual sales increasing by 50% per year, the ever-versatile hemp is finding its way into products including food, clothing, paper, and cosmetics. The intense demand for the crop is great news for farmers... if they're not from the US. It's legal to import hemp seeds and fiber into the US, but it's illegal for US farmers to grow industrial hemp. The USA is the only industrialized nation that has not legalized industrial hemp as a crop, although the federal government actually encouraged farmers to grow it during war time (up until 1970). While several states are working to legalize the growing of industrial hemp, the federal government has another view. "Let's not be naïve," says Tom Riley of the White House Office on National Drug Control Policy in an interview last week with *USA Today*. "The pro-dope people have been pushing hemp for 20 years because they know that if they can have hemp fields, then they can have marijuana fields. It's... stoner logic."

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/hemp112205.cfm



For many more food issue daily headlines: www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

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