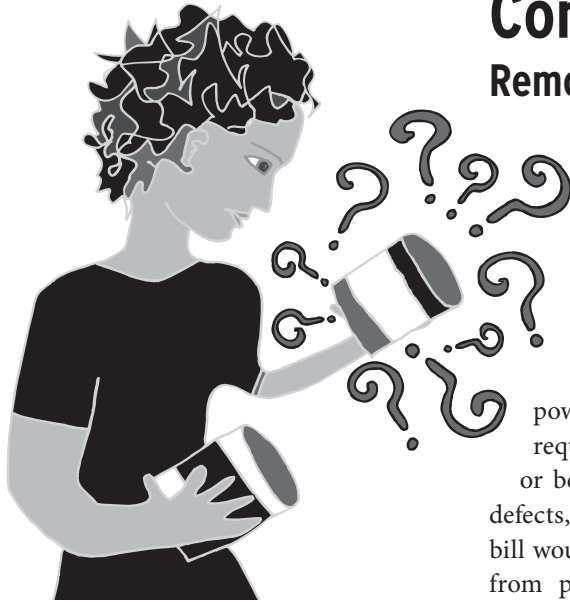




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www.organicconsumers.org

ORGANIC BYTES

Health, Justice, & Sustainability 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!



Congress Blindfolds Consumers Removing the Right to Know What's in Your Food

On March 8, despite massive public opposition, including 50,000 calls and letters from supporters of the Organic Consumers Association, the House of Representatives passed the controversial "national food uniformity" labeling law, which would eliminate over 200 state food safety labeling laws. The law basically takes away local government and states' power to require food safety labels such as those required in California and other states on foods or beverages that are likely to cause cancer, birth defects, allergic reactions, or mercury poisoning. The bill would also prevent local municipalities and states from passing laws requiring that genetically engineered foods and ingredients be labeled. Under the bill, hundreds of state laws and regulations would be eliminated, including those relating to the safety of milk, fish, and shellfish. In order to become law, the bill will now have to go to the Senate for a vote. Because of the enormous public backlash against the bill, Washington analysts believe the bill will have great difficulty passing in the Senate. OCA and other public interest organizations have vowed to go "all out" to stop this anti-democratic, anti-consumer bill in the Senate. **TAKE ACTION:**

www.organicconsumers.org/rd/labeling.cfm

FACT OF THE WEEK: In the 2006 election cycle, big agribusiness has already given \$14,562,681 in campaign contributions to members of Congress.

Source: www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.asp?Ind=A

US Votes Against 132 Nations on Genetically Engineered Food

Biotech corporations are facing off against developing nations and most of the world this week in Brazil in a debate over the UN's Biosafety Protocol. The precedent-setting treaty is an international agreement signed in Jan. 2000 by 132 nations. But the three main countries that grow genetically modified crops (the us, Argentina and Canada) refuse to sign it, because the law would require that countries be notified if the grains they are importing are genetically modified. Biotech companies want that language removed from the treaty, saying that developing nations and anti-GMO consumers in industrialized nations are not entitled to know whether or not their food is genetically engineered. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/goliatho60313.cfm

Reader Poll Should We Boycott? Please Cast Your Vote

How should the OCA deal with the escalating problem of large corporations weakening regulations and taking advantage of loopholes in the organic standards? You decide... as one of more than 850,000 members and supporters of the OCA, your input is needed. Should the OCA call for a boycott of organic brands that are lobbying to weaken organic laws and taking advantage of loopholes in the organic standards? (Example: producing so-called "organic" dairy products on factory farms, where the animals are imported from conventional dairy farms, and then kept in intensive confinement, with no access to pasture.) Please vote on the strategic direction of OCA's Safeguard Organic Standards campaign at: www.organicconsumers.org/chat/viewtopic.php?t=587

Quick Biodemocracy Tidbits



OCA is gearing up its **BioDemocracy Alliance** campaign this spring. Congressman Dennis Kucinich is expected to soon rein-

troduce the Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act, which would require mandatory labeling of Genetically Engineered (GE) foods. Please send a letter to Congress and let them know you want GE foods labeled.

OCA is also happy to be organizing a new round of educational and motivational house parties utilizing *The GMO Trilogy*, a new DVD and CD set produced by bestselling author and biotech critic Jeffrey Smith. Get involved here:

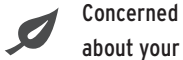
www.organicconsumers.org/ge-free.htm

Don't forget, April 6th is National GE Labeling Call-In Day, make sure you call your Congressman! Tell them you want safety testing and labels on all GE foods and ingredients, similar to laws already in place in Europe and many other countries. Learn more:

www.organicconsumers.org/ge-free.htm

Written and edited by
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Quick Tidbits



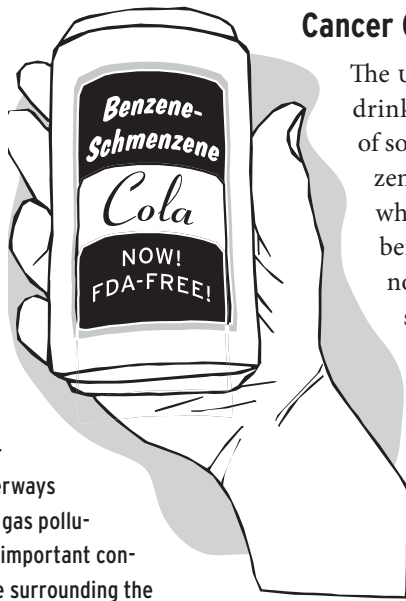
Concerned about your kids and future generations? Go organic... A new study published by the National Academy of Sciences confirms previous studies, showing that organic farming reduces nitrogen leaching into waterways as well as greenhouse gas pollution. "This study is an important contribution to the debate surrounding the sustainability of organic agriculture, one of the most contentious topics in agricultural science worldwide," says Professor John Reganold, co-author of the study. www.organicconsumers.org/organic/nitrogen060309.cfm



USDA Secretary Mike Johanns met with Japanese leaders on Friday to convince them the US beef supply is safe from Mad Cow Disease. Unfortunately, on Saturday, the day after the meeting, the USDA announced the discovery of another new case of Mad Cow Disease in the US. Japan, the top importer of US beef, has recently banned US beef imports, due to concerns over safety of the meat. Despite objections from Japanese and American consumers, the USDA still allows the feeding of blood, slaughterhouse waste, and manure to animals—practices banned in Europe and Japan in order to prevent the spread of the disease. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow.htm



A new study published in the journal *Pediatrics* reveals kids who drink just one sweetened beverage per day can pile on an average of 15 lbs. of additional fat per year, in comparison to children who drink non-sweetened beverages. www.organicconsumers.org/school/study2.cfm



Cancer Causing Chemical Found in Some Soft Drinks

The US, UK, and China have launched investigations into benzene in soft drinks. Results of independent laboratory tests in New York show a couple of soft drinks in the US contain as much as four times above the legal benzene limit for drinking water. Benzene, a known carcinogen, is formed when two ingredients in the beverage react with each other: sodium benzoate (a preservative) and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). The FDA will not release the names of the beverages with high benzene levels but says the companies are being asked to change their ingredients. www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/benzene060303.cfm

Buy Local and Organic to Help Prevent Climate Chaos

Global climate change has become our most important environmental threat. Citizen efforts to reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) have involved calls for conversion to renewable energy & increased automobile fuel efficiency. But did you know that 20-25% of GHGs are created by the production and long-distance transportation of our food? The Mayor of London recognizes this important fact and is taking strategic measures to boost locally grown and organic foods in the region. Plans include high taxes on long-haul transport trucks and providing incentives to hospitals & schools to purchase local and organic foods. "I want London to set a standard for other cities around the world to follow in reducing its own contribution to climate change. How we deal with food will play an important role in this," says Mayor Ken Livingstone. www.organicconsumers.org/btc/london022706.cfm

Attention Minnesotans: You are Invited to an Organic Party

On Friday, March 24th 2006, the Food For Folk Project is hosting a benefit dinner at St. Mark's Church in St. Paul. The event features a wild salmon dinner served with locally grown organic vegetables, a talk by University of Northern Iowa adjunct faculty member and Cedar Falls City Council member Kamyar Enshayan entitled "Locally Grown Food Security," and entertainment by St. Paul's award winning country gospel band House of Mercy. All proceeds will go to the Food for Folk Project, which provides fresh, organic produce and sustainably raised meats and eggs from Whole Farm Co-op to low-income, working poor, and homeless populations. More info: www.wesminrcd.org/foodforfolk.html

Gaia not Guns

What's the relationship between sustainable agriculture, the environment, and massive military spending? Ronnie Cummins, National Director of the OCA addresses this issue in this week's blog. According to Cummins, US taxpayers are currently supporting a military budget of over \$500 billion a year, enough to pay for the cost of eliminating global hunger and stabilizing the global climate. The annual costs of waging the war in Iraq and maintaining military bases in the Middle East alone are sufficient to launch a program to reduce greenhouse gases by 75%, feed the world's hungry, and convert the US economy to renewable energy & organic and sustainable agricultural practices. Learn more and post your thoughts in OCA's blog here: www.organicconsumers.org/rd/ronnie1.cfm