



# ORGANIC BYTES

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[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

Health, Justice, & Sustainability News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association

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## Japanese Officials Resign Over US Mad Cow Debacle

Despite new cases of Mad Cow disease surfacing in the US, Japan is reopening its borders to American beef. As a result of the policy decision half of the members of Japan's beef-safety government advisory panel have resigned. Morikazu Shinagawa, a researcher at the national Institute of Animal

Health and a resigning member of the panel, told Kyodo News Service he "couldn't continue to work" on the panel because the conclusion to resume imports was preordained by the government. Japan banned US beef imports in 2003 due to weak beef safety regulations in the US. While 100% of cows in Japan, aged 24 months and older, are tested for the Mad Cow disease, only 1% of the 35 million cattle slaughtered annually in the US are tested. Japan recently caved to pressure from the Bush Administration and lift the ban on US beef imports while appointing new "experts" to its beef safety advisory panel. [www.organicconsumers.org/artman/publish/article\\_227.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/artman/publish/article_227.cfm)



Aurora Organic Dairy Farm is the largest "organic" factory farm in the U.S., housing over 4,000 cows

## Organic Bytes Readers Vote to Launch Boycott Against Horizon and Aurora

In the last two issues of *Organic Bytes* we invited our readers to vote on the direction of OCA's Safeguard Organic Standards Campaign by taking part in an online poll. The poll asked,

"Should the Organic Consumers Association 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)?" We'd like to thank everyone who took part in that poll. The results indicate a resounding 96% of participants believe the OCA should launch a boycott. In response, and in alliance with the Cornucopia Institute, the OCA sent out a national press release last week calling on consumers to boycott these brands. Two of the largest organic dairy companies in the nation, Horizon Organic (a subsidiary of Dean Foods) and supplier to Wal-Mart and many health food stores; and Aurora Organic, a supplier of private brand name organic milk to Costco, Safeway, Giant, Wild Oats and others, are purchasing the majority of their milk from feedlot dairies where the cows have little or no access to pasture. The National Standards Board is currently accepting public comments regarding factory farm dairy.

Take action here: [www.organicconsumers.org/nosb.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/nosb.htm)


## Superweeds Spreading in Genetically Engineered Cotton Fields

Pesticide resistant weeds are introducing a new problem to cotton farmers. Traditionally, herbicide resistance is dealt with by simply changing the herbicide. But according to North Carolina State weed scientist Alan York, farmers are running out of options: there are no more effective pesticides to switch to. The majority of farmers in the Cotton Belt are now growing Monsanto's genetically engineered Roundup Ready cotton, which is resistant to glyphosate pesticides. As a result of the heavy use of glyphosate in the area, varieties of pigweed have developed an immunity to it. Tests at the University of Georgia showed that the pigweed Palmer Amaranth has developed amazing resistance to glyphosate. Scientists doused the weeds three times with a quadruple concentrated dose of glyphosate, but the pigweed continued to grow and multiply. "If you grow cotton in the Southeast, and you have Palmer amaranth in your fields, looking at side-by-side comparisons of resistant and non-resistant pigweed should scare you to death," York says. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/cotton.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/cotton.cfm)




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## Quick Tidbits

 All of Poland's 16 agricultural regions, representing over two million family farmers, have officially declared themselves free of genetically engineered crops. The Polish government recently said that it is opposed to the production of genetically modified crops and would only allow food with genetically engineered ingredients under highly regulated conditions.

[www.organicconsumers.org/ge/poland060406.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/poland060406.cfm)

 The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy has released a new study revealing arsenic is present in most non-organic chicken products. Testing of 155 samples from supermarket chicken products found 55 percent carried detectable levels arsenic, a highly toxic carcinogen. All 90 fast food chicken products contained arsenic. The toxin levels are due to the industry practice of adding arsenic to chicken feed with the goal of killing parasites and promoting growth. Arsenic is not allowed in organic chicken feed. [www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/arsenic060405.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/arsenic060405.cfm)

 Quebec has passed the toughest rules in North America regarding common gardening pesticides. In a move that has thrilled environmentalists and health advocates, the provincial government has asked its citizens to go back to the traditional ways of gardening and has banned 210 lawn and chemical products from store shelves. "This bold action sets a standard for excellence that other governments ignore at their peril," said Warren Bell, an association board member of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. [www.organicconsumers.org/organic/quebec.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/quebec.cfm)



## Childhood Obesity Causes Shortage in Car Seats

Thanks to increased consumption of fast foods and junk foods, the obesity level among American children has reached epidemic levels. In addition to the countless negative health effects of childhood obesity, a new study says the dietary problems have led to an unexpected shortage of car seats designed for overweight children. Research published in the April issue of *Pediatrics* indicates a shortage of over 100,000 car seats for obese children. Motor vehicle crashes account for 23 percent of deaths among infants and 30 percent among preschool-aged children, meaning car seats designed for the correct body type are essential. The problem is compounded for impoverished families, considering the average car seat designed for an obese child costs \$200-300, which is three to four times more expensive than conventional car seats. [www.organicconsumers.org/artman/publish/article\\_.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/artman/publish/article_.cfm)

## European Leader Says Biotech Corporations Provide Biased Research

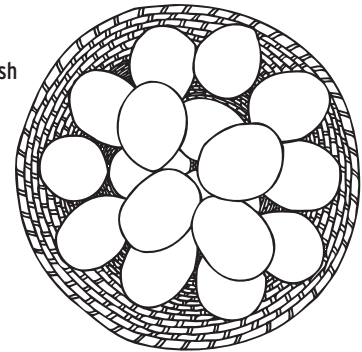
Europe's environment chief has announced that more studies on long term impacts of genetically engineered (GE) crops must be implemented before any new GE crops can be approved. Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas said that too many of the current GE regulatory decisions are based on biased data provided by the biotech industry, which put GE crops in a biased positive light. "Applications for cultivation of GMO products raise a whole new series of possible risks to the environment, notably potential longer-term effects that could impact on biodiversity," he said. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/awed\\_.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/awed_.cfm)

## Tip of the Week Natural Homemade Egg Dyes

*Why color your eggs with artificial dyes when organic ingredients can be used?*

### Tips:

- 1 · Try both fresh and frozen produce.
- 2 · Canned produce will produce much paler colors.
- 3 · Boiling the colors with vinegar will result in deeper colors (add 2 Tablespoons of vinegar per 4 cups of boiling water, and add your chopped fruits and veggies to that).
- 4 · Soak eggs 10 minutes in each color.



### Colors:

- Lavender: Purple Grape Juice
- Violet: Red Onions Skins
- Blue: Blueberries
- Red: Cabbage Leaves or juice from pickled beets
- Green: Spinach Leaves
- Greenish Yellow: Yellow Delicious Apple Peels
- Yellow: Orange or Lemon Peels
- Brown: Strong Coffee
- Pink: Beets or cranberry juice