



www.organicconsumers.org

March 5, 2003 · Volume 1, Issue 8

Quote Of The Week

"When you come to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on."

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Boner Of A Misnomer

Just because a food product is labeled "USDA Organic" doesn't mean it actually has to be organic. This is essentially what Congress decided two weeks ago, when they approved legislation that allows meat to be labeled USDA Organic even if the livestock has been raised on non-organic feed. The Organic Consumers Association received national press coverage as it mobilized its supporters to block this measure, but industry pressure was too strong. "This sets a terrible precedent," said Simon Harris, spokesman for the OCA, "If you can't comply with the regulations, then don't produce organic meat." According to an article in the *L.A. Times*, this congressional action has "undone what it took organic farmers and environmentalists more than a decade to achieve." The OCA is now mounting a massive campaign to overturn this bill as Senator Leahy (D-VT) and Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) introduce the Organic Restoration Act, which would effectively repeal this gutting of the Organic Standards Act by Congress. The OCA is calling on concerned consumers across the U.S. to let Congress know that labeling a food product "organic" means it should be exactly that.

Read all about it:

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/021503_organic.cfm

Take Action:

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/022703_organic.cfm

ORGANIC BYTES

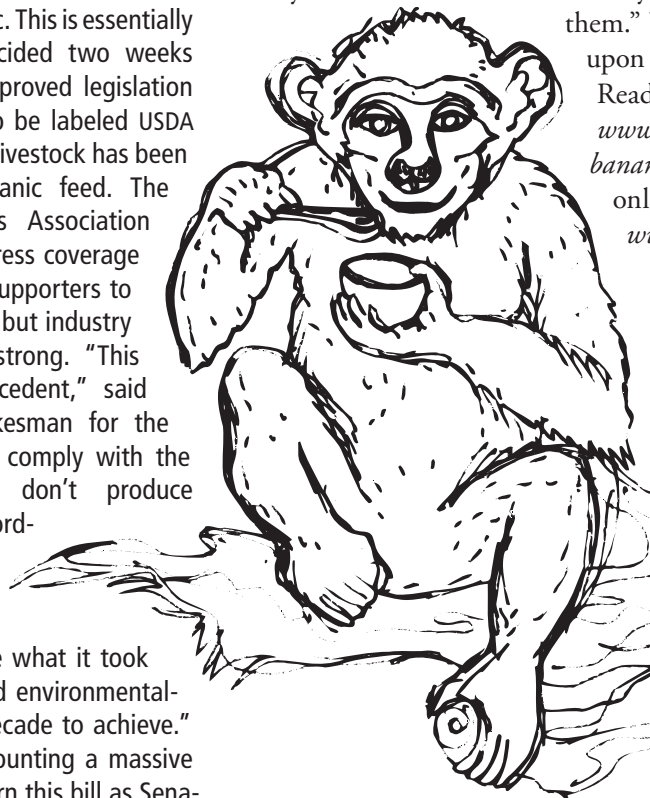
Organic News with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association

Apes Prefer Organic

Monkeys at Copenhagen Zoo are going ape over organic bananas and other fruits, rejecting non-organic foods left in their cages. Copenhagen Zoo, which hopes to be awarded a "green label" as an environmental zoo, began last year feeding its animals at least 10 percent organic products. "The tapirs and chimpanzees are choosing organically grown bananas over the others," zookeeper Niels Melchiorson told the magazine *Oekologisk Jordbrug (Ecological Agriculture)*. "The chimpanzees are able to tell the difference between the organic and the regular fruit. If we give them organic and traditional bananas, they systematically choose the organic bananas, which they eat with the skin on. But they peel the traditional bananas before eating them." Unfortunately, we humans have to rely upon labeling to distinguish the good products.

Read all about it:

www.organicconsumers.org/Organic/bananas022403.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of Organic Food articles: www.organicconsumers.org/organlink.htm



Lie To Me

The courts have officially ruled that it is okay for television news to lie and distort the truth. Accepting a defense rejected by three other Florida state judges, a Florida appeals court has reversed the \$425,000 jury verdict in favor of journalist Jane Akre. Here's the full scoop: Jane Akre and Steve Wilson had produced an expose for WTVT/Fox News of Tampa about how Florida supermarkets were renegeing on a promise not to sell hormone-laden milk from rBGH-injected cows.

In their investigations, they also found many troubling things about the artificial hormone and its maker, Monsanto Company. Fox News had already advertised the expose, but the day before it was to air, the station received a threatening letter from Monsanto's lawyers. Fox ordered Akre to retract her story and do a slanted piece in favor of Monsanto, but Akre refused, on the grounds that it would be dishonest journalism. As a result, she was fired. Akre sued, but a Florida appeals court has now ruled that it is technically not against any law, rule, or regulation to deliberately lie or distort the news on a television broadcast. Akre and Wilson are meeting with their attorneys to discuss a possible appeal of the ruling to Florida's Supreme Court, and are expected to have an announcement and further comment soon. Read all about it: www.organicconsumers.org/rbgh/akre022603.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of rBGH articles: www.organicconsumers.org/rbghlink.html

Keeping Secrets

The force of globalization has resulted in some of the largest worldwide protests in history. Although proponents of globalization glorify the process with euphemisms like "free trade", even the United Nations has made statements of how it benefits industrial agriculture while putting the small family farmer out of business. Now negotiations are underway for the new US/Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). President Bush and corporate CEOs across the U.S. seem to be CAFTA's biggest fans, while farmers across Central America are adamantly opposed. According to the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, CAFTA will "push more people into poverty while increasing the wealth of an elite few." Although CAFTA represents the most important agreement ever signed between the US and Central America, Bush is keeping the documents confidential; and until he signs them, not even the US Congress is allowed to see them. The agreement is expected to pass by the end of 2003.

"Secrecy is the beginning of tyranny."
Robert A. Heinlein

Read all about it:
www.organicconsumers.org/corp/cafta.cfm Globalization:
www.organicconsumers.org/corplink.html

Related Factoid Tidbits

- Because of its link to increased cancer risks, rBGH is banned in every industrialized nation in the world--except for the U.S.
- Monsanto's rBGH is the biggest selling dairy animal drug on the U.S. market.
- According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the use of rBGH in cows may lead to increased amounts of pus and bacteria in milk.
- 95-99% of toxic chemical residues in the American diet come from animal sources. Sources: Food and Drug Administration, Monsanto Company, Department of Health



The Story of Super-weeds

A *New York Times* op-ed dated February 19 makes uncommon sense. It points out that the emergence of weeds resistant to glyphosphate, better known as Roundup, was predictable given the tremendous overuse of the herbicide. A major part of the problem is due to Monsanto's decision to splice their best-selling product right into the genes of plants. Seventy-five percent of the soybean crop planted in this country last year was Roundup Ready, as was 65 percent of the cotton and 10 percent of the corn. With that kind of accelerated evolutionary pressure, the recent discovery of weeds resistant to Roundup is "simply natural adaptation at work." And this is why, the writer says, there has been so much opposition to Monsanto's other genetically engineered products—corn and other crops with toxins from the Bt bacterium spliced into every cell of every plant. "Bt is a safe, natural and effective weapon for gardeners and farmers, and to lessen its effectiveness by overusing it, like Roundup, would be a terrible waste. The logic of industrial farming is to use your best tools until they're worthless, and to hasten their worthlessness by using them as much as you can." Read all about it: www.organicconsumers.org/gel/misfire022103.cfm To learn more, visit OCA's online library of GE Food articles: www.organicconsumers.org/gelink.html For many more food issue daily headlines: www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

Organic Bytes is a publication of the Organic Consumers Association
6101 Cliff Estate Road, Little Marais, MN 55614
218-226-4164 · fax: 218-353-7652

Subscribe to *Organic Bytes*: www.organicconsumers.org/publications.cfm
Help support the work of the Organic Consumers Association with a tax deductible donation: www.securemysite.com/greenpeople/ocadonate.cfm

Important notes to co-ops and natural food store subscribers:
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!