



# 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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## New Online Video Games 'Sell Junk Food to Kids

Advertising to children via the internet is increasing at an explosive rate, according to a new study from the Kaiser Family Foundation. The study analyzed 77 food company websites, most of which marketed junk food to children via methods such as free online video games, where the game characters and themes coincide with the product being advertised. For example, Kellogg's "Funk K Town" website invites kids to take cyber-game adventures on "Cinnalsland" with Toucan Sam, where kids can learn about how much "fun" can be found in the sugary breakfast cereals Apple Jacks and Froot Loops. The Federal Trade Commission claims they have no jurisdiction over this type of advertising, which would be illegal on television. In other words corporate advertisers have free rein to misinform and exploit children using the internet. "Children below the age of 8 have a unique vulnerability to commercial persuasion," said Dale Kunkel, a member of the Institute of Medicine committee that studied the effects of marketing food to children. Learn more:

[www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1176.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1176.cfm)

Written and edited by  
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## Organic Boycott Spreads Organic Outlaws Labeling Factory Farm Milk as "USDA Organic"

In April, OCA launched a boycott of two leading organic dairy brands and distributors, Horizon (a division of Dean Foods) and Aurora, for mislabeling their products as "USDA Organic." All of Aurora's and much of Horizon's "organic" milk is coming from factory farm feedlots where the cows have been brought in from conventional farms and have little or no access to pasture. After three months, thousands of consumers and a number of co-ops and natural food stores have joined the boycott.

In addition, OCA is calling for a boycott of Horizon's sister soy brands—Silk soymilk and White Wave tofu—which have begun turning away from us organic farmers and instead importing cheap organic soybeans from China and Brazil, where labor rights and environmental standards are routinely violated. Please send an email message to the Shameless Seven, telling them to stop violating organic standards and to source certified organic foods and ingredients from North American family farmers. And please forward this email to interested friends and colleagues.

**Take Action:** [www.organicconsumers.org/rd/aurora.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rd/aurora.cfm)

**Please make a donation to help OCA carry out this boycott:**  
[www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

## Scientific Foul Play at the FDA

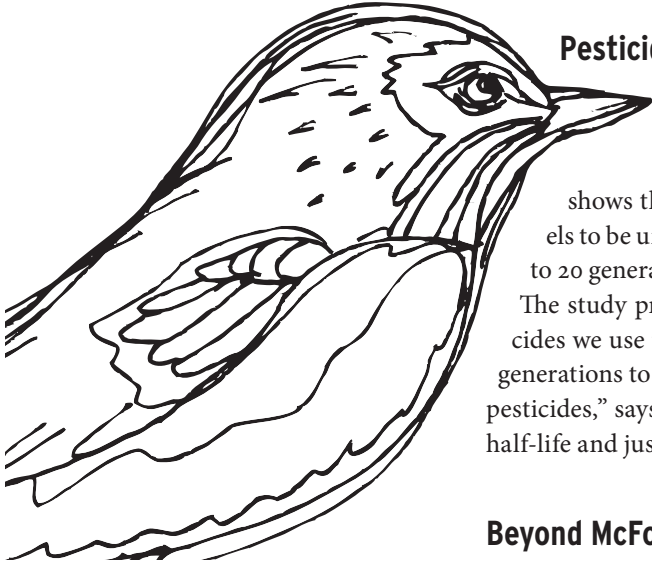
The Union of Concerned Scientists has released a survey of scientists who work for the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The survey reveals that one-fifth of FDA scientists "have been asked, for non-scientific reasons, to inappropriately exclude or alter technical information or their conclusions in a FDA scientific document." The study strongly suggests that the FDA is not adequately regulating products that significantly impact public health, including food, drugs, vaccines, and medical devices. The survey also indicates that 61 percent of the respondents knew of cases where FDA political appointees have "inappropriately injected themselves into FDA determinations or actions." Eighty one percent of FDA scientists in the survey agreed that the "public would be better served if the independence and authority of FDA post-market safety systems were strengthened."

**Learn more:** [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1179.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1179.cfm)



**Expand the boycott to  
five grocery chains selling  
bogus organic milk from  
Aurora Organic:**

- Costco's "Kirkland Signature"
- Publix's "High Meadows"
- Safeway's "O" Organics brand
- Wild Oats' organic milk
- Giant's "Nature's Promise."



## Pesticides' Silent Spring: Why Robins aren't Singing

A new study indicates that robins and other birds are still suffering damage from exposure to DDT, despite the fact the pesticide was banned in the United States over three decades ago. New research shows that the area of the brain affected causes birds with high exposure levels to be unable to sing and protect territory. Researchers estimate that at least 15 to 20 generations of robins have been affected since the pesticide was first applied. The study provides further evidence that many of the toxic chemicals and pesticides we use today will continue to impact the environment and public health for generations to come. "Yes, it happened historically, but there are still problems with pesticides," says Andrew Iwaniuk, author of the study. "They have an extremely long half-life and just because we use one today, that doesn't mean it will always be safe."

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1209.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1209.cfm)

## Beyond McFood: Hospitals Move Toward Natural and Organic

Two thousand hospitals across the us are finally slamming the door on junk foods and low-grade institutional grub. Hospital cafeteria and room meals across the us are notoriously tasteless and nutritionally deficient. After hearing from their doctor or nurse that it's best to stay away from trans-fats, excessive salt, and high sugar foods, a patient can then typically visit the hospital's own cafeteria and chow down on a meal of french fries, chicken nuggets, soda pop, jello and cheese pizza. But this long-standing tradition may gradually be changing. Last week, MedAssets, a leading group purchasing organization for the health care industry, struck a deal with United Natural Foods Incorporated (UNFI), the largest wholesale distributor of natural and organic foods in the country. The deal will bring natural and organic foods into more than 2,000 hospitals in the us.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1182.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1182.cfm)

## Mad Cows and Crazy Bureaucrats

Despite mounting public pressure for universal testing for Mad Cow disease, USDA Secretary Mike Johanns has announced a 90% cut back on testing cattle at slaughter. Two cases of Mad Cow disease have been discovered in the us in the last year, likely meaning that other undiscovered cases have entered the food supply. In Japan, 100% of cows age 24 months and older are tested for the fatal brain-wasting disease before slaughter. In contrast, the us currently tests less than 1% of the 35 million cattle slaughtered annually. The USDA is now claiming that testing 1% of all cattle is "unnecessary" and "too expensive." Dr. Michael Hansen, an expert on Mad Cow disease at Consumers Union, which publishes *Consumer Reports*, described the latest USDA move as "playing Russian Roulette with public health."

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1207.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1207.cfm)

In related news, a Kansas-based meat packing company, Creekstone Farms Premium Beef, filed for summary judgment in its suit against the USDA last week. The USDA claims Creekstone does not have the right to voluntarily test all of its beef for the brain-wasting disease. In response, Creekstone filed a lawsuit against the USDA, saying the company has the right to test all of its meat for Mad Cow Disease and that there are no federal laws saying you can't go above and beyond government regulations for food safety. The USDA has until August 25 to respond to Creekstone's filing.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_1110.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1110.cfm)

### Quick Tidbits



**TIP OF THE WEEK:** Would you like to have the tools and insights to help drive genetically engineered foods off the market? Recently, the Genetic Engineering Action Network published the *The Local Organizing Toolkit* which is a compilation of materials that can help individuals organize local grassroots groups and carry out winnable, strategic campaigns. *The Local Organizing Toolkit* consists of eight chapters: Develop a Local Group, Develop a Campaign Plan, Get Media Coverage, Local Fundraising & Special Events, Local Resolutions, rBGH-Free Dairies, GM-Free Schools, and GE-Free Farmers Markets. Download the kit online at no cost: [www.geaction.org/new.html](http://www.geaction.org/new.html)



**MOVIE OF THE WEEK:** According to Google Video and other mainstream video download websites, the most popular movie on the internet is a documentary called *Loose Change 2nd Edition*. After millions of downloads, the hard-hitting documentary has been called "the internet's first blockbuster." *Loose Change* is free, can be viewed on any computer, and offers a detailed analysis of the scientific and logistical problems inherent in the US government's official story of what happened on 9/11 (note: some computer users may need to download Google Video Player to make the movie play more smoothly). [www.loosechange911.com](http://www.loosechange911.com)