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ORGANIC BYTES

Health, Justice, & Sustainability News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
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Government Report Offers Sobering Statistics About the 2006 Farmer

Last week, the US Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service issued updated estimates regarding 2006 farm income. Here are some quick statistics from the report:

- ▶ Net farm income is forecast to be \$54.4 billion in 2006, down from 2005 by \$19.4 billion (a 26% decline).
- ▶ Government payments are forecast to decline \$6.2 billion.
- ▶ The average family farm will generate 86.7 percent of their income from off-farm sources in 2006. In other words, less than 14% of income is generated from the farm, itself.

Source: www.ers.usda.gov/Features/farmincome/2006/August/

Host a GMO Trilogy House Party or Community Showing and Beat Back Monsanto

OCA and grassroots activists in California recently defeated a "Monsanto Bill" aimed at taking away local communities' rights to ban genetically engineered crops (www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1871.cfm). Now the time has come to go on the offensive. OCA has teamed up with best selling author Jeffrey Smith to offer a set of DVDs called The GMO Trilogy, a 3-disc set, that includes the award winning documentary, *Unnatural Selection and Hidden Dangers in Kids' Meals: Genetically Engineered Food*. You can order the Trilogy online (www.gmotrilogy.com) or better yet, buy it at your local natural food store. The GMO Trilogy is a must have tool to educate your friends and family, beat back Monsanto and the Biotech Bullies. Learn more:

www.organicconsumers.org/houseparty.htm

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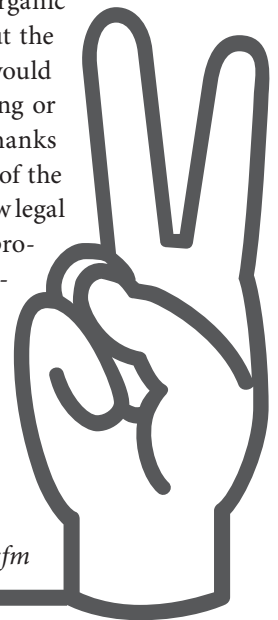
Towards a "Do-Something Congress"

In last week's issue of *PR Watch* (www.prwatch.org), author Conor Kenny gave readers some insight into the work ethic of the US Congress in 2006. Pointing out that President Harry S Truman infamously derided the 1947-1948 Congress as the "Do-Nothing Congress" for meeting for only 108 days, Kenny ponders what Truman would have thought of our modern-day Congress, which is projected to spend only 79 days in session in 2006. "While most Americans returned from their holiday vacation in the first week of January, the House took nearly the entire month off, commencing the session on January 31st," says Kenny. "In February, the House met for only 47 hours, an average work week for many Americans." As the 2006 election season heats up, the Organic Consumers Fund needs your help to build a new Congress that will work hard to bring issues of environmental sustainability and human health to the forefront of American politics. Invite your local candidates to take part in a survey that will help voters determine where they stand on these important issues here: www.organicconsumersfund.org/voterguide.cfm

Organic Farmers and Oil Pipeline Reach a Compromise

A ground-breaking legal precedent was established last week between organic farmers, consumers, and oil pipeline companies. OCA, following a legal initiative spearheaded by Gardens of Eagan and supported by other organic farms in Minnesota, alerted our Minnesota network about the state's plan to allow the construction of an oil pipeline that would have cut across several organic farms, thereby undermining or destroying the farms' hard-fought organic certification. Thanks to the Minnesota organic community and the willingness of the Minnesota Pipeline Company to respect organic farms, a new legal precedent has been established in the state that essentially provides special protections to organic farms (given the expensive and difficult process of acquiring organic certification). According to Ronnie Cummins, National Director of the Organic Consumers Association, "Part of the reason for taking this legal action was not only to prevent this pipeline from disrupting several organic farms in Minnesota but also to set a legal precedent for any other organic farms in the state, or anywhere in the United States.

Learn more: www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1972.cfm



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Quick Tidbits

Update on Rice Contamination

Last week, *Organic Bytes* reported on the USDA's announcement that a variety of genetically engineered (GE) rice unapproved for human consumption has contaminated the US food supply. Since then, Japan has banned imports of US rice, while the EU is requiring that all rice imports from the US be tested for contamination. With the US rice industry in turmoil, the USDA admits it has no idea how extensive the contamination is. Rice farmers say they don't feel the USDA is adequately monitoring the biotech industry. "This is real money that farmers are losing," said Arkansas Rice Growers Association Executive Director Greg Yielding, who said he has fielded dozens of calls from frantic rice farmers. "It is a big deal. We do not feel that USDA and APHIS have adequate funds or staff to do this job. They can't tell you where anything is even though they get permits for it." Learn more:

www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1865.cfm

Idiot's Guide to the GE Debate

As the biotech industry continues to develop new propaganda for convincing the world to stomach it's genetically engineered foods, the debate over the issue seems to be getting as complex as the DNA chains, themselves. You're not alone if you find yourself struggling to explain to your friends why you are leery about genetically engineered foods. Here's a quick and easy-to-understand "Q&A" on GE foods that will take two minutes to read but will leave you with a lifetime of essential information about this critical issue:

www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1860.cfm

Bush Administration Goes to Court Again

Opening briefs were filed before the US Supreme Court last Thursday in a case challenging the Bush administration's reluctance to issue regulations to control global warming. California and 11 other states have joined with environmental groups in a lawsuit they hope will compel the US Environmental Protection Agency to take action to curb the release of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases entering the atmosphere. Learn more:

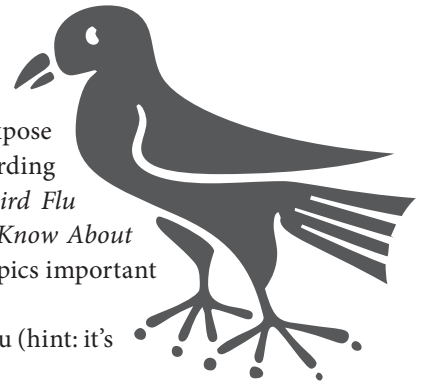
www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1893.cfm

Book of the Week: The Great Bird Flu Hoax

A new book by renowned physician and dietary expert Dr. Joseph Mercola seeks to expose what he calls a "us government hoax" regarding avian flu. The book, entitled *The Great Bird Flu Hoax: The Truth They Don't Want You to Know About the Next Big Pandemic*, hits a number of topics important to organic consumers, including:

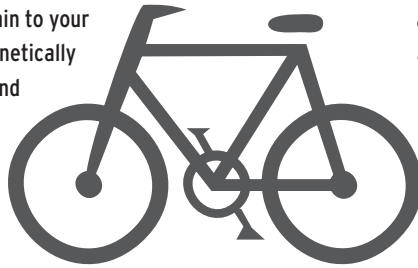
- 🐦 The real culprit in the spread of bird flu (hint: it's related to factory farms).
- 🐦 Who is really profiting the most from the bird flu panic.
- 🐦 How you can help protect yourself and your family from the bird flu by simply and easily modifying your body's natural defense system.
- 🐦 How major meat and other food producers are using the threat of terrorism to enforce oppressive federal regulations to snuff out their small farm competition.
- 🐦 The one common risk factor that nearly everyone infected with bird flu has (you probably don't have it).
- 🐦 New legislation being pushed through by big pharmaceutical companies.

Pre-order your book here and receive a 35% discount: www.thegreatbirdfluhoax.com/



Schools Go Green

Looking for a little good news about the future of our planet? Schools across the us are back in session, and a number of colleges are moving away from business as usual toward sustainability and health. The University of Washington in Seattle is just one of many examples of how educational institutions can set an example for how to do things the right way:



- 🚲 UW students are exploring how to use cooking oil from campus eateries to fuel university cars.
- 🚲 The student body agreed to pay up to \$10.50 a quarter to buy renewable electricity—becoming one of the first in the state to go 100 percent green on the main campus.
- 🚲 Food compost from the cafeterias fertilizes the flowers instead of going into the garbage.
- 🚲 Due to pressure from students, campus eateries serve locally grown foods, organic fruits and vegetables and fair-trade coffee.

- 🚲 Students helped the University build the new Urban Horticulture building in an ecologically friendly manner. The building features a garden roof, second-growth Washington wood and recycled concrete.

Learn more: www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_1797.cfm

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