

ORGANIC VIEW

A Publication of the Organic Consumers Association

Why Americans Are Voting with Forks, Knives & Wallets

Membership Update
Winter 2000 - 2001



Cutting through the rhetoric and slick PR of yet another electoral season, it's obvious that most politicians are still in denial about America's food and farm crisis. When was the last time we heard a politician in Washington (except for Ralph Nader) or in our state capital talk about the fact that we have 76 million cases of food poisoning a year; that 16% of all males and 13% of all women can look forward to getting a food-related case of cancer; that 8% of our children have food allergies; that 16% of our children are diagnosed with behavioral or learning disabilities; that food-related antibiotic-resistant diseases are a growing public health problem; that the majority of the population are overweight or obese; and that we have a literal epidemic of diet-related heart disease? Not to mention that 30% of our topsoil is gone; that conventional farmers spray a billion pounds of toxic pesticides and apply 12 billion pounds of chemical fertilizers every year; that industrial agriculture is our greatest source of water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions; that toxic sewage sludge is routinely spread on non-organic farms; that thousands of species are going extinct; family farmers are going bankrupt; dead and diseased animal parts are being fed back to animals on a massive scale; and that the nation's slaughterhouses are filthy, disease-ridden, and inhumane.

America's organic consumers, animal protectionists, and environmentalists have a long way to go in terms of getting organized and making our presence felt in Washington, the state capitals, and on Main Street. But in the meantime, even though we're short on political candidates, millions of us have started voting everyday, with our forks and knives, with our pocketbooks and food dollars, and with our grassroots public education and mobilization efforts. And with this new type of food politics, we're having a major impact, if not yet in Washington, at least in the marketplace and in the court of public opinion.

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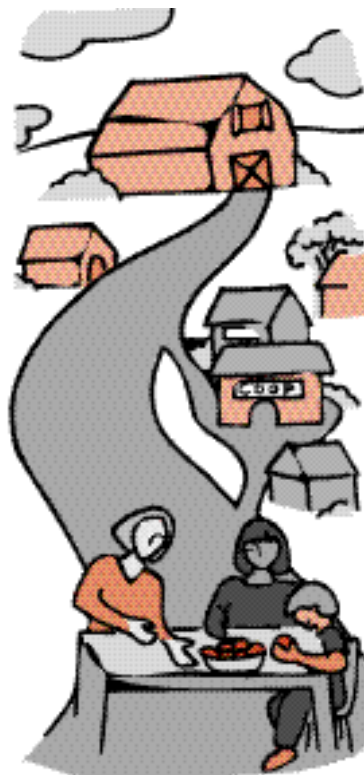
OCA Helps Drive Illegal GE Corn off the Market

*But the Biotech Industry
and Government Are Still
Up to their Old Tricks*

Agricultural biotechnology suffered a serious blow this fall, when the OCA's national coalition, the Genetically Engineered Food Alert (GEFA), broke the news that an illegal, likely allergenic variety (Cry9C) of genetically engineered (GE) corn called StarLink was a ingredient in a number of US consumer food products. The headline-grabbing scandal forced the recall of over 300 major brands including Kraft, Taco Bell, Safeway, and Mission Foods.

In 1998 the US Environmental Protection Agency had approved the commercial cultivation of StarLink corn—spliced with the powerful Bt toxin (*bacillus thuringiensis*)—but only for animal feed. Developed by a subsidiary of the French-German biotechnology conglomerate Aventis, StarLink corn was prohibited in human food products because of fears that this controversial Cry9C variety (50 to 100 times more potent than other Bt-spliced varieties of corn) could set off food allergies in humans.

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A Message from the Director

First of all, thank you. Because of your efforts and support the Organic Consumers Association continues to advance. The movement to drive genetically engineered (GE) foods and crops off the market and to build a healthy, equitable, humane, and organic food and fiber system grows stronger every day.

Over the past three years we have come a long way. We and our allies have put food politics on the national agenda. We've forced the USDA, through our SOS (Save Organic Standards) Campaign to back off from degrading organic standards. We've helped make genetic engineering one of the hottest issues in the country. We've pressured Frito-Lay, McDonald's, and other major food companies to begin to remove GE food ingredients from their brand-name products. Along with our coalition, the Genetically Engineered Food Alert, we've forced a recall of Kraft/Taco Bell, Safeway, and Mission Foods products, contaminated with an illegal and likely allergenic variety of gene-altered corn. We've taken to the streets in Seattle, in Washington, DC, and across the nation to protest the industrialization and globalization of our food supply and the corporate takeover of our political system. We have begun to build bridges between consumers, parents, students, activists, chefs, progressive retailers, and family farmers—a crucial alliance if we are to stop the spread of genetically engineered foods, phase-out the most dangerous practices of factory farming, and make the necessary transition to organic agriculture.

The Organic Consumers Association, despite overwhelming public support, has collided with a stubborn wall of resistance. We have been opposed by Big Business, Big Science, and Big Government every step of the way. We have learned through direct experience that the attempt of the powers-that-be to force genetically engineered foods on an unwilling public—as well as the rather dismal state of our food supply in general—are but symptoms of an even greater crisis: out-of-control corporations, out-of-control technology, and out-of-control government. In order to live in a world in which pure food, healthy people, and a sustainable environment are the norm rather than the exception, we need to restore a sense of democratic control over the nation's food and fiber policies. To do this we need to build a massive network of organic consumers—a network which can stimulate fundamental changes in public policy and marketplace practices.

Our strategy is simple yet fundamental. We want people to stop buying GE and chemically contaminated foods and vote with their forks, knives, and pocketbooks for organic products. We want consumers to continue to demand mandatory safety-testing and labeling of genetically engineered foods. Unless each and every GE food and crop is proven safe for human health and the environment, we want food corporations and grocers to remove all genetically engineered ingredients from their brand-name products. We want city governments, school districts, restaurants, colleges, and hospitals to support a moratorium on gene-foods and crops and to mandate a transition to organic. We want people to buy organic and "Fair Made" clothing and fibers, and boycott garments and apparel made in overseas sweatshops.

Beyond the Frankenfoods controversy, we want a phase-out of the most dangerous and unethical practices of factory farming and industrial agriculture—dangerous pesticides, exploitation of farm workers, antibiotics in animal feed, use of growth hormones, irradiation, use of toxic sewage sludge, intensive confinement of farm animals, and animal cannibalism—the dangerous practice of feeding rendered animal protein back to animals.

The road ahead is exciting, but of course it will not be easy. We welcome your advice, your financial support and, most of all, your participation in helping us build a nationwide public education and mobilization network. Join us!

-Ronnie Cummins

OCA Targets Starbucks

on Genetically Engineered Food & Beverages

Give me a Fair Trade organic coffee mocha, but hold the genetically engineered milk or chocolate, please.

Since July 1999, the OCA has been asking consumers to contact the Starbucks corporation to ask them to stop using milk and dairy products derived from cows injected with Monsanto's controversial recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) and to guarantee that their baked goods and chocolate do not contain genetically engineered ingredients (GE soy, corn, cotton seed, or canola). While some Starbucks outlets are using rBGH-free dairies as their primary milk suppliers, most are not. Although Starbucks now sells Fair Trade coffee beans in bulk, they are not yet brewing it.

We want Starbucks to start brewing coffee which is certified as Fair Trade and shade grown (90% of shade grown coffee is organic) and to

make a pledge that they will never use genetically engineered coffee beans (which are currently being field tested by biotech companies).

Please call or fax or email Starbucks. Tell them to ban rBGH milk, to guarantee that their chocolate and baked goods are GE-free, and to start brewing organic Fair Trade coffee. Tell them you'll take your business elsewhere if they can't give you a written assurance on these matters. Their toll-free telephone number is 800-235-2883. Their fax number is 206-447-3432. You can send them an email by going to their website <www.starbucks.com>



OCA Leads Campaign for GE Food Resolutions

A series of anti-genetic engineering resolutions are being passed by City Councils all across the US, unnerving the ag-biotech industry and sending a message to American politicians that GE foods and crops are becoming a "hot button" issue.

Most recently, City Councils in Ann Arbor, Minneapolis, and Cleveland, passed resolutions calling on the FDA to require mandatory labeling and safety-testing for GE foods and crops, while the Boulder City Council passed a law prohibiting the growing of GE crops on land owned by the city. These resolutions come in the wake of similar moves by city authorities in San Francisco, Boston and Austin, Texas.

The Minneapolis resolution, signed on August 30, not only calls for a moratorium on GE foods, but recommends that city authorities begin purchasing organic foods for city contracts, a move also under consideration by San Francisco officials.

Why Americans Are Voting...

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Organic foods are the fastest growing and most profitable segment of American agriculture, according to USDA statistics. A February 1997 poll by the biotech giant Novartis found that 54% of US consumers would prefer to see organic agriculture become the predominant form of food and fiber production—as opposed to conventional, chemical-intensive farming or agricultural biotechnology.

A June 2000 survey carried out by the National Center for Public Policy, a conservative think tank, indicated that 69% of the American public believe that the organic label on food products means that they are safer and better for the environment. This is the main reason why 10 million organic consumers will buy eight

billion dollars worth of organic food this year in the US. By 2010, at the current rate of growth, organic will constitute 10% of US agriculture. But of course this is not enough. In Europe trends indicate that 30-50% of all farming may be organic by the year 2010. More and more health and environmentally conscious Americans are turning to organic food. And for good reason:

Concern over toxic pesticide residues. A March 1999 study by *Consumer Reports* found that organic foods had little or no pesticide residues compared to conventional produce. A 1999 study by the Environmental Working Group found that millions of US children eating non-organic fruits and vegetables were ingesting dangerous amounts of a variety of pesticide neurotoxins and carcinogens.

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OCA Joins Nader Organization to Ban Junk Food in Schools

Organic Consumers Association has teamed up with Commercial Alert to convince public schools to stop promoting junk food and bad nutrition to our schoolchildren.

Commercial Alert, founded by Ralph Nader, is a national network of people who oppose the excesses of commercialism, advertising and marketing. It is coordinating a nationwide grassroots campaign to kick junk food peddlers and advertisers out of our public schools.

In July, Organic Consumers Association, Commercial Alert,

public health professionals, children's advocates, and others sent a letter to Senate and House Agriculture Committee Chairmen Richard Lugar (R-IN) and Larry Combest, (R-TX) and Ranking Members Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Charles Stenholm (D-TX), asking them to get the public schools to stop promoting junk food to children. The letter says that in thousands of schools "corporations and school administrators have joined together to market high-calorie, caffeinated, high-sugar candy and soda pop to impressionable children," which contradicts the purposes of the National School

Lunch Program. The letter is at <<http://www.essential.org/alert/junkfood/aglet.html>>.

Please tell your Members of Congress to stop the public schools from marketing junk food and to ensure that schools carry out the healthful intent of the National School Lunch Act.

The Congressional switchboard phone is 202-225-3121. To find the fax numbers and e-mail addresses of Members of Congress, see <<http://www.visi.com/juan/congress/zipitoit.html>>.

What you can say to your Members of Congress:

1. The public schools are aggressively promoting junk food and bad nutrition to impressionable schoolchildren.
2. Congress should stop the public schools from marketing junk food, and ensure that schools carry out the healthful intent of the National School Lunch Act.
3. Congress should require the public schools, in exchange for receiving federal funds for school lunches and other educational programs, not to advertise, sell or promote junk food to school children.
4. School lunch programs should be converted to healthier menus using organic ingredients.



Kids need good food!

What you can do in your community:

1. Find out if your local public schools sell junk food to schoolchildren.
2. Find out if your public schools advertise junk food to children. About 12,000 schools show Channel One, a televised in-school marketing program that aggressively advertises junk food to captive audiences of 8 million schoolchildren. Some schools also have marketing deals with soda companies such as Coca-Cola or Pepsi.
3. If your public schools sell or advertise junk food, ask your local school board members and school administrators to get rid of the junk food and junk food ads, Channel One, Coke and Pepsi.

For more information about the marketing of junk food to schoolchildren and Commercial Alert's campaign to stop it: visit Commercial Alert's website at <<http://www.essential.org/alert/>> or send email to <gary@essential.org> write or call: Gary Ruskin/Commercial Alert 1611 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 3A Washington, DC 20009 Phone: 202 296-2787 Fax 202 833-2406

New Report Examines Commercialism in Schools

Recognizing that the nation's 47.2 million students are an increasingly lucrative target market for consumer product companies, school districts are often willing to join with corporations. A new report released by the General Accounting Office begins: "In-school marketing has become a growing industry. Some marketing professionals are increasingly targeting children in schools, companies are becoming known for their success in negotiating contracts between school districts and beverage companies, and both educators and corporate managers are attending conferences to learn how to increase revenue from in-school marketing for their schools and companies."

About 25 percent of the nation's middle schools and high schools now show Channel One, a broadcast of news features and commercials, in their classrooms, and about 200 school districts have signed exclusive contracts with soft-drink companies to sell their beverages in schools. And in at least one case, students using computers in classrooms were offered incentives to enter personal data — names, addresses, information on personal habits — which would then be sold to advertisers. Full story: <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/09/14/business/14SCHO.html>> See also: Why The Whine: How Corporations Prey on Our Children <<http://www.mothing.com/SpecialArticles/Issue97/whine.htm>>

FDA To Release Proposed Regulations on GE Foods

Over the next 30 to 60 days the Food and Drug Administration is expected to publish proposed federal regulations on genetically engineered foods and crops. According to our sources in Washington, these forthcoming regulations will require neither pre-market safety-testing nor mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods—ignoring the wishes of the overwhelming majority of Americans. Analysts predict little or no change in this "no labeling, no safety-testing" policy whether Bush or Gore inhabits the White House.

Once the FDA publishes its proposed rules on genetic engineering there will likely be a 75 day public comment period. The OCA, joined by its allies across the country, will encourage thousands of consumers across the US to write, fax, or email the FDA demanding a moratorium on all GE foods and crops until or unless they are properly safety-tested, labeled, and insured.

Stay tuned to *BioDemocracy News* and our website <www.purefood.org> for further developments.

Free Electronic Newsletter!



BioDemocracy News, by Ronnie Cummins, National Director of the Organic Consumers Association, is our free electronic newsletter which contains news and analysis on Genetic Engineering, Factory Farming, and Organics.

To subscribe or request back issues go to our website: www.purefood.org

or contact: *BioDemocracy News* c/o Organic Consumers Association

6101 Cliff Estate Road, Little Marais, Minnesota 55614

Phone: 218-226-4164 Fax: 218-226-4157

email: info@organicconsumers.org

Update on National Organic Standards

Now that the USDA comment period on the second set of proposed federal regulations on National Organic Standards has ended, what should organic consumers do? We need to remain vigilant.

According to Reuters news agency, the USDA received over 40,000 comments. Most of the comments at the USDA website <www.ams.usda.gov/nop> basically correspond with the position of the OCA (see *BioDemocracy News* 25 & 26) and the coalition that we're part of (the National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture): that the proposed rules need to be tightened up, not loosened. According to the USDA, the final regulations on organic foods will be published sometime near the first of the year (2001) in the Federal Register. The final rules will come into force approximately 12 months after publication. If the final rules do not meet the expectations of the OCA and the organic community once they are published, we'll have to either sue the USDA in Federal Court or join the organic community and come up with our own label and standards.

In the meantime stay tuned to our website <www.purefood.org> and our electronic newsletter, *BioDemocracy News*, for further developments.

Illegal GE Corn

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The Wall Street Journal reported November 3 that the recall of StarLink corn could ultimately cost Aventis and the food industry up to one billion dollars. Over a dozen consumers filed a class-action lawsuit alleging that they were poisoned by food products containing StarLink corn. Farmers began making preparations to sue Aventis, who failed to inform thousands of growers that StarLink was not supposed to get into the food chain. Even Cargill, the largest grain distributor in the world, was threatening to sue Aventis. By late-November the controversy had spread overseas, with Japan, America's largest overseas customer, halting almost all corn imports.

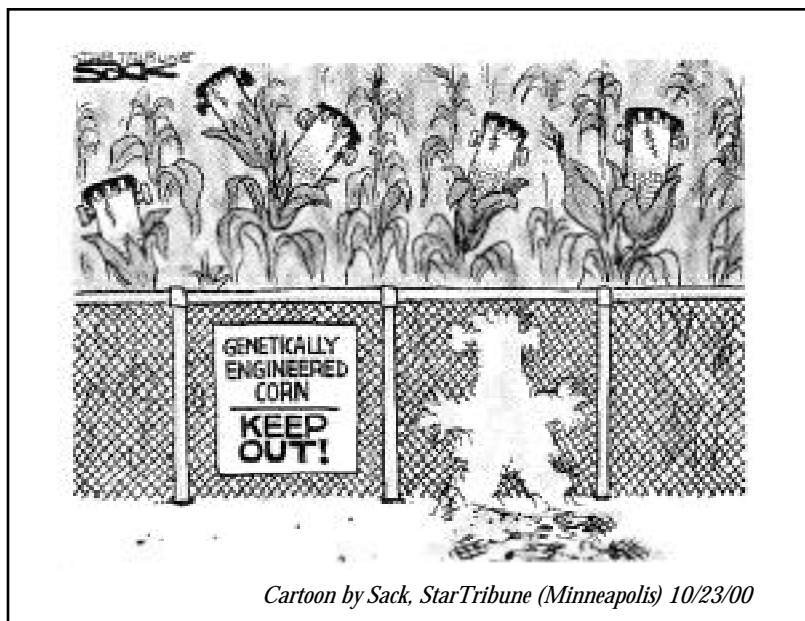
Sometime after December 1, the EPA is expected to reverse itself and declare that StarLink corn is indeed safe for human consumption. This will undoubtedly please Aventis, giant grain exporters, and the biotechnology industry, but this move is unlikely to meet the approval of America's increasingly skeptical consumers.

The StarLink scandal has brought home the realization to American consumers, perhaps for the first time, that the nation's supermarkets are filled with an extensive inventory of untested, unlabeled, genetically engineered foods. Critics

of GE food have warned for years that splicing foreign proteins into common food products, proteins which in most cases humans have never eaten before, can set off dangerous food allergies—with symptoms ranging from fever, rashes, diarrhea, and respiratory

liability insurance coverage) will no doubt please the biotech industry and America's food giants, but again will only fuel the fires of resistance on the part of consumers. Analysts predict little or no change in this policy whether Bush or Gore inhabits the White House.

Once the FDA publish their proposed rules on genetic engineering there will likely be a 75 day public comment period. The OCA, joined by its allies across the country, will encourage thousands of consumers across the US to write, fax, or email the FDA—demanding a moratorium on all GE foods and crops until they are properly safety-tested, labeled, and insured. Stay tuned to *BioDemocracy News*



Cartoon by Sack, *StarTribune* (Minneapolis) 10/23/00

problems to anaphylactic shock and sudden death. The FDA admits that eight percent of all US children are now plagued by food allergies, and that the situation is growing worse. Nutritionists warn of a suspected link between food allergies and asthma. Even the staid *New England Journal of Medicine* warned in its March 14, 1996 issue that unlabeled genetically engineered foods are "uncertain, unpredictable, and untestable."

Besides the Clinton/Gore EPA reversing itself and declaring that StarLink corn is safe for humans after all, the Food and Drug Administration is expected to release proposed federal regulations for genetically engineered foods and crops by the end of the year. These forthcoming regulations (no safety-testing, no labeling, no required

and our website <www.purefood.org> for further developments.

Update on FDA Legal Petition

Currently, we are utilizing our Food Agenda 2000-2010 petition drive to generate thousands of citizen comments in support of a legal petition filed on March 21, 2000 to the FDA by the Center for Food Safety, OCA, and 50 other groups to pull all genetically engineered crops and foods off the market and subject them to rigorous safety-testing (Docket #OOP-1211/CP1). Over 50,000 comments have been submitted. The Food Agenda leaflet can be found on the next page, just waiting to be copied, reprinted, and freely distributed.

Food Agenda 2000-2010

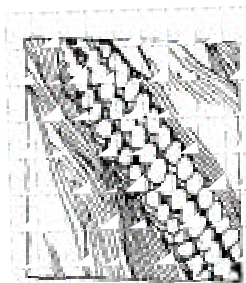


Global Moratorium on all Genetically Engineered Foods and Crops



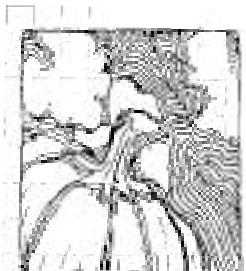
Because they have not been safety tested or labeled, all genetically engineered foods and crops must be taken off the market.

Stop Factory Farming, Phase-out Industrial Agriculture



Begin the phase-out of dangerous pesticides. Ban hormone implants, antibiotics and rendered animal protein in animal feed, corporate feedlots, irradiation, and the use of toxic sewage sludge on farmlands.

Minimum 30% Organic by 2010!



Implement a long-term "transition to organic" program to convert agricultural production in the US from chemical-intensive, industrial farming to at least 30% organic by the year 2010.

ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION
6101 Cliff Estate Road, Little Marais, MN 55614
TEL 218-226-4164 FAX 218-226-4157
To Join the OCA : info@organicconsumers.org
To Volunteer: campaign@organicconsumers.org
Web Site: <http://www.purefood.org>

Support Legal Action Against The FDA

The Center for Food Safety and the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), joined by 50 other groups, have filed a legal petition with the Food and Drug Administration (Docket # 00P-1211/CP1) to take all genetically engineered (GE) foods and crops off the market and subject them to rigorous safety-testing. Please send a letter to the FDA in support of our petition.

Take Gene-Altered Frankenfoods off the market!

*Sign on to support the legal petition
www.purefood.org*

*Or look for our food agenda petitions in
your local co-op or natural food store!*

*Send a letter in support of our petition to:
Commissioner Jane Henney
Docket # 00P-1211/CP1*

*FDA Dockets Management Branch, (HFA-305)
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061, Rockville, MD 20852*

Call the Frankenfoods 15!

Call, Fax, or E-mail (via their website) the Frankenfoods Fifteen. Tell these companies to get genetically engineered food ingredients out of their products! Our special targets currently are Kellogg's and Campbell Soup Company.

Kellogg's
800-962-1413
fax: 616-961-2871
www.kelloggs.com

Safeway
800-723-3929
fax: 925-467-2005

Frito-Lay
800-352-4477
fax: 972-334-5071
www.fritolay.com

Nestle
800-452-1971
fax: 818-549-6952
www.nestleusa.com

Heinz Foods
888-472-8437
fax: 412-456-6128
www.heinz.com

McDonald's
630-623-6198
fax: 630-623-6942
www.mcdonalds.com

General Mills
800-328-1144
fax: 612-764-8330
www.generalmills.com

Campbell Soup Company
800-257-8443
fax: 856-342-3878
www.campbellsoup.com

Kraft
800-543-5335
fax: 847-646-2922
www.kraftfoods.com

Hershey's
800-468-1714
www.hersheys.com

Coca-Cola
800-438-2653
fax: 770-989-3640
www.cocacola.com

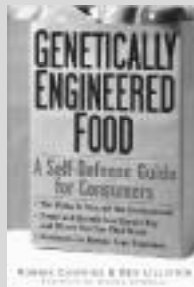
Nabisco
800-932-7800
fax: 973-503-2202
www.nabisco.com

Quaker Oats
800-367-6287
800-407-2247
www.quakeroats.com

Starbucks
800-235-2883
fax: 206-447-3432
www.starbucks.com

Procter and Gamble
800-331-3774 www.pg.com

New Book!



Genetically Engineered Food A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers by Ronnie Cummins & Ben Lilliston

**Clearly explains the hazards
of GE foods and crops &
what you can do about it.**

Advance Praise for *Genetically Engineered Food: A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers*
"I breathed a sigh of relief as I picked up this book. Finally, there's a reliable source of information for consumers on the confusing subject of genetically engineered foods. In clear language, Cummins and Lilliston guide us to greater knowledge and greater hopefulness. If you only read one book on GE foods, this should be the one." - Peggy O'Mara, Editor and Publisher, *Mothering* magazine.
"Cummins and Lilliston are clear, accurate and compelling. If you want to understand the dangers of genetically engineered food, this is the book you need. And if you want to make safe food choices for your family, this is the book you should buy." - Cheryl Long, Senior Editor of *Organic Gardening* magazine.
To order copies of the book go to the Organic Consumers Association website (www.purefood.org), or mail a check to: OCA, 6101 Cliff Estate Road, Little Marais, MN 55614 for \$15.95 which includes postage.

Why Americans Are Voting..

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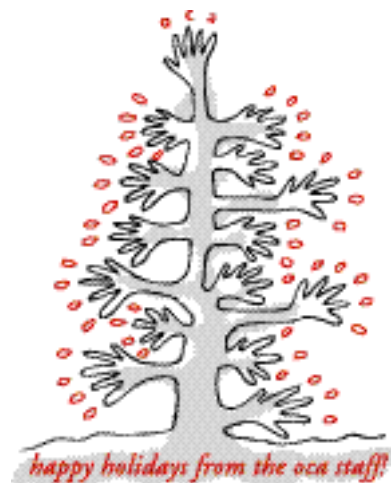
Concern over drug residues. Organic farming prohibits the use of antibiotics in animal feed. Recent scientific research has confirmed the fact that antibiotics, routinely fed to factory farm animals to make them grow faster, are creating dangerous antibiotic-resistant pathogens which are infecting Americans who eat these animal products.

Concern over food poisoning, deadly e-Coli A 0157:H7, campylobacter, salmonella, listeria, and other food borne diseases. The Centers for Disease Control admit that there are at least 76 million cases of food poisoning every year in the US. Filthy slaughterhouses, contaminated feed, and diseased animals are commonplace in industrial agriculture. According to government statistics, most non-organic beef cattle are contaminated with e-Coli 0157:H7; over 90% of chickens are tainted with campylobacter, and 30% of poultry are infected with salmonella. There are no documented cases of organic meat or poultry setting off food poisoning epidemics.

Concern over food irradiation, use of toxic sewage sludge spread on farmland, and genetic engineering. Organic certification prohibits irradiation, sewage sludge, and genetic engineering. A 1997 poll by CBS found 77% of Americans opposed to food irradiation, while a recent survey by the Angus Reid polling group found the majority of US consumers opposed to genetically engineered foods. Consumers are especially incensed that industry and the FDA refuse to require labeling of genetically engineered food. Numerous polls over the past 15 years have found that 80-95% of Americans want labels on gene-altered foods, mainly so that they can avoid buying them.

Concern over the environment. Studies indicate that the industrialization and globalization of agriculture are a leading contributor to greenhouse gases and climate destabilization. Other research shows an increasing percentage of municipal water supplies are contaminated by pesticide residues, chemical fertilizers, and sewage runoff from factory farms and feedlots.

Concern for animals & biodiversity. Factory farms and genetic engineering are nothing less than institutionalized forms of cruelty for farm animals. Industrial agriculture poses a mortal threat to wildlife and the entire web of biodiversity. Only a sustainable, decentralized, humane, and organic form of agriculture is defensible in moral and ethical terms. The patenting of living organisms is inherently immoral.



It's no wonder consumers are turning to organic foods while biotechnology and agri-chemical special interests are starting to panic. So keep in mind this post-election season that those of us who care about food, family farms, animals, and sustainability have to start getting more political. We've got to organize ourselves into a powerful nationwide consumers network, which is what the Organic Consumers Association is trying to do. We must stand up and make our voices heard. We need to keep on voting every day—with our forks, knives, and pocketbooks.