



## Fraud Busters

A recent series of articles by a *Washington Post* reporter could have some consumers questioning the value of the USDA organic seal. But are a few bad eggs representative of an entire industry? Consumers are all for cracking down on the fraudulent few who, with the help of Big Food, big retail chains and questionable certifiers give organics a bad name. But they also want stronger standards, and better enforcement—not a plan to weaken standards to accommodate “Factory Farm Organic.”

The *Washington Post* exposed a couple of major brands, certified organic, that don't strictly adhere to organic standards. The *Post* and others also recently reported on what one lawmaker, who serves on a key USDA committee, called “uncertainty and dysfunction” at the National Organic Standards Board.

All these reports are troubling on multiple levels, especially to consumers who rely on the USDA organic seal to help them avoid pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), synthetic ingredients and foods produced using methods that degenerate soil health and pollute the environment. (It's important to note that none of these reports address the biggest marketing and labeling fraud of them all—products sold as “natural,” “all natural” and “100% natural,” a \$90-billion industry that eclipses the \$50-billion certified organic industry).

What can consumers do to ensure that the certified organic products they buy meet existing organic standards? And how do we, as consumers, fight back against efforts to weaken those standards?

The short answers: There are about 25,000 honest organic local and regional producers, vs. a handful of big brands, mostly national, who flout the rules. And if consumers want stronger, not weaker organic standards, we need to demand them. [orgcns.org/2tKsLDO](http://orgcns.org/2tKsLDO)

## Lobbying for Loopholes

Okay, so organic standards, and the process used to enforce them, aren't perfect. But the certified organic label is still your best bet for avoiding pesticides, GMOs and synthetic ingredients, and foods produced using methods that degenerate soil health and pollute the environment. What we need are stronger standards, and better enforcement. Unfortunately, Congress and the Trump Administration's USDA are threatening to “reform” the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and the National Organic Standards Board—in ways that could weaken organic standards beyond recognition.

Who's behind the push to erode standards? The same bad actors who have been lobbying for loopholes ever since Congress passed the OFPA in 1990—Big Food corporations and factory farm operations masquerading as organic. And now they're stepping up their game, for two reasons. One, as consumer demand for organic products grows, Big Food is buying up organic brands. This gives them a seat at the organic policymaking table, where, naturally, they are hard at work to lower standards in order to raise profit margins.

And two, they smell opportunity. The Trump Administration has made its position on regulations clear: more industry involvement, more concern for corporate profits, and less concern for consumer rights, public health, the environment.

Congress needs to hear from consumers—often, and in large numbers—that we want stronger, not weaker organic standards. Standards that support small, authentic producers. Take Action: [orgcns.org/2uERZYZ](http://orgcns.org/2uERZYZ)

## Get Your ‘Vitamin T’

Corn is an integral part of the Mexican culture. To make the most of this traditional, popular domesticated plant, Mexicans have developed a variety of dishes popularly referred to as “Vitamin T:” tacos, tortas, tlayudas, tlacoyos, tamales and the queen of them all, the tortilla.

Tortillas are popular in the U.S., too. So popular that they're outselling U.S. fast food staples like burger and hot dog buns. According to the Tortilla Industry Association, tortillas are more popular today in the U.S. than all other ethnic breads, including bagels, English muffins and pita.

When prepared correctly, tortillas provide many nutritional benefits. The key to unlocking these benefits lies in an ancient tradition that is still practiced in Mexico, Central America and even in some places in the U.S. and Canada—nixtamalization, a preparation process that uses lime water, flake lime, pickling lime and calcium hydroxide. Unfortunately, as tortilla-making became industrialized, nixtamalization was replaced by a more efficient, but less beneficial production process.

Asociación de Consumidores Orgánicos (Organic Consumers Association Mexico) has launched a new campaign, “Yo quiero mi Tortilla 100% Nixtamalizada” (“I want a 100% Nixtamalized Tortilla), to defend and protect the traditional nixtamalization process, and to ensure that no GMO corn is allowed in the production of nixtamalized tortillas.

[orgcns.org/2tGITpZ](http://orgcns.org/2tGITpZ)

Join the ‘Tortilla 100% Nixtamalizada’ Campaign: [orgcns.org/2tKET7M](http://orgcns.org/2tKET7M)

## Land, Lives, Peace

This year's Caux Dialogue on Land Security Conference, in Caux, Switzerland, focused on how to restore degraded lands as a means of regenerating local economies, increasing food security, fostering peace and reversing global warming.

Regeneration International's roving reporter, Oliver Gardiner, produced a video featuring speakers, farmers, government officials, activists and other conference participants who spoke about kickstarting “a regeneration.” Is it possible to rehabilitate large-scale damaged ecosystems? Yes—if we set the intention, said John D. Liu, ecosystem restoration researcher, educator and filmmaker.

“People all over the world are engaged in this process,” said Judith Schwartz, author of *Cows Save the Planet* and *Water in Plain Sight*.

Indeed, we all need to engage. With intention. [orgcns.org/2tgKumG](http://orgcns.org/2tgKumG)

## Play Defense

What role does organic food play in strengthening your immune system? OCA's Ronnie Cummins will speak on this topic during the July 24 – 31 online Immune Defense Summit. Ronnie joins 35 other experts who will speak on a range of topics, including:

- Infectious disease solutions (without toxic drugs!)
- Latest advances in immune protective protocols
- How to stop the threat of colds, flu and pneumonia
- Alarming vaccine news (and safe alternatives!)
- Strategies to reverse disease symptoms at the root cause

If you're looking for strategies to keep your immune system strong, and resist superbugs, pandemics, viruses and chronic diseases, tune in online, July 24-31.

Register for the Immune Defense Summit (no cost): [orgcns.org/2vegIjn](http://orgcns.org/2vegIjn)

