



GMO Awareness

The battle to take back our food and farming system from Monsanto was never going to be easy, or quickly won. That said, consumer awareness and consumer demand is chipping away at Monsanto's GMO empire.

In this interview with Dr. Joe Mercola, for *Mercola.com's* "GMO Awareness Week," Ronnie Cummins outlines some of the ways we are winning, and how OCA plans to keep up the pressure on Big Biotech, including:

Providing funding to the U.S. Right to Know organization which, while independent from OCA, has done a masterful job of creating media coverage about the dangers of Roundup residues and pesticides in general. Educating consumers about the fact that GMOs are really just delivery systems for pesticides (i.e., their primary cause for being is to increase pesticide sales), and that the only way to avoid dangerous pesticide residues and GMOs is to buy organic food, both when shopping for your daily groceries and when eating out.

Ramping up independent lab testing of nonorganic products claiming to be "all-natural," "natural," "eco-friendly," "free-range," "grass fed," and so on. "There's a huge fraud going on in the marketplace," Cummins explains. With glyphosate, the active ingredient in Monsanto's Roundup weedkiller, now being detected in the urine of 70-80% of Americans and 90% of water samples, anyone concerned about their long-term health can't afford to ignore the potential impact of using poisons to grow our food. orgcns.org/2pjdDxZ

Settled!

Handsome Brook Farm and OCA have resolved a consumer-protection action OCA filed against Handsome Brook in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia on August 29, 2016, concerning Handsome Brook Farm's "Pasture Raised" egg labels. The organizations have also resolved a lawsuit filed by Handsome Brook against OCA. The OCA's action alleged that some of Handsome Brook Farm's eggs labeled as "Pasture Raised" were, in fact, from producers not engaged in pasture-raising hens, and that some farms within Handsome Brook's own farm network did not live up to its internal standards for pasture-raising. Handsome Brook acknowledges shortcomings identified by OCA, including limited out-of-network purchases of organic eggs from producers in late 2015 and early 2016 that did not meet its pasture-raising criteria. orgcns.org/2FygGMT

No Soil, No Farms, No Food

A few years ago, the UN warned that on average, the world has fewer than 60 growing seasons left. That's a bleak prognosis for our soils—and just as bleak for our farmers. So bleak, in fact, that experts compare the current situation to the 1980s when bankruptcies and foreclosures contributed to the loss of 296,360 farms. It's not too late to turn things around. This year, Congress will pass the Farm Bill, legislation that determines how \$90 billion per year is used to shape our food system. Congress could continue with business as usual, directing funding to the wealthiest farmers growing genetically engineered pesticide-drenched industrial monocultures that tear up our best soil to produce crops that get burned in car engines, fed to animals in factory farms or processed into diabetes-inducing junk foods. Or, this year, the Farm Bill could go in a new direction. Take Action: orgcns.org/2Fg9X9T



Hormone Havoc

It's widely known and accepted that neonicotinoid pesticides are killing off the bees. But what are they doing to humans? Messing with our hormone production, according to a team of researchers in Quebec.

Elyse Caron-Beaudoin, a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Montreal's School of Public Health, wanted to know if neonics have a long-term effect on human hormone production. Based on her research, Caron-Beaudoin and her team concluded that because some neonics act as hormone disruptors, they can affect unborn babies during pregnancy, and they can also fuel breast cancer. Caron-Beaudoin and her team couldn't experiment on actual pregnant women or breast cancer patients, so they did their research using models they constructed in the lab. What they found was that neonics, at concentrations found in the environment, cause increased activity of an enzyme responsible for estrogen production.

In most types of breast cancer, the proliferation of cancerous cells is driven by increased estrogen production. And according to the researchers, previous studies show fluctuating hormone levels during pregnancy can harm babies. The full results of the research will appear in an upcoming issue of *Environmental Health Perspectives*. Take Action: orgcns.org/2n3JaTk

A Better Breadbasket

The Midwest region of the U.S., sometimes referred to as "America's breadbasket," has been beset by water woes—due in large part to synthetic fertilizer and toxic pesticide run-off polluting major waterways and seeping into city water supplies. Polluted water is just one of the side effects of an industrial agriculture model that is failing consumers and failing farmers. What would the future of Midwest agriculture look like if instead of food production being the underlying cause of economic, social and ecological destruction, we redesigned it to be the source of clean water, healthy soil and a toxin-free environment? What if family farms began to thrive again? What if agriculture became part of the climate solution, instead of the largest contributor to the problem? Those were the topics of conversation last month at a meeting held during the MOSES Organic Farming Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin. The meeting, organized by Regeneration International, Main Street Project, OCA, Regenerate Nebraska and Midwest Organic Services Association laid the foundation for a new coalition—the Regeneration Midwest Alliance—whose vision includes a systems-change approach to redesigning how our food is produced. OCA looks forward to our collaborative role in advancing this new coalition and building a better breadbasket! orgcns.org/2GrKGH9

North Star

If you're looking for greater transparency around how your food is produced, you can soon start looking for the Regenerative Organic Certification (ROC). ROC was officially launched at the Natural Products Expo West trade show last week, by the Regenerative Organic Alliance, a coalition of organizations and businesses led by the Rodale Institute, Patagonia and Dr. Bronner's. What does the new certification tell you 'about a product? First, you can rest assured that ROC-certified products meet all of the baseline USDA organic standards. For consumers who want to support farmers and producers who go beyond organic, the ROC certification assures them that the producer also focused on soil health and carbon sequestration.

Birgit Cameron, senior director of Patagonia Provisions, told *Civil Eats* that the ROC is an attempt to be the "north star" for the industry as a certification that encompasses the health of the planet, animal welfare and social fairness. orgcns.org/2FVHd5R