



[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)  
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## Quick Quiz: How US Democracy Works

**Question:** How is it that every industrialized nation in the world has banned Monsanto's rBGH as unsafe, but it's legal (and unlabeled) in the US?

**Answer:** In order for the FDA to determine if Monsanto's growth hormones were safe or not, Monsanto was required to submit a scientific report on that topic. Margaret Miller, one of Monsanto's researchers put the report together. Shortly before the report submission, Miller left Monsanto and was hired by the FDA. Her first job for the FDA was to determine whether or not to approve the report she wrote for Monsanto. In short, Monsanto approved its own report. Assisting Miller was another former Monsanto researcher, Susan Sechen. Deciding whether or not rBGH-derived milk should be labeled fell under the jurisdiction of another FDA official, Michael Taylor, who previously worked as a lawyer for Monsanto.

## Organic Cash - The Best Way to Get Rich

*The Organic Monitor* announced this week that global sales of organic foods in 2002 peaked \$23 billion, more than a 10% increase from the previous year.

[www.organicconsumers.org/organic/070603\\_organic.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/070603_organic.cfm)

# ORGANIC BYTES

*Organic News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association*

## Genetically Modifying Consumer Rights

Monsanto is suing Portland, Maine-based Oakhurst Dairy for labeling their milk "Our Farmers' Pledge: No Artificial Growth Hormones." According to Monsanto, manufacturer of the genetically engineered recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (known as rBGH or rBST), Oakhurst Dairy does not have the right to let its customers know whether its milk is laced with genetically engineered hormones. Oakhurst says they've been labeling their products like this for four years, in response to consumer demand. Although rBGH has been banned in every industrialized nation in the world except for the United States, Monsanto continues to claim that rBGH-derived milk is no different from the natural stuff, despite documentation that rBGH milk contains substantially higher levels of a potent cancer tumor promoter called IGF-1. Monsanto sued two dairies and threatened several thousand retailers in 1994 for labeling or advertising milk and dairy products as "rBGH-free." Despite Monsanto's intimidation tactics, more than 10% of US milk is currently labeled as "rBGH-free," while sales of organic milk and dairy products (which prohibit rBGH) are booming. In recent months a Monsanto-funded front group, the Center for Consumer Freedom, has launched a smear campaign against organic dairies, including Organic Valley, claiming they are defrauding consumers.

[www.organicconsumers.org/rbgh/071303\\_rbgh.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rbgh/071303_rbgh.cfm)

For a full discussion on the rBGH controversy, see the rBGH section on the OCA website: [www.organicconsumers.org/rbghlink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rbghlink.html)

## How Monsanto's Policies Have Become US Policy

Prior to being the Supreme Court Judge who put G.W. in office, Clarence Thomas was Monsanto's lawyer. The US Secretary of Agriculture (Anne Veneman) was on the Board of Directors of Monsanto's Calgene Corporation. The Secretary of Defense (Donald Rumsfeld) was on the Board of Directors of Monsanto's Searle pharmaceuticals. The US Secretary of Health, Tommy Thompson, received \$50,000 in donations from Monsanto during his winning campaign for Wisconsin's governor. The two congressmen receiving the most donations from Monsanto during the last election were Larry Combest (Chairman of the House Agricultural Committee) and Attorney General John Ashcroft. (Source: Dairy Education Board)



liz welch

## Radioactive Yummy Nummies

The World Trade Organization has decided that food can be irradiated at any dose, no matter how high. Consumer groups reacted with shock at the news that international food radiation laws, in place since 1979, have been gutted. "The UN and WHO have abandoned their mission to protect the health and welfare of the world's population," said Andrianna Natsoulas of Public Citizen's Critical Mass Energy and Environment Program. "People who eat irradiated foods will become guinea pigs in what will amount to one of the largest feeding experiments in history."

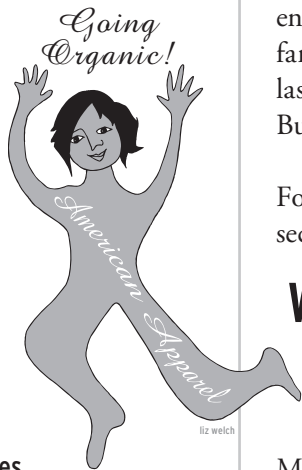
**Get Involved:** Attend the WTO teach-ins and protests in Cancun on an escorted delegation with Ronnie Cummins and the OCA: [www.organicconsumers.org/corp/0624\\_wto.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/0624_wto.cfm)

## American Apparel Going Organic

Last week, the OCA reached a significant milestone in its national *Clothes for a Change Campaign*.

The OCA and its allies have successfully lobbied American Apparel, the largest T-shirt company in the US, known for its strong stance against sweatshops, to work towards achieving an 80% blend of organic cotton in its clothing. Los Angeles based American Apparel's transition to organic program will provide a stable market for over 1,000 acres of California-grown organic cotton.

[www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/070903\\_sweatshop.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/070903_sweatshop.cfm)



## GE Crops in Africa?

According to a piece in the *New York Times*, Bush and his biotech backers are grossly mistaken in their claim that GE crops would help alleviate hunger in Africa. "The first generation of genetically modified food crops—corn and soybean seeds—were created to make pest management simpler on America's large, mechanized farms. The technologies would be far less effective on African farms, which are small and diversified and rely largely on human labor," wrote respected scientist Dr. Charles Benbrook. The article also points out that GE crops need nearly ideal growing conditions, something the arid and drought-ridden climes of Africa simply cannot provide—not to mention the fact that impoverished African farmers can't even afford GE seeds, which typically cost 35% more than traditional seeds.

[www.organicconsumers.org/ge/071403\\_ge\\_africa.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/071403_ge_africa.cfm)

## Cotton Fills Bellies

If the Bush Administration is truly interested in helping Africa's ailing economy, consideration should be given to a July 11 *New York Times* Op Ed piece from African agricultural experts. Put simply, these experts point out that government subsidies to US cotton farmers are strangling Africa's economy. Cotton production accounts for as much as 40% of exports in some African nations, where much of the cotton is grown with few or no pesticides. In contrast, over 70% of US cotton is genetically engineered, and it has become the most pesticide intensive crop. US cotton farmers received over three billion dollars in government subsidies in the last two years, more than the entire economic output of African nations like Burkina Faso, where more than two million people depend on cotton.

[www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/071303\\_cotton\\_subsidies.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/071303_cotton_subsidies.cfm)

For a full discussion on the global cotton crisis see the *Clothes for a Change* section on the OCA website: [www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/clothes/)

## Weird Wheat Wields Woes

Scientists from the University of Manitoba have released a report indicating, "Under current conditions the release of Roundup Ready wheat in Western Canada would be environmentally unsafe." Monsanto's GE wheat would lead to an increase in the use of glyphosate herbicide, a widely-used chemical now being linked to increased growth of fungal plant pathogens, known as fusarium head blight (FHB). FHB has already caused tens of millions of dollars in losses for wheat farmers on the eastern prairies of Canada.

[www.organicconsumers.org/ge/071403\\_ge\\_wheat.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/071403_ge_wheat.cfm)

For many more food issue daily headlines: [www.organicconsumers.org/log.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/log.html)  
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