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## If They Don't Want It, Why Are We Growing It?

In the UK, the most expansive public opinion survey on GE foods has finally been completed. The survey conclusions result from more than 650 public meetings and 37,000 questionnaires. The survey summary is rocking the UK government, which has recently begun discussing opening the UK's borders to GE foods. Only 8% of the public said they felt comfortable eating GE foods and a landslide 54% said the UK should never permit the planting of GE crops. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/brits100303.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/brits100303.cfm)

## Is Your Neighbor Growing Scary Drugs?

On a secret farm in northeastern Colorado, an experimental genetically engineered pharmaceutical corn is being grown that can never be eaten and is so dangerous, no other crops can be grown within a mile radius. The plant is still in its development phase, but has such a high risk of wreaking havoc on the environment, human health and the agricultural economy, it is being grown in an undisclosed location more than 3,000 miles away from the company who "invented" it. According to toxicologist Suzanne Wuerthele, "Producing pharmaceutical compounds in food crops is a really, really bad idea. The chance of it contaminating the food supply is great, and once that happens, it will destroy our export markets." [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/biopharm093003.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/biopharm093003.cfm)

# ORGANIC BYTES

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

## California County Seeks To Ban Frankencrops

In Mendocino County, California, organic consumers, companies, and farmers have taken it upon themselves to gather enough signatures to place an initiative on the coming March 2004 ballot to make genetically engineered (GE) crops illegal within the county. Last Wednesday, the group turned in over 3,000 signatures, which should enable them to qualify for the ballot. Although biotech companies are preparing to blitz the county with pro-GE PR, Mendocino residents are vowing to keep GE contamination out of the county's strong organic produce and beverage industry. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/CABallot100303.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/CABallot100303.cfm)



liz welch

## When They Say It's Locally Grown, They Mean It

Somerton Tanks Farm in Philadelphia is proving that organic farming can be profitable in just about any setting—even in an urban area. Located on a small half acre, the inner city farm is selling its organic produce and salad mixes to local restaurants. It looks like Somerton Tanks will be grossing around \$25,000 in its first year, and doubling that in its second year. "We wanted to prove that a city person who didn't have a lot of resources could, in fact, practice urban agriculture and be successful at it," said Roxanne Christensen, a volunteer accountant for the operation. [www.organicconsumers.org/organic/philly100303.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/philly100303.cfm)



Help OCA build a powerful network of 5,000 organic consumers in your Congressional District · [www.organicconsumers.org/network.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/network.htm)

## Taking Over The World - Kraft/Philip Morris

The OCA, along with the GE Food Alert (GEFA) network is coordinating a nationwide Week of Action to pressure Kraft foods, the world's largest food distributor (and offshoot of the tobacco giant Philip Morris), into going GE-free. We've been watching Kraft closely for more than two years, since we found illegal traces of Starlink corn in their Taco Bell products (a genetically modified corn that the USDA has deemed unsafe for human consumption), forcing them into a multimillion-dollar recall of their tainted products. Rallies and leafleting events will be held at Kraft production facilities and grocery stores across the US during the week of October 25 through November 1. We've made it incredibly easy for you to get involved locally:

Sign up at [OrganicConsumers.org/Kraft/](http://OrganicConsumers.org/Kraft/)  
Contact the OCA: 218-226-4164  
Email: [Craig@OrganicConsumers.org](mailto:Craig@OrganicConsumers.org)

## Another Good Reason To Go To College

Organic hamburgers have now replaced conventional burgers in all University of Wisconsin student cafeterias. Produced by local farmers and distributed to the schools by Organic Valley, a nationwide farm coop, the organic beef is only the first step towards meeting student demands for more organic food in the cafeterias. "We're a land-grant university that's supposed to be supporting local farmers and reducing environmental impact," said John Hendrickson, senior outreach specialist for the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. Serving as another shining example of the explosive growth in demand for organic foods, the University Housing Food Service said it also plans to serve all-organic salads, but cannot, as of yet, find enough local organic farmers to supply their demand. [organicconsumers.org/organic/uw100303.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/organic/uw100303.cfm)

## Taking Over The World -Starbucks

Paris, France- Starbucks is boldly preparing to open its first outlet in the coffee connoisseur and café capital of the world. French Starbucks subsidiary president Franck Esquerre says, "We are not trying to compete with the traditional Parisian cafe. We bring a different concept." His words have not soothed the nerves of coffee café owners in Paris, given the fact that the gargantuan coffee-shop chain has swallowed up "mom and pop" coffee shops all around the world, now boasting more than 7,000 stores in 30 countries. [www.organicconsumers.org/starbucks/paris100103.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/starbucks/paris100103.cfm)

## Taking Over The World -Monsanto



Despite promises made during last year's presidential campaign, President Lula da Silva has opened, at least temporarily, Brazil's borders to Monsanto's GE soybeans. Brazil is the second largest soybean producer in the world and is expected to take over the US #1 position by next year. Although Brazilian consumers and farmers are overwhelmingly opposed to allowing GE soybeans to be legally grown in the country, the producer of the GE seeds, Monsanto, stands to make substantial profits on the deal and has been "pressuring" the Brazilian President to ignore the demands of his constituency. The Brazilian President was ultimately "convinced" by a triad of pressure groups: the powerful soybean lobby in southern Brazil (many of whom have already been growing GE soybean seeds smuggled into the country from Argentina), the US Embassy, and Monsanto (who have been threatening to sue Brazil and its farmers) to permit the GE soybeans. Lula arranged for the announcement to be made while he was out of the country—forcing his Vice President Jose Alencar to make the controversial announcement. Alencar at first resisted signing the decree, saying it violated Brazil's laws, but President da Silva pressured him from New York, stating the Vice President "knows what he has to do, and he will do it." Grudgingly, Brazil's VP signed the decree papers, saying, "The next time, I'm going to be the one who travels." In the short time since the decree has been signed, its legality has been challenged on several fronts, including Brazil's Attorney General Claudio Fontelles, arguing that the Executive Order to allow GE soybeans is unconstitutional. [www.organicconsumers.org/ge/brazil100103.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/ge/brazil100103.cfm)

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