



www.organicconsumers.org

December 9, 2003 · Volume 1, Issue 24

Quote of the Week

"I do not allow myself to be overcome by hopelessness, no matter how tough the situation. I believe that if you just do your little bit without thinking of the bigness of what you stand against, if you turn to the enlargement of your own capacities, just that in itself creates new potential."

-Vandana Shiva, Activist and Author

Harvesting the Wind

Farmers across the US are continually discovering innovative methods of keeping their family farms in business. One such means, harvesting wind, is becoming increasingly profitable and popular. While taking up very little space and generating clean and sustainable energy, each wind turbine quietly cranks out between \$2,000 and \$4,000 in annual profits for the farmer. Leroy Ratzlaff, a South Dakota farmer, has now installed seven wind turbines, to provide stability to his farm's finances. "It's almost like renting out my farm and still having it," Ratzlaff said. "And the cows don't seem to mind a bit." www.organicconsumers.org/corp/family_farm_wind_power.cfm

Positive Action Brings Positive Change

Complaining about the oil, coal and nuclear power industries does little good, unless you do something about it. Now just about everyone can support the sourcing of wind power by their local utility company. To find out opportunities for including wind power and other renewable energy sources in your monthly electricity bill in your area, go here: www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/consumers.shtml

ORGANIC BYTES

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

Genetically Engineered Pets

California recently became the only state in the US to ban the sale of genetically engineered pets. Although new glow-in-the-dark zebrafish (engineered with genes from jellyfish and sea anemones) have been released onto the market throughout the rest of the nation, the California Game Commission said their decision is based on simple ethics. "I just don't think it's right to produce a new organism just to be a pet. To me, this seems like an abuse of the power we have over life, and I'm not prepared to go there today," said Sam Schuchat of the California Game Commission. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/ge_fish.cfm

Seeking the Brain's Buy Button

Backed by funding from major corporations, Researchers at Emory University are undergoing intensive studies of the human brain looking for what has been coined the "buy button". This new pursuit of consumer control, known as

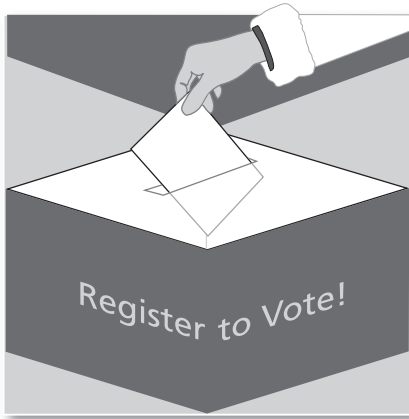
neuromarketing, involves Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) on live subjects to find the specific part of the brain that is activated when a consumer is successfully wooed by an advertisement into purchasing a product. Using the data from this research, marketers hope to be able to create ads that follow the exact neurological pathways that ultimately activate the "buy button" in consumers. According



to a letter to the Emory University from a coalition of groups opposed to this research, "If Emory University takes its own mission seriously, it should challenge this abuse of medical knowledge and technology to manipulate people for commercial purposes." www.organicconsumers.org/corp/neuromarketing.cfm

Creating a GE-Free Northern California

It's official: Mendocino County, California has approved a ballot initiative that will allow voters to choose whether or not the county should ban genetically modified crops. Mendocino County's agricultural income is strongly rooted in organics, and local farmers are concerned about decreased revenues, due to possible contamination from neighboring GE crops. The vote will be held March 2, 2004 and would make the county the first in the US to pass an anti-GMO resolution. Stay tuned to the OCA for further updates. The OCA is also working with activists in several other California counties (Humboldt, Marin, Sonoma) who are interested in joining Mendocino and creating, in effect, a GE-Free Northern California. www.organicconsumers.org/ge/california_initiative.cfm



Register to Vote Online!

Can one vote make a difference? Just ask the folks in Florida, where the margin of victory in the 2000 presidential election was a mere 537 votes. You can register to vote and/or update your registration info, right now, through the OCA/ "Your Vote Matters" website! Not only will you be taking the required step to become an active participant in the coming elections, you will also be helping OCA, as Working Assets Long Distance is currently offering a small donation to the OCA for every voter that registers on our site. If you are already registered, please pass this link on to your family and friends. The time for positive change is NOW.

<https://www.workingforchange.com/vote/index.cfm?ms=OCA001>

Bronner's Donating 10% of Web Sales to OCA

Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps has committed to donating 10% of all web sales in November and December to the Organic Consumers Association. Bronner's recently won Co-op America's prestigious 2003 Green Business Award for leadership in advancing the Green business movement. The 50 year old natural soap and body care product company was selected from 2,200 Green businesses for its dedication to the environment, social rights, and the community. The address is: www.drbronner.com/main.html

Take Action

If any of the issues above spark your desire to take action, please visit OCA's Action Center for instant faxes, petitions, volunteering and donation opportunities.

organicconsumers.org/action.htm

Faith and Fair Trade

Responding to the plight of millions of struggling coffee farmers worldwide, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is working to get US churches and parishioners into the practice of buying "fair trade" coffee (a certified product that guarantees farmers a fair price for their crops). "There's a lot of coffee being moved through faith communities," says Karen Smith, director of CRS' coffee program. "It's tying into people's values, and they're making conscious decisions based on their values." Americans spend \$19 billion on coffee each year. With 65 million Catholics in the US, CRS is hopeful this new initiative can have a positive impact on coffee farmers everywhere. www.organicconsumers.org/Starbucks/faith_fair_trade.cfm

Likely Allergenic GE Corn Still Spreading

StarLink Corn, an experimental genetically engineered crop that the USDA found to be unsuitable for human consumption, hasn't been grown by farmers for several years. Yet recent analysis of this year's harvest has found that it is still contaminating 1% of the nation's corn. The discovery fuels the arguments of GE opponents, who claim that these experimental crops should not be released on the market until they have been adequately tested for effects on human health and the environment. "The StarLink lesson is that contamination is to some extent irreversible," said Doreen Stabinsky, a Greenpeace scientist. Once a new genetically engineered plant is released on the market, it is impossible to keep its pollen from spreading, thereby leading to its existence in the food supply indefinitely. According to the European Union, this is one of the reasons for its decision to resist growing and importing GE foods.

www.organicconsumers.org/ge/ge_corn_starlink.cfm

Green Guide Recommends Organic Cotton

As one of the most chemically intensive crops, conventional cotton is responsible for \$2.6 billion worth of toxic pesticide use every year. You can help change this unsustainable practice by exercising the power of your consumer dollar. *The Green Guide* recently listed some of the best organic cotton products on the market:



Maggie's Functional Organics: manufactured in worker-owned cooperatives, adhering to fair-trade principles · www.organicclothes.com · 800-609-8593

All of **Patagonia's** cotton lines are organic. www.patagonia.com · 800-638-6464

Under The Canopy: organic cotton sheets and towels made with low-impact dyes according to fair-trade policies · www.underthecanopy.com · 888-226-6799

Garden Kids: organic cotton clothing up to children's size 8. All made according to Fair Wage Labor practices in Oregon · www.gardenkids.com 541-465-4544

American Apparel, wholesale T-shirt manufacturer, sweatshop-free mission, now converting to organic cotton as well · www.americanapparelstore.com · 213-488-0226

Wildlife Works gives 100% of profits to benefit conservation organizations. Yoga clothes; T-shirts; sisal bags handcrafted by a women's coop in Kenya · www.wildlife-works.com · 888-934-WILD

For many more food issue daily headlines: www.organicconsumers.org/log.html

Organic Bytes is a publication of the Organic Consumers Association
6101 Cliff Estate Road · Little Marais, MN 55614 · 218-226-4164 · fax: 218-353-7652

Subscribe to *Organic Bytes*: www.organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.htm

Help support the work of the Organic Consumers Association with a tax deductible donation:
www.securemysite.com/greenpeople/ocadonate.cfm

Note to co-op and natural food store subscribers: *Organic Bytes* is a great tool for keeping your staff and customers up to date on the latest issues. Feel free to print *Organic Bytes* for posting on bulletin boards and staff break tables. You are also welcome to use this material for your newsletters. There's also a plain text version of *Organic Bytes* available at www.organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.htm