



ORGANIC BYTES

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Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
www.organicconsumers.org

“**W**hat you ask is who you are, and what shapes our lives are the questions we ask, refuse to ask, or never think of asking...” -Sam Keen

Mendocino Days Away From Landmark Vote

March 2 marks the day when voters in Mendocino County, California will choose whether or not their county will become the first in the US to legally ban genetically engineered crops. The biotech industry is using its financial and political clout to try to stifle the voices of Mendocino consumers and farmers, but the OCA predicts a victory for the people. Stay tuned for the vote results... www.organicconsumers.org/ge/mendocino-gmos.cfm

Victory for Hemp Foods

A federal appeals court has ruled that hemp foods are safe and legal to consume. Three years ago, when the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) called for a ban on hemp food products, 100,000 consumers and natural food companies, and even the Canadian government, wrote letters opposing this decision. Subsequently a lawsuit was filed against the DEA by the hemp industry and natural food companies, supported by public interest groups such as the Organic Consumers Association. Hemp seed, oil, and nuts are a rich source of protein, dietary fiber, minerals, iron, vitamin E, and a near perfect composition of essential fatty acids—Omega 3 & 6. · www.organicconsumers.org/Toxic/hemp_seed.cfm

OCA Files Formal Complaint on Fraudulent Organic Labels

On February 18, 2004, The Organic Consumers Association (OCA), on behalf of its national network of 500,000 consumers and 350 natural food stores, coops, and organic businesses, submitted a formal Complaint to the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP) against the California-based company, Bayliss Ranch, and the organic certifier, Quality Assurance International (QAI), for illegally counting ordinary water in Bayliss Ranch's water extracts as "organic." This scheme enables Bayliss Ranch's customers—manufacturers of food and body care products for consumers such as Avalon, Nature's Gate, and Jason's—to make fraudulent claims that their body care products are "70% organic," by counting the ordinary water in the Bayliss extracts as the primary "organic" content of the products. This practice threatens to undermine consumer confidence in the USDA organic label, which assures consumers that products claiming organic status are truly at least 70% organic **without** counting water as "organic." Sign the petition to the USDA:

www.organicconsumers.org/bodycare/links2.cfm



Mad Cow Bombshell

The New York Times reported on February 17 that researchers in Italy have discovered a new strain of Mad Cow Disease that could be responsible for infecting hundreds of Americans and Europeans with a fatal brain wasting disease called "sporadic CJD" or Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. US Government scientists and the beef industry have previously admitted that 300 Americans are dying every year of "sporadic CJD," but have denied that these cases, and hundreds like them in Europe, are caused by eating infected meat products. Dr. Pierluigi Gambetti, director of the National Prion Disease Pathology Surveillance Center, said the discovery of a new strain of Mad Cow Disease closely resembling sporadic CJD in humans underlines the need for more stringent testing of cattle in North America for Mad Cow Disease.

-www.organicconsumers.org/madcow.htm

Monsanto Biopirates Stealing Indigenous Knowledge

The European Patent Office (EPO) has approved a patent which gives the Monsanto Corporation “ownership” rights over a traditional variety of wheat cultivated in rural communities in India for generations. Rainer Osterwalder of the EPO claims that authorities don’t have the legal power to be able to stop corporations from committing “biopiracy”. “Sometimes the office cannot prevent that indigenous knowledge is used for a patent, and then the indigenous people can not use it anymore. Science is often one step ahead of the laws.” www.organicconsumers.org/Patent/biopirates.cfm

We Need To Talk

Interested in sharing your thoughts and ideas with thousands of other like-minded folks locally and around the world? Register free for OCA’s new online web forum and chat center. The OCA website has been getting 4-6 million hits every month, so we decided it’s time to open up the communication channels and let everyone share their ideas, post articles, comment on related issues, and come together with others who share your concerns. Start talking with others in the organic consumers community right now! www.organicconsumers.org/chat/index.php

· Help others learn about food safety, organics, and related topics. Place a link on your website to: <http://OrganicConsumers.org>
Find OCA Banners for your use at: OrganicConsumers.org/logos.htm



GE Wheat Generates Grassroots Resistance

Monsanto, the corporation that brought us Agent Orange, DDT, Bovine Growth Hormone and PCBs, has engineered wheat to withstand applications of the company’s toxic Roundup herbicide. Scientists from the University of Manitoba recently released a report stating “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. Consumers in Japan, South Korea & Europe—some of the biggest international consumers of wheat—have indicated they do not want an engineered version of the crop.

[-www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.html)

Kraft & GE Wheat

FDA officials are completing their perfunctory review of Monsanto’s application for Roundup Ready wheat. Food companies, especially Kraft, have publicly expressed concerns about consumers rejecting products with engineered ingredients, especially the new engineered wheat. If Kraft, the largest food company in the US, rejects wheat, it will send a clear message to farmers not to grow it.

Call Kraft CEO Roger Deromedi at Kraft Foods Headquarters at 847-646-2000 or their consumer hotline at 800-323-0768.

PLEASE TELL KRAFT:

- You are concerned about the health, environmental and economic risks posed by the new genetically engineered wheat and other genetically engineered food, and
- You will avoid Kraft products that contain genetically engineered ingredients

PLEASE ASK KRAFT TO:

- Pledge not to use the new genetically engineered wheat
- Stop using genetically engineered ingredients in its products
- Live up to its promise to do more to ensure a safe food supply

www.Krafty.org

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

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