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ORGANIC BYTES

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

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Consumers Turn to Organic Beef

Consumers, increasingly wary of the horrors of industrial meat, bought \$10 million worth of organic beef last year, as well as several hundred million dollars of transition-to-organic or grass-fed beef. According to the Organic Trade Association, the industry is expected to grow even more rapidly over the next five years. www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/organic-beef.cfm

Another Cancerous Tidbit

Government scientists at the National Cancer Institute have announced that at least 80% of cancer cases are due environmental causes, such as diet, tobacco, and alcohol, as well as radiation, infectious agents, and substances in the air, water, and soil. www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/cancer070104.cfm

As if Italian Food Wasn't Already Good Enough

Italian school food laws passed in 2002 are now coming into effect. Before 2005, 100% of foods served in schools to children age 3-10 must be organic. For students in advanced schools, 35% of cafeteria foods must be organic. Eventually 100% of the nation's school fare will be organic.

www.organicconsumers.org/organic/italy062804.cfm

Mad Cow Regulations: A Long Time Coming

Last January, after the first case of Mad Cow Disease was discovered in the US, the federal government tried to alleviate consumer concerns by announcing new regulations that would forbid the feeding of blood, slaughterhouse wastes, and manure to cows. Six months later, none of those regulations have been implemented, although the USDA says the formal publications of new rules is imminent. The beef industry has applied intense pressure to the FDA and USDA to ensure that new regulations don't cut too deeply into profits. At the same time, the health of the American consumer is being jeopardized.

www.organicconsumers.org/madcow/laws.cfm



MAD COW USA STOP THE MADNESS

Why are we STILL allowing the feeding of blood, manure, and slaughterhouse waste to non-organic farm animals?

Is Monsanto Quietly Dropping rBGH?

Since its release onto the market in 1994, Monsanto's recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH) has been banned in most industrialized nations, other than the US, Brazil, and Mexico. While the genetically engineered hormone is regularly being injected into 22% of the dairy herd in the US to force cows to give more milk, scientists warn that it may increase milk drinkers' risks of getting cancer. After a decade

of forcing unlabeled and untested rBGH-tainted milk and dairy products on consumers, Monsanto is mysteriously scaling back its production of the controversial drug. In January the company announced a 50% cutback in production. Recently, Monsanto's plants in Austria and Augusta, Georgia, have halted production entirely, supposedly due to minor contamination problems. Rumors within the industry, however, are that Monsanto is in a panic about field reports of major damage to bovine health, including bone cancer, prompting the company to phase out production of the controversial hormone so as to avoid legal liability. Stay tuned to OCA for more info: www.organicconsumers.org/monlink.html

Proving Why Organic is Better

The European Union is shelling out an equivalent of over 22 million US dollars to New Castle University in the UK to find out why food nutritional value and taste quality are decreasing. New Castle will work with over 30 partners across Europe to explore how organic farming could mediate these problems. The project is called "Quality Low Input Food"—check it out: www.qlif.org

My Favorite Class is Lunch

Schools in California are coming up with ingenious ways of bringing organic food to young students in an affordable and educational manner. At Berkeley Unified School, a new program teaches kids how to grow and harvest their own organic food, which is then served in the school's cafeteria. Although the school must currently raise funds to pay for the program, educators hope that after demonstrating that organic school gardens result in improved childhood health, they will be entitled to government funding. The US spent \$75 billion treating obesity related health problems in 2003, according to the Center for Disease Control.

www.organicconsumers.org/school/school-lunch.cfm



We Need to Talk

Interested in sharing your thoughts and ideas with thousands of other like-minded folks locally and around the world?

Check out OCA's online web forum:

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>

Banners for your use:

<http://OrganicConsumers.org/logos.htm>

"Natural" Foods Chain Still Scamming its Customers

Two years ago, the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) and Greenpeace were successful in forcing the billion dollar natural foods supermarket chain Trader Joe's to declare that all of its brand name products (which make up a full 80%+ of all the chain's sales) would become GMO-free. Although the company's website states that "all of the manufacturers of private label food and beverage products for Trader Joe's are making those products without the use of genetically engineered ingredients," the OCA has recently learned that the 200+ store chain is still using milk in its private label cheeses that is sourced from cows injected with rBGH, a genetically engineered animal drug. In fact, many of the company's cheeses are still sourced from dairy operations where cows are regularly injected with rBGH. The OCA and Sierra Club have provided Trader Joe's with a list of rBGH-free dairy suppliers from throughout the US. The company now needs to hear from consumers that either Trader Joe's truly goes GMO-free, or its customers will shop elsewhere.

Send a quick fax online today: www.organicconsumers.org/tjs.cfm

Starlink Corn Fiasco Finally Pays Out

Four years ago traces of an illegal, likely allergenic genetically engineered corn (Starlink) began showing up in taco shells and other food products in the US. Hundreds of US consumers reported serious allergic reactions food products likely contaminated with StarLink corn. A billion dollar recall of food products ensued, and farmers whose fields were contaminated by the drifting Starlink pollen incurred massive financial losses. In June of 2004, a class action lawsuit against Aventis, the producer of Starlink corn, came to a close with a settlement of \$112 million to affected farmers (amounting to only about \$1-2 per contaminated acre). The disaster is a dramatic example of how genetically engineered crops can go awry. www.organicconsumers.org/Corn/starlink.cfm

Starlink Pollution

"In Iowa, StarLink corn represented 1 percent of the total crop, only 1 percent. It has tainted 50 percent of the harvest." *ABC News*-November 28, 2000

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