



# ORGANIC BYTES

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[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
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## Quote of the Week

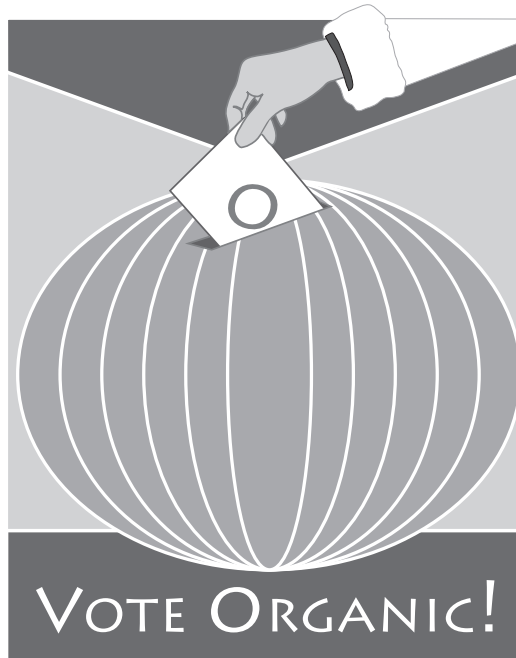
"Biotechnology and patenting of life forms is now the new frontier for conquest, and Africa ought to be wary because a history of colonialism and exploitation is repeating itself." -Wangari Mathai, Kenya Environmental & Justice Activist 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner

## Banana Giants On Trial

Chiquita, Dole, and Del Monte are being sued by thousands of banana workers in Costa Rica for poisoning them and their families with a deadly pesticide that was banned in 1979. Dibromochloropropane (DBCP) is known to cause cancer, birth defects, sterility and liver damage. The class action lawsuit is demanding payment for damages described as "wanton and reckless acts... and outrageous and malicious conduct." The banana giants have reportedly offered to settle out of court. [www.organicconsumers.org/corp/chiquita100804.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/chiquita100804.cfm)

## Biopirates Selling Genetic Material of Indigenous Brazilians

A biotech company is illegally selling the genetic material of Brazilian tribal peoples. Coriel Cell extracted blood from as many as 200 indigenous people in Brazil and is selling the blood online for \$85 per sample to other companies interested in identifying and ultimately patenting positive characteristics within those genes. The Brazilian government has asked the US government to take action, as the company was caught doing the same thing back in 1996. [www.organicconsumers.org/patent/biopiracy100604.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/patent/biopiracy100604.cfm)



## Voting Organic On and After November 2

The slogan of the OCA for this fall is "Vote Organic-Today and Everyday." And of course by this we mean that you, along with America's 30 million other organic consumers, should "vote," both with your pocketbook for consumer purchases, and your political voice. Political change is obviously in the air this fall, whether we're talking about the elections or about public policies on farming, food, and Fair Trade (or should we say Unfair Trade).

For a comparison of the significantly different positions of the Presidential candidates on food, farming, and Frankenfoods, check out:

[www.organicconsumers.org/organic/kerry100604.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/kerry100604.cfm)

Kerry and Bush have major differences on health, food, and other issues, but no matter who wins the election, it will still depend on consumers to create pressure in the marketplace for dismantling America's dominant regime of factory farms, chemical intensive agriculture, and genetic engineering. John Stauber, OCA Policy Board Member, gives us his personal perspective on the Presidential contest here: [www.organicconsumers.org/corp/staubernader100704.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/corp/staubernader100704.cfm)

## The Other Big Elections in November

Just weeks away from critical votes on ballot initiatives that would ban genetically engineered (GE) crops in Marin, Butte, San Luis Obispo, and Humboldt counties (California), biotech supporters and the Farm Bureau have pumped several hundred thousand dollars into a frenzied disinformation campaign to defeat the bans. In contrast, organic consumers, progressive businesses, and family farmers supporting a ban in these counties are, once again, operating with very little funding. Mendocino County (CA) took the lead on banning genetically engineered crops in March, followed in August by Trinity County. Organic consumers and anti-GE activists all over the world are closely watching these ballot initiatives. Help OCA in our efforts to spread these bans throughout North America: [www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

## Chinese Organics

In China, the expansion of the organic industry is now keeping pace with the explosive growth found in much of the rest of the world. Last year domestic sales of organic goods in China hit \$8.8 billion and the industry is expanding at 30% per year. [www.organicconsumers.org/organic/china100804.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/china100804.cfm)

## African Kids Going Organic

Organic gardening and lessons on permaculture have recently been introduced to over 12,000 schools in South Africa. According to South African Education Minister Naledi Pandor, "Learners have become familiar with permaculture, an organic system of farming and gardening that combines people and plants in a way that produces more energy than it uses. In addition, many schools now use their projects to implement active learning. They grow their own food, harvest, conserve and manage water, recycle waste, generate income for the school, run outreach projects and much more." [www.organicconsumers.org/organic/africa093004.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/africa093004.cfm)

## Sponsored Message:

Buildings that Purify Water and Make Oxygen like Trees?! A Ford auto factory with a 455,000 square-foot avian habitat on its roof?! It's happening. And in one of our recent dialogues with William McDonough—a *Time* magazine "Hero for the Planet"—he tells us more about these developments and ideas. Listen to New Dimensions CDs and you are intimately connected with the most remarkable individuals of our time—feeling their passion, better understanding their thoughts, and learning from their wisdom. For more than 30 years, we have engaged in deep dialogue with many of the world's leading thinkers—reaching many millions of listeners around the planet on radio, shortwave and satellite. Now we are offering our most popular CDs at a full 25% off. Get them here: [www.ishoppingcart.com/app/adtrack.asp?AdID=99601](http://www.ishoppingcart.com/app/adtrack.asp?AdID=99601)

## Cities Conceal Hazardous Lead Levels in Municipal Water

The *Washington Post* reports that cities across the US have been allowed to hide water test results that show dangerous levels of lead due to old city plumbing. Cities including New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Detroit have thrown out evidence of high levels of lead to avoid the costs associated with fixing the problem. The EPA has facilitated this deception to the public by overlooking more than 90% of the individual municipality reports of dangerous levels of lead in the drinking water. Lead exposure can cause serious brain and kidney damage. Many middle and upper-income households now filter their drinking water, but lead is also heavily absorbed through the skin while bathing.

[www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/lead100604.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/foodsafety/lead100604.cfm)

## Senate Bill Would Ban Junk Food in Schools

The US Senate has introduced a bill that would ban soda pop and junk food vending machines in schools receiving federal funding. The bill, known as the Childhood Obesity Prevention Act, would also prohibit the advertising of junk food in schools, and provide more foods low in fat, calories and added sugars (e.g. fruits, vegetables and whole grains). Please contact your US Senators to support the Prevention of Childhood Obesity Act (S. 2894). The congressional switchboard phone is 202-225-3121. Get involved by visiting the OCA's **Appetite for a Change Campaign** website. [www.organicconsumers.org/sos.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.htm)

## Organic Foods Slow Global Climate Change

The Rodale Institute has found that supporting organic agriculture reduces negative impacts on global climate change. Conventional farming uses large amounts of synthetic fertilizers made from fossil fuels. The manufacture and use of these petroleum-based products make up as much as 30% of the agriculture industry's output of carbon dioxide. Organic farmers rely on manure and other organic matter for fertilization, which the Rodale Institute reports actually allows carbon to be stored safely in the soil. Buying locally grown foods also protects against unneeded greenhouse gas emissions. On average, food travels 1,500 miles in the US before landing on the dinner table.

[www.organicconsumers.org/organic/globalwarming100404.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/globalwarming100404.cfm)



Friendly Reminder: *Organic Bytes* is still really hungry. Many of our donors tell us they can't give us any money right now, because they've put it all into the crucial November elections. But as we point out below, we're your advocate and voice for the long haul, both before & after Nov. 2. Please make a contribution now at [www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

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

*Organic Bytes* is a publication of the Organic Consumers Association

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