



ORGANIC BYTES

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www.organicconsumers.org

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association
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Alert: USDA Ignores Public Rejection of Proposal to Allow 38 Non-Organic Ingredients & Toxic Fish Oil in Foods Labeled as "USDA Organic"

Basically ignoring more than ten thousand emails and letters from consumers and farmers opposing the latest industry-sponsored attack on organic standards, the USDA has approved a proposal allowing 38 new non-organic ingredients to be allowed in products bearing the "USDA Organic" seal. But the agency says this may just be interim approval, and has offered to extend the public comment period another 60 days (the original public comment period was only 7 days).

USDA's controversial proposal will result in the following:

- Anheuser Busch will be allowed to sell its "Organic Wild Hops Beer" without using any organic hops at all.
- Sausages, brats, and breakfast links labeled as "USDA Organic" will be allowed to contain intestines from factory farmed animals raised on chemically grown feed, synthetic hormones, slaughterhouse waste, and antibiotics.
- Products labeled as "USDA Organic" and containing fish oil may contain toxins such as PCBs and mercury.

www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5225.cfm

Feed the Hungry at the Gas Pump

Automakers roughly doubled the fuel economy of cars between the 1970s and the late 1980s. In other words, the "know-how" has been here for a long time.

Over the past 20 years, automakers have used advancements in technology to add more than 800 pounds to the average vehicle and nearly double horsepower, while fuel economy has declined. Be smart about what you drive.

The grain required to fill a 25 gallon gas tank with ethanol would feed one person for a year. Every time you fill your tank, think about biking, walking, mass transit or just relaxing at home. Live simply so that others may simply live.

Next year, 30% of us corn will be used for ethanol. Instead, the same amount of fuel could be saved by increasing average fuel efficiency by just three miles per gallon. Let your Representatives and Senators know that you support strong fuel efficiency standards and a wholesale conversion of us transportation, utilities, and agriculture to renewable sources of energy.



Alert: The 2007 Farm Bill: Sustainable Agriculture or Corporate Welfare

Congress is currently drafting a new Farm Bill, legislation that will determine agriculture policy for the next five years. Will it be more corporate welfare for polluting agribusiness or new incentives for farmers to provide healthy and affordable food while protecting farmworkers and the environment? Unfortunately, the bill that the House Agriculture Committee is working on is looking a lot more like the former.

Please write Congress in support of sustainable agriculture: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_5813.cfm

NAIS Alert: Keep 'Big Brother' Out of Farm Bill

Industrial agriculture lobbyists have been pushing for a National Animal

Identification System (NAIS) for several years. The proposed NAIS program would require every person who owns a farm animal, even if it's just one chicken or a pet horse, to register their "property" with the federal government, identify each animal (in most cases with implanted microchips or other electronic identification), and report their movements on a national database.

This program would impose particularly heavy burdens on family farmers who raise animals on pasture, while giving further competitive advantage to factory farms.

The House Committee on Agriculture is considering a provision in the massive 2007 Farm Bill that would implement NAIS. The House Committee on Agriculture will vote on the bill July 12, so time is of the essence.

www.organicconsumers.org/rd/nais.cfm



Corn-Based Ethanol Adds to Global Food Crisis

- In the past 12 months, the global corn price has doubled.
- Because corn is the most common animal feed, this affects the price of milk, cheese, eggs, meat, as well as corn-based sweeteners and cereals.
- In the US, milk prices have nearly doubled.
- Butter prices in Europe have spiked by 40%.
- Pork prices in China are up 20%.
- In Mexico there have been riots in response to a 60% rise in the cost of tortillas.
- In six of the past seven years, global grain consumption has exceeded production. As a result world grain reserves have dwindled to 57 days. This is the lowest level of grain reserves in 34 years.
- While the UN lists 34 countries as needing food aid, 30% of next year's grain harvest in the US will be converted to ethanol to fuel cars.

Dialing for Organic Dollars

Each year, Working Assets Long Distance (WALD) Company donates a portion of its revenue to national non-profits doing front line work on progressive issues, such as the Organic Consumers Association (OCA). If you are a current Working Assets customer, you can help the OCA receive a portion of these funds by sending a quick online letter, nominating the OCA for donations. Thanks! WALD customers vote for OCA here: www.workingassets.com/voting/

Quote of the Week

"The stage is now set for direct competition for grain between the 800 million people who own automobiles, and the world's 2 billion poorest people." - Lester Brown from the Earth Policy Institute, speaking at a briefing to the US Senate two weeks ago.

Soil is One Secret Solution to Global Warming

Can organic farming fight climate change? Yes. And we're not just talking about food miles. Research from the Rodale Institute shows that sustainably-farmed soil absorbs 30% more carbon than conventional agriculture, and switching our farmland to organic would cut greenhouse emissions by 10% in the US (20% in Canada and most of the rest of the world). For a concise explanation of how organic farming could be a major tool in the fight against climate change check out the 10 minute online video SOIL: The Secret Solution to Global Warming, featuring Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser. The website includes an online petition calling on world leaders to switch subsidies from conventional to sustainable farming practices.

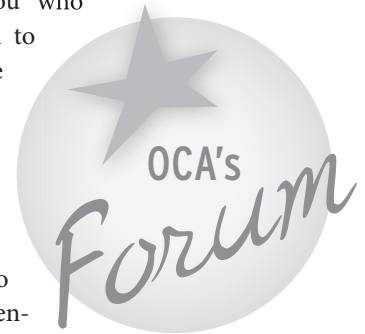
www.quantumshift.tv/v/1181028043/

Your Online Organic Community Has Arrived

Thanks to hundreds of you who responded to our invitation to join OCA's new web forum. We have just added a new blog feature to the forum, so feel free to go in and set up your own dedicated blogs. The OCA website receives over six million hits each month, so we're excited about the potential for discussion and networking this forum can provide.

Of course, a forum isn't any good without its users, so even if you're a newbie and have never used a forum, please follow this link and get involved:

www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php



Please Donate to the OCA

As a nonprofit, we need your donations so we can continue to move forward. You can donate online at:

www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm

Or mail your tax deductible donation to the OCA:

Organic Consumers Association

6771 South Silver Hill Drive · Finland, MN 55603

Or by phone: 888-403-1007 (toll free).

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