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

# ORGANIC BYTES

Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
Please forward this publication to family and friends, websites, print it, & post it. Knowledge is power!

## Grassroots Victory & Alert of the Week: Anheuser-Busch Pledges to Use Only Organic Hops in Its Organic Beer

As reported previously, the USDA is proposing to add 38 non-organic ingredients to the National List of allowable ingredients in products labeled as "USDA Organic" (products that are at least 95% organic). The OCA has been petitioning the USDA to remove some of the more problematic proposed ingredients, such as factory farmed animal intestines, mercury-laden fish oils, and non-organic hops.

On the hops issue, the USDA was heavily lobbied by the beer giant Anheuser-Busch, who claimed that organic hops are not commercially available and has been advertising its "Wild Hops Lager" as "the perfect organic experience" using conventional hops grown with chemical pesticides and synthetic fertilizers. Thanks in part to a USDA petition signed by over 20,000 *Organic Bytes* readers like you, Anheuser-Busch has announced it will now start using 100% organic hops for its organic beer line.

**Alert:** Despite Anheuser-Busch responding to public pressure and negative publicity in the press, the USDA apparently still plans to officially rank organic hops as "commercially unavailable." This will allow beer-makers to use chemically grown hops in their beers labeled as "organic", instead of supporting family farmers who are currently growing organic hops.

Please take a moment to sign a new petition to Anheuser-Busch, thanking them for pledging to use organic hops and requesting they tell the USDA to remove conventional hops from the National List of approved organic ingredients, thereby requiring all organic beer makers to use organic hops. Sign the petition at:

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_6523.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6523.cfm)

## Slow Food Around the World

Facing off against the overwhelming presence of fast food in our every day lives, the "Slow Food" movement seeks to bring local and ethically produced foods back to the family table.

Check out this short *TBS Storyline* online video for a delicious viewing experience, where you'll meet Slow Food farmers, chefs and consumers from around the world.

**Warning:** this video may cause hunger pangs or the overwhelming desire to find the nearest garden, coop or farmers market.

Watch video at: [www.tbsstoryline.com](http://www.tbsstoryline.com)

## Environmental Toxins Killing 13 Million Children per Year

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released the most extensive research to date on the impacts of environmental toxins on children's health. The report indicates that over 30% of childhood diseases can be linked to exposure to environmental toxins. According to WHO researchers, 13 million deaths could be prevented annually by improving the environment. The vulnerability of children is increased in degraded and poor environments.

The report states that due to environment-related diseases, one in five children in the poorest parts of the world will not live longer than their fifth birthday.

The OCA's **Appetite for a Change** campaign is focused on implementing policies and practices that can one day provide a safe environment for our children: [www.organicconsumers.org/afc.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/afc.cfm)

## Don't Just Buy Local - Buy in Season

More and more consumers are beginning to understand the incredible environmental and economic benefits of buying local. Industrial agriculture and long distance food transportation and processing now

generate up to 25% of all climate destabilizing greenhouse gases. Farmers Markets across the country are reporting record attendance and sales.

Massive amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> are produced when the average, often highly processed and wastefully packaged store-bought food item travels 1500-2500 miles from farm to fork. You know you're doing the planet and our climate a favor when purchasing items grown by farmers in your area.

Buying foods in season can be as important as buying locally. A bag of tomatoes grown locally may have less of an energy impact than those shipped up from Chile. But grow those tomatoes out of season in a heated greenhouse and its energy impact can exceed the imported option.

Of course, the moral of the story isn't to buy your tomatoes from Chile in the winter time, but rather to look for foods that are growing locally in season or were grown and canned/dried/preserved locally. [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_6358.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6358.cfm)



## Organic Bytes Readers Talk Back: Corn-Based Ethanol Adds to Global Food Crisis?

**Organic Bytes reader writes:** In issue #112, you discuss how using corn for ethanol is hurting the world's food supply. I thought it was worth noting that the corn mash leftover from the ethanol production can be used for feed. It's actually easier for the cows to digest. I know, because I've been using the stuff for years.

**OCA response:** This is a good point. As a note, due to the booming demand of ethanol, a lot of land that could be used to grow food crops is being converted to biotech corn production. The OCA's current work with us political leaders includes a focus on allocating 2007 Farm Bill funding for further research and implementation of sustainable biofuel production, such as the needed step towards energy efficient cellulosic ethanol fuels, which utilize stocks such as corn husks and grasses for fuel production, rather than food sources. These biofuel stocks are also needed to produce organic compost in order to reduce the use of energy intensive and environmentally destructive chemical fertilizers. But beyond the development of more sustainable biofuels such as switchgrass, the main challenge remains that we must drastically reduce our use of greenhouse gas polluting and non-renewable fuels and replace these fuels with solar and wind power.

[www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_6483.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_6483.cfm)

## Your Older Car May Be a Flex-Fuel Car Already

**Organic Bytes reader writes:** I think your readers should know that if they have cars that were made before 1998, they could be using E85. The computer systems in cars made after that tend to need adjusting to run E85, but I have a 1991 vehicle, and it has run great on E85 for over a year now with absolutely no modifications necessary and no problems.

**OCA response:** Yes, some older cars could run on E85 with little need for conversion, but most cars have a need for minor conversion (for example, making sure there is no rubber in your fuel system). It costs car manufacturers less than \$100 to make a new car E85 compatible. It can actually be a pretty easy modification. There are kits you can purchase for this same conversion, but none have been certified by the EPA yet. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty recently called on the EPA to certify a kit that is being used successfully around the world from [www.flextek.com](http://www.flextek.com). We'll keep you posted.

## More Info on Corporate Buyouts of Organic Companies

**Organic Bytes reader writes:** I do like the spider web of natural food acquisitions you've compiled, and in fact it is very enlightening [Issue #114]. Yet it's not complete. Stonyfield is owned by Dannon, Ben & Jerry's is Unilever, Green & Blacks Organic Chocolate is Cadbury... Nestle has a small stake in Divine Chocolate, and there's more. just as an FYI, in order to continue the web. Thanks for doing what you do!

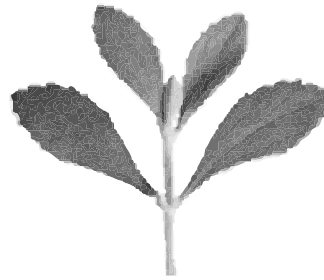
**OCA response:** As noted in that *Organic Bytes* piece, the charts we highlighted in that issue were specifically for the Top 25 organic sellers. They were not designed to cover all companies. For a more thorough list of "who owns what" in the organics world go to:

[www.organicconsumers.org/Corp/mergers.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/Corp/mergers.cfm)

*Note: If you have questions or comments about issues covered in Organic Bytes, like the readers above, please post them in our Organic Bytes forum: [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php)*

## Coca-Cola & Cargill to Market Natural Sweetener

The beverage and food industries have sought the "perfect sweetener" for decades. It's no secret that standard table sugar (sucrose) and its even worse cousin, high-fructose corn syrup, rots teeth, leads to obesity, and is a major contributor to diabetes. So chemical companies have concocted an armada of synthetic sugar alternatives such as saccharin and aspartame that have been linked to everything from cancer to neurological disorders.



Now Coca-Cola and Cargill have announced they have "developed" the perfect natural sweetener. The sweetener is stevia, a zero calorie plant-based sweetener that has been used for hundreds of years. In Japan, 40% of

the sweeteners consumed are from stevia, so it can't really be called a "new" sweetener. But here in the US, likely due to lobbying of the FDA by synthetic sweetener producers, stevia has been hidden in the shadows by strange labeling requirements that keep the average consumer from even understanding what stevia can be used for.

Coca-Cola and Cargill plan to bring a patented version of stevia to the mainstream as the perfect natural sweetener by removing some of the bitter aftertaste. Is this good news or bad news? What's your opinion?

Share your thoughts in OCA's web forum. It's easy and quick to sign up and join the online organic community: [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php)

## Please Donate to the OCA

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[www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://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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