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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!

## Preconditions for an Organic Future:

### No War, No Warming

It is becoming increasingly clear that current government policies and corporate “business as usual” are leading us straight toward ecological disaster and climate chaos. The inconvenient truth is that there will be no organic or sustainable future unless health-minded organic consumers and farmers all over the world take up the banner of *No War, No Warming*.



As nearly all of the world’s scientists are now warning us, in order to avoid catastrophic global changes, we must keep atmospheric greenhouse gas (primarily CO<sub>2</sub>) pollution below 450 parts per million and launch a trillion dollar program of greening the US and global economy—including making local and regional based organic food and farming the norm—and reducing greenhouse gases by at least 10% in 2010, and 90% in 2050.

We must stop the trillion dollar war for oil in Iraq, stop all future wars, and end our addiction to fossil fuels. We must shift \$680 billion in annual military expenditures to rebuild urban and rural communities. We must go green and promote environmental and organic justice with new jobs and a new food and farming system in a clean energy economy.

These are the demands of *No War, No Warming*, a broad network, spearheaded by the Organic Consumers Association and dozens of other groups, that has come together over the last six months. On Monday, October 22nd, No War No Warming activists will converge on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC to engage in mass nonviolent civil disobedience. Find out more and sign up for the DC action or for local actions at [www.NoWarNoWarming.org](http://www.NoWarNoWarming.org)

To stay in touch with daily developments, turn off your TV and the corporate controlled mass media, and tune in to the Organic Consumers Association website, especially our *Planting Peace* and *Environment & Climate* news and action sections [www.OrganicConsumers.org](http://www.OrganicConsumers.org)

### Get Interactive with OCA

The OCA tech team has been busy, working on new ways to help you network and get involved. Does one of our articles really have you steamed? We have just added a new “comments” feature to all of the dozens of articles we post on our homepage every day, allowing you to share your thoughts about what you are reading with other organic enthusiasts and netroots bloggers. Just look at the foot of every article.

In addition, there are now nearly a thousand people registered on OCA’s new web forum, posting ideas and questions related to OCA issues. Although you can discuss and read about any topic or interest in OCA’s web forum, our current feature topic is an area where folks have been sharing stories about chemical sensitivities. Whether you’ve had reactions to GE foods, pesticides, additives or any other chemical, please share your story.

The OCA will be collecting these stories you can remain anonymous if you choose to help policy makers understand the importance of food safety and organics.

Get involved at: [www.organicconsumers.org/forum/](http://www.organicconsumers.org/forum/)

### OCA’s Potential “Organic” Factory Farm Class Action Lawsuit Builds Momentum

Thanks to hundreds of organic consumers across the country for writing back to us last week to take part in OCA’s proposed class action lawsuit against Aurora Organic Dairy for defrauding consumers by labeling factory farm feedlot dairy products as organic.

We will be contacting each of you as this case proceeds. For those who haven’t contacted us yet, please do so now. Please write to us today if you have purchased dairy products labeled as “organic” since January 2004 until now from large retail chains and wholesalers including Wild Oats, Wal-Mart, Costco (*High Meadows*), Safeway (“O” Organics), Target (*Archer Farms*), Giant (*Natures Promise*), or UNFI (*Woodstock Farms*). Drop us a note at [ronniecummings@organicconsumers.org](mailto:ronniecummings@organicconsumers.org) or call the OCA office at 218-226-4164 and tell us:

- Your name and phone number
- Name and brand of purchase
- Name of store
- City, state and addresses available
- Approximate time frame of purchase (ex. 2004-2006)

For the latest news on the Aurora Organic Dairy Scandal, see *Corporate Organics Circles the Wagons: Lies, Damn Lies, and Public Relations: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\_7144.cfm*

Written and edited by  
Craig Minowa & Ronnie Cummins

## Find Out What's in Your Tap Water, Move Beyond Toxic Plastic Bottles

Although it's common knowledge that industry, factory farms, government agencies (especially the military), and municipalities are polluting our drinking water supply, this awareness has led to a widespread phobia of tap water that is ironically exacerbating the water pollution problem.

It takes five times as much water to make the plastic bottle than the amount of water the bottle actually holds. Last year, Americans consumed 1.5 million barrels of oil to make disposable water bottles.

That's enough to take 100,000 cars off the road and 1 billion pounds of carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. The average American adult spends nearly \$200 each year on bottled water. And of course, recent scientific studies indicate that hormone disrupting chemicals are steadily leaching out of those billions of non-recycled plastic water bottles that Coke and Pepsi are selling us, slowly poisoning us. But how do you know if the water coming out of your home or workplace's faucet is actually okay to drink in the first place? Obviously, in some cases it's not, but here are some links to help you find out if your fear of your tap water is really justified:

### OCA REVIEW: TOP TAP WATER SAFETY TESTING OPTIONS

1 · Water suppliers are required to supply their customers with an annual consumer confidence report (drinking water quality report). The report you tells where your water comes from and what's in it. To get your local municipality's report, check here: [www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo/](http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwinfo/)

**Advantages:** The report is free and relatively thorough.

**Disadvantages:** Water suppliers aren't required by law to test for all types of contaminants.

2 · *The Watersafe Test Kit* is an affordable tool that identifies harmful levels of eight different common contaminants in water: bacteria, lead, nitrates, nitrites, chlorine, pH, hardness and two common pesticides.

**Advantages:** It's only \$20, and it's a home kit that you can use anytime and anywhere you like.

**Disadvantages:** Although the kit tests for the 8 most ubiquitous types of contaminants, there are other less common pollutants it does not assess. [www.nextag.com/watersafe-test-kits/](http://www.nextag.com/watersafe-test-kits/)

3 · NTLabs provides consumers with the most thorough laboratory analysis of drinking water we can find at such an affordable rate.

**Advantages:** The Watercheck includes a 75 item check for bacteria, heavy metals, inorganic chemicals, trihalomethanes, 44 volatile organic chemicals, & 20 pesticides, herbicides & PCB's.

**Disadvantage:** The cost is \$159, but you may actually save money if you find out you don't need to be investing in bottled water and filters. [www.ntllabs.com](http://www.ntllabs.com)



## FDA Cracks Down on Natural Herbal Sweetener, Stevia

The FDA, under pressure from the powerful sugar and artificial sweetener lobby, has issued a warning letter to Celestial Seasonings for using a popular natural sweetener in some of its teas. The letter indicates the FDA classifies the herb stevia as "unsafe", even though it is a main staple sweetener in countries like China and Japan and has been used without negative health effects by indigenous people for at least 400 years.

In the FDA's letter to Celestial Seasonings, the agency aggressively condemns the use of the herb, noting that "enforcement action may include seizure of violative products". The FDA claims no evidence has been provided to the agency regarding the herb's safety, but federal records reveal the FDA has received over a thousand scientific studies regarding stevia, and all but one of them verify the safety of the herb.

In sharp contrast, nearly half of the studies provided to the FDA regarding the artificial sweetener aspartame, previously owned by Monsanto, indicate serious health concerns, yet it is one of the most commonly used (and one of the most profitable) sweeteners in the US. The OCA has verified that the FDA has strengthened enforcement of stevia imports at the borders. Last week, the agency updated a document that mandates detainment of imported food products containing stevia. [www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_7140.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_7140.cfm)

### Related Quote of the Week

"The only possible way to report that the results showed detrimental effects is by taking information out of context. If this is the case, one concludes that these FDA scientists are incompetent and irresponsible, or if not, they must belong to some sort of conspiracy group to carry on a sinister agenda against this plant with the objective to keep it away from American consumers by attributing to it safety issues that do not exist." -Mauro Alvarez, Ph.D., responding to the fact that the FDA cited stevia studies he conducted as evidence that stevia is unsafe.

### 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](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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