

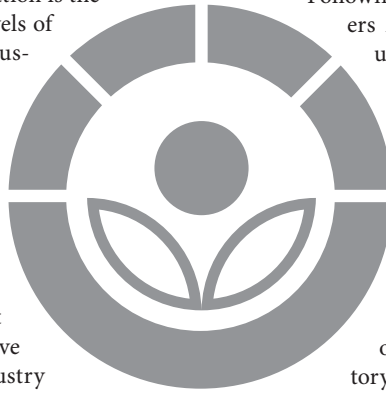


Alert: FDA OKs Irradiated Lettuce and Spinach

Rather than dealing with the problems inherent in a disease-ridden factory-farmed food system, the FDA announced in mid-September it will allow the irradiation of lettuce and spinach. Food irradiation is the controversial practice of bombarding food with high levels of x-rays (ionizing radiation) in order to destroy disease-causing pathogens.

Unfortunately, in the process of irradiation, other hazards arise, like the creation of toxic free radicals, vitamin and nutrient loss, and the formation of carcinogenic chemicals. While irradiated lettuce and spinach must be labeled in supermarkets, there are currently no labeling requirements whatsoever for restaurants, schools, hospitals, or nursing homes serving irradiated produce or other nuked foods such as beef. Over the past decade, OCA and our allies in the organic community have prevented corporate agribusiness and the nuclear industry from contaminating organic standards. Food irradiation is prohibited on any product labeled as "organic." There is currently a 30 day comment period for the FDA's new rule.

Take Action: organicconsumers.org/irrad/irradiationcomment.htm



A product bearing the Radura symbol has been irradiated

Obama Backs OCA & UFW's Call for "Natural Beef" Supplier to Recognize Workers' Rights

Following alerts and petitions circulated by the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) and the United Farm Workers (UFW) union, Barack Obama has sent a letter urging Beef Northwest Feeders in Oregon to engage in collective bargaining and contract negotiations with its farm workers. Beef Northwest is refusing to acknowledge a vote its workers took earlier this summer to form a union.

Obama called on the company to recognize the desire of the employees' rights to form a union and to negotiate with them in good faith. OCA has pressured Beef Northwest to recognize the rights of its workers to form a union, and has asked Whole Foods, the major purchaser of "natural beef" that is finished at the Beef Northwest factory farm, to intervene. Unfortunately, the head of Whole Foods, John Mackey, has been vocal over the years in his opposition to unions, in spite of company PR expressing support for Fair Trade.

EPA Sued for Bee Colony Collapse Cover-Up

Over the past two years, beekeepers have reported an alarming and potentially catastrophic loss of bees from their hives ranging anywhere from 30-90 percent. This "Colony Collapse Disorder" (CCD) isn't just a problem for beekeepers and farmers, but for consumers as well, since bee pollination is essential for crop production. The USDA claims that one out of every three mouthfuls of food is dependant on bee pollination.

Experts have been researching CCD and have linked the die-off to a number of likely culprits. One of the likely killers is a new pesticide, clothianidin, approved by the EPA in 2003. Germany and France have banned this type of pesticide to protect their bee population. In the US, clothianidin was approved after Bayer CropScience, the chemical's maker, submitted required studies to the EPA regarding the chemical's impact on bees and the environment.

Now the EPA is suspiciously and illegally refusing to release these public documents. To expose this cover-up and hopefully to save the bees, last week the Natural Resources Defense Council filed a lawsuit against the agency. Learn more: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_14192.cfm

Which Sweet Corn is Genetically Modified?

Organic Bytes reader question: "It's harvest time, and corn is everywhere, including my local farm stand. I asked the farmer's wife if their corn was non-GMO, and she didn't seem to know. Could you shed some light on this in the next newsletter—whether most sweet corn for human consumption is GMO or not?"

OCA's Response: More than 70% of the corn grown in the US is now genetically modified, but the overwhelming majority of this corn is grown for animal feed and ethanol. Among the marketing problems for the biotech companies is the fact that GMO sweet corn doesn't taste very good. The bottom line is that there is very little GE sweet corn being grown in the US at the present time, so it is highly unlikely you will be running into this "Frankencorn" at your local farmer's market or natural food store. Most farmers who grow GMO crops that re-seed, like corn, are aware that they are growing GE varieties, because Monsanto and the other GMO seed giants require a legal contract to be signed which prohibits the farmer from saving their seeds. We can all be thankful that genetic engineering is prohibited under national organic standards. In short, support your local and organic farmers and enjoy this year's sweet corn harvest!

GNA Alert and Video: Green Jobs Now

On September 27 the OCA is taking part in **Green Jobs Now: A Day to Build the New Economy**. We'll be doing Green Jobs Now actions at organic farms, farmers markets, community gardens, food co-ops, and community supported agriculture projects to show elected officials and 2008 candidates that we're ready for green jobs in organic food and farming now!

Take action: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_14368.cfm

Victory Gardens Symbolize a New Age

"We have had enough of the old ways of thinking, and we are here to take back control of our lives, our health, our resources, and our futures. We are resisting the control of destructive governmental and corporate forces. We are developing an energy and enthusiasm that characterizes new values, new ways of living, new survival techniques, and new experiences... A garden that symbolizes our part in this evolution is a challenge and a source of immense hope. If a family or group is able to achieve this, others will follow, and the movement will grow. In a time of famine for many and threatened famine for many others, the victory garden is an indication of a new way the earth can be made more fruitful. We must have a vision." Read Barbara L. Minton's full essay at: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_14315.cfm

The World According to Monsanto

This must-see film exposes why Monsanto—who races to genetically engineer (and patent) the world's food supply—has become the world's poster child for malignant corporate influence in government and technology. This landmark documentary plays August 29-Sept 1, at the Roxie Theater in San Francisco. Screening hosted by Jeffrey M. Smith, international best selling author of *Seeds of Deception* and *Genetic Roulette*, who will also premiere his short film about Monsanto's genetically engineered bovine growth hormone, *Your Milk on Drugs—Just Say No!*

Learn More: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_14391.cfm

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