



Quote of the Week

"I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around the banks will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered." -Thomas Jefferson 1802

Latest News on Global Warming

Exceeding climate scientists' worst fears, a new global study shows that greenhouse gas emissions are continuing to rise at dangerous, life-threatening levels. Due to growing public concern and efforts around the world to curb runaway fossil fuel pollution, many climate experts have expected to see CO₂ emissions begin to level off or decline. Unfortunately the latest greenhouse gas statistics, just released, covering the period of 2006-2007, indicate a three percent increase in climate-destabilizing CO₂ emissions. Three percent may not sound like a lot, but this figure actually exceeds the most dire worst-case projections by a group of Nobel Prize-winning international scientists in 2007. I Panel on Climate Change warns that a temperature change between 3.2 and 9.7 degrees Fahrenheit will lead to catastrophic environmental changes, including massive flooding, crop failures, starvation, and global conflict. Given the new CO₂ emissions data, basically reflecting government inertia and corporate greed in large greenhouse gas polluting giants such as the US, China, and India, scientists now project, if current trends continue, a catastrophic global increase in world temperature of 11 degrees by the end of this century. The new data also shows the average US consumer generates more carbon dioxide pollution by far than anyone else in the world. This news comes just days after Arctic scientists discovered that the melting permafrost is releasing millions of tons of methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more powerful than CO₂. The inconvenient truth is that more drilling, coal plants, and resource wars like the bloody occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, compounded by energy, chemical, and greenhouse gas intensive industrial agriculture, are literally acts of collective suicide. We must make the transition to a green, re-localized, and organic economy ASAP, and help the rest of the world, especially China and India, do the same, or civilization as we know it is doomed.

Mad Court vs. Mad Cow

A federal court has ruled in favor of the USDA in a long-standing dispute between the agency and a Kansas-based natural beef company that wants to test all of its meat for Mad Cow Disease. The USDA currently tests only a tiny percentage of US beef cows for the fatal disease, unlike the EU or Japan, where basically all cows are tested at slaughter for the disease. The USDA's controversial and dangerous policy, an obvious attempt to cover up the fact that the routine practice of feeding slaughterhouse waste, blood, and manure to animals on non-organic farms has spread Mad Cow Disease to many cows in the USA, has caused a number of major foreign nations to ban US beef imports. In an effort to re-establish trade, Creekstone Farms, a natural beef producer, (which does not feed slaughterhouse waste to its animals) responded to the loss of its foreign markets in Japan and Korea by asking the USDA if the company, itself, could pay to have all of its meat tested for BSE (Mad Cow Disease), thereby assuring leery foreign buyers of the meat's safety. In an outrageous move, the USDA threatened the company and its CEO with fines and imprisonment if they were to begin testing the safety of their beef. Creekstone took the USDA to court, claiming food manufacturers should have the right to invest in testing to make sure their food is safe. But a DC Court of Appeals recently ruled against Creekstone, saying the USDA has "broad powers" in interpreting how to enforce food safety laws.

SAY NO!
TO SWEATSHOP
"NATURAL" BEEF

Alert: Say NO to Sweatshop "Natural" Beef

Last week, the Organic Consumers Association put a call out to our network to support the United Farm Workers' ongoing union drive at Beef Northwest, a chain of Oregon cattle feedlots, producers of the popular brand, Country Natural Beef. Thousands of you have responded, signing our petitions or volunteering to leaflet in front of targeted Whole Foods supermarkets across the country, demanding an end to labor exploitation in the \$70 billion "natural" and organic food and farming sector. OCA believes that a healthy and sustainable food system depends on respect for the workers, animals and the environment. Unfortunately, labor laws in the United States do very little to protect the nation's two million farm workers, some of the most exploited and vulnerable members of our society. Labor unions, like the United Farm Workers, represent one of the few ways

that workers can organize and gain economic justice and dignity in a system rife with abuse and exploitation. It's time for Whole Foods to show as much concern for the workers at its Northwest Beef feedlots, as it supposedly does for the animals. For more information about OCA's Whole Foods Campaign and to learn more about the realities of farm workers in the United States, please visit: www.organicconsumers.org/ufw.cfm

UN Reprimands Monsanto

The President of the UN General Assembly condemned Monsanto for profiteering in his opening remarks last week. President H. E. M. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann noted that the global food crisis is worse than ever. In his remarks at the UN in New York City, he cited World Bank figures, which now blame 75% of the food crisis on the current mass transfer of food crop production towards biofuels. According to Brockmann, the world's food supply "has been subordinated to the economic aims of a handful of multinational corporations that monopolize all aspects of food production, from seeds to major distribution chains, and they have been the prime beneficiaries of the world crisis. A look at the figures for 2007, when the world food crisis began, shows that corporations such as Monsanto and Cargill, which control the cereals market, saw their profits increase by 45 and 60 per cent, respectively."

EPA and Bush Administration Busted

In 2007, *Organic Bytes* reported that the Bush Administration had eliminated pollution laws that required factory farm pollutants to be monitored and documented. In place of the old regulations, a new program was created that invited factory farms, which are more specifically known as CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations), to monitor their own pollution and voluntarily submit those reports to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Not surprisingly, last week, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a report indicating the new factory farm pollution policies aren't really working very well. According to the report, the EPA "is responsible for regulating CAFOs and requires CAFOs that discharge certain pollutants to obtain a permit." Yet according to the report, the EPA isn't effectively regulating factory farm pollution, because the agency currently has little data on how much and what type of pollution these CAFOs are putting out. Even more embarrassing, the EPA's data is so weak, they don't even know how many CAFOs there are. Given the fact that one of these factory farms can put out as much raw sewage as a US city, the GAO report suggests it might be a good idea if the EPA considered restarting that whole monitoring and enforcing thing it used to do.

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