



## Alert: Don't Cut the Organic Standards Debate

For eight years the OCA has stood with organic family farmers in an effort to crack down on the handful of giant factory farms, each milking thousands of cows, that are misrepresenting themselves as organic. The USDA just put out a draft rule that would require mandatory pasturing of dairy cows during the full growing season, with a minimum of 30% of their feed coming from pasture forage. The OCA and the organic community support this tightening up of pasture and feed standards. Unfortunately, the proposed new regulation still includes a loophole that would allow large dairy farms to bring non-organic heifers, or young milk cows onto their farms, and then call them organic. The USDA has allowed only a shorter than usual comment period from the public on this rule. We need more time to mobilize consumers and farmers to close this loophole and decertify the dozen or so industrial-scale dairy feedlots operated or sourced by large dairy corporations such as Aurora, Horizon, Rockview, and Shamrock, who supply cheap "organic" milk to Wal-Mart, Safeway, Costco and other chains. We ask that you send a message to the USDA secretary asking for a 30-day extension to the public comment period so all farmers, including Amish families that don't have e-mail, and consumers, have a chance to review this rule and make their views known. Take Action at: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_15758.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_15758.cfm)

## November NOSB Recommendations

**"Organic" Seafood:** The USDA National Organic Program has so far avoided putting USDA Organic labels on seafood, as the industry is rife with controversy over the environmental impacts of fish farming and over-harvesting. In the absence of US organic standards, shoppers seeking aquatic fare that is safe, healthy, nutritious, and sustainably produced have looked to recommendations from the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Program, the Marine Stewardship Council, and foodies like Mark Bittman. Last week, the NOSB made a recommendation to the USDA NOP on how to certify organic aquaculture. Sadly, they didn't pay enough attention to the experts and they've managed to come up with lower standards than competing certifications. The recommendation won't take effect unless the USDA NOP acts. If and when the NOP takes action, the OCA will be organizing consumer opposition to any rule that doesn't start with current sustainable seafood certifications as its baseline. Visit OCA's Organics page for more articles on the NOSB's organic seafood recommendation: [organicconsumers.org/organlink.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/organlink.cfm)

### AN ORGANIC THANKSGIVING ON A LIMITED BUDGET

- ✦ Be strategic in your organic purchases: Focus on replacing the "Dirty Dozen" fruits and vegetables (those with the most pesticide residues) with organic alternatives: apples, celery, grapes, lettuce, pears, potatoes, spinach...
- ✦ Host a potluck: Have your guests share a fair portion of the burden of expenses, and you can have more time to focus on providing a nice atmosphere.
- ✦ Buy less food: About a quarter of food from Thanksgiving meals ends up being wasted.
- ✦ Use smaller plates: Large plates result in people taking more food than they can eat.

## Join BreakTheBailout.com

As millions of Americans lose jobs, homes, health care and savings, Wall Street and industry billionaires are flying in droves to Washington, DC, in their corporate jets with their hands out, asking the US taxpayer to bailout the ventures that they ran into the ground with their own greed and short-sightedness. Bush, Congress and President-Elect Obama can't be counted on to stand up to these crooks. Only a massive outpouring of public protest is going to be able to stop our public treasury from being used to create golden parachutes for greedy executives. We do need trillions of dollars to stabilize our economy, but we can't put it in the wrong hands. We need that money to 1) green the economy, creating millions of new jobs in localized organic agriculture; wind, solar and geothermal energy; public transportation; highspeed railways; carbon-negative building construction and energy efficiency retrofits; and 2) stop global warming by halting deforestation and gradually phasing out the use of fossil fuels and nuclear power. Please join the OCA in supporting the Break the Bailout campaign. Please pledge now at [www.breakthebailout.com](http://www.breakthebailout.com)

## OCA Pressure Eliminates Vilsack as USDA Secretary

In last week's *Organic Bytes*, OCA alerted readers that President-elect Obama was considering former Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack for USDA Secretary of Agriculture. Vilsack has been an ardent supporter of Monsanto, GE crops, and corn and soy-based biofuels. Thanks to vocal opposition from thousands of you in the OCA network, Vilsack's nomination has been withdrawn. Although Vilsack told the *Des Moines Register* he didn't want to comment on why he had been sacked, sources at the Obama transition headquarters reported "a flood of calls and emails" from organic consumers opposing Vilsack's nomination. Thanks to your participation, the OCA office in Washington, DC is submitting a petition with 8,000 signatures to Obama's transition team this week, urging Obama to take a strong stand in support of organic food and farming. See a list of better candidates to head the USDA at: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_15732.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_15732.cfm)

## The Great Thanksgiving Turkey Debate

The OCA web forum *Web Topic of the Week* is buzzing about healthy and green Thanksgiving meal ideas. Here are a few of the postings:

**From Sandra F:** "I ordered my turkey from our local health food store. I am not sure if it is injected or not. Just know it says free range, no preservatives, not fed animal by products. This is the first year I will be cooking organic, making most everything from scratch and cooking a lot of things I won't eat. (I am going low carb, no flour, no sugar). But my family will insist on some of the old favorites. But the ingredients will be organic and fresh. I will even be making my own cheese sauce for the broccoli and the mac and cheese. No cranberry sauce, fresh cranberry relish this year."

**From greenbeans:** "If you really want a naturally raised turkey there is always the option of going out and shooting a wild one. They exist in virtually every state of the union. Open seasons are in spring and fall, usually. I gut the bird, pluck the feathers and roast the whole bird and make soup with the carcass. Some folks skin the whole bird or take only the breast to eat since the dark meat is tough. Wild turkey meat is the best."

**From Lily89:** "It's much better all around to go meatless for Thanksgiving. As somebody already pointed out, nutloafs are delicious, as are tofurkeys made with organic soybeans. Or you can make your own marinated and baked tofu dish. Another option is to just have lots of great vegetarian side dishes, who says you have to have a turkey or meat-like centerpiece?"

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## Brita Announces Water Filter Recycling Program

In *Organic Bytes* #134, OCA launched an alert with its ally [takebackthefilter.org](http://takebackthefilter.org) to ask America's #1 water filter company, Brita, to begin a US recycling program for the hundreds of thousands of filters the company sells domestically each year. Although Brita had a recycling system in place for the filters it was selling overseas, apparently the company didn't feel like there was enough demand for a similar system among US consumers. Thanks to pressure from citizen activists, the company has announced it is launching a US recycling program where consumers can drop-off the filters at Whole Foods Market or mail them in. The plastic will be recycled into toothbrushes and razors, and the activated carbon will be regenerated for alternative use. Learn more

## Our Work Depends On Our Supporters

Help the OCA in our ongoing campaigns to safeguard organic standards, build the green economy, and move the nation toward an organic, equitable, and sustainable future. Our work is dependent on your donations. Please donate now at: [organicconsumers.org/donations.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/donations.cfm)