



Organic 'Victory' Garden Planted at White House

In a major victory for organic and local food activists, First Lady Michelle Obama broke ground on the White House's first organic kitchen garden since the Roosevelt Administration. According to the First Lady "I've been able to have my kids eat so many different things that they would have never touched if we had bought it at a store because they either met the farmers that grew it, or they saw how it was grown."

Are you ready to follow the First Lady's lead? Would you like resources and tips for growing or expanding your own victory garden? Sign OCA's organic victory garden petition and visit our Organic Transition's Campaign at:

organicconsumers.org/transitions/

Tax Greenhouse Gas Emissions Now

The current climate crisis will become a full-blown climate catastrophe unless Congress acts quickly to drastically reduce climate-destabilizing greenhouse pollution from our current, and rising, 387 ppm (parts per million) of CO² in the atmosphere back to a level below the dangerous tipping point of 350 ppm. Big business, including agribusiness, has been profiting from cheap energy and saddling the public with the costs of its pollution for too long. Now, they're trying to escape regulation through Wall Street-style emissions trading. It's time to make the polluters pay. We need a tax on greenhouse gas emissions now! Ask Congress to pass America's Energy Security Trust Fund Act of 2009 and extend its carbon tax to all greenhouse emissions, including the potent methane and nitrous oxide emissions from industrial agriculture's fossil fuel fertilizers and factory farms.

organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17351.cfm

Rumor Update: HR 875

The following note is typical of the calls and e-mails OCA has been receiving this week: "Do you know anything about HR 875, a 'food safety' bill that was written by Monsanto, Cargill and ADM? I've heard a few individual activists scream about this as the death of farmers markets, CSAs and local organic food, yet have seen no alerts from any of the reliable groups, including OCA. Any idea what's up with this?"

For the record, OCA does have an alert out on HR875. As OCA points out in our Action Alert, we cannot support a "Food Safety" bill unless it provides protection or exemptions for organic and farm-to-consumer producers and cracks down on the real corporate criminals who are tampering with and polluting our nation's food supply—such as Monsanto.

Having said that, OCA supports aspects of HR875 that call for mandatory recalls of tainted food, increased scrutiny of large slaughterhouses and food manufacturers, and hefty fines against companies that send poisonous food to market. The now discredited ultra-libertarian notion that companies or the "market" will regulate themselves is not only ludicrous, but dangerous, whether we are talking about the banking system or the food and farming sector.

Monsanto and large corporate agribusiness are out to destroy traditional farming. While many people have been distracted by HR 875, the biotech companies have been pushing their agenda: Monsanto's gene-altered (so-called) drought-resistant corn, Epi-topix's E. coli vaccine, and the ban on rBGH-free labeling that Monsanto's successor Eli Lilly is trying to push through the Kansas legislature.

We need to keep working together to work towards positive alternatives, such as organic agriculture and the green economy.

Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) Update

Since the OCA's EFCA alert in *Organic Bytes* #165, thousands of people have contacted Congress in support of workers' rights and the proposed Employee Free Choice Act (HR 1409 & S560). Meanwhile, Fortune 500 front groups have spent over 100 million dollars to defeat or water down these bills. Whole Foods and Starbucks, traditional union busters, have offered a so-called "third way" which would essentially gut EFCA's key worker protections. Despite the hysteria and lies circulated against EFCA, the bill does not eliminate workers' choice to utilize the secret ballot, nor threaten our shaky economy. EFCA would level the playing field for workers, including those now routinely exploited by large corporations in the food sector, and increase penalties against companies such as Wal-Mart, Whole Foods, McDonald's, or Starbucks that illegally coerce or intimidate employees in an effort to prevent them from forming a union.

Will you stand up for workers and supporter EFCA? Contact your Congresspersons today. Learn more in OCA's EFCA Action Center:

organicconsumers.org/efca.cfm

What's in Your Body Care Products?

Organic Bytes #165 reported on a new study from the OCA exposing and assessing levels of the carcinogen 1,4-Dioxane in personal care and household cleaning products. Many of the products we analyzed had cleaned up their acts since our 2008 study, but a few products still tested off the charts for dangerously high levels. This week, we posted our press conference on YouTube, which summarizes our study and features David Steinman.

Watch the video at organicconsumers.org/bodycare/



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"That there is a crisis in water is a given, and that we need to address it is a given. That's why there's so much momentum behind developing a global standard." -Michael Spencer, director of the Water Stewardship Initiative speaking at the World Water Forum in Istanbul about the development of a new "Water Stewardship" standard. This certification is expected to be as globally popular as the current Forest Stewardship Certification. Within a couple of years, Water Stewardship logos should adorn a wide variety of products ranging from beer to cereal to t-shirts.

Headlines and Articles of the Week

► Is a Food Revolution Now in Season?

Organic gardens are springing up outside of federal buildings in DC. School lunch programs are getting more funding to provide kids with healthier foods. Sales of natural and organic foods are booming.

► How Local Retailers Can Compete With Wal-Mart

A new study has found that when Wal-Mart comes to town, local grocery stores should not attempt to compete with the chain's low prices. Instead, the study found that local stores expanding niche food items, like natural and organic products, fared better against the behemoth.

► Sugar Making a Comeback

The old enemy, sugar, doesn't seem as evil as high fructose corn-syrup (HFCS) to the modern mindful consumer, so many products are now touting sugar as the new 'natural' ingredient.

► Integrated Solutions to the Water, and Climate Crises

"The dramatic convergence of multiple crises-global warming, hunger and depletion of natural resources such as water-compels us to shift from the dominant industrial agriculture model and consider a new way forward..."

► Join OCA's Delegation to Cuba, End the Travel Ban!

Learn more at: organicconsumers.org/cuba.cfm

How to Make Positive Change

OCA's success stories are due to the involvement and donations of our supporters. In order to continue bringing positive change in the realms of health, social justice, and sustainability, we need your contributions. If unable to donate, please help spread the word about OCA to friends, family and colleagues. Please donate today:

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