



Urge Governor Sebelius to Veto rBGH Bill

Contact Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius and urge her to veto HB 2121 before April 16th. HB 2121 could potentially restrict any national US dairy from properly labeling their milk products as free from genetically engineered bovine growth hormone (rBGH or rBST). Take Action: organicconsumers.org/action.cfm

Tell USDA & NOSB: Protect Organic Standards

Certified organic food and products are about the only things sold in grocery stores these days that can be accurately described as nutritious, safe and good for the environment. (Beyond organic, you can support economic justice by choosing Fair Trade or Union-Made items.) Vigilance is required to prevent unscrupulous companies from driving down organic standards, or exploiting their workers. Family-scale organic dairy farmers are being undermined by factory farm feedlots masquerading as organic, as well as Wal-Mart and other national retail chains driving down farm gate prices. Multi-ingredient organic food processors are cutting costs by using the same supply chain as bottom-of-the-barrel conventional brands, with unfortunate results such as the recent peanut butter food poisoning scandal. Fake organic imports threaten to flood the domestic organic marketplace. Under the Bush Administration, USDA's National Organic Program contributed to these problems by being slow to address National Organic Standards Board recommendations, issue definitive regulations, and enforce existing ones. Under the Obama Administration, with Kathleen Merrigan as second-in-command at the USDA, we have an opportunity to prevent corporate greed from corrupting organic standards. Please send a letter to the USDA: capwiz.com/grassrootsnetroots/issues/alert/?alertid=13088991

USDA Revises Plant Hardiness Map

The USDA is responding to climate change by updating the Plant Hardiness Zone Map for the first time in 20 years. The map shows where various types of plant species can thrive, and as warmer annual temperatures move northward, the more than 80 million US gardeners and farmers will be looking to the map to see what new plants may be able to grow in their area. The Plant Hardiness Zone Map is typically used for domesticated plants, but this graphic display also sheds light on how native plant species are shifting due to climate change. The updated map is due out later this year. organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17423.cfm

Study Finds Infant Formula Contamination

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that 15 brands of infant formula are contaminated with perchlorate, an environmental toxin found in rocket and missile propellants. Two of the brands account for 87% of milk-based infant formula sales in the US. Perchlorate is a potent thyroid toxin that may interfere with fetal and infant brain development. The study found that reconstituting the formula with water that has levels as low as 4ppb of perchlorate would cause 54% of infants to exceed "safe" dosage levels of the toxin. organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17460.cfm

Shoveling Water on Vimeo

Journey to the heart of coca country where US tax dollars have financed the aerial fumigation of 2.6 million acres of land in Colombia with Monsanto's herbicides—devastating the world's second most biodiverse country. See crop-dusters target coca plants, the main ingredient of cocaine, with concentrated herbicide as part of the US war on drugs. Listen to people on the ground, hear about the impacts, learn new ideas about how to solve this deadly problem: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17464.cfm

Will the Real "Monsanto Bill" Please Stand Up?

News of a "Monsanto Bill to Criminalise Organic Farming" has been speeding around the internet. The Organic Consumers Fund, OCA's lobbying partner in Washington, DC, analyzed the bill and determined that we could not support food safety legislation like this that could be applied in a one-size-fits-all manner to all farms, including organic and farm-to-consumer operations—especially a bill that references the National Animal Identification System (a voluntary USDA animal tagging program that some influential members of Congress are trying to make mandatory for every owner of even a single farm animal). With these concerns, we posted an alert on March 12. Nevertheless, we were alarmed by the misleading headlines attached to anti-HR 875 alerts. Even if this bill were passed as is today, it wouldn't criminalise organic farming. The bill would require farms to have a food safety plan, allow their records to be inspected, and comply with food safety regulations. To say this is tantamount to criminalization doesn't give organic farmers enough credit. Worse, linking this bill to Monsanto (for no other reason than because the bill's sponsor Rosa DeLauro is married to political operative Stan Greenberg, who lists Monsanto as a past client) obscures the real damage Monsanto is doing in Congress. This past week, Monsanto got a bill passed in committee that forces GMOS on Africa. Learn more and take action: www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17480.cfm



EIGHT WAYS TO JOIN THE LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT

- ✦ Turn your lawn to a vegetable garden or join a community gardening program.
- ✦ Start a community garden program if there isn't one in your area.
- ✦ Eat more vegetables—a heavy meat diet creates more greenhouse gases.
- ✦ Can your foods and throw a "preserve party" to swap foods.
- ✦ Create a group to glean local farm fields of unharvested crops.
- ✦ Look for farmers markets, roadside stands and CSAs.
- ✦ Form an organic food buying club.
- ✦ Throw potlucks, with an emphasis on organic and locally-grown foods.

Headlines of the Week

Toward a Post Carbon Food System

"The American food system rests on an unstable foundation of massive fossil fuel inputs. It must be reinvented in the face of declining fuel stocks. The new food system will use less energy, and the energy it uses will come from renewable sources..."

Green Power from Algae?

"In the past, Venetians have looked upon algae as their enemy, but now they're hoping to tame the plants to satisfy the historic Italian seaport's energy needs. Will algae provide the ultimate in green power, or is the scheme merely a green pipe dream?"

Vandana Shiva: "Seed is Sacred"

"In Hindi, seed is bija or "containment of life." "Seed is created to renew, to multiply, to be shared, and to spread. Seed is life itself," Ms. Shiva said. Corporations such as Monsanto have reduced seed to private property..."

How a Green Economy Is an Antidote to Casino Capitalism

"Two of the overarching economic issues around which progressives will need to struggle are: first, how to build a clean energy economy, creating millions of good jobs in the process; and second, how to create a financial system focused on channeling money toward productive investment as opposed to destabilizing speculation..."

Read more at organicconsumers.org/archives/log.cfm

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