



Healthy, Local & Organic School Food Now

School food: It's never had a reputation for being good, but these days, it's downright unhealthy. Obesity and a host of diet-related diseases are linked to the school lunch menu, which is loaded with over-processed starches, fats, genetically modified ingredients, and meats laced with hormones, antibiotics and pesticides. Squeezed into buying on the cheap, school districts buy milk that has been produced with the use of rBGH and beef that gets recalled for the E. coli contamination that is inevitable in factory farm operations where corn-fed cattle wade in their own waste all the way to the slaughterhouse. Very few vitamin-rich fresh fruits and vegetables are part of the lunch menu, even though it's universally understood this is the key to improving childhood and long-term health. The 2009 Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act is an opportunity to change what kids eat at school and raise a generation of kids who understand good nutrition and value locally produced, fresh, organic food. Ask Congress for local & organic school food: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17382.cfm

Food Safety Working Group Update

We posted an alert recently that former Monsanto lawyer Michael Taylor, who has been serving on President Obama's Department of Agriculture Transition Team, was the leading candidate to staff the White House food safety working group. Taylor, who now promotes himself as a food safety expert, is a lawyer whose accomplishments include shepherding Monsanto's rBGH through Clinton's FDA as the Deputy Administrator for Policy.

OCA's Political Director, Alexis Baden-Mayer, attended the May 13th Food Safety Working Group's Listening Session in Washington. Here's her report: "I didn't see Taylor in the room, but it's too soon to declare victory. We should keep reminding Secretary Vilsack that we don't want Michael Taylor or any other former corporate lobbyist to be involved in crafting the government response to food safety."

"I had an interesting conversation with Bryce Quick, Deputy Administrator for the Department of Agriculture's Food Safety Inspection Service since 2005, who greeted me by saying, 'Organic, oh we're going to have problems with you!' He claimed to have visited an organic farm in Latin America several years ago that had major food safety issues although he wasn't sure if it was actually certified. When the meeting broke into small groups to craft policy "themes" it was clear that the conversation wasn't going to get too deep, I was placed in a group tasked with developing ways to "Allocate Resources Efficiently." I managed to get the group to find consensus around the idea that food safety solutions need to be scale appropriate, as regulations created for factory farms aren't going to be appropriate for small and micro producers who sell direct to consumers."

What would you like Secretary Vilsack to know about food safety? Tell him here: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_17541.cfm

Web Video: Food Inc.

In *Food, Inc.*, Robert Kenner exposes the highly mechanized underbelly of the US food industry, that has been hidden from the consumer with the consent of regulatory agencies. Our food supply is controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the farmer, the safety of workers and our environment. Interviews with experts such as Eric Schlosser, Michael Pollan, and forward thinking entrepreneurs like Stonyfield's Gary Hirshberg and Polyface Farms' Joel Salatin, reveal shocking truths about what we eat, and how it's produced. organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18022.cfm

When Local Goes Industrial

The local food movement is gaining enough popularity to capture the interest of big business. Some of the biggest corporate food companies are looking for ways to greenwash their products. Although it sure beats sourcing their crops from overseas and is a step in the right direction, the following marketing claims can be misleading since the actual processing of these often factory-farm grown products may be anything but local:

- ▶ Frito-Lay North America, owned by PepsiCo, is trying to portray Lay's potato chips as a local food in the regions where the potatoes are grown.
- ▶ ConAgra declares that because Hunt's canned tomatoes are mostly grown within 120 miles of its processing plant in Oakdale, CA, that makes them "local" for Oakdale, and maybe even Californians.
- ▶ Kraft is trying to determine if people in Wisconsin will buy more pickles if they know the cucumbers in a jar of Claussen's are grown there.

Headlines of the Week

EPA Has Revoked Approval of Two Moth Pesticides

The EPA has revoked approval of two moth pesticides pulled from aerial spraying over a dozen California counties last year when residents argued in a Santa Cruz court that the government failed to adequately assess health and environmental risks..."

The Truth Behind wic— Organic is *Not* an Option

"In February 2009, Washington State decided to remove organic milk from its list of 'approved foods' reimbursable by the Women, Infant and Children Program wic. Though this decision led to serious backlash from organic consumers and supporters nationwide, what may be a little known fact to many is that slashing organic produce from wic approved food lists for 'reasons related to cost' is currently being practiced in almost every single state."

Smart Transportation in the Peak Oil Era

"The Smart Jitney is a system of efficient ride sharing that addresses the problem of transportation in a post-peak oil world. The system utilizes the existing infrastructure of private automobiles and roads. The goal of the system is to insure that each private car

always carries more than one person per car trip, optimally 4-6. This would cut auto gasoline usage by an estimated 80% and commute time by an average of 50% within two years..."

Farm in a Barrel: Raise Fish and Grow Your Own Organic Vegetables

A Georgia company is selling 'Farm in a Barrel', a self-contained eco-system that allows homeowners to raise organic fish and vegetables at the same time. The method, called aquaponics, combines aquaculture fish farming and hydroponics growing plants in a soil-less system. The fish produce the nutrients to feed the plants, while the plants and bacteria clean the water..."

Website Challenges Corporate Abuse of Our Food

"Corporate abuse of our food begins with the seeds and in the soil that nurtures all life. The fast food industry demands enormous quantities of cheap, low-nutrition and uniform crops, encouraging the widespread use of toxic pesticides, industrial fertilizers and genetically modified seeds. These practices deplete our environment and threaten both our health and the livelihoods of family farmers." www.stopcorporateabuse.org/content/seed-soil

Read these articles and many more at OCA's website: www.organicconsumers.org

'ORGANIC' BRANDS IMPORTING BEANS FROM CHINA



"Health conscious shoppers should no longer associate Silk with organic, and should seek the green USDA Certified Organic seal when purchasing soy products... The good news in this report is that consumers can easily find, normally without paying any premium, organic soy foods that truly meet their expectations." -Source: Charlotte Vallaey, a researcher at Cornucopia Institute and the primary author of a new report that ranks mainstream soy brands based on how much they source their beans from US Farmers.