



## Alert: 260,000 Frankentrees to Be Grown in US

The USDA is currently taking public comments on whether the company ArborGen should be allowed to conduct 29 field trials of genetically engineered "cold tolerant" eucalyptus trees in the US. This massive experiment, which is on the verge of being green-lighted, will use nature as the laboratory to test more than 260,000 frankentrees.

Scientists are voicing concerns over this proposal, including:

- ✦ The USDA failed to do an Environmental Impact Statement to assess potential negative issues related to the proposed field trials.
- ✦ The spread of these plants into the wild through seeds and plant matter is highly likely, and the impacts on native ecosystems from this invader are unknown.
- ✦ One of the experimental GE tree varieties is a known host for *Cryptococcus gatti*, a fatal fungal pathogen whose spores cause meningitis in people and animals.

Comments are being accepted by the USDA until July 6. Learn more and take action: [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_18276.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18276.cfm)

## Who Should Sit on the NOSB?

The Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 established the National Organic Standards Board as a 15-member board responsible for advising the USDA Secretary on all aspects of the National Organic Program. During the Bush Administration, the board was stacked with a number of advocates for industrial-style corporate agribusiness, who apparently see organic food as not much more than a fashionable niche market. This is President Obama's first opportunity to appoint members of the organic community with a proven commitment to organic integrity. There are five volunteer positions available for 2 organic producers, 1 retailer, 1 organic handler, and 1 environmentalist. Who do you think should sit on the National Organic Standards Board? Join the Discussion in OCA's Web Forum: [organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=2770](http://organicconsumers.org/forum/index.php?showtopic=2770)

## OCA Tours in the Central Highlands of Mexico

The OCA invites you to join other organic activists at the beautiful organic farm and eco-center of our sister organization, Via Organica—*The Organic Way*, in the central highlands of Mexico. Meet OCA Director Ronnie Cummins and other staff members during these seven-day study tours at the Via Organica Farm School & Conference Center outside San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato. This unforgettable experience will inspire and energize you, providing tools, contacts, and knowledge for the challenges ahead. Seven-Day Tours Include:

- ✦ Organic Farming and Green Building Workshops with Via Organica Staff and Mexican Organic Activists.
- ✦ Fresh Organic Meals, Beautiful Accommodations, Thermal Swimming Pool.
- ✦ Visits to Organic Farms, Stores, Restaurants, Green Buildings, and Community Organizing Projects.
- ✦ Visits to World Heritage sites and other attractions in nearby San Miguel de Allende and Atotonilco

In addition to our ongoing tours, this summer you can enroll your child in Camp Gaia at Rancho Via Organica! This day camp is for ages 4-14 and is weekly from July 27 to August 14. Eco-art, theater, nature activities, caring for farm animals, swimming, dance and campfires. Learn more and register at [organicconsumers.org/tours/](http://organicconsumers.org/tours/)

## Tell Obama & Vilsack to Drop Pro-GMO Rules

Just before leaving office, the Bush Administration released a new federal law that would significantly weaken the regulation of GE crops. Please join the OCA in pressing President Obama and USDA Secretary Vilsack to drop Bush's pro-GMO rule. The rule would increase contamination of organic and conventional crops and release the USDA from the responsibility to remedy GMO contamination. It would let the GE pharmacrop industry gene-splice dangerous drugs and industrial chemicals into plants and food crops in the open environment. In addition, the rule would give the biotech industry the power to decide whether their new genetically engineered crops should be subject to regulation at all. In the 2008 presidential race, Obama promised "change we can believe in." We need a change from the Bush Administration's pro-GMO policies. [organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_18276.cfm](http://organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18276.cfm)

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK



"Scientists at Duke University in North Carolina have created pollen models that show tree pollen traveling from a forest in North Carolina for over 1,000 kilometers northward into eastern Canada. Scientists researching sterility in trees have admitted that 100 percent guaranteed sterility in GE trees is impossible. This evidence implies that if GE trees are released into the environment, widespread and irreversible contamination of native forests cannot be prevented." -Anne Petermann of the Global Justice Ecology Project

Ann Wright, a former Sustainable Agriculture Coalition advocate, was named Deputy Undersecretary last week. Among other duties, Wright will oversee the Agricultural Marketing Service, which is the branch of the USDA that houses the National Organic Program, and she will be in charge of the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service which monitors GE crops.

## Headlines of the Week

### Organic Advocate Appointed to USDA Position

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### Report Indicates the Era of Cheap Oil is Over

The US Department of Energy's annual International Energy Outlook report predicts a sharp drop in projected future world oil output (compared to previous expectations). For the first time, the well-respected

Department of Energy appears to be joining with those experts who have long argued that the era of cheap and plentiful oil is drawing to a close...

### More Problems With BPA and How to Avoid It

Two new studies link BPA to heartbeat irregularities and fertility problems. BPA is a ubiquitous chemical used to make hard, clear plastics for food containers, dental sealants and liners for food and beverage cans. Due to the growing evidence of health problems associated with BPA, there are an increasing number of products now labeling themselves as not containing BPA. Look for such labels on children's toys and reusable beverage bottles. In the realm of food safety, Eden Foods is one company leading the way in food can liners that do not contain BPA.

### For Dairy Farmers, the Depression is Here

"The price dairy farmers receive for milk has dropped by half since December, the largest single drop since the Great Depression... farmers are being paid a price that is far below the cost of production. As a result, we stand to lose as many as half of the nation's dairy producers by the end of the year..."

Read these articles and many more at OCA's website: [www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)

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