



Alert: Tell Whole Foods and United Natural Foods: Organic Means Respecting Workers' Rights

OCA has urged the world's largest organic and "natural" retailer and wholesaler, Whole Foods Market and United Natural Foods, Inc. respectively, to prioritize certified organic food and products, support farmers and manufacturers' transition to organic production, and to stop advertising or promoting so-called "natural" products (greenwashed conventional products) as if they were almost as good as or almost organic. OCA has fought to integrate organic and Fair Trade principles, to protect the rights of workers throughout the natural and organic supply chain, from farm and food processing workers to truck drivers, warehouse packers, retail clerks and restaurant workers. Fair Trade, health, and sustainability are the inseparable components of an organic food and farming system and a green economy. This is why we are challenging industry leaders as well as the entire organic and green community to implement a domestic Organic and Fair Trade code of conduct that assures workers' rights are respected. Send the Whole Foods and UNFI's CEOs a message that organic means supporting workers' rights: organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18535.cfm

Support OCA's NOSB Endorsements

Secretary Vilsack will soon make the Obama Administration's first appointments to the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB), a non-governmental advisory and supervisory board comprised of representatives of the organic community who make formal recommendations on organic standards and allowed ingredients in organic production to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP). Several important topics are now under deliberation by the NOSB and the NOP, including:

- ▶ Violations of national organic standards in the dairy sector, where leading brands (including Horizon & Aurora) continue to undercut ethical brands by utilizing cheaper, inhumane and less nutritious confinement feedlots where cows have little or no access to required pasture.
- ▶ Misbranding in the personal care sector, where increasing numbers of products laced with synthetic chemicals and not certified as organic are being labeled or advertised as "organic".
- ▶ Standards for organic aquaculture (fish farms).
- ▶ Which minor ingredients may be synthetic or sourced in non-organic form.

The appointment of strong organic advocates to the NOSB will help safeguard organic integrity, allow the organic movement to speak with one voice, and reassure consumers that "USDA Organic" is the gold standard for nutrition, safety, humane treatment of animals and environmental sustainability. organicconsumers.org/organlink.cfm

Consumers Think 'Natural' is Greener than 'Organic'

A Shelton Group survey of US consumers shows 31% of respondents believe '100% natural' is the most desirable eco-friendly product label claim, compared to 14% who chose '100% organic'. According to Shelton, "Many consumers do not understand green terminology. They prefer the word 'natural' over the term 'organic,' thinking organic is more of an unregulated marketing buzzword that means the product is more expensive. In reality, the opposite is true: 'Natural' is the unregulated word. Organic foods must meet government standards to be certified as such."

The survey suggests why companies like Horizon, Silk, and Peace Cereal are ditching organic ingredients, while UNFI and Whole Foods Market are failing to educate consumers and project a clear preference for certified organic goods. Instead, UNFI, WFM, and others are giving prominent shelf space to so-called 'natural' product-lines which are cheaper and more profitable to produce and sell than "organic," although these "natural" products are routinely contaminated with GMOS and synthetic chemicals, and derived from industrial agriculture and food processing practices that are polluting the environment, undermining biodiversity, and exploiting farmers and workers. organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18531.cfm

The Debate Over 'Natural' vs. Organic: Where Do You Stand?

Letter from one of our readers: "I have relied on the OCA to be a significant force for alternatives to an industrial food system. You have had a significant impact on helping all of us interested in choices in the food marketplace. I really take issue with the stance that certified organic is the only legitimate alternative to an industrial/global/impersonal food system. The movement which is connecting more and more consumers to think about where their food comes from, how it is produced and who profits from their food expenditures has grown rapidly as a "big tent" movement. I acknowledge that some abuse of the "natural" label occurs, but I do not believe we who are interested in alternatives to the industrial/global/impersonal food system benefit from a position which asserts that the only alternative acceptable is "certified organic."

Learn more and join the discussion: organicconsumers.org/forum

NEW STUDY REVEALS MAJOR HEALTH PROBLEMS LINKED TO GE FOODS

"We demand the systematic publication of the results of these tests, which we could only obtain on a case by case basis by taking legal action... It [the study] brings to light a significant underestimation of the initial signs of diseases like cancer and diseases of the hormonal, immune, nervous and reproductive systems, among others... The health crises may be more important than the international financial crisis because of the lack of transparency of the regulators." -from a study published in the *Journal of Biological Science* pointing toward serious health hazards from GE foods and pesticides. The research, conducted by scientists from France, Italy, New Zealand, UK & US, corroborates the decade-long criticism by public interest organizations such as OCA, Greenpeace, and Friends of the Earth that European Food Safety bureaucrats and the FDA have used unreliable tests to assess the safety of food and products containing GMOS. GMOS are now found in more than 80% of (non-organic) foods sold in conventional grocery stores in the US, as well as the majority of animal feed in the EU. organicconsumers.org/articles/article_18515.cfm

HEADLINES OF THE WEEK

Administration Seeks to Restrict Antibiotics

In written testimony to the House Rules Committee, Dr. Joshua Sharfstein, principal deputy commissioner of food and drugs, said feeding antibiotics to healthy chickens, pigs and cattle should cease.

And Dr. Sharfstein said farmers should no longer be able to use antibiotics in animals without the supervision of a veterinarian"

Dow Pitching New Toxic Pesticide

Public health and environmental advocates have asked the EPA to deny a request from Dow Agro-Sciences for a permit allowing it to release large amounts of sulfurlyl fluoride onto farm fields in four states. The chemical is a toxic pesticide whose global warming effects are thousands of times stronger than carbon dioxide"

Nobody Knows What Nanoparticles

Do your sunscreen, energy drink and high-tech clothing may be among the 800-plus consumer products made with nanomaterials: those manufactured at the scale of atoms and molecules. Nanotechnology, a fast-growing global industry, is essentially unregulated. Advocates and independent scientists agree that we need to get ahead of the risks before it's too late"

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

