



Call To Action: Eliminating Labeling Fraud in Organic Personal Care Products

A committee of the USDA National Organic Standards Board wants to "Solve the Problem of Mislabeled Organic Personal Care." OCA is very encouraged by the committee's proposal to make sure that any use of the word "organic" on a personal care product is backed up by third-party certification to USDA standards for products that are "USDA Organic" or "Made With Organic Ingredients." This is what OCA's **Coming Clean Campaign** has been pushing the USDA to do for the last 5 years. Unfortunately, the USDA has been hostile to the idea and even USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, an advocate for organic agriculture, has resisted consumer pressure on this issue. The long struggle for USDA enforcement of organic standards in personal care continues. The first step is getting the full NOSB to adopt the committee recommendation. The deadline for sending comments to the NOSB in advance of their November 3-5 meeting is October 19. Please take action today: organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm

Help Defend and Support the OCA

If you make an on-line donation to the OCA we will enter your name in a drawing to win some organic goodies! Two winners will be drawn at random on September 22nd and will be announced in the next issue of *Organic Bytes*. organicconsumers.org/donations.cfm



OCA Confronts Whole Foods & UNFI

Many thanks to the thousands of you who pitched in to help us stand up to Whole Foods with your letters, words of encouragement and donations! What started as a campaign to get Whole Foods and its principal supplier, UNFI (United Natural Foods Inc.), to sell more organics and respect workers' rights got tangled up in the health care debate when Whole Foods CEO John Mackey's anti-health care op-ed spurred health care advocates to launch a boycott. Even though OCA has chosen to pressure Whole Foods and UNFI rather than call for a boycott, Whole Foods pulled us into the fray by threatening to sue OCA over the use of their logo on a petition.

The controversy has kicked off a spirited debate among OCA members over health care reform. An article Ronnie Cummins wrote in March 2008, "Beyond Progressive Malpractice: Taking Down Big Pharma", addresses many of the concerns raised by OCA activists. Here's an excerpt: The problem is clear. The solution is obvious. The trillion-dollar life or death question is whether we can overcome our sectarian divisions and mobilize grassroots power... Can we heal the perennial split between proponents of universal health care and the alternative health movement? Can progressives and libertarians reach out to the economically disadvantaged and stressed-out majority to create a massive grassroots pressure that will literally force the politicians to do the right thing?" Continue the discussion in the OCA forum: organicconsumers.org/forum/

The next skirmish in our campaign to get Whole Foods and UNFI to implement Fair Trade practices, to respect workers rights, and to put a priority on selling organic products will take place in Boston at the Natural Products Expo East trade fair, September 24-26. Please join OCA and our labor and Fair Trade allies for a picket line and rally in front of the Expo East conference hall at 9:30 AM on September 24. Contact: Alexis Baden-Mayer: alexis@organicconsumers.org.

Quote of the Week

"It will take money from our state and federal governments, and advocacy by our leaders, to change course on a ship this big. It won't be easy, because it can't happen just by lecturing kids on nutrition, or putting salad bars in cafeterias. Edible Education is...a way of making sure that children grow up feeling the soil with their own fingers, harvesting its bounty in the American sunshine, and watching their own hands make the kind of beautiful, inexpensive food that can nourish the body and the spirit. Only then will the next generations of Americans know that we don't just vote in the ballot box, we vote for the kind of world we want every time we choose what to eat."

- Alice Waters, *Edible Schoolyard: A Universal Idea*

Organic Sales Growth Down to 7% in 2009

The "natural" food phenomenon worries many in the organic industry. So-called "natural" products aren't regulated and don't have to meet any special standards, so they can be marketed more cheaply than genuine certified organic food. Many formerly organic brands are trying to fool consumers into thinking natural and organic are the same.

Early this year, for instance, WhiteWave Foods added "natural" Silk soy milk to its line of organic products. This summer, WhiteWave (a unit of Dean Foods) broadened its Horizon line of organic products with its first "natural" offering: Little Blends, a yogurt for toddlers.

In August, it began test-marketing Milk Breakers, a six-ounce single serving of "natural" milk with added protein. This year, for the first time since at least 2004, sales of "natural" foods and beverages will likely grow at a faster rate than sales of organic foods, according to *Nutrition Business Journal*. The organic industry is fighting back. In September, Organic Valley will debut an online calculator that

lets consumers see how many chemicals they avoid by using organic milk. "We're holding on when some other sectors are sinking," says Theresa Marquez, chief marketing executive for Organic Valley. "Our future is organic."

Little Bytes

Chemicals in Our Diets Lead to Obesity

Most people don't think about how chemicals in their diets affect their weight or weight loss efforts. But the man-made chemicals you consume on a regular basis can play a big role in whether you're fat or not—even if those chemicals don't contain a single calorie.

Organic Milk Linked to Fewer Allergies

A recent Dutch study suggests that children are one-third less likely to suffer from allergies before age two if they're raised on organic dairy products.

Organic Foods Are Now 'Mainstream', Says USDA

The USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service said: "Organic products have shifted from being a lifestyle choice for a small share of consumers to being consumed at least occasionally by a majority of Americans."

Thoughts on the Legacy of Norman Borlaug

This was the man who arguably did more than any other to nurture the era of monocrops, GM foods and the intensive use of petrochemical pesticides and fertilizers. He may have saved a billion people from imminent starvation, but he planted the seed for future woes.

Read these articles & many more: www.organicconsumers.org

Visit Mexico with OCA staff in October

Join OCA's organic food and farming eco-tour. October 4-11, hosted by our Mexican sister organization Via Organica, based in San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato. Several spaces are open at a discounted price of \$850 for the week of workshops, tours to area organic farms, restaurants, stores, and green-building projects. Meet Mexican activists and savor gourmet organic meals and beverages, swim in our thermal pool, hike and bike and enjoy the cultural attractions of the nearby UN-designated world heritage site of San Miguel de Allende. This is a great opportunity to learn more about organic farming, share ideas, have fun, and support the OCA. Sign up now: organicconsumers.org/tours/