



Victory on Organic Body Care and Cosmetics

In a milestone victory after years of work by the OCA and the organic community to demand an end to blatant labeling fraud in the organic marketplace the National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) voted 12 to 1 at their November 2009 meeting to direct the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) to enforce the law for organic personal care products—just as they do for organic food. This means that shampoos, body care products, and cosmetics that claim to be organic but are not certified would be forced to drop their organic label and advertising claims, or else reformulate their products (getting rid of petrochemicals and problematic synthetic ingredients) to meet “USDA Organic” or “made with organic ingredients” standards. The OCA is initiating a letter-writing campaign asking the USDA to take quick action on the NOSB recommendation. While we wait for the USDA to begin enforcement actions, we’re calling on consumers to boycott fake, falsely labeled organic body care brands, and to buy only USDA certified organic products. Take Action: www.is.gd/4Ydoo

Get GMO Vaccines out of Organic

Vaccines are allowed in organic animal husbandry, but genetic engineering is excluded from organic. There is one exception: genetically modified vaccines. Under current law, genetically modified vaccines must be petitioned for use and reviewed by the NOSB to be included on the National List of allowed substances. The problem is, the USDA National Organic Program hasn’t been enforcing the law. Instead of asking the USDA to enforce the law, the NOSB is instead recommending that the USDA change the law to remove the GMO vaccine review requirement. The recommendation they passed would require non-GMO vaccines to be used whenever they are available, so it’s not quite as bad as it could have been, but it would still allow any type of GMO vaccine to be used without review, as long as a certifier could be convinced that there were no non-GMO alternatives. The OCA is taking action to prevent this misguided recommendation from being adopted by the USDA. We’re calling on the USDA to enforce the current law, and to disallow GMO vaccines, unless there is absolutely no other alternative to saving the animal’s life. The USDA should train certifiers on identifying genetically modified vaccines and preventing their use. Take Action: www.is.gd/4YdsU

Victory on Organic Animal Welfare

Current organic regulations prescribe livestock living conditions which accommodate the health and natural behavior of animals. The regulations require access to the outdoors, pasture for ruminants, clean bedding, and appropriate shelter, while placing restrictions on confinement. However, many organic consumers and farmers have complained that the current regulatory language is insufficiently precise.

The NOSB passed a recommendation last week that attempts to remedy this situation, by adding measurable standards for the treatment of animals and prohibiting practices like tail docking and debeaking (cutting off animals’ tails or beaks) that hadn’t been expressly addressed before. As the NOSB minority opinion points out, the recommendation isn’t perfect and doesn’t go far enough. For instance, it could have limited the frequency of milking for dairy cows to twice a day, and could have required certifiers to monitor the overall health of farms by keeping track of animals that die prematurely or have to be taken out of organic production.

Nevertheless, the OCA supported the recommendation, as we believe that it will encourage the USDA to enforce and strengthen existing laws. Please write to the USDA to ask them to do a better job of enforcing current animal welfare standards and use the new NOSB recommendation as the starting point for even stronger and better defined requirements: www.is.gd/4Ydwe

Get Nanotechnology Out of Organic

Over the objections of the OCA and thousands of our members, the NOSB decided to table the recommendation to prohibit nanotechnology in organic. The NOSB member who fills the scientist slot, Katrina Heinze of General Mills, delayed the process by insisting that the Board consider a compromise position that wouldn’t exclude nanotechnology from organic altogether, but would classify it as a “synthetic” that could be petitioned for use in specific instances. Please write to the NOSB and tell them to ban untested, unlabeled and hazardous nanotechnology products and ingredients in organic: www.is.gd/4YdEg

New York Times Echoes OCA's Charges Against Siddiqui

“The White House has nominated Mr. Siddiqui for the position of chief agricultural negotiator in the office of the us trade representative. He is presently a vice president at CropLife America, a coalition of the major industrial players in the pesticide industry, including Syngenta, Monsanto, Dow Chemical and DuPont. That job doesn’t seem to square with the Obama administration’s professed interest in more sustainable, less chemically dependent approaches to agriculture. Nor does much of the rest of Mr. Siddiqui’s résumé. The White House has touted his role in the first phase of developing national organic standards. But those standards, as they first emerged in draft form in the Clinton years, were notoriously loose about allowing genetically engineered crops and the use of sewage-sludge fertilizers to be labeled as ‘organic.’” OCA press release? No, it’s actually the *New York Times* editorial page. www.is.gd/4Ydzn



Quote of the Week

Will Obama Walk His Talk on Organics?

“I was just reading an article in the *New York Times* by Michael Pollan about food and the fact that our entire agricultural system is built on cheap oil. As a consequence, our agriculture sector actually is contributing more greenhouse gases than our transportation sector. And in the mean time, it’s creating monocultures that are vulnerable to national security threats, are now vulnerable to sky-high food prices or crashes in food prices, huge swings in commodity prices, and are partly responsible for the explosion in our healthcare costs because they’re contributing to type 2 diabetes, stroke and heart disease, obesity, all the things that are driving our huge explosion in healthcare costs.”
-Barack Obama, campaigning for the Presidency, during an interview with Joe Klei in *Time*, 10/23/08

Climate Change Art Project

With just over a month to go before the critical UN climate talks in Copenhagen, we’re trying to spread the word about organic agriculture’s amazing potential to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and sequester climate-destabilizing CO² in the soil. OCA is joining the iSky Campaign’s **Make Art for Climate** project that brings people together to decorate large pieces of cloth with images conveying the urgency around climate change and the need for positive solutions. If you send an artwork on cloth, we will incorporate your art into a large banner for use in public actions and demonstrations. Prior to the start of the Copenhagen Summit on December 7, the art pieces will be delivered in DC to the Obama administration and key Senate offices. This DC delivery will be complemented by public actions and similar art deliveries to local Senate offices across the country from December 1-4, all aimed at drawing media attention to the need for President Obama and the Senate to take bold action on climate.

To get involved contact alexis@organicconsumers.org or mail your artwork to 1858 Mintwood Place, NW #4, Washington, DC, 20009.