




# ORGANIC BYTES


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[www.organicconsumers.org](http://www.organicconsumers.org)


Food and Consumer News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
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## Halloween Chocolate Made With Forced Child Labor

The scariest thing about Halloween this year won't be the costumes... it's the chocolate. Almost half of the world's cocoa is being produced on West African plantations where, according to the UN's International Labor Organization, 284,000 child laborers "are either involved in hazardous work, unprotected, or have been trafficked." Say no to the chocolate industry's ghoulish links to child slavery by buying Fair Trade and organic chocolate.

 Help educate people about this important issue by sending a letter to the editor of your local newspaper here: [www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/oca/pickMedia.jsp?letter\\_KEY=576](http://www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizationsORG/oca/pickMedia.jsp?letter_KEY=576)

 Host a slavery-free Halloween house party to distribute trick-or-treat sized Fair Trade chocolate minis to your friends and neighbors. Fair Trade trick-or-treat kits: [www.store.gxonlinestore.org/trickortreatkit.html](http://www.store.gxonlinestore.org/trickortreatkit.html)

 Order Fair Trade chocolate minis for your Halloween party or trick-or-treaters: [www.equalexchange.stores.yahoo.net/organiccocoa.html](http://www.equalexchange.stores.yahoo.net/organiccocoa.html)

 Help us publicize the slavery-free Halloween campaign by letting us know about your house party. Contact: [alexis@organicconsumers.org](mailto:alexis@organicconsumers.org)

## This Week's Alert: Government's Bird Flu Plan is Dangerously Flawed

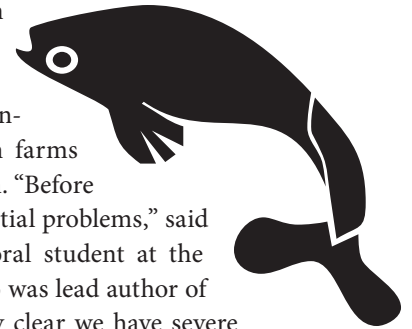
The USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service has posted a draft response plan to deal with an outbreak of avian influenza in the US. The draft response plan does not acknowledge the risk posed by factory-farm poultry industry practices in the emergence and spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza. Also, the plan does not address what will be done to protect free-range, organic and family farmers. Finally, the plan lacks adequate protective measures for farm workers and contract growers. To view our statement outlining the inadequacies of the draft response plan, go here: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_2806.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_2806.cfm) Help protect free-range, organic and family farms today and send your comment in to APHIS!

Email comments to: [NAHEMS.Guidelines.Comments@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:NAHEMS.Guidelines.Comments@aphis.usda.gov)



## Tip of the Week: Avoid Factory Farmed Salmon

A new study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences makes a convincing case that salmon farms are killing off wild salmon. "Before we knew there were potential problems," said Martin Krkosek, a doctoral student at the University of Alberta who was lead author of the study. "Now it is very clear we have severe problems here." The study found that salmon farms are massive breeding grounds for parasites known as sea lice. The parasites then concentrate in rivers and streams and kill the young salmon that do not have scales to protect themselves. Most salmon farms are located in Canada, where 280 salmon farms produce about 96,000 tons of salmon each year. About 70 percent goes to US consumers. The study, which confirms previous findings, is the most comprehensive to date. Responding to this study and similar past study results, Andrew Thomson, Canada's government head of Pacific fisheries, said, "We need to do more research on it." Farmed salmon is also known to have higher levels of PCBs than wild salmon. Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_3015.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_3015.cfm)



## DVD of the Week: Climate Crisis and the 2006 Elections

Global warming might be a grim subject, but we think that you will find this 28 minute DVD uplifting. The theme that resonates throughout the DVD is that climate change must be a prominent part of the 2006 election agenda. The film features authors Bill McKibben, Elizabeth Kolbert and Ross Gelbspan; students; and a broad spectrum of people determined to fight for a clean energy future. "There is absolutely no time to waste. The midterm elections in 2006 are not a moment too soon to begin," says Kolbert. The film offers ideas for concerned voters to help their candidates get active on this important issue. It's great for House Parties and Community Screenings. For a \$10 donation, the OCA will send you this important film today. As an extra bonus we'll send you the DVD video on buying local and organic called "The True Cost of Food." Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/climateaction.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/climateaction.cfm)



## Quick Tidbits

### India Bans GE Field Tests

India's supreme court has ordered a ban on all field trials of genetically engineered plants until further notice. The decision comes in response to widespread complaints by farmers and consumer groups, who pointed out that the safety claims made by the biotech companies were based on skewed studies the companies paid for themselves. Indian farmers are adamantly opposed to introducing any more biotech crops, in the wake of the widespread cultivation of a genetically engineered cotton variety patented by Monsanto that has caused widespread crop failures, driving thousands of Indian cotton farmers into desperate poverty. Since Monsanto's GE cotton was introduced, 20,000 bankrupt farmers have committed suicide.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_2943.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_2943.cfm)

### New York City Bans Trans-Fats

New York is set to become the first city to pass a strict ban on trans-fats in restaurant food. Hydrogenated oils are known to increase the risk of heart disease and have no nutritional value. The law will affect more than 24,000 food establishments and restrict trans-fats to no more than half a gram per serving. New Yorkers eat out more frequently than the average American, and over half of the city's restaurants currently use trans-fats. Policy makers say the rule will go into affect July of next year and should not cause economic problems, given that alternatives to the trans-fats, like other oils or margarine, are comparably priced.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_2890.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_2890.cfm)

### Senator Requests Aspartame Ban

A New Mexico State Senator is calling on the Bush Administration to ban the artificial sweetener aspartame. Now present in more than 6,000 consumer products, aspartame has been repeatedly found to have ill health effects ranging from neurodegenerative diseases to brain tumors to birth defects. Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino and members of the New Mexico Legislative Health and Human Services Committee filed a letter with the President's office, requesting he call on the FDA commissioner's office to rescind the approval of aspartame, which has been the source of more health effect complaints to the FDA than any other chemical on the market.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_2880.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_2880.cfm)

### Scam of the Week: Indentured Scientists Claim Excessive Salt is OK

The prestigious *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* (JACN) has published several studies claiming that excessive salt consumption is not as bad for your health as was previously determined. The published studies have since received press attention all over the US. It has now been revealed that the guest editor of that particular issue of the journal Dr. Alexander G. Logan, was a paid consultant to the salt industry. The regular editors of JACN also allowed the piece to be edited by a sodium committee stacked with representatives from Frito-Lay, Heinz, Kraft, and Proctor & Gamble. Several of the studies were written by past and current consultants to the Salt Institute, which is the industry's lobbying arm. JACN has since apologized for not disclosing this information and for publishing studies that it now confesses were not even peer-reviewed, which is supposed to be standard protocol for publishing any study.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_2993.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_2993.cfm)

### Be an OCA State News Scout:

We need your help. Become a News Scout! The OCA, with your help, will be unveiling News and Action Centers for all 50 states in the next few weeks. We want to keep your state's news items up to date. Send us news, events, organizations, and campaigns for your state.

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/state/statecontribute.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/state/statecontribute.cfm)

### Please Donate to the OCA

As a nonprofit, we need your donations so we can continue to move forward. You can donate online at:

[www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

Or mail your tax deductible donation to the OCA:

**Organic Consumers Association**

6771 South Silver Hill Drive

Finland, MN 55603

Or by phone: 888-403-1007 (toll free).

For many more food issue daily headlines:

[www.organicconsumers.org/log.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/log.html)

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