



ORGANIC INTEGRITY: UNDER ATTACK

National Organic Standards, finalized in 2002, are under attack. The most recent attack included moves in April by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow previously banned in organic crops, antibiotics and synthetic hormones in organic dairy production, and fishmeal containing PCBs and mercury residues to be fed to animals on organic farms. The USDA also announced they would no longer monitor or police organic label claims on “non-food” items including body care products, pet food, fertilizers, and seafood. After a national mobilization by the OCA and it’s allies, the USDA backed off on all these proposals. After three major battles to safeguard organic standards over the past six years, OCA believes that constant vigilance will be required to maintain organic integrity.

WHAT’S AT STAKE:



Organic Standards Under Fire:

Agribusiness front groups, such as the Farm Bureau, big food corporations like Kraft, biotech companies such as Monsanto, right-wing think tanks, such as the Hudson Institute, and industry-friendly government agencies have consistently tried to undermine organic standards and get the USDA to allow conventional chemical-intensive and factory farm practices on organic farms. Unless strict organic standards are maintained, consumers will lose faith in the organic label. These standards must also be applied to body care products, pet food, fertilizers, and seafood.



Preserving Organic Farms and Consumer Choice:

Genetically Engineered (GE) crops pose a serious pollution threat to organic food and farms. Windblown pollen from GE crops and commingling of seeds in grain elevators or transport vehicles are contaminating organic farms and seed stocks of corn, soy, cotton and canola. The OCA is calling for strict legal liability on all GE crops utilizing the “polluter pays” principle, to protect the property rights of farmers growing organic or non-GE crops. The OCA is also calling for mandatory labeling on GE foods—similar to laws already in place in Europe and other countries—so that consumers have a choice whether or not to buy GE foods.



Federal Funding for Organics:

The current five year \$220 billion US Farm Bill allocates less than \$5 million annually for organic research, promotion and marketing—approximately one-tenth of one percent. This means that Congress is using billions of our tax dollars to reward chemical-intensive, factory farm style operations, while penalizing non-chemical farmers. This, despite the fact that organic food has been the fastest growing segment in the food marketplace for over 13 years. To move beyond using pesticides, chemicals and genetically modified seeds, conventional farmers need government subsidies and conversion programs that prioritize local and regional organic production. These misguided priorities must be reversed in the upcoming 2007 Farm Bill. (*over...*)

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THE SOLUTION: REAL SUPPORT FOR ORGANICS!

Organic food and agriculture represent the future for the United States and planet. But without far-reaching change, organics will lose credibility and disappear. The rest of the world is now embracing organics as the hope for the future. From federal organic subsidies in Austria, to organic communities in Brazil, the organic future is now!

ORGANICS AT THE CROSSROADS

Organic food, fiber and body care are at a critical turning point. While 13 million households in America are buying organic products regularly, corporate agribusiness and genetic engineering are steadily trying to undermine organic integrity. If we are to feed the world, protect the environment and guarantee safe food, organic is the answer. However, without strict standards and a fair share of taxpayer subsidies, the organic sector will grow much more slowly than it should. The time has come to act!

MAKING YOUR VOICE FOR ORGANICS HEARD

Reclaim BioDemocracy! While you can daily support organic food and agriculture with your pocket-book, buying from responsible, local organic producers, we need political pressure on key decision makers. Make your voice heard, demand support and protection for organic food, fiber and body care! The Organic Consumers Association has spearheaded the struggle for organic integrity for the last six years! We have generated tens of thousands of letters and faxes to government agencies, supermarkets and corporations. We have received local, national and international press coverage. As a result, organic food is cheaper, and more widely available, while organic consumers are becoming a political force to be reckoned with. With your help, we can advance our broad-based organic agenda. Please take a few minutes to write and call your congressional representative to express your concern.

LETTER WRITING TIPS

Ask your Congressional Representative to:

- Join the Congressional Organic Caucus.
- Support House Bill #2916 for mandatory labeling of GE foods.
- Demand an increase in organic funding in the 2007 Farm Bill.
- Demand an end to subsidies for chemical-intensive and GE crops such as cotton.
- Ask your representative to please respond to your concerns in writing.
- Make sure to include your name and address.

THANK YOU!

ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION

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