



This is a condensed print version of our weekly newsletter. For links to action alerts as well as in-depth information about each story, please visit the online version: organicconsumers.org/bytes/ob262.htm

Monsanto Nation: Exposing Monsanto's Minions

By Ronnie Cummins. My exposé last week, "The Organic Elite Surrenders to Monsanto: What Now?" has ignited a long-overdue debate on how to stop Monsanto's earth killing, market-monopolizing, climate-destabilizing rampage. Should we basically resign ourselves to the fact that the Biotech Bully of St. Louis controls the dynamics of the marketplace and public policy? Should we seek some kind of practical compromise or "coexistence" between organics and GMOs such as GE alfalfa, even though scientists point out there is no such thing as containing the genetic pollution from a perennial crop like alfalfa that produces large amounts of pollen and is a favorite food for bee pollinators? Should we focus our efforts on crop pollution compensation and "controlled deregulation" of GE crops, rather than an outright ban, or mandatory labeling and safety-testing? Should we prepare ourselves for a future farm landscape where the US's 23 million acres of alfalfa (93% of which are currently not sprayed with toxic herbicides), including organic alfalfa, are sprayed with Roundup and/or genetically polluted with Monsanto's mutant Frankenforage? Or should we stand up and say "Hell No" to Monsanto and its Minions?



Monsanto's GE Alfalfa: Obama's Organic Betrayal

In last week's *Organic Bytes*, we made the case that the Organic Elite had betrayed the organic community when they naively sat down to cut a deal for "coexistence" with the USDA, essentially giving up on confronting Monsanto where it matters: in the market (including Whole Foods Market), where unlabeled GMO and factory-farmed foods are routinely purchased by unwitting consumers. OCA chided Organic Inc. for abandoning grassroots "activist pressure, boycotts, and petitions" and internalizing the defeatist notion "that the battle against GMOs has been lost." As *Organic Bytes* was sent to our members, news came that President Obama and USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack had betrayed the organic industry. As OCA expected, Vilsack, apparently on direct orders from the White House, abandoned the idea of "controlled deregulation" for something much more Monsanto-friendly. Monsanto's controversial RoundUp Ready alfalfa will likely be planted this spring and—like all of the biotech industry's GMOs—it remains untested, unregulated, unrestricted, and unlabeled. It seems that Obama has elected to join the ranks of Monsanto Minions, just like Bush Jr., Clinton, and Bush Sr. before him.

The good news is that the organic industry is finally showing some anger and passion! In the wake of this betrayal foretold, the Organic Trade Association published an open letter condemning Vilsack's decision, signed by United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI), Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley, as well as a host of organic advocacy groups and individuals, including Michael Pollan.

The Organic Trade Association also criticized Obama directly:

"The hope ignited by electing a president that would represent the people, against special interests and business as usual in Washington, was sadly extinguished when your office chose sides. As quoted by Maureen Dowd in Sunday's *New York Times*, your chief advisor David Axelrod offered a parting pun to "plow forward" on genetically engineered alfalfa, before heading off to get you re-elected. The cynicism of biotech lobbyists has penetrated the inner most sanctum of your White House and I am deeply disappointed... Since GE it is not currently labeled or tracked in our food supply, it is impossible to conduct long-term studies on the link between GE and human health problems.

"I want to be able to choose whether the foods I eat contain genetically engineered ingredients. When it comes to GE crops in America, I will vote for choice both at the grocery store and at the polls in 2012."

Truth in Labeling Campaign

Tell Whole Foods, Trader Joe's & Chains to Adopt Truth-in-Labeling Practices for GMOs and Factory-Farmed Foods

Whole Foods admits in an internal company document that it sells GMO foods, while they claim to support mandatory GMO labels. So, why don't they start Truth-in-Labeling with their own stores, and voluntarily label conventional and "natural" containing GMOs or coming from Factory Farms (CAFOS)?

Take Action online: bit.ly/gAUYYTA

Millions Against Monsanto Campaign Chapters

So far, 1,444 organic activists have signed up to volunteer to launch Millions Against Monsanto campaign chapters. We have volunteers in 304 of the 435 congressional districts!

Take Action online: bit.ly/gAUYYTA

Fair World Project

In the last 2 weeks over 9000 consumers have sent letters to TransFair, urging them to not change their name to "Fair Trade USA." An additional 26 Fair Trade companies and NGOs have endorsed the campaign. If you haven't yet, take action today!

On January 10, the OCA and Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps filed a Complaint to the FTC against TransFair and Fair Trade Cheater Brands Avon and Hain Celestial. The FTC is requesting consumer input regarding OCA and Dr. Bronner's complaint.

Internship Opportunities with the OCA

Office Internship

We are offering an internship working in our national office in Finland, Minnesota, beginning in late February for 4 months, with the option to stay on longer. This is an unpaid internship but you will be provided with a place to stay and a small stipend for food and living expenses. The internship will consist of basic office tasks such as answering phones, interacting with members, data entry, work on our website, as well as specific projects that we will work with you to develop. Opportunities will also be provided for local community involvement, including visits to a local CSA, dairy farm, and other sustainable agriculture and community venues in the region.

Online Research Internships to help OCA's Fair World Project

FWP seeks online interns to conduct internet research to support our Fair Trade Procurement Campaign and our Database Research Project. Interns will locate and post news stories, campaigns, and events, and reach out to like-minded organizations and green businesses or collect contact information on natural food stores, CSAs, etc. Although these are unpaid internships, FWP is willing to work with students to arrange college credit for your work.

20ate.org - Let's Celebrate Real Food this February!

One day after the US government issued its clearest and strongest statement on the need for Americans to eat less and better foods, the snack food lobby launched National Snack Food Month whose goal is to get us to eat more and worse. 20ate is a crowd-sourced, open-source campaign to encourage people to opt out of unhealthy, processed snack and junk foods for the 20ate days of February and opt in for real ones instead.