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

# ORGANIC BYTES

Health, Justice, & Sustainability News Tidbits with an Edge... From the Organic Consumers Association  
Please forward this publication to family and friends, websites, print it, & post it. Knowledge is power!

## Byte Back—Take Action

*There's still time to "byte back" on recent action alerts we've highlighted in Organic Bytes. If you haven't already done so, please take a moment to learn more about these issues and make your voice be heard!*

### Stop Genetically Engineered Plum Trees:

The USDA is accepting public comments regarding the commercial planting of a genetically engineered (GE) plum tree, known as "C5." The plum has been gene-spliced to be resistant to the Honey Sweet Pox Potyvirus, which doesn't even exist in the United States. Approval of C5 would be the first widely released GE tree in the mainland United States (GE papayas are currently grown in Hawaii), and would pave the way for more GE tree and fruit varieties, including peaches, cherries, and apricots. GE tree pollen can drift for several miles, leading to contamination of neighboring organic crops and indigenous trees.

#### Learn more and Take Action:

[www.organicconsumers.org/plum\\_alert.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/plum_alert.htm)

## Boycott of Horizon Dairy Generating National Publicity

The Organic Consumers Association's (OCA) call for a boycott of the nation's largest organic dairy brand, Horizon Organic, has recently generated stories in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, National Public Radio, and the Associated Press. The media coverage has highlighted the growing backlash by organic consumers against industrial scale dairy feedlots, who are misleadingly labeling their products as "USDA Organic," even though the animals on these factory farms have little or no access to pasture. In addition, most of the cows on these giant feedlots have been imported from conventional dairies, where they were weaned on blood, injected with hormones and antibiotics, and fed genetically engineered grains and slaughterhouse waste. While Horizon sources half of its milk from family farms where the lactating cows do have access to pasture, Aurora Organic, OCA's other major boycott target, gets all of its milk from intensive confinement feedlots. Aurora sells its "organic" milk to supermarket chains including Costco, Safeway, Giant, and Wild Oats, who bottle it under their own private labels.

For more information, see the Safeguard Organic Standards section of the OCA website [www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/sos.cfm) as well as [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_923.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_923.cfm)

Please help OCA continue our fight to Safeguard Organic Standards!

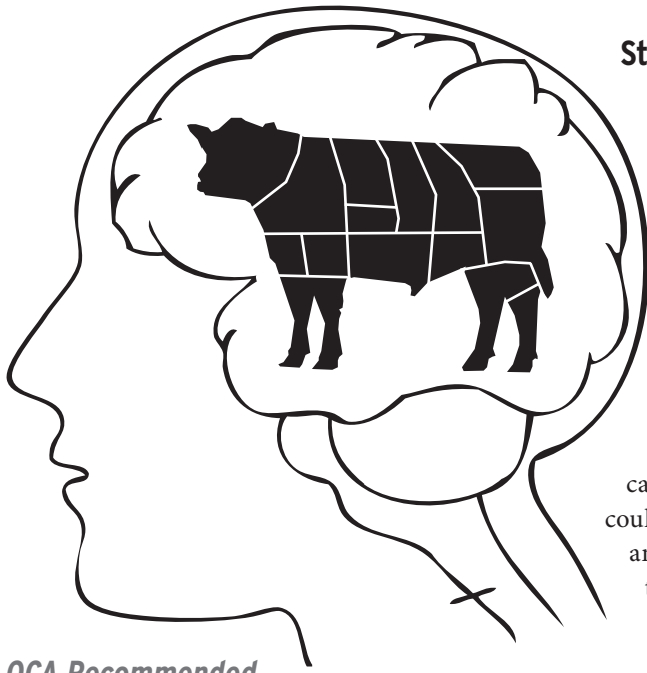
[www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/donations.htm)

### Pesticides Increase Risk of Parkinson's Disease

A new Harvard study has linked pesticide exposure to a 70% increase in Parkinson's disease. The study, which is the largest ever conducted, was released in the July 2006 issue of the *Annals of Neurology*. This research backs up earlier animal studies linking pesticide exposure to brain and nerve damage. For those who were exposed, occupation was not a risk factor, as farm workers and everyday home bug-sprayers all had the same increased risk. The study did not correlate the increased risk with any specific pesticides, but rather found the connection in overall general use of pesticides. "This is certainly the biggest and most serious populations study on people, and it appears to be the best proof today that there is a general association between pesticide and Parkinson's among people," said Robin Elliot, executive director for the Parkinson's Disease Foundation in New York City, describing the findings as "important and solid."

Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_902.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_902.cfm)

Written and edited by  
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### **OCA Recommended Websites of the Week**

*Did you know you can reduce muscle pain with rosemary? Or that kelp can help with hair loss, cilantro can soothe a headache, and cherries can assist you in getting a better night sleep? NewsTarget and Truth Publishing have launched the internet's largest free searchable database of healing foods, herbs and nutrients. Look up any ailment and find a quick guide to treating the problem with everyday natural ingredients.*

[www.healingfoodreference.com](http://www.healingfoodreference.com)

*You can now hear Organic Consumers Association staff speaking on the popular and informative Meria Heller Internet Radio Show every second Tuesday of the month. The show is broadcast live at 10am Pacific (until the clocks change again, then it will be 10am Mountain) and recorded for the archives while live. Ronnie Cummins, OCA's National Director will be on the program August 10, followed by Ryan Zinn September 14 and Craig Minowa October 12. [www.Meria.net](http://www.Meria.net)*

### **Study Says Mad Cow May Be Incubating in Thousands of People**

A new study in *The Lancet* medical journal (UK) suggests that variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD), the human variant of Mad Cow Disease, may not peak in the human population for several decades, by which time many thousands of beef eaters and hospital patients that have received tainted blood transfusions could die. The study shows how Kuru, a similar fatal brain-wasting prion disease in New Guinea, has been found to have an incubation period of 35 to 41 years. Researchers suspect it could be longer for vCJD because the infection is transmitted between species, from cows to humans. The 160 fatal human cases of the disease that have already surfaced around the world could represent a distinct genetic subgroup of the population with an unusually short incubation period, according to John Collinge, the study leader and a professor at University College, London. There could be "substantial underestimations" in recent estimates of the size of the vCJD epidemic, Collinge said in a report in *The Lancet*. Learn more: [www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article\\_889.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/2006/article_889.cfm)

### **EPA Staff Revolts**

**4,536 OCA members have taken action on this issue so far:**

Nine thousand EPA scientists have submitted a strongly worded letter to the EPA's Administrator, Stephen Johnson, protesting that "industry pressure" is compromising the "integrity of the science upon which agency decisions are based." The scientists are calling for a ban on pesticides known to be highly toxic. Research indicates that several dozen widely sprayed organophosphate pesticides, similar in composition to bio-warfare nerve gases, pose serious health threats, especially to children. Learn more and Take Action: [www.organicconsumers.org/epa7.htm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/epa7.htm)

### **State Food Safety Labeling Laws Under Attack**

**71,330 letters sent by OCA members so far:**

The House of Representatives has passed a controversial "national food uniformity" labeling law that would take away local government and states' power to require food safety food labels such as those required in California and other states on foods or beverages that are likely to cause cancer, birth defects, allergic reactions, or mercury poisoning. The law lowers the bar on food safety by overturning hundreds of food safety state laws and regulations, including those governing the safety of milk, fish, and shellfish. The bill now goes forward for consideration by the Senate. Learn more and Take Action: [www.organicconsumers.org/rd/labeling.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/rd/labeling.cfm)

**We rely on your donations to continue our work on these important issues!**

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

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For many more food issue daily headlines: [www.organicconsumers.org/log.html](http://www.organicconsumers.org/log.html)

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