

Making America Organic...One Home At a Time!



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A green rectangular graphic with the text "Safeguard Organic Standards" in yellow and "SOS" in large yellow letters. To the right is a circular icon of a green hand holding a leaf. Below the main text is a smaller paragraph: "After 35 years of hard work, the US organic community has built a multi-billion dollar alternative to industrial agriculture. Now large corporations such as Kraft, Wal-Mart, and Dean Foods - aided and abetted by the USDA and members of Congress - are moving to lower organic standards and seize control. For the sake of the earth and the health of the people we must stop them."

Over the past week, Organic Consumers Association network members have deluged the U.S. Congress with over 55,000 emails and over 10,000 telephone calls. Thank you for your support.

This nearly unprecedented grassroots upsurge has temporarily rattled Congress and the industry, delaying the initial Sneak Attack in the Senate on organic standards, resulting in a compromise amendment (H.R. 2744) September 21 calling for "further study of the issue."

Unfortunately we expect another, possibly even more serious, Sneak Attack in the House/Senate Conference Committee over the next week as Congress members put the final wording together for the 2006 Congressional Agriculture Appropriations Bill (for a list of committee members and contact info, visit <http://www.organicconsumers.org/organic/ofpa-contacts.cfm>).

Therefore OCA is now calling on consumers and the organic community to apply pressure to their House of Representatives members as well as their Senators to stop the Conference Committee from degrading the standards.

In addition we urge everyone to start applying pressure to the Organic Trade Association, who are unfortunately spearheading this Sneak Attack.

We ask everyone who has read our SOS Action Alert and signed our petition to Congress to call your House of Representative member 202-224-3121, as well as the OTA: 413-774-7511.

Background

After 35 years of hard work, the U.S. organic community has built up a multi-billion dollar alternative to industrial agriculture, based upon strict organic standards and organic community control over modification to these standards.

Now, large corporations, such as Kraft, Wal-Mart, & Dean Foods--aided and abetted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and members of the Organic Trade Association, are moving to lower organic standards by allowing Bush appointees in the USDA National Organic Program to approve a broad list of synthetic ingredients and processing aids that would be allowed in organic production.

Even worse these proposed regulatory changes will reduce future public discussion and input and take away the National Organic Standards Board's (NOSB) traditional lead jurisdiction in setting standards.

What this means, in blunt terms, is that USDA bureaucrats and industry lobbyists, not consumers, will have near total control over what can go into organic foods and products. (Send a quick letter to your Congresspersons online at <http://www.organicconsumers.org/rd-ofpa.htm>.)

During the next week, acting in haste and near-total secrecy, the U.S. Congress is being lobbied by industry to vote on a rider in the House/Senate Conference Committee to the 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill that could take away control over organic standards from the National Standards Board and put this control in the hands of federal bureaucrats in the USDA.

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September 27-29, 2005

Harvest Blend Regular

- Jumbo Carrots
- Cucumbers
- Rosemary
- Red Romaine Lettuce
- Yellow Onions
- Russet Potatoes
- Green Bell Peppers
- Hass Avocado
- Granny Smith Apples
- Starkrimson Pears
- Black Seedless Grapes
- Kiwi
- Angelino Plums

See the web site for details on our other options. Produce bag contents are subject to change based on availability.

You Don't Say

"Lettuce is like conversation: It must be fresh and crisp, and so sparkling that you scarcely notice the bitter in it." - C.D. Warner

"I have no truck with lettuce, cabbage, and similar chlorophyll. Any dietitian will tell you that a running foot of apple strudel contains four times the vitamins of a bushel of beans." - S.J. Perelman

"Ask not what you can do for your country, ask what's for lunch." - Orson Welles

"Manhattan is a narrow island off the coast of New Jersey devoted to the pursuit of lunch." - Raymond Sokolov



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Remember the USDA proposal in 1997-98 that said that genetic engineering, toxic sludge, and food irradiation would be OK on organic farms, or USDA suggestions in 2004 that heretofore banned pesticides, hormones, tainted feeds, and animal drugs would be OK?

For the past week in Washington, OCA has been urging members of Congress not to reopen and subvert the federal statute that governs U.S. Organic standards (the Organic Food Production Act: OFPA), but rather to let the organic community and the National Organic Standards Board resolve our differences over issues like synthetics and animal feed internally, and then proceed to a open public comment period.

Unfortunately most members of Congress seem to be listening to industry lobbyists more closely than to us. We need to raise our voices.

In the past, grassroots mobilization and mass pressure by organic

consumers have been able to stop the USDA and Congress from degrading organic standards. This time Washington insiders tell us that the "fix is already in." So we must take decisive action now.

We need you to call your Congressional Representatives and Senators today. We need you to sign the following petition and send it to everyone you know. We also desperately need funds to head off this attack in the weeks and months to come. Thank you for your support. Together we will take back citizen control over organic standards and preserve organic integrity.

Call the Capital Switchboard here: 202-224-3121, and tell your Congresspersons not to support any amendments to the ag appropriations bill that would lower organic standards. You can send a quick letter to your Congresspersons online here: www.organicconsumers.org/rd-ofpa.htm.

Thanks for your help!

Recipes

Garlic Chicken and Rosemary

- 8 chicken thighs
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 head garlic, broken into cloves
- 4 sprigs fresh rosemary
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 1/2 cup dry white wine
- black pepper

Dust the chicken in the flour. Heat the oil in a fry pan until hot and then toss in the chicken pieces, try not to stir too much so the skin browns and crisps and then turn over to do the other side. Add garlic. Add the rosemary, stripping the leaves off the stalk. Add the liquids and then the pepper. Place chicken and juices in a casserole and cook at 325F for a half hour.

Potato Cucumber Salad

- 1.5 lbs russet potatoes, unpeeled and thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 1 1/2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1/4 cup canola or vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh dill
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 large cucumber, unpeeled and thinly sliced

Place potato slices in a 9-inch square microwave-safe baking dish; cover with microwaveable plastic wrap and microwave at HIGH 9 to 11 minutes, or until tender stirring gently every 3 minutes.

Combine vinegar, mustard, oil, dill and salt in a small jar. Cover tightly and shake vigorously. Pour vinegar mixture over potatoes. Cover and refrigerate until chilled. Gently mix in sliced cucumber before serving.

Lettuce with Rosemary-Orange Vinaigrette

- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 tbsp balsamic vinaigrette

- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 tsp minced orange zest
- 1/8 tsp cumin
- salt, to taste
- 1 bunch rosemary, chopped
- 1 head lettuce, chopped

Wisk first seven ingredients together in a small bowl. Add greens, toss and coat.

Cajun Roasted Potatoes

- 1.5 lbs cut up potatoes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 3/4 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp finely minced garlic
- 1/8 to 1/4 tsp ground cayenne pepper
- 1/4 tsp thyme

Combine potatoes and olive oil in a 13x9x2-inch baking pan. Sprinkle with seasonings and toss to coat well. Roast at 450° for about 35 minutes, stirring 2 to 3 times.

Oven Baked Rosemary Potato Chips

- olive oil
- 1 medium russet potato, peeled
- kosher salt
- 1 tsp rosemary

Preheat the oven to 375F. Brush 2 large baking sheets lightly with oil. Use a mandoline or hand held slicing machine to cut the potatoes lengthwise into 1/8-inch thick slices. Arrange the slices in 1 flat layer on the baking sheets. Brush the slices lightly with oil and bake until golden throughout, 15 to 20 minutes, checking often since they brown at different rates. Transfer to paper towels and sprinkle with salt and the rosemary while hot.