

Bowman Weighs In on Suit

Excerpts from Sissy Bowman's article, reprinted with permission from Cooperative Grocer, www.cooperativegrocer.coop.

Note: This was originally printed just prior to the Summary Judgment.

There continues to be much debate about the lawsuit, and simple answers seem far away. But then, nothing much has been simple about implementing the Organic Food Production Act. With new and increasingly diverse organic products entering or wishing to enter the market, making decisions that will lead us into a credible, simple and efficient implementation path will become even more complicated. Now is when we set precedents and determine who will make the difference in what organics is to become.

This is an opportunity to improve the quality of what is called "organic," to build consumer confidence in the label as well as the process that creates the label, and to bring consumers into a more powerful role as far as their food choices are concerned. It is up to us—those who call themselves representatives of this industry—to uphold the integrity of the label and to encourage the public to comment during this important moment in the history of organic food. *Cissy Bowman is Executive Director of Indiana Certified Organic and manages Hoosier Organic Marketing Education, a nonprofit organization in Indiana.* ♣

Verbatim Excerpts from the Summary Judgment

In the US District Court for the District of Maine, Arthur Harvey v. Mike Johanns, Secretary of Agriculture Civil No. 02-216-P-H Judgment be entered in Plaintiff's favor with respect to counts 3 and 7 of Plaintiff's Complaint.

DECLARATORY JUDGMENT with respect to Count 1: 7C.F.R. § 205.606 shall not be interpreted to create a blanket exemption, to the National list requirements specified in 7 U.S.C. § 6517, permitting the use of nonorganic agricultural products in or on processed organic products when their organic form is not commercially available. Consistent with the Organic Foods

Production Act of 1990 (OFPA), 7 C.F.R. § 205.606 shall be interpreted to permit the use of a nonorganically produced agricultural product that has been listed in section 205.606 pursuant to National List procedures, and when a Certifying Agent has determined that the organic form of the agricultural product is not commercially available.

The Court of Appeals' decision recognized that some producers, handlers, and certifiers may have misinterpreted section 205.606 to mean that any nonorganic agricultural product which was determined by a certifying agent to be not commercially available in organic form could be used in organic products, without being individually listed pursuant to National List procedures. That interpretation is contrary to the plain meaning of OFPA.

With respect to Count 3: 7C.F.R. §§ 205.600(b) and 605(b) are contrary to the OFPA and exceed the Secretary's rulemaking authority to the extent that they permit the addition of synthetic ingredients and processing aids in handling and processing of products which contain a minimum of 95% organic content and which are eligible to bear the USDA seal. This declaration does not apply to synthetic ingredients and processing aids authorized by 7 U.S.C. § 6519(f) or § 6510(a)(7).

With respect to Count 7: 7C.F.R. § 205.236(a)(2)(i), which creates an exception to general organic production requirements for conversion of whole dairy herds from traditional to organic production, is declared contrary to the OFPA and in excess of the Secretary's rulemaking authority.

[For full info, go to www.ams.usda.gov/NOP under Latest News.]

Federal Register - Vol. 70, No. 126 - Friday, July 1, 2005

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, Agricultural Marketing Service [TM-05-08] National Organic Program (NOP), Final Judgment and Order in the Case Harvey v. Johanns

AGENCY: Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice. [This is the official notice that supports Ms. Robinson's notice on the previous page – Ed.]

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service is publishing this notice pursuant to a June 9, 2005, consent final judgment and order issued by the United States District Court, District of Maine, in the case Harvey v. Johanns. The court issued a declaratory judgment that 7 CFR 205.606 shall be interpreted to permit the use of a nonorganically produced agricultural product only when the product has been listed in section 205.606 pursuant to National List procedures, and when an accredited certifying agent has determined that the organic form of the agricultural product is not commercially available. The court's order limits an accredited certifying agent's commercially available determinations for nonorganic agricultural products used in or on processed organic products to the 5 substances contained in 7 CFR 205.606. The products are native cornstarch, water extracted gums, kelp when used as a thickener and dietary supplement, unbleached lecithin, and high methoxy pectin.

Excerpted from Federal Register:

http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Newsroom/FedReg07_05HarveyCaseFinal.pdf

"In my opinion, if the results of the Harvey decision prevail, the consequences will be severe for the organic industry. That's why OTA is working to return to a pre-Harvey status quo."

Phil Margolis, Chair, Organic Trade Assn. Interview in Organic Processing Magazine, Vol 2 #4, July-Sept 2005

The August Organic Business News reports that OTA plans to comment on rules as they are offered instead of taking a proactive role in proposing regulation implementing the Harvey court decision.

Harvey vs USDA Timeline Summary of the Facts

October 2002: The USDA implemented the NOP and Arthur Harvey sued in Harvey v. Veneman.

2003: The wheels of the bureaucratic court process moved.

Jan 8, 2004: Harvey lost on all 9 counts. He appealed the decision on all but two to the First Circuit Court of Appeals. Also in 2004, Veneman was replaced by Mike Johanns as Secretary of Agriculture, so the case became known as Harvey v. Johanns.

Jan 26, 2005: Appeals Court issued a decision that affirmed the Court's prior decision on all but 3 counts. Decision was in Harvey's favor on 2 counts and another was remanded back to the lower court for clarification.

April 6, 2005: Harvey, USDA, and other amici of the court presented their opinions on implementation to the Court. See Page 10 for the June 9 & July 1 actions.

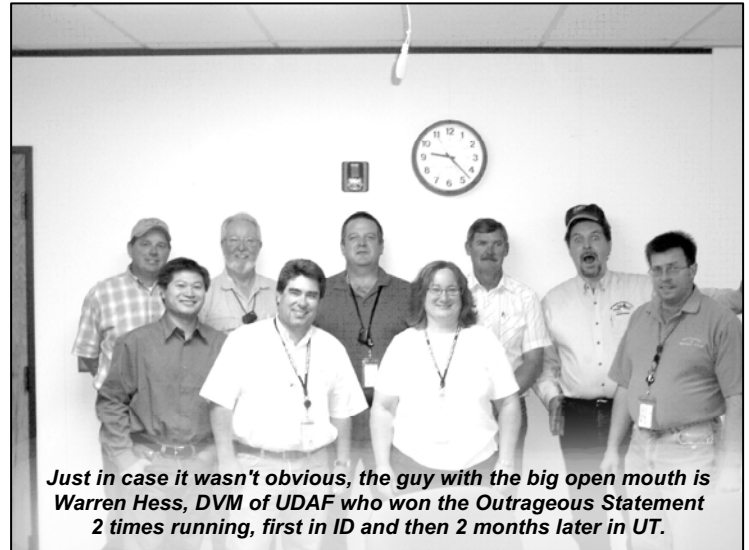
UDAF Handler Inspector Training

By John O'Malley Burns

Seth Winterton of Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) and IOIA organized a closed training for 9 UDAF professional staff, taught by John O'Malley Burns. It was great to have such a small class and be able to focus on all of the needs of each of the participants.

The Outrageous Statement award was won by **Warren Hess**, DVM, who asked, (when iodophores were being discussed as specifically allowed for teat cleaning in Dairy cows), "Why do organic cows need their teeth cleaned". He had graduated from a very humane vet school in northern California and was very sensitive to bovine orthodontics...

Everyone appreciated the participation of Jeff from Central Milling in Logan Utah for allowing us to tour his plant and review his records. Being a small group we were able to conduct Audit Trail samples and a spelt Audit Balance. Thank you UDAF for another good training experience.



Just in case it wasn't obvious, the guy with the big open mouth is Warren Hess, DVM of UDAF who won the Outrageous Statement 2 times running, first in ID and then 2 months later in UT.

Idaho Livestock Training

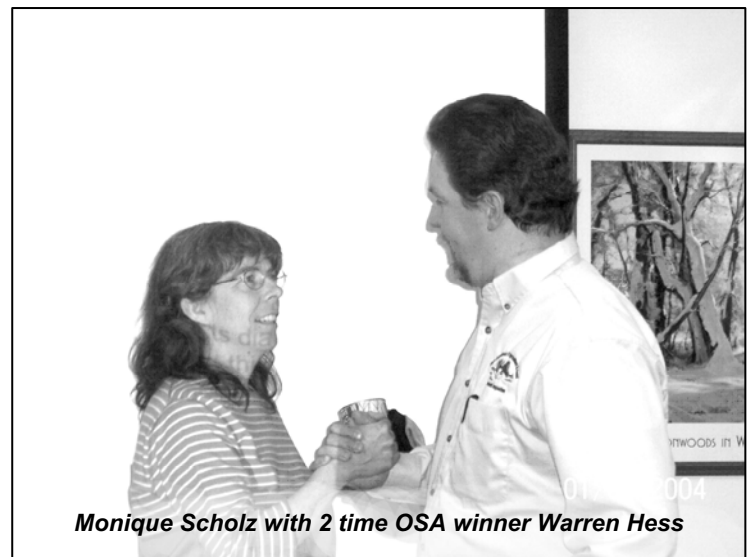
By Monique Scholz

IOIA and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) hosted a 3 day Organic Livestock Inspection Training at the department headquarters in Boise, Idaho May 23-25, 2005.

The course was preceded May 22 by a very well-attended NOP Crop Standard Workshop, led by Margaret Scoles. Although only five advance registrations had been received for the workshop, and despite the fabulous early summer weather, 9 participants completed the interactive workshop.

The lead trainer for the Organic Livestock Inspection Training was Monique Scholz from Québec, assisted by Margaret Scoles. Although we have known each other since the founding of IOIA and have both trained many inspectors, this was our first experience working together and we found our style and approach to be very complementary and well-balanced. Approximately one third of our 20 participants were from the IDSA, i.e., state inspectors whose workload includes many

other types of inspection work (grain, seed, dairy etc.) in addition to organic inspections. Other participants came from throughout the USA as well as Canada. The training team was delighted to note the intermittent presence of other state employees in the classroom, notably the deputy commissioner, for different training modules. Margaret Misner, of the ISDA, stated that the "training has generated a lot of interest in my department" and enhanced the credibility of the organic inspection scheme among her colleagues.



Monique Scholz with 2 time OSA winner Warren Hess



Trainers Monique Scholz and Margaret Scoles with 19 participants

An intense field trip was generously hosted by **Nathan Jones** of Glenn's Ferry. His diverse organic operation includes a cow-calf herd and modest finishing lot. For participants (and trainer!) from other bioregions, the field trip had the added advantage of getting us into the "desert", i.e., extensive BLM grazing land. Due to the exceptionally wet conditions for Idaho this spring, these pastures were an astounding palette of blooming vegetation.

The traditional Outrageous Statement Award was reluctantly accepted by **Dr Warren Hess**, a veterinarian from Utah who attended the full course and provided much helpful insight. During the review of materials led by Ms. Scoles, and on the subject of scours, he stated "The only thing that corrects diarrhea right now is a cork...and I think that is a natural product".

The course ended with an exam taken by 18 participants.

Pasture Rule Changes Sent Back to NOSB for More Work

With no forewarning, the NOP in mid-August returned the pasture rule change recommendations adopted by the NOSB in March. According to The Cornucopia Institute, as expressed by their policy analyst Mark Kastel, at the spring NOSB meeting the board passed two minor rule changes that would have closed some of the loopholes that large industrial farms were using to get around the requirement that ruminants (dairy cattle) must be pastured. The changes would have made it clearer that it is not enough for animals to have "access to pasture" but that they must in fact "graze." Large farms were using this loophole to justify confining their cattle even though pasture was theoretically available. A second rule change would have made it clear that lactation was not a "stage of production/life," allowing farmers to "temporarily" confine their cattle during all or most of lactation. "These rule modifications were well reasoned and insightful. However, they were suddenly, and without warning, rejected by the USDA National Organic Program staff at the August NOSB meeting. The staff defined the changes as ambiguous and without clear regulatory intent.

"We objected to the USDA rejecting the NOSB's proposed language without negotiating an acceptable alternative, if they had legitimate concerns. In fact, the USDA could have crafted alternative language and presented it to the board at their meeting last week for approval. Instead, they sent the rule changes back to the NOSB to start the process over again," reports Kastel.

"Depending on the NOSB meeting schedule, this might not be taken up again until next spring. It might take as long as 18 months from that point in time until these rules take effect as law. And then, farms that are out of compliance would presumably be given an opportunity to file a new management plan and modify their operations. Thus, in the best case scenario, it could be as long as 3-4 years from now until enforcement actions, based on the proposed rule changes, could take place."

IOIA contacted NOSB chair Jim Riddle, who reports that the recommendations "were not rejected. They were returned for further work. The board was told that the language was unclear and the documents lacked 'regulatory justification'. The NOSB Livestock Committee will revise the recommendations and expand the 'rationale' section to include a complete regulatory justification. The NOSB did adopt a pasture guidance statement." IOIA will let our members know where to access that NOSB guidance statement as soon as it becomes available.

Resources

Online Guide to U.S. Organic Certifiers

Published The Rodale Institute's NewFarm.org and the Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) have announced the *New Farm Guide to U.S. Organic Certifiers*, an online resource where farmers can find comprehensive profiles of participating organic certifiers, including fee structures, available services and geographic areas served. It is the only qualitative organic certifier guide available. Access the guide at www.newfarm.org/ocdbt.

Featured is information on a wide variety of characteristics of certifiers accredited by the NOP. Farmers can browse all certifiers, compare the full profiles of two certifiers or search by criteria such as farm size and type of operations certified.

"A farmer can click on 'livestock' and 'Ohio,' and instantly see all the listed certifiers that will serve that type of operation in that state," said Greg Bowman, on-line editor at NewFarm.org.

The guide is a collaborative effort of OFRF and The Rodale Institute® (TRI).

The U.S. Guide to Organic Certifiers can also be accessed from the OFRF website at www.ofrf.org

Organic Soy Lecithin Available 100% Organic Soy Lecithin is now available in commercial quantities. Clarkson Soy

Products has been producing this product since 2003.

New Nat'l Farmer Magazine Organic Producer Magazine claims to be the first national magazine for organic farmers. They plan to publish bi-monthly, both hardcopy and online. Check out the prototype issue at: www.organicproducermag.com.

Two new resources from ATTRA The National Sustainable Agriculture Information Services (ATTRA) has established a new on-line database, "*Suppliers of Seed for Certified Organic Production*." It lists sources of organic and untreated seed for annual crops: grains, cover crops, and vegetables.

ATTRA also has a new publication, "*Seed Production and Variety Selection for Organic Systems*" that provides insight into the current regulatory climate and the future direction of the seed industry.

Both the on-line database and the new publication can be accessed through:

www.attra.ncat.org

Other News

Paul K. Keene, 1910-2005

Paul K. Keene, a pioneer of organic farming in the US whose products were among the first commercially available organic foods in the country, died on April 23 at a nursing home in Mechanicsburg, Pa. He was 94.

For more than half a century, Mr. Keene ran Walnut Acres Farm, near Penns Creek in central Pennsylvania, which produced and packaged an array of foods including peanut butter, granola and free-range chicken. Walnut Acres products were grown without pesticides or chemical fertilizers and were stocked by health food stores around the country and sold worldwide through the company's mail-order catalog.

Mr. Keene's company was sold in 2000 and is no longer in business. A line of foods bearing the Walnut Acres Organic label is now manufactured by the Hain Celestial Group.

When Mr. Keene started Walnut Acres in the mid-1940's, the agricultural gospel called for using chemical fertilizers and insecticides, with their promise of cheaper, more efficient farming. Natural farming was viewed as eccentric, if not downright un-American.

"It doesn't seem that long ago that everyone thought we were kooks or Commies," Mr. Keene told U.S. News & World Report in 1995. "Someone once tossed dynamite on the property. Another burned crosses."

In the late 1930's, Mr. Keene took a teaching job in northern India. There, he became involved in the Indian independence movement and met Mohandas K. Gandhi, whose belief in simple living greatly influenced him. ♣

Highlights of Recent Board Meeting Minutes

Full minutes will be posted on the IOIA website in the members-only section as soon as available.

April 28, 2005 Highlights

- Jack circulated the first quarter financial report was prior to the meeting. Jack suggested that we are not able to predict how much income IOIA will generate annually especially because the training income is so unpredictable. Currently, we are on track with the budget and could have a \$10,000 in reserve at the end of 2005.
- The BOD supported the motion for the reorganization of the Training Committee to create a new structure that allows for involvement of trainers and others in the training program review. Margaret, Lisa, Janine and Ann Baier will be involved in restructuring the Training Committee and its training program.
- Margaret said she has been working on special trainings such as an organic dairy workshop and a possible Morocco training.
- The BOD supported the motion to accept Lisa's curriculum proposal with funding for phase 1 and 2 and endorse in principle phases 3, 4 and 5.
- The BOD agreed to the motion that the 2006 AGM will be on February 23 2006 in La Cross, Wisconsin.
- Garry reported that he had spoken with Janine and Lee Ann McCormick about co-chairing the Canadian Committee and updated the BOD on the progress of the task force.
- The BOD agreed to appoint Lee Ann McCormick as co-chair of the Canadian Committee. Brian thanked Garry for keeping the BOD informed on the Canadian situation. The BOD agreed to support Lisa's participation on the Inspector Training subcommittee of the Canadian Regulatory Task Force.
- The BOD discussed the possibility of establishing an IOIA Canadian contact point (or office). Garry and Jack offered to bring forward more information to the next meeting about setting up an IOIA office in Canada.
- Brian led a round table on the Board members thoughts about the timing of a full board Strategic Planning retreat. The BOD decided that the retreat that was planned for June of 2005 be postponed, but the BOD will continue with the planning meetings and reset the retreat date when it is economically feasible and the BOD members are available. The BOD decided that the agenda for the May 5th meeting will be to continue with the planning and the Canadian office situation. It was noted that some time should be set aside for thinking about the Big Picture. Brian thanked Dag for his commitment to IOIA and the strategic planning process.
- Margaret noted that Arthur Harvey plans to be among those who will tend the IOIA booth in Chicago. A specific time will be posted for conference attendees to chat with Arthur at the IOIA table.

May 19 Highlights

- Dag Falck led the BOD in a Planning to Plan for the Strategic Planning retreat session with a recap of the previous sessions and a round table about how the participants felt about the process to date. The BOD discussed who is IOIA, what IOIA does, its values, ethics, areas of expertise. There was general agreement in the value of the process and the need to avoid crisis management. Dag summarized the session as the desire for increased professionalism in IOIA, to be able change with a changing world that is more regulatory driven and the question, "What does IOIA have to offer?"
- Garry informed the BOD that Lisa will attend the Government of Canada's Organic Production System Task Force (Organic Task Force) Training Subcommittee on behalf of IOIA. Other IOIA members on the Training Subcommittee that plan to attend the meeting are Garry Lean, Janine Gibson and Monique Scholz. Information about the establishment of a legal IOIA Canadian entity was brought forward.
- Margaret said the once again OTA gave IOIA complimentary booth space at the 5th Annual All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show, May 1-3, Chicago. A big 'Thank You' to OTA. Over 10% of IOIA inspector members stopped by the booth this year. Thanks to Maarten Samsom, George Danner, Arthur Harvey, and Billy Hunter who helped with staffing, as well as toting in and shipping out. On April 30, Margaret attended the NASOP where Jim Riddle gave an update on NOSB activity, including comments on Good Guidance documents. He said that rules for honey, greenhouse, and mushrooms are likely to be posted for public comment this year that the confusion in the marketplace over labeling personal body care products is still unresolved. Riddle also said that the court's Summary Judgment might impact the use of DL-Methionine as an ingredient in livestock feeds.

June 14 Highlights

- Brian noted that the reason for the planning meeting was to establish the foundation for and the foster the momentum for the upcoming IOIA BOD Strategic Planning retreat. Dag began the Planning session by reviewing the previous issues and led a discussion about who is IOIA, what does IOIA do, and how can IOIA become indispensable by providing something that cannot be obtained anywhere else? The idea of a formalized questionnaire to the certifiers was discussed. It was pointed out that ultimately what certifiers want is for inspectors to know what certifiers want! It was noted that some of the qualities that the certifiers want might could be mutually exclusive. John Foster agreed to pose 10 ‘questions to the certifiers’ as a starting point for the BOD certifier questionnaire. Dag pointed out that a questionnaire could be useful in not only in gathering information but also in informing or educating the person answering the questionnaire. There was discussion about changing inspector training so that it would become more of an ongoing process rather than a one-time event.
- Garry reported on the June 14th Canadian Food Inspection Agency Organic Task Force Training subcommittee meeting that took place in Winnipeg, Manitoba. In attendance was Garry Lean, Lisa Pierce, Janine Gibson, Monique Scholz, Byron Hamm, Brian Ives. Garry said that Lisa did an excellent presentation on the IOIA. Janine offered support of IOIA and its training programs. He also said that there was no decision on what entity or entities would deliver the inspector or verification officer (VO) training program(s). Committee members are drawing up an outline of inspector or VO qualifications. There was no answer to the question to, “Who would accredit the VO training program(s)?” There was no further discussion of the need for an incorporated IOIA office in Canada during the meeting, but the IOIA will certainly need a Canadian office if the IOIA applies for government grant funding. There was no subsequent subcommittee meeting scheduled.

July 14 Highlights

- Dag opened the Planning for the Strategic Plan portion of the meeting. Dag had previously emailed the board the document, “Item Planning” as a guide for the Planning session. Luis agreed to assist the BOD in organizing our Brainstorm ideas by entering them as data into an Excel document to be emailed to the BOD later. The BOD agreed that prioritizing and evaluation of our ideas would occur later. The BOD agreed to work by phone conference on portions of Dag’s Item Planning Document that would include brainstorming ideas such as, what has IOIA done in the past in this area, what are IOIA’s values around this item, what does IOIA want to do on this topic? The development of practical time goals, practical strategies and the identification of structural and other changes needed in order to successfully implement each idea (if any changes are needed) are to be addressed later, hopefully at an in person BOD retreat. The BOD proceeded to brainstorm IOIA’s opportunities, challenges and other ideas.
- Brian led a discussion regarding date, location, facilitator, funding and length of a possible Strategic Planning retreat. Luis said he felt that the retreat would be the second part of the November 2000 Montana retreat. A decision was made to go ahead with the retreat that will be separate from the AGM. The BOD agreed that the Strategic Planning retreat would be held in California on November 2,3,4,5 of 2005.
- Jack forwarded his financial report to the BOD prior to the meeting. He reported that IOIA operated better than expected at the end of the 2nd quarter primarily due to better than expected training income for IOIA-managed trainings to date. Operational expenses are running about as expected.
- Margaret reported that the project completion date for the RMA Collaborative Agreement with NCAT is September 30. The Vegetable Record keeping Forms, Farm Documentation Forms, Budgeting Tools, and Pocket Notebook are all being completed by NCAT. IOIA members and subcontractors have contributed and are available for ongoing review. These tools are expected to be finalized by end of July. The Southern Organic Resource Guide is in the final stages of review for formatting by NCAT in late July.
- The IOIA AGM date and training configuration are not confirmed. Tentatively, the AGM is scheduled in the Radisson Hotel, in LaCrosse, WI on February 23. Margaret said she will create a tentative table of events to be held concurrently with the IOIA AGM
- IOIA sent letters of support for Miles McEvoy (certifier rep) and Emily Brown Rosen (consumer rep).
- The BOD voted to allocate \$1300.00 for Margaret and Lisa to work on the curriculum in Red Deer, Alberta August 28-31. [Note: These funds are to be for travel expenses.]
- The next BOD meeting will be on August 18, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

The tall guy is Robert Guilford, whose great organic farm in Clearwater, Manitoba, was the site of the basic farm training with trainer Janine Gibson earlier this year. → → →



Monsanto Report Sheds Light on Damaging Foods

The public may finally be getting an idea of just how damaging genetically modified (GM) foods can be.

That's because, thanks to a German court ruling, the biotech company Monsanto was ordered to publicly expose a controversial report about its Mon 863 variety of corn. Mon 863 was genetically engineered to produce a form of bacillus thuringiensis (Bt), designed to attack corn root worm.

The data verified claims made by prominent scientists who found animals that ate the GM corn developed severe side effects in the blood, kidney and liver and that humans eating the corn might also be at risk.

Moreover, the nearly 1,200-page report on the corn exposed that European regulators accepted Monsanto's promises that their corn was safe, despite the unscientific and contradictory rationale that was used to dismiss significant problems. Among the problems discovered in rats that ate the corn:

- * Kidney inflammation
- * Liver and kidney lesions
- * Increased blood sugar levels
- * Reactions that mimic cancer, allergies, anemia and poor blood pressure

Scientists Speak Out

Two prominent scientists -- both uniquely qualified to assess the study -- spoke out about the findings regarding Mon 863. Both scientists expressed alarm about the unsupported arguments that Monsanto and some European regulators used to force product approvals.

However, their prominent concern was the ways in which Monsanto "wrote-off" statistically significant effects.

Ditching Accepted Methods of Science

In the study, test rats ate Mon 863, while the control group ate non-GM corn from the same parent line. Considering the results were not entirely in Monsanto's favor, the company and their supporters in the European Food Safety Authority appeared to ditch the accepted methods of science to rationalize the findings and instead:

- * Relied on just two observation times, which will not give data about the intervening periods; moreover, the short 90-day time period will miss chronic and

reproductive problems, as well as problems in the next generation.

- * Depended on analytical methods that are half a century old, and ignored powerful new methods including profiling techniques, DNA chips and proteomics.

- * Reported bizarre weight measurements, suggesting possible problems with animal management or faulty data.

- * Defended changes in kidney weights by comparing the values with a separate study, which used different corn genetics and a different lab.

All in all, Monsanto's research paper was confusing, conflicting and inadequately reported. It also neglected to disclose the nutritional composition of the feed (backed up by chemical analysis) and the methods used to measure changes in the animals.

Yet despite all of this, the European Food Standards Agency still recommended that Mon 863 be approved.

U.S. Support

And the United States government's support for biotech is no secret either; in fact, it is the official policy in several U.S. agencies to sponsor the industry, and some of them have attempted to push acceptance of GM crops in Europe.

From Health Lies Exposed.com

Testing Finds GM Corn Absent from Mexico

Extensive testing in Oaxaca, Mexico, during 2003 and 2004 failed to turn up any evidence of genetically modified corn, says a Reuters news story on Planet Ark. GM corn had been found in a remote mountainous region in 2001, raising fears that the native gene pool in this area where corn originated had been contaminated. According to the story, an education campaign in the area has urged farmers not to plant corn of unknown origin, because it could be imported modified corn. This education is credited with helping quickly stop the spread of the modified corn in the region.

<http://www.planetark.com/dailynewsstory.cfm?newsid=31978&newsdate=09-Aug-2005>

Alfalfa Deregulated

The USDA has announced that herbicide-tolerant Roundup Ready alfalfa is officially deregulated, which means that it will be available to plant this coming fall, raising serious contamination concerns

amongst producers in heavy alfalfa growing regions such as California and Oregon.

Alfalfa is the fourth largest crop in the USA and the first perennial crop to have been given non-regulated status by USDA/APHIS. It is grown in 50 states and raises particular concerns about contamination and creation of 'super-weeds' because it becomes feral very easily and could become an herbicide-tolerant weed itself. Contamination of other alfalfa crops is almost guaranteed, which means that any dairy or beef cattle fed alfalfa in the US will potentially be ingesting genetically engineered crops. There are additional concerns that the introduction of GE alfalfa will virtually eliminate the possibility of organic honey because the crop is cross-pollinated by bees; as much as 30% of our honey relies on alfalfa pollen.

In an unprecedented twist, Forage Genetics, the patent holder for Roundup Ready alfalfa, has voluntarily agreed that Roundup Ready alfalfa will only be available this year for domestic use, not for export. It will not be available at all in the Imperial Valley of California, where a great deal of exported alfalfa is produced. This demonstrates awareness on their part (and the part of the USDA) that export markets will not accept GE-alfalfa.

New Study Reveals Thousands of Field Tests of GE Crops Across U.S.

More than 47,000 field tests of genetically engineered crops were authorized by the U.S.D.A. between 1987 and 2004 despite serious environmental threats and inadequate regulations in place to monitor their impacts, according to a new report released recently by Environment Maine Research & Policy Center and Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). Three hundred seventy-five of these tests were conducted in Maine, mostly for GE potatoes.

Both the National Academy of Sciences and the General Accounting Office have criticized the USDA for inadequate oversight and expertise in authorizing the release of GE crops.

Nevertheless, this new study reveals substantial increases in 2003 and 2004 of testing of crops engineered to produce pharmaceutical and industrial chemicals, as well as of many new crops never before released. [see GE, page 18]

Organic agriculture: The Only Way to Save This Earth

By Ramesh Nath Sharma

Today human beings are challenging nature with new discoveries and inventions. By reason of this the whole world is changed into a small village. With these new discoveries and inventions, peoples' lives are made luxurious and comfortable too. But on the other hand, human beings, animals, creatures, and plants seem to be in hazardous condition, i.e., as a whole, nature is in a critical situation. Humanity itself is the product of this nature, full of conscience among the living things of this globe. But men are being more commercial for their own benefit without caring of their beautiful home, earth. For individual benefit there is unhealthy rivalry which stops humans from thinking that they are also product of this nature. As a conscience living thing, man has to think about nature or preserve nature with proper behavior. It has to be said that man has no right to destroy this nature or earth. On the other hand, due to urbanization, industrialization, and infrastructure development, the rapid loss of agricultural land and its prominence in the worlds' food economy will decrease. The worlds' population, which is rapidly increasing, will suffer as well.

For living things of this planet, agriculture is the basic component to their lives, which is completely related to nature. Without agriculture, living things of this earth cannot imagine their lives. Soil, water, sun, wind and sky are the main factors of agriculture, which are also the main elements of nature. Nature means earth; if nature is destroyed earth also will be destroyed. Without preserving the nature, earth cannot be saved.

For the better supply of agriculture production, farmers have been using new technology such as genetically modified organisms (GMO's), chemical fertilizers, and synthetic pesticides in agriculture. Using chemical inputs in agriculture, there is instant benefit but in the long run these chemicals destroy the production capacity of soil as well as the life of human beings, animals and creatures. In totality it has been creating environmental problems. In the same way, GMO's are also collapsing the originality of the plant specified by nature. Or one has to say nature is stroked by all these things.

Here we have to know about organic agriculture. There are several explanations regarding organic agriculture. Organic agriculture includes agricultural systems that promote the environmentally, socially and economically sound production of food and fibers. By respecting the natural capacity of plants, animals and local conditions it aims to optimize quality in all aspects of agriculture and the environment. Organic farmers are not allowed to use synthetic pesticides or fertilizers. Some of the essential characteristics of organic systems include: design and implementation of an "organic system plan" that describes the practices used in producing crops and livestock products; a detailed record-keeping system that tracks all products from the field to point of sale; and maintenance of buffer zones to prevent inadvertent contamination from adjacent conventional fields. Now in the world, extension of organic agriculture is growing. Nearly 25 million of hectares of land is covered by certified organic agriculture farming which is gradually growing all over the world.

Now we have to look at the benefit of organic agriculture. Less food and drinking water contamination is the main advantage of organic agriculture, as there is a considerably reduced risk of contamination of food when no chemical fertilizer and pesticides are used. A safer working condition is another advantage. Farmers and farm workers actually die each year because of mishandling of pesticides, especially in developing countries. If use of pesticides is reduced, such kind of tribulations will be reduced. Organic production has the potential to produce sufficient food of a high quality. In addition, organic agriculture is particularly well suited for those rural communities that are currently most exposed to food shortages. Greater biodiversity, reduction of soil erosion, less consumption of water, low use of non-renewable resources are other main characteristics of organic agriculture. There are so many other advantages, even though viewing all abovementioned advantages also proves that it is a must that organic agriculture continue to grow, to save the nature or this earth.

In the context of Nepal, modern technologies (using of chemical fertilizer & pesticides) have been implemented in the field of agriculture. Nepal has a history of using chemical fertilizer and pesticide for

over 35 years for high agriculture production yields. But, there is less impact of this in comparison with developed countries. The main reason is insufficient infrastructure development such as roads and other access. So, it could not spread out all over the country. Because of this, farmers of Nepal are still far from the environmental effect of the conventional method. Limited farmers are using these chemical inputs where they are available but they are not using in the proper way or in relative amounts. Due to this, the life of the soil is dying day by day and fertility of the soil is decreasing; not only that, the quality of production is also contaminated. For example we can take rice. Before using chemical fertilizers, the quality of rice was very high and was full of flavor. While cooking the rice in a kitchen, all of the surrounding area used to smell of it. After using chemical fertilizers, the quality of rice start to be decreased, and now there is not any flavor in the same variety of rice. Similarly, it has been decreasing the quality in other food and crops, too.

Nepal is a mountainous country, and here, the origin of all rivers and streams are the mountains. The greater part of the agricultural land is residue in the southern part of the country and these rivers and streams are used for the irrigation of those lands. All chemical fertilizer and pesticides used in mountain farms comes with the flow of water in the river, and it affects the crops as well as the environmental & ecological balance.

This is the time to think, otherwise it will be too late. To avoid negative impact of chemical inputs used in agriculture, all the concern parties such as Government, NGOs, INGOs have to take further steps. In this regard government has to play a vital role in coordinating with concerned NGOs and INGOs. This is an example of only one developing country – and there are many other developing countries like Nepal.

Humanity is natural therefore all of its activities should be natural or should not be beyond the nature. If human activities move away from nature, the result will be very problematical. It will affect the home of humans on earth and the results will be hazardous. Despite many in the world that are aware of this fact, we should not be late to think about this matter. Ignoring human life, contemplating whether competition for the [see **Nepal**, page 18]

ED, from page 5

inspectors who might not meet all of their criteria. I've been less supportive than I'd like to committees this year, as we experienced record number of IOIA-managed trainings and the diversion of the RMA project.

Inspection Woes: I enjoyed assisting **Wendy Paulsen** in completing her apprenticeship this year for livestock, having covered farms last year. New apprentice **Jean-Marie Aguerre** of Oregon survived a full week with me this year. I only do about 20-30 inspections each year, but still I struggle with getting those darned reports written. "Be more concise!" I tell myself. I keep thinking of what Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "I'm sorry this is such a long letter, but I didn't have time to make it shorter." I finished a report about midnight last night that should have been shorter, but I just ran out of time... 🌱

Nepal, from page 17

large amount of agricultural production with the commercial view is right or wrong, we have to think in these regards. Therefore, by proper utilizing of natural resources, we should strive for high quality organic agricultural production.

In this way we can save our planet. For this we should apply sustainable organic farming systems. In the meantime, developed countries in the international community should share in the responsibility of supporting the economic development of developing countries. In view of the fact that the latter rely highly upon agriculture, it is of great importance to further international organic agriculture cooperation.

This article was submitted by Ramesh Nath Sharma, Executive Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Development Program Nepal (SADP-Nepal), located in Pokhara, Nepal.

GE, from page 16

The report, *Raising Risk: Field Testing of Genetically Engineered Crops in the U.S.*, highlights potential risks associated with the release of GE plants. The results of large scale field trials conducted over many years were just published in the March 2005 Proceedings of the [British] Royal Society demonstrating adverse effects on wildlife, but experiments conducted in the US continue to be piecemeal and short term. Scientists have criticized

research in this country as deliberately designed to hide any harm.

"Our environment is being used as a laboratory for widespread experimentation on genetically engineered organisms with profound risks that, once released, can never be recalled," said Environment Maine Advocate Matthew Davis. "Bt corn plants have been found to be toxic to monarch butterflies and other non-target species. Until proper safeguards are in place, this unchecked experiment should stop."

Findings of the new Environment Maine Research & Policy Center report include:

* As of January 2005, the fourteen states and territories that have hosted the greatest number of field test sites are: Hawaii (5,413), Illinois (5,092), Iowa (4,659), Puerto Rico (3,483), California (1,964), Nebraska (1,960), Pennsylvania (1,707), Minnesota (1,701), Texas (1,494), Indiana (1,489), Idaho (1,272), Wisconsin (1,246), Georgia (1,051), and Mississippi (1,008).

* Since 1991, USDA has received 240 requests for 418 field releases of crops engineered to produce pharmaceuticals, industrial chemicals, or other so-called biopharmaceuticals; the number of requested field releases of "biopharm" crops increased from 22 in 2003 to 55 in 2004.

* Nearly 70% of all field tests conducted in the last year now contain secret genes classified as "Confidential Business Information," which means that the public has no access to information about experiments being conducted in their communities.

* The ten crops authorized for the greatest number of field releases are corn, soybean, cotton, potato, tomato, wheat, creeping bentgrass, alfalfa, beet, and rice. Potatoes have had 143 field releases in Maine.

USDA authorized field tests on several crops for the first time in 2003 and 2004, including American chestnut, American elm, avocado, banana, eucalyptus, marigold, safflower, sorghum, and sugarbeet.

These experimental genetically engineered crops are grown in the open environment to test the outcome and

environmental impact of certain gene combinations. The groups charged that field testing genetically engineered crops in such a widespread way poses serious threats to the environment and neighboring farmers.

"For over a decade, MOFGA has called for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act prior to any field testing or field release of GE plants or other organisms. We're still waiting," said Sharon Tisher, Chair of the MOFGA Public Policy Committee. "Not only the distinguished National Academy of Sciences, but also the staff of the U.S. Department of the Interior, have raised serious questions about the risk of GE crops and animals becoming harmful invasive species. Also, GE crops that present a risk of genetic contamination of organic crops are a direct economic threat to certified organic farms."

A major goal of the field tests is to obtain information about potential ecological risks associated with genetically engineered organisms. However, independent reviews of the data collected by the USDA demonstrate that very little information has been gathered. As a result, despite the large number of field experiments that have occurred, fundamental questions about their impact remain unanswered, including long-term impacts on the soil and non-target species.

"The evidence continues to mount that the U.S. regulatory system is based on the principle of 'don't look, don't find,'" said Davis. "Conducting field tests that are poorly designed is taking large risks without any benefits."

Environment Maine Research & Policy Center and MOFGA called for a federal moratorium on genetically engineered foods unless:

- * Independent testing demonstrates safety,
- * Labeling for any products commercialized honors consumers' right to know, and
- * The biotechnology corporations are held accountable for any harm resulting from the products.

From the publication *Environment Maine*

IOIA sends hope and prayers to all who have been affected by Hurricane Katrina

Straight Talk from Farmers on Farming Organically and Successfully in the Northeast

Northeast Organic Farming Association announces the completion of a brand new manual series: ten handbooks that present the most proven and successful practices of organic farmers around the region. It's the NOFA *Organic Principles and Practices Handbook Series*, funded by the NOFA Interstate Council, NOFA/Mass and SARE.

All ten handbooks, illustrated and 60 - 110 pages in length, are written by talented farmer-writers for serious gardeners and commercial growers. Pre-publication review by farmers and scientists with relevant backgrounds has assured that each covers up-to-date experience and research. The handbooks include tables, references and farm profiles and are fully indexed. The series was illustrated by Jocelyn Langer and coordinated and edited by Jonathan von Ranson with the help of longtime farmers and leaders in NOFA.

NOFA and the book ordering page are at www.nofa.org

Suggested retail price is \$7.95. Bulk price \$4.50 per book (minimum 6 books of any title), \$3.50 order fee plus 30¢ per book postage. To order, contact Elaine Peterson info@nofamass.org or 978 355-2853.

To request review copies, contact Jonathan at commonfarm@crocker.com or 978 544-3758.

Handbook titles include: **Organic Dairy Production** by IOIA member Sarah Flack. Healthful organic milk comes from healthy cows, which come from good forage management based on healthy soils. Here's help in developing the observation skills and practices to get there, including chapters on soils, plants/forages, livestock, marketing and record-keeping. Health-protecting treatment options are covered, plus considerations for marketing fluid milk and value-added dairy products and coverage of regulations issues. Profiles of half a dozen individual farms help shed light on aspects of dairying and value-added production.

Vegetable Crop Health: helping nature control diseases and pests organically

Whole Farm Planning: ecological imperatives, personal values and economics

Compost, Vermicompost and Compost Tea: feeding the soil on the organic farm

Crop Rotation and Cover Cropping on the Organic Farm: soil resiliency and health

Marketing and Community Relations: the organic farmers' guide

Humane and Healthy Poultry Production: a manual for organic growers

Organic Seed Production and Saving: the wisdom of plant heritage

Organic Weed Management

Organic Soil Fertility Management



Bioethics Paper Available

"*The Transgenics: A Bioethical Overview*" is a Paper presented by Dr Marta Lachowicz and Agr. Eng Lidia A. Gaivironsky in the IX Argentinean and Latin American Journey of Bioethics: "Bioethics, Health and Citizenship in the XXI Century", Buenos Aires City, Argentina, November 2004.

If you are interested to have a free copy of it, please, send a message to lagaivi@fibertel.com.ar

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- COG Organic Field Crop Handbook, 2nd Edition, Expanded and Rewritten. Published by Canadian Organic Growers. An invaluable resource. While preserving the best of the now out-of-print and no longer available first edition, this edition is updated to include info on GMO's, E. coli issues in manure, and many additions to the crop section. 222 pages, spiral bound, \$30.00.
- Food Plant Sanitation and Safety, by Dr. Joe Montecalvo, 184 pp, \$50.00
- Introductory Food Science, Dr. Joe Montecalvo, 187 pp, \$50.00
- Managing Cover Crops Profitably, 2nd Edition, published by Sust. Ag Network, \$18.00
- Organic Livestock Handbook, published by Canadian Organic Growers. Edited by Anne Macey, 179 pp, spiral bound, \$25.00
- Organic Tree Fruit Management, published by COABC, 240 pages, \$30.00
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2005 Calendar

Sept 7 Organic Food & Farming Education & Research Field Day, Wooster, Ohio. Visit Ohio State U's Ag Research and Development Ctr. to see what researchers are doing in organic ag research.
<http://www.oeffa.org/tours05.html>

Sept 8 - 9 National Workshop on State and Local Food Policy, Des Moines, Iowa. <http://www.statefoodpolicy.org/natwkshp05.htm>

Sept 13 - 15 Eastern Biofuels Conference & Expo. Warsaw, Poland.
<http://www.easternbiofuels.com>

Sept 15 - 18 Natural Products Expo East, Washington, D.C. <http://www.expoeast.com/>

Sept 16 WSU Master Goat Farmer Program, Tacoma, Wash.. 3-day program covering herd health and nutrition, pasture management, milking management, meat goats, reproduction and genetics.
www.smallfarms.wsu.edu/whatsnew/MasterGoatFarmer.html

Sept 19-23, 15th IFOAM World Congress, Adelaide, Australia. Info: Fax: +61 8 8339 7800, <http://www.nasaa.com.au/ifoam/>
E-mail: ifoam2005@nasaa.com.au

Sept 19-22 Advanced Training in Organic Crop Production. Three separate multi-day sessions (starting and ending at noon) will cover a wide range of organic veggie production and management topics. New York. www.neon.cornell.edu/training

Sept 24-27 IOIA Processing Inspector course, Taiwan. See page 3 for details.

Sept 28-30 What Works! Rural Entrepreneurship & Community Development in the Northeast Conference, Burlington, VT. www.cas.nercrd.psu.edu/entrepreneur2005wksp.htm

Sept 29-Oct 2 IOIA Livestock Inspector course, Taiwan. See page 3 for details.

Oct 3-7 III World Congress on Conservation Agriculture.

Share/Expose experiences and lessons noted worldwide on the role of conservation agriculture in enhancing rural livelihoods in diverse environments. Nairobi, Kenya. www.act.org.zw

Oct 6-7 USDA Workshop on Organic Agriculture: Innovations in Marketing, Technology, and Research, Washington, DC.
www.ers.usda.gov/organicagworkshop

Oct 6-9 9th Annual Conference of the Community Food Security Coalition. Field trips, keynote speakers, workshops on food system-related topics, meals serving locally grown food, and more. Atlanta, Georgia.
www.foodsecurity.org

Oct 7-9 Green Genes - Saving Breeds Created for Grass, Fort Collins and Greeley, Colorado. Don't miss a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to tour the Livestock and Poultry Gene Bank facility of the USDA National Animal Germplasm Program.

<https://secure.cnchost.com/albc-usa.org/Conference2005/conference2005.html>

Website 2: <http://www.albc-usa.org/>

Oct 11-17 Grazing for Great Livestock, Waco, TX. Intro course for solving practical problems using sustained agriculture techniques related to managing native pastures and rangelands. Topics include rangeland ecology, stocking rates, rotations, brush control, and vegetation improvement.
www.highlanderranch.com/

Oct 14-16 Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association National Conference, Red Boiling Springs, Tennessee.
www.biodynamics.com

Oct 15 - 22 IOIA Basic Farm and Processing Inspector training, New Brunswick, Canada. See page 3 for details.

Oct 16-19 4th National Small Farm Conference, "Enhancing Opportunities for Small Farmers and Ranchers". Greensboro,

NC. www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/smallfarms_if_conferences.html

Oct 20-21 IOIA/PCO Organic Dairy Inspector training. See page 3 for details.

Oct 21 - 23 The 2005 Women in Sustainable Ag Conference. Burlington, VT.
www.uvm.edu/wagn/womeninag.html

Oct 28-30 Natural Products Northwest, Seattle, WA. Exhibits, educational conference.
www.nnfa-northwest.com/

Nov 2-4 Green Business Conference and Festival, San Francisco, CA.
www.coopamerica.org/cabn/conference/

Nov 3-5 13th National Small Farm Trade Show & Conference, Columbia, MO. The largest annual small farm conference and trade show in the US. www.smallfarmtoday.com

Nov 4-6 From Field to Fork: Creating a blueprint for a sustainable food system in the Carolinas. 20th Annual Sustainable Agriculture Conference, Durham, North Carolina.
www.carolinafarmstewards.org

Nov 6-9 Agricultural Institute of Canada - AIC Conference: Identifying Strategies to Support Sustainable Agriculture, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. www.aic.ca

Nov 11-12 IOIA cosponsored Advanced training, organic fiber processing. See story, page 1.

Nov 11-13 Tilth Producers Conference, Wenatchee, Washington.
www.tilthproducers.org/conference.htm

Dec 4-7 IOIA/ICO Organic Farm and processor inspector trainings, Indianapolis, IN. See page 3 for details.

December 14 -16 Int'l Conference on Natural Farming and Farmers' Knowledge, Hisar, India. www.geocities.com/nf_net/icnffk.html

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