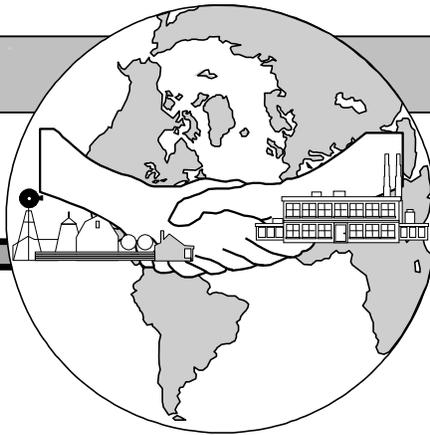


ORGANIC

VISION



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**Certification Director:** Jodi Snyder  
**Japanese Coordinator:** Yoshiko Tuttle  
**Certification Specialist:** 3 newbies

**Betty's Bits**

2016 is a year that will go down in infamy. Some of you "oldsters" may remember what famous person I stole that quote from.

We managed to get all of you inspected in a timely manner for which I am grateful to my staff and all the inspectors. But many of you have not received your certificates yet. A situation that embarrasses and pains all of us. Just when the "new hires" from 2014 were of value for reviews, one moved out of state and the other (much to her dismay, of course) had to quit due to severe health reasons. We have hired 3 new reviewers. We are praying they have the work ethic and fast learning capabilities they seemed to have during the interviews. All 3 have good farm backgrounds which should help. Keep GOA and the 3 new staffers in your "good" thoughts.

I am sure most of you have been having the same up and down weather we have been experiencing. Some days we want to bring out the seed catalog and others snow pants and heavy boots.

There are big changes coming from the NOP, about stocking densities, treated lumber for fencing, etc. before you build buildings to house livestock or

poultry or put up fences, replace fence posts, please call, email or write to the office and request NOP 5023-Treated Lumber (Draft Guidance).

GOA new Certification Review Specialists are: Mark Beaver, Jessica Green and Taylor McNamara. More background later.

In closing, I hope GOA will be forgiven for the past 2 years and we will be able to go back to completing our obligations to our member/clients. Any adjustments we need to make to accomplish and assure our faithful member/clients will be announced via snail mail to all of you.

With gratitude and appreciation,.

Betty

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## 2017 HOLIDAY CLOSING SCHEDULE FOR GOA

Fri, 14 Apr	GOOD FRIDAY	Thu, 23 Nov	THANKSGIVING
Mon, 29 May	MEMORIAL DAY	Fri, 24 Nov	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Mon, 3 Jul	INDEPENDENCE DAY	Fri, 22 Dec	CHRISTMAS (CLOSE AT NOON)
Tue, 4 Jul	INDEPENDENCE DAY	Mon, 25 Dec	CHRISTMAS DAY
Mon, 4 Sep	LABOR DAY	Fri, 29 Dec	NEW YEARS (CLOSE AT NOON)
		Mon, 1 Jan, 2018	NEW YEARS HOLIDAY

### IMPORTS WRONGLY LABELED AS ORGANIC

GOA has been informed that there is has been a "dramatic increase in the import of organic commodities, especially grains. A key area of concern for U.S. organic grain growers, and increasingly for consumers, is whether these increased imports present an opportunity for fraudulently labeled organic products to enter the United States, undermining the opportunity for U.S. producers to get a fair price in the market."

In a letter from OFOAM to USDA, John Bobbe asks IG Phyllis Fong to take a "careful look at the potential for non-organic products, especially bulk commodities like grains, to enter the U.S. market and be sold as organic."

## Quick Takes

### California Clears Hurdle for Cancer Warning Label on Roundup

28 Jan 2017  
Sustainable Pulse

California can require Monsanto to label its popular weed-killer Roundup as a possible cancer threat despite an insistence from the chemical giant that it poses no risk to people, a judge tentatively ruled Friday.

Read More: <http://sustainablepulse.com/2017/01/28/california-clears-hurdle-for-cancer-warning-label-on-roundup/#.W15X87qp1BX>

### GMO Arctic Apples to Hit Shelves Next Month Without Clear Labeling

EcoWatch  
Lorraine Chow  
19 Jan 2017

The first genetically modified (GMO) apples, which are engineered to resist browning when sliced, will arrive in select midwestern U.S. stores next month. The fruit, produced by Okanagan Specialty Fruits and sold under the brand name Arctic Apples, will be packaged as "grab-and-go" slices, according to Capital Press.

A customer will only know that the fruit is genetically modified by scanning the packaging with a smartphone. The company is adhering to the new GMO food labeling act

which allows businesses to use a QR code instead of clear wording that informs consumers if a product contains GMO ingredients.

Read More: <https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/gmo-arctic-apples-hit-shelves-next-month-without-clear-labeling>

### Nutella, Bacon and Other Foods You Love That are Linked to Cancer

USA Today  
Mary Bowerman  
12 Jan 2017

"The leading causes of death and disability are largely chronic diseases now, but 80% is completely diet and lifestyle, it's what we expose ourselves to" Michael Greger, the founder of NutritionFacts.org said in the four-part series Prescription: Nutrition.

In the past few years, we've seen reports that many much-loved foods may have links to cancer or other life-threatening illnesses.

Most recently, palm oil, an edible oil used in a slew of different foods including Nutella, was found to contain a potentially carcinogenic contaminant.

Read More: <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2017/01/12/nutella-bacon-and-other-foods-you-love-linked-cancer/96494672/>

### All Signs Point to a Corporate Takeover of the Marijuana Industry by Bayer, Monsanto

The Dawn News  
October 19, 2016

Following months of negotiations and various offers, Germany-based Bayer has finally sealed the deal with Monsanto, purchasing the seed giant for \$66 billion. The merger is reported to be the largest all-cash deal on record.

The purchase means a lot of things, and none of them good for consumers. For one, it strengthens the monopolization of

the world's food supply. It also means more genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and chemicals to be doused on them.

Now, some are predicting the merge could also mean the takeover of the marijuana industry. Monsanto has an intimate business relationship with Scotts Miracle-Gro, "a convicted corporate criminal— and Scott's Miracle-Gro is trying to take over the marijuana industry," according to Big Buds Mag.

Read More: <http://www.thedawn-news.org/2017/01/03/all-signs-point-to-a-corporate-takeover-of-the-marijuana-industry-by-bayer-monsanto/>

### NEWS FROM GOA AND BEYOND

[Ed Note: I get much of the material for this section of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA) at <http://www.organicconsumers.org/> and The Cornucopia Institute at <http://www.cornucopia.org/>]

#### USDA's Proposed Organic Program Would Unfairly Promote Large Organic Industry Over Small Organic Farmers

*Critics say that these so-called "check-off" programs poorly represent small farmer priorities in the granting of research dollars.*

Beyond Pesticides  
27 Jan 2017

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) opened a 60-day public comment period January 17 on a controversial proposal to establish a federal research and promotion check-off program that has split the organic community, with many family farmers and small farm operators disagreeing with the larger organic industry groups, represented by the Organic Trade Association (OTA), on the benefits that they will derive from a mandatory payment requirement.

The application to USDA for a check-off, originally submitted by OTA in 2015, has drawn sharp division on questions of benefits and cost to farmers. OTA believes that the check-off will generate resources to lift the organic market. This program is different from traditional check-off programs, which promote individual commodities. USDA oversees check-off programs under the Commodity, Promotion, Research and Information Act of 1996.

According to OTA, the check-off creates an industry-funded promotion, research, and information program for certified organic products, whose overarching goal is to strengthen the position of certified organic products in the marketplace. OTA says this would be achieved by funding research to benefit the organic industry, improving access to information and data across the organic sector, and educating consumers about the benefits of organic, resulting

in increased demand for organic products. Under the proposal, funds will be collected from certified organic farmers, handlers, and processors. The program will be led by a board of the same makeup from different geographic regions.

The concerns of opponents, which include a diverse mix of farm and consumer organizations, are represented by the group No Organic Check-Off. The group identifies six problems with the proposed check-off system:

This will be just another tax on farmers either directly or indirectly when processors pass the cost down.

Want to promote the benefits of organic? You can't in a check-off. Even something as simple and accurate as "Organic is the Gold Standard," will not be allowed by USDA.

The Check-off system is fundamentally broken for farmers – the federally mandated check-off programs have restrictive guidelines, heavy bureaucracy, lack of accountability and cost of administration.

Check-off programs have a history of using check-off funds inappropriately, with poor representation of farmer priorities in granting of research dollars.

Commodity check-off programs that are successful see a decline of family farmers in business.

Promoting organic sales now will not increase organic acreage in the US but will increase lower priced organic imports.

The proposed program will be funded by organic certified producers and handlers whose annual gross sales are in excess of \$250,000 paying one-tenth of one percent of net organic sales, with importers paying the same percentage on the transaction value of their certified organic products reported to U.S. Customs and Border Protection upon import. Producers, handlers, and importers that fall below the \$250,000 threshold could voluntarily choose to opt in to

the program.

[Ed. The details of this program are too long for this newsletter.]

Read More: <http://www.alternet.org/food/how-usdas-proposed-organic-program-would-unfairly-benefit-big-food-industry-over-small-farmers?akid=15152.138978.cE0Coz&rd=1&src=newsletter1070613&t=27>



### EU Nations Say NO to GM Crops but not Quite Loudly Enough

Liz O'Neill (gmfreeze.org)  
27 Jan 2017

A key vote today saw European nations oppose the European Commission's proposal to authorise the first new GM crops for cultivation since 1998, but failed to achieve the necessary majority for the proposal to be formally shelved.

EU member states were voting on a proposal to authorise two new strains of GM maize, and the reauthorisation of the one GM crop currently grown in the EU (also maize).

Read More: <http://www.gmfreeze.org/news-releases/278/>



### More Farmers are Grazing Animals in Winter

*It's not easy to keep animals on pasture in cold months, but these ranchers have found a way to do it humanely.*

Caroline Abels  
Animal Welfare, FARMING  
.26 Jan 2017

After an early season snowstorm in November 2014, Troy Bishopp had an epiphany that changed the way he approaches tending cattle. The longtime grass farmer and grazing advocate, who had recently launched a winter grazing experiment on his 100 acres in central New York, watched as the 60 dairy heifers he was contract grazing burrowed their faces into the nearly five inches of snow and tunneled down to chomp on the tall grasses sleeping below.

Witnessing the cows employ techniques once used by wild ruminants such as bison, elk, antelope, and bighorn sheep on the Great Plains and in the Rocky Mountain West, Bishopp realized his hypothesis was correct: he could indeed feed cattle for part of the winter without using hay.

“Over the last three or four years, I can safely say it's become a habit,” Bishopp says—to graze cattle into November, December, and even January on grass grown out

and left untouched (or stockpiled) during the summer and early fall. Most years, thanks to stockpiling, Bishopp adds about two months to his grazing season, which usually ends in mid-October when grasses begin to go dormant. After winter grazing ends, he feeds his cattle hay.

Read More: <http://civileats.com/2017/01/26/more-farmers-are-grazing-their-animals-in-winter/>



### More Soil Organic Matter Makes More Rain

*New satellite data shows just how important is plant-soil evapotranspiration and how it lasts longer than once believed.*

Alan Newport  
18 Jan 2017

Some meteorologists say up to half of the rainfall on a continent comes from the evapotranspiration of plants and soil. This implies a huge reward for better soil management.

This is exciting because it strongly suggests grazing and farming that builds soil is not only directly beneficial to those practicing it for higher yields, lower inputs, more profit and more drought resiliency, it also appears it helps make more rain for everybody.

Read More:  
<http://www.beefproducer.com/management/more-soil-organic-matter-makes-more-rain>



### Ronnie's Inauguration Day Message

Organic Consumers Association  
Ronnie Cummins, co-founder and International Director of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA)  
20 Jan 2017

Today, Donald Trump was sworn in as president of the United States.

Today, I'm announcing our #ConsumerRevolution and #PoliticalRevolution 2017-2020 platforms.

Today, we witnessed the swearing in of a president who has signaled loud and clear his intent to maximize the profits of giant corporations—like Exxon Mobil, BP, and Monsanto and Bayer (whose merger he's set to approve)—on a scale never before seen in our lifetimes. Public and environmental health be damned.

Trump has appointed a slate of millionaire and billionaire corporate cronies to key, powerful positions, with orders to immediately set to work rolling back any regulations or policies that even hint at cutting into corporate profits. We

will have an EPA Administrator, an Energy Secretary and a head of the CIA who largely reject the international scientific consensus that human behavior is a contributing factor to global warming.

We will have billionaire bankers running the U.S. Treasury Department and the American economy.

And yesterday we learned, not surprisingly, that the new USDA Secretary of Agriculture will be former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue. Another millionaire climate-denier, Perdue is a cheerleader for the worst of the worst agribusiness corporations. Based on his history, Perdue will have no interest in protecting the interests of rural farmers, farm workers or consumers from the routine poisoning of our food, water and air by factory farms, pesticides and GMOs.

### ***Why do we need a revolution?***

Our democracy is broken. Under the Trump Administration, we could witness the final collapse.

The handful of corporations that control our food, farming, energy and pharmaceutical industries have corrupted the marketplace to the point that it generates enormous profits for CEOs and shareholders at the expense of workers, consumer choice, human health and the environment.

Our political process no longer works for a majority of people in this country, much less for the future of the common good. The failure of this process can be traced to the disproportionate influence of corporations and the uber-wealthy (1%) on policymaking, either through direct lobbying or by using generous campaign contributions to buy the loyalty of incumbent and/or future politicians.

These systemic failures originated and are perpetuated from the top down. They will be corrected only by a bottom-up grassroots rejection of the status quo, by a critical mass of citizens who hold a new, more hopeful vision for a healthier, safer, more equitable future.

### ***What can you do?***

Today, I call on you personally to get involved in our consumer and political revolutions. OCA and our allies will be organizing as never before at the local and state levels, pulling together the energy and talents of people young and old, from environmental, social justice, peace—every movement that shares our vision.

We'll need people who live in and understand the needs of rural communities. We'll need city dwellers. We'll need lawyers and accountants. Farmers and factory workers. Moms and Dads.

We will have to work together, for each other. Because it's clear that our elected officials will not be working for us.

It's time to get out from behind our laptops and cell phones, to break out of our silos, to break the pattern of single-issue organizing.

Please follow our communications as we roll out critical new consumer and political campaigns. Please share our messages far and wide. Please attend the community meetings and house parties we will soon be organizing.

And if you can, please support our critical work with a donation today—or better yet, become a monthly donor. Thank you!

Read More: <https://www.organicconsumers.org/essays/ronnie%E2%80%99s-inauguration-day-message>



## **The EPA Petition to End Water Fluoridation**

*The sheer weight of scientific evidence has far exceeded reasonable doubt, and it's difficult to see how the EPA, or anyone else, can continue to believe that water fluoridation is safe, according to the author.*

The Lund Report  
11 Jan 2017

OPINION -- Six weeks ago, the Fluoride Action Network, Food and Water Watch, Organic Consumers Association, American Academy of Environmental Medicine and several others petitioned the EPA to ban fluoridation chemicals because they're neurotoxic – they harm the brain.

The petition cites 196 peer-reviewed studies published over the last ten years, including over 2,500 pages of supporting documents. Out of 61 human studies, 57 found that fluoride caused harm, including behavioral problems and lowered IQ in children. Out of 115 animal studies, 112 found harm. Out of 17 cellular studies and three reviews, all found harm.

These eye-opening numbers may be a revelation to most of the health and medical community, but significant evidence on fluoride's neurotoxicity has been building for years.

*Rick North is a retired executive for several non-profits. He's the former executive vice president (CEO) of the Oregon American Cancer Society and former project director for the Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility.*

Read More:  
<https://www.thelundreport.org/comment/6161#comment-6161>

## Grass-Fed Beef, Sold One Cow at a Time

Nick Wingfield  
17 Jan 2017

LOPEZ ISLAND, Wash. — On a blustery afternoon in December, Scott Meyers mingled in a pasture with a herd of black cattle, sweet-talking them as if they were family dogs with a weakness for flattery. He scratched their backs, hugged them and rattled off their names: Chocolate, Fudge, Honey.

From these pampered creatures, Mr. Meyers produces grass-fed Wagyu beef, celebrated for a buttery flavor that comes from the Japanese breed's intense fat marbling.

It used to be that to get beef from Mr. Meyers's Sweet Grass Farm, customers had to order it directly from him in freezer-busting quantities, like a 30-pound variety pack or a quarter of a cow. Then they had to pick the meat up on designated dates at one of two locations outside Seattle, or take the 40-minute ferry ride to this island.

But about a year ago, Mr. Meyers connected with some Seattle tech entrepreneurs who had just created a start-up called Crowd Cow. The online service sells whole cows from small ranchers, divided into manageable orders, usually about 10 to 12 pounds, and delivered to homes as frozen, vacuum-sealed cuts. The beef from Mr. Meyers's first animal sold out on Crowd Cow within a couple of hours.

"They're really providing a great service," said Mr. Meyers, 60, who runs Sweet Grass Farm with his wife, Brigit Waring. "They're that really helpful middleman."

Internet middlemen help ordinary people share cars and apartments. Why not cattle?

The concept is starting to catch on with beef connoisseurs and small ranchers like Mr. Meyers, who would rather spend time ranching than doing all the work required to sell beef directly to customers: blogging about their cattle, promoting themselves on social media, juggling order logistics.

Crowd Cow and similar start-ups promise to do that work, without obliterating the identities of small ranchers like Mr. Meyers. Rather than putting its own brand on the meat it buys, Crowd Cow advertises the beef's producers and allows them to tell the stories of their ranches on its website.

"They're transparent — they sell our product as our product," said Mr. Meyers, who also sells beef directly to Seattle-area customers through his company's website. "It gives me some security. If I put my beef in a store, that limits my identity."

Joe Heitzeberg, the chief executive of Crowd Cow, which

has sold nearly 200 cows online, founded the company with Ethan Lowry. He said their idea was to teach the consumer about the particulars of each ranch. "We're saying it's like microbrews and wine," he said. "There are differences. We want you to understand the differences."

Long before the dawn of the computer, friends, families and neighbors banded together to buy cows from local cattle ranchers, divvying up the butchered parts that stuffed their freezers and fed them for months.

Websites like Craigslist have allowed people to recruit strangers to join in cow shares. Local ranchers advertise the shares through sites like Eatwild, and some sell beef directly to customers through their own sites.

Many of the ranchers are tapping into a growing public demand for high-quality beef from small producers. Most of the beef on Crowd Cow and similar websites is grass-fed, which research has shown has higher levels of healthful omega-3 fatty acids than meat from animals raised on feedlots. The company's ranchers, including Mr. Meyers at Sweet Grass Farm, do not use growth hormones; in rare cases, they use antibiotics to deal with medical conditions, but not to promote growth.

While even large commercial cattle operations now sell grass-fed beef and many supermarkets stock it, some consumers prefer the beef they get from small producers online.

"I felt like there was more flavor coming to the table," Timothy Enns, a biotechnology executive in Pleasanton, Calif., said of the beef Crowd Cow sells. "It's a very high-quality product."

Loren Taylor, of Ocean Shores, Wash., has ordered several times from Crowd Cow, and enjoyed the beef from Sweet Grass Farm. "My favorite is the Wagyu," Ms. Taylor said. "That meat is awesome. You can definitely taste it."

"I really do believe it's the way their farmers take care of their cows," she added.

Price comparisons with supermarkets are tricky because of the way online services package their orders. A new company called ButcherBox, based in Cambridge, Mass., sells subscriptions to variety packs of meat, weighing seven to nine pounds, that are delivered by mail every one to three months.

A typical \$129 box of grass-fed beef from the company includes ground beef, rib-eye steaks, flank steaks, sirloin tips and a tri-tip steak. ButcherBox sells additional cuts as add-ons to orders, like a 10-ounce rib-eye steak for \$12.50. Amazon Fresh, the web retailer's online grocery service, sells a 10-ounce grass-fed rib-eye steak for just under \$14.

Mike Salguero, the founder and chief executive of ButcherBox, said the company had about 10,000 subscribers nationwide, and each month shipped 100,000 to 200,000 pounds of meat, including pork and chicken, from various ranches. It identifies the sources of all of its meat in the box.

“Our dream is to be your meat for the month,” he said. “We believe people should be eating meat that’s much healthier than they are currently getting.”

Crowd Cow takes a different approach, spotlighting a single cattle ranch at a time and selling the beef from only one of its cows until the entire animal is gone. Much of its beef comes in variety packs: A recent sale from Step by Step Farm in Curtis, Wash., featured a \$69 package that included four eight-ounce flat iron steaks, two 10-ounce chuck steaks and two pounds of ground beef.

More intrepid eaters can buy hearts, livers and tongues. The company sold turkeys for Thanksgiving, and plans to expand to other kinds of meat.

Crowd Cow buys the animals after they are already dry-aged, butchered and vacuum-sealed in plastic, so it can deliver orders within a week. For now, the company gets its beef from Washington ranches and serves customers only in the West, with plans to expand eventually to the East Coast.

It doesn’t appear that big beef sellers are feeling much impact from the start-ups. “We have not heard of Crowd Cow, so we can’t speak to what they are attempting to do,” said Kelsey Bugjo, a spokeswoman for Omaha Steaks, which reported \$450 million in sales during the 2015 fiscal year.

Becky Harlow Weed operates Harlow Cattle Company, a 320-acre cattle farm in Spanaway, Wash., and now sells nearly three-quarters of the approximately 52 grass-fed cattle she slaughters every year to Crowd Cow, rather than to individuals or upscale butcher shops.

“I can honestly say it makes it more simple for me,” she said. “I have one big customer. Sometimes I think, ‘Wait, that’s scary.’ Everyone says don’t put your eggs in one basket.”

“But I don’t have as much desk work to do,” she added. “I don’t worry about who is going to take this carcass or that carcass. It has given me more time to focus on cattle and the ranch.”

Still, some independent cattle ranchers said it was risky to distribute largely through an internet start-up, which could be acquired down the line by a company less interested in how the meat is raised.

“Maybe Crowd Cow sells,” said Glenn Elzinga, who owns and operates Alderspring Ranch in May, Idaho, with his wife, Caryl. They have sold grass-fed beef on their own website for more than a decade.

“That’s what happens with venture capital: They sell the business to somebody and everything changes,” Mr. Elzinga said. “Corporate boardroom decision-making isn’t always aligned with the small producer.”

But Mr. Heitzeberg said he and his co-founder had set out to build a company that could grow without compromising its values. “We are not looking for an exit,” he said.

Read More: [https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/17/dining/grass-fed-beef-crowd-cow-startups.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/17/dining/grass-fed-beef-crowd-cow-startups.html?_r=0)



## USDA Grants Final Approval for Invasive GE Grass

*Rushed Approval of Genetically Engineered Bentgrass Granted Despite Ongoing Threat to Agriculture, Environment*

GJEP staff  
18 Jan 2017

PORTLAND, Ore.— The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued a final deregulation decision approving Monsanto and Scotts’ genetically engineered (GE) bentgrass, even as the highly invasive creeping grass continues to spread unchecked beyond its Oregon and Idaho test plots.

Decades-old outdoor experiments have proven the bentgrass impossible to control since it escaped from “controlled” plots and invaded irrigation ditches, riverbanks and the Crooked River National Grassland, crowding out native plants and the wildlife that depends on them. Despite more than a decade of efforts and millions of dollars spent, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Scotts and Monsanto have failed to curb the spread of the invasive grass. Yet now the USDA has capitulated to Monsanto’s and Scotts’ request that federal regulators relinquish any authority over the GE grass, leaving local landowners and state of Oregon to wrestle with the problem.

Unlike the USDA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has recognized the danger of the novel GE grass and its likelihood of spreading out of control. The federal wildlife agency concluded that if approved, the grass is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the endangered Willamette daisy and Bradshaw’s lomatium and harm the critical habitat of the endangered Fender’s blue butterfly and Willamette daisy.

Read More: <http://globaljusticeecology.org/usda-grants-final-approval-for-invasive-ge-grass/>

## Monsanto, EPA Seek to Keep Talks About Glyphosate Cancer Review a Secret

Carey Gillam  
18 Jan 2017

Monsanto Co. and officials within the Environmental Protection Agency are fighting legal efforts aimed at exploring Monsanto's influence over regulatory assessments of the key chemical in the company's Roundup herbicide, new federal court filings show.

The revelations are contained in a series of filings made within the last few days in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California as part of litigation brought by more than 50 people suing Monsanto. The plaintiffs claim they or their loved ones developed non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL) after exposure to Roundup herbicide, and that Monsanto has spent decades covering up cancer risks linked to the chemical.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs want the court to lift a seal on documents that detail Monsanto's interactions with former top EPA brass Jess Rowland regarding the EPA's safety assessment of glyphosate, which is the key ingredient in Roundup. Monsanto turned the documents over in discovery but marked them "confidential," a designation plaintiffs' attorneys say is improper. They also want to depose Rowland. But Monsanto and the EPA object to the requests, court documents show.

Read More: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carey-gillam/monsanto-epa-seek-to-keep\\_b\\_14250572.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carey-gillam/monsanto-epa-seek-to-keep_b_14250572.html)



## Organic Consumers Association #ConsumerRevolution and #PoliticalRevolution 2017-2020 Platform

Organic Consumers Association  
19 Jan 2017

### *Why Revolution*

Our democracy is broken. And the handful of corporations that control our food, farming, energy and pharmaceutical industries have corrupted the marketplace so that it generates enormous profits for CEOs and shareholders at the expense of consumer choice, human health and the environment.

The U.S. political process no longer works for a majority of people in this country, much less for the future of the common good. The failure of this process can be traced to the disproportionate influence of corporations and the uber-wealthy (1%) on policymaking, either through direct lobbying or by using generous campaign contributions to buy the loyalty of incumbent and/or future politicians.

These systemic failures originated and are perpetuated from the top down. They will be corrected only by a bottom-up grassroots rejection of the status quo, by a critical mass of citizens who hold a new, more hopeful vision for a healthier, safer, more equitable future. This grassroots uprising, or revolution, must target both the existing political process and the corrupt marketplace that this dysfunctional process has created. This will require that we, as citizens, play an active role in disrupting and reshaping the political process by actively engaging in it, especially at the local level. As citizens and consumers, we must also play an active role in disrupting the marketplace by participating in consumer campaigns designed to force corporations to take responsibility for their destructive impact human health, on the environment and on the responsible companies that can't compete economically on an uneven playing field.

### *#Consumer Revolution 2017-2020*

Overarching goal: Force corporations that sell consumer products, including food, clothing, drugs and personal care products, to respond to consumer demand for truthfully labeled products that have a positive impact on human health and are produced using regenerative processes and practices that not only prevent harm to human health and the environment but also measurably improve soils and combat global warming.

(1) Move toward making organic, 100% grass-fed, and regenerative food and farming the norm, not just the 5-percent alternative in the marketplace, by doubling sales of organic to \$80 billion by 2020, and by increasing sales of U.S. grass-fed meat and dairy, and organic and pastured poultry and pork by at least 400 percent by 2020.

(2) Achieve a 50-percent reduction in sales of GMO food and animal feed by 2020, with the aim of driving GMO animal feed off the market.

(3) Force major food brands and companies that fraudulently label their products as "natural," "organic" or "GMO-free" to remove misleading labels and/or transition their products and production methods to organic and/or regenerative.

(4) Increase market share for clothing made from organic cotton, wool and other natural fibers through a high-profile "Care What You Wear" campaign that encourages consumers to boycott GMO cotton and synthetic fibers.

### *#Political Revolution 2017-2020*

Overarching goal: Reform the current political process to create a democracy that works for all people, not just wealthy corporations and the 1%, by uniting the food, climate, economic and social justice, natural health and

peace movements in a coordinated effort to support candidates, elected public officials and policies, at the local, state and federal levels, that support our common goals.

- (1) Support the candidates and elected officials endorsed by the post-Bernie Sanders movements, including “Brand New Congress” and “Our Revolution.”
- (2) Lobby candidates and elected public officials to support OCA’s #ConsumerRevolution platform
- (3) Lobby candidates and elected public officials to support the “Our Revolution” platform.
- (4) Organize local grassroots meet-ups and coalitions to run candidates, for local and state offices, who support our issues.
- (5) Oppose any candidates or policies that promote racism, sexism, homophobia, militarism and all forms of discrimination, whenever and wherever they arise.
- (6) Oppose voter suppression in all forms, including laws or illegal attempts to disenfranchise voters.
- (7) Support the decriminalization of drug use, including the legalization of marijuana, and oppose the war on drugs.
- (8) Combat climate change by promoting candidates and policies that advance regenerative food, farming and land use, in addition to fossil fuel emissions reduction and renewable energy, as solutions for achieving zero emissions, for reversing global warming by sequestering excess CO2 and greenhouse gases in soil and forests, and for addressing our public health, water and environmental crises.

Read More: <https://www.organicconsumers.org/news/organic-consumers-association-consumerrevolution-and-politicalrevolution-2017-2020-platform>



### **Chicken Industry Pushes Against Movement Seeking Lower-weight, Slow-growing Birds**

Geoffrey Mohan  
Los Angeles Times  
13 Jan 2017

The chicken industry pushed back this week against a growing campaign to move away from breeding larger birds that bulk up quickly, saying the “slow-growth” movement would use more energy, cost shoppers more and possibly result in less protein on people’s plates.

If even a third of the nation’s \$48-billion poultry industry switched to more svelte chickens, the national flock would need to grow by 1.5 million birds to keep up with current consumption rates, according to an economic analysis

released Wednesday by the National Chicken Council, a not-for-profit trade association.

That increase would require an additional 5.1 billion gallons of water and 7.6 million acres of land to raise the additional feed those chickens would need, according to the report.

The report, prepared by an industry consulting group, comes after a year marked by increased pressure from consumers, retailers and food service companies to transform practices at the nation’s factory farms, including the use of antibiotics, housing chickens in crowded cages and failing to stun birds properly before slaughter.

Last March, Whole Foods Market announced it would require its suppliers to switch back to slower-maturing breeds and to improve farm conditions by 2024 as part of the Global Animal Partnership program the retailer created to push for more humane treatment of farm animals. In November, food service titans Aramark and Compass Group agreed to follow the same standards.

“It is really unsustainable to have business practices that cause so much suffering, are so unhealthy, that consumers are appalled and reject the product when they’re educated about what’s happening,” said Daisy Freund, director of farm animal welfare for the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which has pushed the slow-growth movement.

In the 1920s, the average U.S. domesticated chicken was a relatively scrawny bird — weighing a mere 2½ pounds at slaughter, some 115 days after it was born. It now averages about 6 pounds and takes only 49 days to reach “market maturity,” according to the council.

Read More: <http://www.latimes.com/ct-chicken-industry-smaller-birds-20170113-story.html>



### **Buying Grass-fed Dairy is About to Get Easier**

Katherine Martinko  
13 Jan 2017

Last year, one of America’s biggest organic dairy cooperatives, Organic Valley, added 17 additional grass-fed milk farms to its roster. The reason? It needed to keep up with demand for Grassmilk, the nation’s top-selling grass-fed dairy brand. Now Organic Valley has 81 farms working to produce Grassmilk, and demand for its milk, yogurt, and cheese continues to grow at three times the rate of non-grass-fed dairy products.

Americans can’t get enough of grass-fed dairy. They love the idea of cows grazing outside and products free from antibiotics and growth hormones. But the dairy aisle of the grocery store is still a murky, confusing place. There are so

many labels, logos, and certifications on containers that it's impossible to know what they all mean.

To solve this problem, a group of dairy cooperatives teamed up to make it easier for shoppers to make informed choices. Headed by the American Grassfed Association (AGA), new Grassfed Dairy Standards were written last year, with the collaboration of other grass-fed dairy producers.

The new standards were formally approved in December 2016. An accompanying logo will be visible on dairy products in the near future, pending the creation of a formal timeline for launch, likely to be announced in early February.

Read More:

<http://www.treehugger.com/green-food/buying-grass-fed-dairy-about-get-easier.html>



*[Ed. The following article is not about Organic Farming, but I thought it was important to bring to your attention. In the past, I paid little attention to the groups refusing to vaccinate their children for fear of, among other things, autism. Now I find very respected people who have examined the evidence carefully and say that those groups have real fears and that the CDC, a critical and well-trusted organization, has been lying for decades. This lesson relates as well to the EPA and the USDA. Trust but verify is a useful guideline again.]*



### Mercury, Vaccines and the CDC's Worst Nightmare

Rita Shreffler  
15 Dec 2016

For over three decades, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. has been one of the world's leading environmental advocates. He is the founder and president of Waterkeeper Alliance, the umbrella group for 300 local waterkeeper organizations, in 34 countries, that track down and sue polluters. Under his leadership, Waterkeeper has grown to become the world's largest clean water advocacy organization.

Around 2005, parents of vaccine-injured children started encountering Kennedy's speeches and writings about the toxic mercury-based preservative thimerosal. They embraced new hope that this environmental champion would finally expose the truth about vaccine injury and win justice for injured children. Kennedy is known for his fierce and relentless brand of environmental activism and his advocacy for transparent government and rigorous science. He is now applying his tenacious energies and sophisticated strategies to exposing the fraud and corruption within the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the pharmaceutical industry. Last month, he launched his new non-profit, the World Mercury Project, with vaccine safety

advocates Lyn Redwood and Laura Bono, legends themselves among parents of vaccine-injured children. Autism File executive editor Rita Shreffler spoke with Kennedy about CDC corruption, pharmaceutical industry greed, media malpractice and his vision for the World Mercury Project.

**Rita Shreffler: How did you first get involved in the autism/vaccine controversy?**

**Robert F. Kennedy:** I was dragged kicking and screaming into this brawl. By the early 2000s, I was fighting multiple lawsuits on behalf of Riverkeeper and Waterkeeper against coal-fired power plants. I was touring the country speaking about, among other things, the dangers of mercury emissions, which, by then, had contaminated virtually every fresh water fish in America. Following many of these appearances, mothers would approach me. Their tone was always respectful but mildly scolding. They said that if I was serious about eliminating the perils of mercury, I needed to look at thimerosal. Vaccines, they claimed, were the biggest vector for mercury exposure in children. I really didn't want to get involved because vaccines were pretty remote from my wheelhouse. I'd always been pro-vaccine. I had all my kids vaccinated and got my annual flu shot every year. But, I was impressed by these women. Many of them were professionals: doctors, lawyers, scientists, nurses and pharmacists. They were overwhelmingly solid, well-educated, extraordinarily well-informed, rational and persuasive.

**RS: Was there a particular one of these mothers who finally got you to take the bait?**

**RFK, JR:** Yeah, my brother Max's wife, Vicky Strauss Kennedy, introduced me to a psychologist named Sarah Bridges. Her son Porter was vaccine-injured and later diagnosed with autism. After an eight year legal battle, she had finally received compensation from the vaccine court, which acknowledged that Porter got his autism, seizures and brain damage from thimerosal and pertussis vaccines. She persuaded me to start looking into the science.

**RS: That was a daunting request!**

**RFK, JR:** I have always loved science and I'm comfortable reading it. By then, I'd handled many hundreds of environmental cases. Almost all of them involved scientific controversies. When I started reading about thimerosal, I was dumbstruck by the contrast between the scientific reality and the media consensus. All the network news anchors and television doctors were assuring the public that there was not a single study that suggested thimerosal was unsafe or that it could cause autism. After a short time on PubMed, I'd identified many dozens of studies suggesting that thimerosal causes autism and a rich library of peer-reviewed literature—more than 400 published studies—

attesting to its deadly toxicity and its causal connection to a long inventory of neurological injuries and organ damage.

**RS: What do we know about thimerosal safety testing?**

**RFK, JR:** First of all, vaccines are not subject to the safety rigors undergone by other pharmaceuticals in the FDA approval process. There are no large scale, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies. And, in the one 1930 human study of thimerosal that predated its use in vaccines, all the subjects injected with thimerosal died. In 2004, an FDA official acknowledged in testimony before a Congressional committee, that no government or privately funded study has ever demonstrated thimerosal's safety. On the other hand, there is plenty of science suggesting that thimerosal is NOT safe. Several hundred studies available on PubMed link thimerosal exposure to the neurodevelopmental and immune system diseases that are now epidemic in the generation of American children born after the CDC dramatically increased childhood thimerosal exposure starting in 1988.

My book, *Thimerosal—Let the Science Speak*, summarizes these studies. The scientific literature inculcates increased thimerosal exposure as a culprit in the explosion of ADD, ADHD, speech delay, narcolepsy, SIDS, ASD, seizure disorder, tics and anaphylaxis, including asthma and food allergies. According to the CDC, one in six American children—the so called "thimerosal generation"—now suffers from a developmental disability. We have published a compendium of 80 published, peer-reviewed studies that strongly suggest a link between thimerosal exposure and autism.

**RS: The CDC started adding to the vaccine schedule in the late 1980s and all these diseases, including autism, began spiking among kids in the mid-1990s. That's when parents started seeing perfectly healthy children regress into autism after receiving their vaccines.**

**RFK, JR:** Yeah. A rising chorus of complaints from parents and pediatricians linked the new thimerosal-heavy vaccine schedule to an explosion in autism. In response, the CDC, in 1999, commissioned an in-house Belgian researcher, Thomas Verstraeten, to study the Vaccine Safety Datalink, the largest American repository of childhood vaccine and health records, collected by HMOs. The HMO data clearly showed that the massive mercury doses in the newly expanded vaccine schedule were causing runaway epidemics of neurological disorders—ADD, ADHD, speech delay, sleep disorders, tics and autism among America's children. Verstraeten's original analysis of those datasets found that thimerosal exposures increased autism risk by 760%. The

CDC now knew the cause of the autism epidemic.

**RS: How did the CDC react to the revelations in the Verstraeten study?**

**RFK, JR:** The vaccine branch called an emergency meeting of regulators from WHO, FDA, vaccine industry stakeholders and the American Academy of Pediatrics at the Simpsonwood Conferences and Retreat Center in Norcross, Georgia. They reportedly held the meeting off the CDC campus to shield the deliberations from freedom of information requests. During a frantic two-day debate, that group decided to embargo Verstraeten's study. The CDC then pushed Verstraeten aside and assembled a team of industry and CDC scientists to rework the study using dodgy statistical devices to make the autism signal disappear. After four increasingly deceptive iterations, that team succeeded in eliminating the signal linking thimerosal with autism and a half dozen other neurodevelopmental disorders. The CDC published that version and told the public that thimerosal was safe. When parents asked to see the raw data, the CDC claimed that it had somehow "lost" all the raw data so that no independent group could check this result.

**RS: Right, that's when the CDC went into the business of creating its notorious phony epidemiological studies?**

**RFK, JR:** Exactly. Over the next two years, the CDC worked with the pharmaceutical industry to gin up seven epidemiological studies that purport to exculpate thimerosal from causing the autism epidemic. None of these studies pretend to be safety studies. Each of them simply looked for the presence of a small number of designated diseases in specific populations exposed to thimerosal. All of them are fatally flawed due to improper methodologies or deliberate fraud. Nevertheless, these are the studies that the CDC lists on its website—and that its spokespeople regularly cite—to defend mercury in vaccines. It's worth noting that the CDC itself has so little faith in these studies that it derailed a scheduled 2012 review of their underlying science by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and killed a 2006 review of thimerosal safety by the National Toxicology Program. Under CDC pressure, the Institute of Medicine made the astonishing declaration, in 2004, that, based on those seven flawed studies, the science was settled and no new studies on the causative relationship between thimerosal and autism should be undertaken or funded. That declaration effectively cut off support for any scientist who wants to investigate the link.

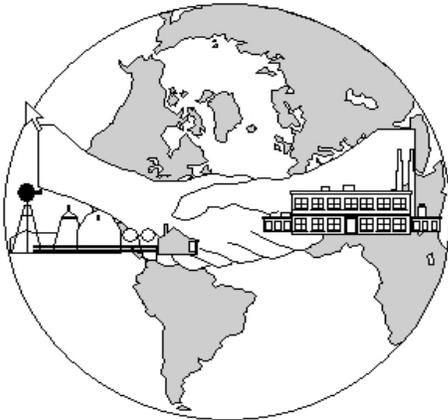
Reas More: <http://www.ecowatch.com/cdc-mercury-vaccines-kennedy-2199157054.html>



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