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Real Food Houston

NEWSLETTER - October 11, 2011

Dear , here's the latest news about food issues, presented by topic, and an update from Real Food Houston - - -

Efforts to Ban and/or Label Genetically Engineered Foods (also called Genetically Modified Organisms)

[NOTE: In my comments, I will usually use the term genetically engineered (GE) rather than genetically modified organism (GMO) to avoid confusion with acceptable methods of genetically modifying organisms such as hybridization and selective breeding; however, the two terms are commonly used interchangeably.]

Label GMO Activists March from NYC to Washington, DC

Activists opposed to GMOs are marching from NYC to Washington, D.C., to call for labeling of GMOs. About 1,000 people have signed up to participate in at least part of the march. About 50 plan to go the full trip. October has been declared Non-GMO Awareness month by the [Non-GMO Project](#).

More from multiple sources: [There were too many stories to list all of them here.]

[More from Seattlepi.com . . .](#)

[More from care2.com . . .](#)

[More from CBSlocal.com New York . . .](#)

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2011/10/01/activists-plan-march-against-genetically-modified-food/>

[More from TreeHugger.com . . .](#)

Monsanto's Days May Be Numbered

The HuffingtonPost wonders if Monsanto's days are numbered. More than 50 organizations have signed a document asking the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development to ban the use of genetically modified foods. The Conference will meet in Rio De Janeiro in June 2012. The HuffingtonPost article reports that "Despite biotech companies' promises of increased crop yields, drought and pest resistant seeds that can

relieve the world's hungry, genetically modified foods have yet to fulfill those promises.” Weeds and insects are showing signs of resistance causing need for use of increased amounts of Monsanto’s pesticide, Roundup, costing poor farmers more money than ever. “Small-scale agroecological farming and other sustainable farming methods "developed in the framework of food sovereignty" currently feed about 70 percent of the world's population, cites the CSOs' document, stating that the UNCSO has an historical opportunity to eliminate world hunger, improve the environment and financial stability around the world by moving away from biotechnology. Market diversity and research support for small-scale farming could decrease the world's seed prices by 30 percent--or about \$9 billion annually, according to the document.” [More from HuffingtonPost.com . . .](#)

Petition Filed Seeking Mandatory Labeling for Genetically Engineered Foods

The Center for Food Safety has filed a legal petition with the USDA requesting mandatory labeling for foods made with genetically engineered crops. The petition is backed by a coalition of nearly 400 businesses and organizations, including Horizon Organic, Stonyfield Farm, the American Nurses Association, Consumers Union, Union of Concerned Scientists, The Rural Advancement Foundation International, and Food & Water Watch. [A complete list of organizations can be found at <http://justlabelit.org/about/partners>.] Many countries already require labeling of genetically engineered foods, including the European Union, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Brazil, and China. Almost 90% of corn and over 90% of soy and cottonseed grown in the US are from GE seeds. Much more from multiple sources: [There were many stories on this topic.]

[More from Reuters.com . . .](#)

[More from USAToday.com . . .](#)

[More from Prnewswire.com . . .](#)

[More from the CenterforFoodSafety.org . . .](#)

[More from TrueFoodNow.org . . .](#)

[More from StrongerTogether.coop . . .](#)

[More from the Salt Lake Tribune . . .](#)

[More from AFP . . .](#)

[More from BusinessWeek.com . . .](#)

[More from MedicalExpress.com . . .](#)

Austin, TX, Rally for Labeling GMOs

Austin, TX, is site of rally for labeling of genetically engineered foods. Local family farmers think consumers should know what's in the food

they're buying--from pesticides to GMOs. [More from kut.org . . .](#)

Chinese scientists Are Concerned About Safety of GM Foods

China's Ministry of Agriculture claims to be able to ensure the safety of GM crops while scientists appeal for caution. Scientists are concerned about the potential effects on human beings. They are also unsure if the GM foods actually do increase production. They say that the American Academy of Environmental Medicine "reported in 2009 that several animal studies indicated serious health risks associated with GM foods, including infertility, immune problems, accelerated aging, faulty insulin regulation and changes in major organs and the gastrointestinal system [More from GlobalTimes.cn . . .](#)

California Initiative Could Be End of GMOs

California is looking for signatures to put an initiative on the ballot that would call for mandatory labeling of products containing GMOs. Since most consumers don't know they are currently eating foods containing GMOs, many think, including those producing the GMOs, that if people knew the foods had GMOs, they would stop buying them. Surveys indicate that about 90% of Americans want to know about GMOs in their foods. [More from NaturalNews.com . . .](#)

Environmental Organizations in Quebec Want Mandatory GMO Labeling

Quebec, Canada, environmental organizations have petitioned the provincial government to begin mandatory labeling of genetically modified (GMO) foods. [More from McGillDaily.com . . .](#)

Lack of GMO Labeling Due to FDA Ruling

Americans don't have foods labeled as genetically engineered (GMO) because the FDA has specifically ruled that foods cannot be labeled as GMO or non-GMO or GMO free. The FDA supports the ruling by claiming that these terms are "misleading because people don't understand these acronyms" and that "it's very difficult to ensure that there are no trace amounts of GM material in a food item." This post says the current labeling problem is caused by too many regulations, and that the solution is not to have more rules. [More from the Independent Women's Forum . . .](#)

New Broccoli Beneforte Not Genetically Engineered

Clarification to last week's newsletter: Developers of Beneforte say they "used conventional breeding techniques to develop the new broccoli

which contains two to three times as much glucoraphanin than standard broccoli.” Last week’s newsletter implied that Monsanto’s Beneforte broccoli was genetically engineered, which it is not. Researchers say future study of Beneforte will emphasize “gaining more evidence of the health benefits of this particular broccoli.” [More from Webmd.com . . .](#)

Problems with Genetically Engineered Foods

Glyphosate May Be Most Overlooked Poison

Glyphosate, active ingredient in Monsanto’s Roundup, may be the most “overlooked poison” according to Dr. Mercola. Research published last year found birth defects in frogs and chicken embryos. The defects were primarily malformations of the skull, face, midline and developing brain, and spinal cord. The levels of glyphosate that caused these birth defects were “at far lower levels than used in agricultural and garden applications . . . Other independent scientific research has also found that glyphosate causes: Endocrine disruption, DNA damage, Developmental toxicity , Neurotoxicity, Reproductive toxicity, Cancer. . . Many of these effects were apparent at much lower doses than the typical levels of pesticide residues found in food. . .” [More from mercola.com . . .](#)

India Plans to Charge Monsanto With "Biopiracy"

Huffington Post reports that India is planning to charge Monsanto with “biopiracy” for “stealing’ an indigenous crop—eggplant--and using it to create a modified version without permission.” Monsanto took locally grown eggplant without conforming to the Indian Biological Diversity Act. According to HuffPost, the stakes in India are huge for Monsanto who “sees an enormous potential market for genetically modified corn in India.” Sales in India of Monsanto GM products are around \$7 billion per year. [More from HuffingtonPost.com . . .](#)

Genetically Engineered Organisms (or GMOs) Are Made in a Lab

Genetically engineered organisms (or GMOs) “are made in a lab by forcing the DNA of two completely different species together.” They are in no way comparable to plant hybrids or selectively bred plants and animals. For example, Bt corn has been genetically engineered to add the DNA of a bacteria into the corn. The bacteria acts as a pesticide. There is no way to wash this pesticide off of the corn, it is infused into its DNA. One study in Quebec found bacteria from Bt GMO corn “in 93 percent of 30 expectant mothers, in 80 percent of the umbilical blood of their fetuses, and in 67 percent of the blood of 39 non-pregnant women.” Biotech companies had previously issued assurances that “the pesticide would be

destroyed in the gut and pass harmlessly from the body.” [More from Metropulse.com . . .](#)

Studies Show GMO Feed Causes Organ Disruption in Animals

Scientific studies conclude GMO feed causes organ disruption in animals. The conclusion is based on a review of 19 animal studies. The review “shows that consuming genetically modified (GM) corn or soybeans leads to significant organ disruptions in rats and mice, particularly in livers and kidneys.” The paper also said that other organs such as the heart and spleen, or blood cells may be affected too. The GM soybean and corn used in the studies are the same that “are currently consumed by billions of people.” Although these results show serious problems, most of the studies were of very short duration, under 90 days, and could have missed other significant effects of GMOs. Effects of pesticides and drugs “can create effects that are passed on through generations, only showing up decades later.” [Much more on this subject from NaturalNews.com . . .](#)

GE Canola Found Growing Wild in North Dakota

Genetically engineered canola has been found growing wild across North Dakota. A study from the University of Arkansas “shows that 45% of roadside canola sampled contains genetically modified (GM) or genetically engineered (GE) traits.” The article says it may be too late to stay GMO-free in Canada and the United States “because the seed stock is basically contaminated.” GM canola was found “everywhere from ditches to parking lots.” Some locations had thousands of GM plants, other locations it was the only thing growing, even along roads where there had been spraying for weeds. There were suggestions of breeding among the samples because the plants had combinations of traits not previously seen. [More from Care2.com . . .](#)
[More from ScienceCodex.com . . .](#)
[More from The Vancouver Sun . . .](#)

GE Crops Fail in Australia

Genetically engineered crops fail in Australia. Crop yields and quality of GE canola grown in drought conditions in Western Australia suffered severely while non-GE canola had exceptionally high yields. [More from Radio New Zealand News . . .](#)

War on Raw Milk

Toronto Star Comes Out Heavily Against Raw Milk

Toronto Star weighs in against raw milk. Saving “public safety must come

first,” a Toronto Star editorial sides with the Canadian judge who reversed the earlier acquittal of Michael Schmidt on charges of illegally selling raw milk through a herd share program against raw milk. The editorial claims there is “virtually no sound scientific evidence supporting the claim that raw milk improves people’s health. On the contrary, there’s a mountain of data showing it can be dangerous. It’s especially risky for children, pregnant women and the elderly.” [The editorial ignores evidence of the health benefits of raw milk, including the recent European [study](#) showing an improvement in allergies for children who drink raw milk.] [More from the Toronto Star . . .](#)

Praise for Toronto Star Editorial

Blogger praises the Toronto Star’s editorial and recalls Adelaide Hunter Hoodless, the woman who campaigned avidly for pasteurization more than a century ago after her son died from drinking contaminated milk. [More from blogger . . .](#)

Uneven Handling of Raw Milk Recalls

A comment on a raw milk outbreak article makes a good point. Why don’t officials just say to use the recalled milk only in cooking. If chicken or ground beef were contaminated, people would be advised to cook the meat well before using. Instead all raw milk recalls advise dumping the milk, they don’t mention cooking. The article is referring to a recall of milk from New York raw milk dairy farmer Jerry Dell. Campylobacter was apparently found in milk samples. [More from OutbreakNews.com . . .](#)

Ireland Close to Raw Milk Ban

Ireland seems to be close to winning the war on raw milk drinkers. According to Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney, raw milk will be banned in Ireland “as soon as possible.” The article repeats the standard arguments against raw milk, then, toward the end of the article, there’s a hint of what might be the real reason: “Mr Coveney told Labour TD Kevin Humphreys that regulating for the sale of raw milk would be difficult and costly to implement and would still not eliminate health risks.” Yes, it looks like cost could be the real reason after all. [More from IrishTimes.com . . .](#)

Local food critic calls plan to ban raw milk "very ill-advised." [More from Corkindependent.com . . .](#)

Food Rights Upheld

There is an excellent post about food rights related to the latest raids and

court decisions against raw milk. The post covers the Rawesome raid and the Wisconsin decision. [More from prwatch.org . . .](#)

Canadian Dairy Farmer Continues to Deliver Raw Milk

Michael Schmidt continues to deliver raw milk in spite of judge's decision against him. [More from Yorkregion.com . . .](#)

Demand for Raw Milk

Florida Regulations Conflict With Public Demand

Florida allows the sale of unpasteurized milk only as pet food, yet state authorities acknowledge that many buy the milk through an underground supply chain. There are 46 farms registered to sell raw milk as "commercial feed." [More from SunSentinel.com . . .](#)

Growing Demand for Raw Milk in South Dakota

Black Hills Milk, a South Dakota dairy farm, can't keep up with demand for raw milk. They sell 100 gallons a day and usually sell out by days end. The farm is trying to expand their herd to meet the increasing demand. [More from Black Hills Pioneer . . .](#)

Saturated Fat is Good

Study Shows Improved Survival in Heart Failure

GA [new study](#) published online at Cardiovascular Research shows "high intake of saturated fat, but not polyunsaturated fat, improves survival in heart failure despite persistent mitochondrial defects." The high saturated fat intake improved survival compared to a high polyunsaturated fatty acid (PUFA) diet or a low fat diet. The study, which involved hamsters, was published on behalf of the European Society of Cardiology. [More from Cardiovascular Research . . .](#)

[NOTE: There are too many articles that incorrectly condemn saturated fats to include them all in the newsletter. A few of the worst will be included in the Poor Health Advice section.]

Sustainable Agriculture

Listeria Outbreak in Cantaloupe Illustrates Problem with Reliance on Ever Larger Farms

The recent listeria outbreak traced to cantaloupe from Colorado illustrates the increased likelihood of such incidents because of the long journey from the farm to the consumer. The cantaloupe had been sold and resold

making it difficult if not impossible to determine who were the end sellers. “Fewer and larger farms dominate food production in this country.” This has fueled the popularity of farmers markets and locally grown produce. [More from MedicalXpress.com . . .](#)

And Now, How Some People Still Don't Get It There's Lots of Bad Advice Out There

Dietary Recommendations for Children

“At age 2, children should drink 1 percent or skim milk, in place of whole or 2 percent milk.” This is one of the worst recommendations offered in this article, but it’s not the only one. It also recommends avoiding cheese, bacon, and other high-fat meats while saying children need foods made with canola and safflower oils. The general dietary advice for children is to eat fruits, vegetables, low fat yogurt and dairy, and whole grains. This diet is not all bad but where are the nutrient dense foods like whole raw milk, egg yolk, and liver? Among the better recommendations are eating avocados, fish, and olive oil. [More from MarketWatch.com: report of a Nestle Research Institute release . . .](#)

India Times 8 Tips to Lower Cholesterol

The India Times features an article with 8 tips to lower cholesterol in the diet. Much of the advice would be good instead of bad if the recommendations were simply reversed. For example, the article advises the use of pure vegetable oils and avoiding lard or butter. To get the healthier option just reverse the advice, use lard and butter, but avoid vegetable oils. Other unhealthful recommendations include trimming all visible fat from meat, avoiding sour cream and butter, cooking meat in advance and refrigerating so that all fat can be removed, and draining fat after cooking before eating. Only one of the 8 tips has some good advice: avoid fried foods because of the acrylamide formed when vegetable oils are heated to high temperatures. Using healthier fats would help. [More from The Times of India . . .](#)

Here are the latest posts on Real Food Houston - - -

GMO Foods Should Be Labeled

There’s a rally in Austin this Sunday, October 2, to support the requirement to label foods that contain GMOs. The Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) is supporting the rally. FARFA makes a good point about the FDA’s having allowed GM crops to . . . [Continue reading →](#)



Southern Cornbread

After finding a good, local source of freshly ground flour and corn meal, I made cornbread, in an iron skillet, of course. I used the cornbread recipe from Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon. The organic whole wheat flour and organic ... [Continue reading →](#)

Georgia's Market Downtown

The Houston Chronicle is reporting that Georgia and Rick Bost will open a new restaurant, Georgia's Market Downtown, in early November, located at Main and Prairie. The Bosts are the owners of Georgia's Farm-to-Market grocery store and cafe on the Katy freeway and ... [Continue reading →](#)



Missouri Raw Milk Dairy Closes

There's more than one way to eliminate the small raw milk dairies. There is a war on raw milk, but those attacking raw milk don't always carry guns. The costs of producing safe raw milk were just too high for ... [Continue reading →](#)



5th Annual Farm and Food Leadership Conference, San Antonio

We really enjoyed the two days at the conference in San Antonio's Pearl Stable September 12-13—the presentations, panel discussions, wonderful lunches, and of course, the movie Farmageddon. Monday's keynote speaker was Dr. John Ikerd, author of Sustainable Capitalism, A Return to Common ... [Continue reading →](#)

Rally for Real Food – October 2, 2011

I have just learned about an important event coming up soon. There will be a Rally for Real Food in Austin at the Texas State Capitol on October 2, 2011, from Noon to 3 PM. The rally is promoting a ... [Continue reading →](#)

Let's Help Texas Organic Farmers Devastated by Wildfires

Many Texas organic farmers have been devastated by the wildfires that are raging across the state. Generous Iowa organic farmers have donated "2 truckloads of premium certified organic hay for certified organic producers" to help the Texas organic farmers, but ... [Continue reading →](#)

Forest Metaphor for Government Food Safety Campaign

Piero Sardo has written an excellent post about the high cost of the efforts of the experts to ensure the safety of our food by sterilization, i.e., pasteurizing milk, irradiating meat, etc.. Sardo is the president of the Slow Food Foundation ...

[Continue reading →](#)

A Better Way for Coffee Shops

I've learned from a reader that there are two coffee shops in the Houston area that serve unhomogenized, lightly pasturized milk with their coffee. They are Pearland Coffee Roasters and Catalina Coffee Shop. If you really like your coffee, you might ...

[Continue reading →](#)

Quick and Easy Salad Dressings—Healthy Too!

Blue cheese dressing I like blue cheese salad dressing but have been avoiding it because almost all commercial brands use soy oil as the base for salad dressings, including mayonnaise. Someone recommended using raw sour cream as a salad dressing, ...

[Continue reading →](#)

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