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Real Food Houston

NEWSLETTER - *October 22, 2011*

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

Raw Milk

Michael Schmidt Faces Additional Charges

Canadian raw milk advocate Michael Schmidt will face additional charges after he distributed raw milk at a rally last week. The Grey Bruce Health Unit insists that raw milk is unsafe to consume. [More from the Toronto Sun . . .](#)

Canadian Comment: "New Dairy Laws Udder Nonsense"

A letter to the editor of North Shore News in British Columbia says "New dairy laws udder nonsense." The author says he owns a share of a dairy cow and chooses to consume raw milk. He expresses disbelief that the Canadian government would provide heroin, crack cocaine and methamphetamine addicts with drugs, needles, and pipes but make raw milk illegal. That seems to me a difficult position to defend. Wonder why the Canadian government finds it so easy? [More from North Shore News . . .](#)

Natural News Will Cover Raw Milk Freedom Riders

NaturalNews.com plans to cover the Raw Milk Freedom Riders on November 1. [More from Natural News . . .](#)

New Zealand Reviews Raw Milk Options

New Zealand's Food Safety Minister is requesting discussion on options to continue the current policy of allowing what they call "farm gate sales of raw drinking milk." The options are limited and "the Government is not proposing to allow commercial-scale of this product at this time." The article continues the usual warnings against raw milk by saying that "the very young, elderly, pregnant women and those with low immunity are

advised against consuming raw milk and raw milk products.” It looks like access to raw milk in New Zealand will not be improving any time soon.

[More from invest in NZ . . .](#)

Genetically Engineered Foods (GMOs)

Top Five Myths About Genetic Modification

Greenpeace responds to an attempt to allay fears about genetic engineering. The original article insisted that “scientists can very precisely select genes and introduce them into their target species.” Greenpeace” counters “inserting DNA can cause additional fragments to be inserted and can also delete and rearrange the plant’s own DNA. Unexpected and unknown fragments of genetic material have been found in commercial GM crops;” therefore, “GM crops could produce unintended novel proteins, or altered plant proteins. Because most allergens are proteins, this raises concerns about these crops’ potential to cause allergies.” [More from Janet Cotter at the Conversation . . .](#)

Brazil Approves Commercial Genetically Modified Bean

Brazil’s National Technical Commission on Biosafety has approved for commercial release a genetically modified bean. The bean has been engineered to resist the golden mosaic virus. The virus is spread by a whitefly. The transgenic bean will be available to farmers in 2 to 3 years. The claim is that the GE bean will reduce the amount of insecticide being used to kill the whiteflies. Other GE varieties have not yielded the claimed results. [More from biofortified.org . . .](#)

Monsanto Markets GM Corn Sold Directly to Consumers

Monsanto is marketing a genetically modified corn that will be sold directly to consumers. They already control 60% of the US corn market, but most of that goes to animal feed or processed foods like oil and corn syrup. Now they want their corn on your plate. “The new GM sweet corn is engineered to kill insects with Bt toxins and to resist heavy spraying with Roundup herbicide.” [More from the JoplinIndependent.com . . .](#)

EuropaBio Puts Pressure on EU to Approve GM Crops

EuropaBio, which represents biotechnology organizations across Europe, is putting pressure on the EU by warning that delays in approvals of genetically modified crops will cause increased cost and unfair competition to Europe’s farmers. Only two GM crops have been approved by the EU, where in the US, 90 have been approved. [More from the Farmers Weekly Interactive . . .](#)

GM Plants Unlikely to Increase Food Security

The Epoch Times says that “The evidence is clear that GM plants are unlikely to play any effective role in increasing food security. In fact, the expense and risk of GM crops could actually decrease food security. GM seeds are subject to patent claims which will indirectly increase the price of food; this will not alleviate poverty or hunger and will pose a threat to food sovereignty.” The article goes on “supporting farmers and farm workers in eco-agriculture systems that minimize dependency on external inputs, such as artificial fertilizers and pesticides, is a major option to fight hunger and improve food security worldwide.” The article concluded with “We simply do not know if GM crops are safe for animal or human consumption.” [More from the The Epoch Times . . .](#)

Monsanto Wants to Dominate Vegetable Seed Market

Monsanto is quietly moving into the produce aisle of your grocery store. “Monsanto’s goal: to dominate today’s \$3-billion global market for produce seeds, much as it already has done with corn and soybeans.” Monsanto moved into the vegetable arena in 2005 when it bought seed company Seminis Inc. in Oxnard, CA. It has since bought four additional vegetable seed companies “opened 57 research centers worldwide and hired a slew of seed geneticists and agricultural researchers.” Monsanto claims that these vegetables are not genetically engineered; however, R. Paul Thompson, director of graduate studies at the University of Toronto’s department of ecology and evolutionary biology says “What they are really doing is creating something where the probability is very low that it would have happened in nature without human intervention.” So far, Monsanto has avoided introducing genetically engineered produce partly due to the years required to clear government regulatory systems. They are also concerned with public controversy. [More from the The Los Angeles Times . . .](#)

Alaska Senators Try to Block GE Salmon

Alaskan Senators Mark Begich and Lisa Murkowski have filed legislation to completely ban the production of genetically engineered fish in the market. Sen. Begich proposes banning interstate commerce of GE fish, while Sen. Murkowski is trying to prohibit funds being used by the FDA to approve the application for GE fish. A letter opposing approval of AquaBounty’s GE salmon has been signed by 93 fishing, conservation, consumer, and other groups. [More from the Alaska News . . .](#)

Americans Don’t Understand the Problem With GMOs

The Right2Know march has arrived from Brooklyn to the White House to protest the fact that Americans don't have the right to know that GMOs are in most foods. According to a Huffington Post Green article, there weren't many people in Washington to greet the marchers. The author, Maria Rodale, doesn't understand why so few were there when thousands showed up for the Martin Luther King dedication and many others are protesting against the Occupy Wall Street movement. She says "Meanwhile, GMOs, which represent the absolute WORST of corporate American and effect [sic] EVERYONE, black, white, teens, men, women, and especially babies, just aren't getting the attention they deserve. Why? Is it too complicated? Or are Americans just blinded by their focus on cheap food—and not understanding that the food is cheap because they pay for it with their taxes." [More from the Huffington Post . . .](#)

Biotech Whistle Blowers

Jeffrey Smith reveals that scientists and former biotech industry representatives are "now blowing the whistle in regards to the corruption . . . the fraudulent 'science' that continues to be used to thrust GMOs on the public, and the revolving door between the biotech industry and politics that allows it to continue." Several scientists have had their careers destroyed for conducting independent scientific research into GMOs. One scientist spoke of a 1996 Monsanto study that was rigged to dilute the feed in a supposed feeding study so that it contained almost no GM soy. [More from infowars.com . . .](#)

Big Business and Government Collusion About GMOs

The Huffington Post has a good article about food freedom and genetically engineered foods. The author, Dave Murphy, of Food Democracy Now! relates the GMO food issue to the Occupy Wall Street demonstration, which he says is "born out of a legitimate frustration with the collusion between Big Business and elected officials of the U.S. government." He goes on to say that "nowhere is that collusion so great as in food and agricultural production where four firms control 84 percent of beef packing, 66 percent of port production and one company, Monsanto, controls patents on more than 93 percent of soybeans and 80 percent of corn grown in the U.S." The new biotechnology is less than twenty years old but already GMOs appear in 75 to 80 percent of processed food that we eat in the U.S. [More from the Huffington Post . . .](#)

GM Crops Promote Superweeds

UK's The Guardian reports that "GM crops promote superweeds, food insecurity and pesticides" This is the conclusion of a report by 20 Indian

south-east Asian, African and Latin American food and conservation groups. GM crops first sold about 20 years ago are now grown in 29 countries and have promised many miracles, including as a solution to world food shortages, climate change and soil erosion; however, this report finds that the crops have not lived up to these promises. The report claims that benefits such as drought resistance and salt tolerance have yet to yield significant improvement. The authors are most concerned about is the “greatly increased use of synthetic chemicals, used to control pests despite biotech companies’ justification that GM-engineered crops would reduce insecticide use.” The article continues listing many additional problems found with GM crops in countries around the world. [More from The Guardian . . .](#)

Saturated Fats Are Good

We Shouldn't Be Demonizing Saturated Fat

Ronald M. Krauss, MD, a lipid specialist and director of atherosclerosis research at the Children’s Hospital Oakland Research Institute, is quoted by the article’s author as saying that “we shouldn’t be demonizing saturated fat.” The author, Holly Carling, a Doctor of Oriental Medicine and Naturopathy, refers to the study by the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition that showed that there was no significant correlation between dietary saturated fat and heart disease. She says that there are more significant risks for heart disease, such as being overweight and having diabetes, than eating fat. She continues “Eating fat is essential. More than 200 functions in the body are dependent upon dietary fats to work.” When we demonized fat, Americans turned to sugar to replace the flavor lost with the fat, and, because “refined carbohydrates don’t satiate us like fat does, we consume enormous amounts of it to compensate.” “So this whole thing has been just a big fat mistake!” [More from Coeur d’Alene Press . . .](#)

NYC Mayor Bloomberg to UN: Government Should Control Citizen's Diet

The Washington Times says that “Food taxes more about milking consumers than helping them.” Authors Jens F. Laurson and George A. Pieler discuss the Danish ‘fat tax’ calling it “one of many egregious recent examples of state interference in personal decisions that extend well beyond our food.” They are responding to a statement by New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg who told the United Nations that state control of our diets is “ultimately the government’s highest duty.” The authors point out that the Danish tax on saturated fat “assumes citizen-consumers are infants incapable of making choices. . . . it relies on pseudoscientific ‘findings’ and gross simplifications.” They say that

saturated fat is not worse than unsaturated fat and that nutritionists now think non-complex carbohydrates are the “real drivers of obesity.” They explain the real reason for the ‘fat tax’ “as with tobacco, alcohol, carbon and flight-fuel taxes, deterring politically and socially incorrect behavior is the *raison du jour* to justify higher taxes because it’s a tax raise that ‘means well’ and won’t likely rouse much opposition.” The law is not “about steering people as much as milking them.” [More from The Washington Times . . .](#)

Study Recommends Attention Shift to Carbohydrates

A new study published in the Netherlands Journal of Medicine looked at dietary intake of saturated fatty acids (SAFA) and the association with cardiovascular disease (CVD). The conclusion of the study is “that avoidance of SAFA accumulation by reducing the intake of CHO [carbohydrates] with high glycaemic index is more effective in the prevention of CVD than reducing SAFA intake per se.” “The total body of evidence suggests that attention should be shifted from the harmful effects of dietary SAFA per se, to the prevention of the accumulation of SAFA in body lipids. This shift would emphasise the importance of reducing dietary CHO, especially CHO with a high glycaemic index, rather than reducing dietary SAFA.” [More from The Netherlands Journal of Medicine . . .](#)

Poor Nutrition Advice

Healthy and Unhealthy Cooking Oils

The Newcastlestar.com recommends avoiding palm oil and cottonseed oil because they are less healthy. The article is wrong about palm oil and it condemns cottonseed oil for the wrong reason—it’s 26% saturated. The healthier cooking oils are said to be Canola, sunflower, olive, peanut, and soy. Olive oil is good, but not the best for cooking. Canola, cottonseed, and soy are almost certainly GMO in the US. The implication is that vegetable oils are the healthiest oils for cooking. [More from Newcastlestar.com.au . . .](#)

Nutrition Myths: Fact or Fiction?

Nutrition myths: fact or fiction? Part 2 (Don’t know what happened to Part 1) from LakeNewsOnline has some interesting “facts.” The author claims as “**Fact**” that “saturated fat intake is the biggest culprit in increasing cholesterol levels.” She recommends eating no more than one egg per day, eating only low-fat dairy products, and limiting meat and butter. Another “**Fact**” is “saturated fats and trans fats are more unhealthy than

cholesterol.” Still another “**Fact**” is that your daily fat intake should be low, “less than 20 percent” of calories. The author is a cardiac rehab dietitian in Missouri. [More from Newcastlestar.com.au . . .](#)

American Dietetic Association Says Vegan Diets OK for Children

The American Dietetic Association says vegetarian or vegan diets, “as long as they are well-planned, are appropriate for all phases of life, including childhood and adolescence.” They continue saying that vegetarian or vegan diets “are healthful, nutritionally adequate and may provide health benefits and treatment of certain diseases.” The article at [cnn.com](#) provides advice from several registered “dietitians” who all appear to agree that even a child can be healthy on a these diets. For the true story about these diets, see [Vegetarianism: What the Science Tells Us](#) and [Myths of Vegetarianism](#) . It seems unethical to me for a registered dietitian to approve such an unhealthy diet especially for children and young adults. [More from cnn.com . . .](#)

Food Rating System Would Rate Diet Coke Tops

A food rating system being studied by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) would give a diet coke a three, while 1% milk would be rated 2. The rating system would evaluate each food for “acceptable” levels of three nutrients that are “of concern”—sodium, added sugars, and trans fats or saturated fats. Notice that they do not distinguish between harmful trans fats and beneficial saturated fats but lump them together. Also notice that the system doesn’t give points for nutrition content such as protein, vitamins, minerals, etc. What kind of system would give diet Coke “three points for having low levels of fats, added sugars and sodium”? Although not specifically mentioned, whole milk would probably rate zero due to its fat content. How could this system help a consumer make wiser choices of foods? The Huffington Post calls this system “very ugly indeed.” HuffPost says “if it propagates the perception that high-calorie walnuts and almonds and avocado and yogurt are less good than 0-calorie diet sodas ... it will take ugly to a whole new place.” [More from Healthland . . .](#) and [HuffingtonPost . . .](#)

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

Biotech Industry Group Looks for Influential ‘Ambassadors’

The UK Guardian is reporting that leaked documents indicate EuropaBio, Europe’s largest biotech industry group—members include Monsanto, Bayer, and other GM

(genetic modification) companies—is “recruiting high-profile ‘ambassadors’ to lobby European leaders on GM policy.” A draft email among the documents claims to have “have interest” from Sir Bob ... [Continue reading →](#)

Let’s Go, Raw Milk Mamas!

Go mamas! A group of mothers who feed their children raw milk are planning a peaceful demonstration to “defy FDA interstate commerce and food safety law on raw milk in support of farmers across the nation willing to supply fresh ... [Continue reading →](#)

CSPI’s Advice is NOT in the Public Interest

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) has long been an advocate of controversial food policies. Since the 1970s they have attracted media attention to many of their campaigns. Two reports brought my attention back to CSPI. The first was ... [Continue reading →](#)



Twin Persimmons Farm – Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) in Grimes County

I’ve just learned about a vegetable CSA program in the Houston area—Twin Persimmons Farm. If you’re not familiar with a CSA, here’s the Wikipedia definition: A CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farming operation ... [Continue reading →](#)

What Does Genetically Engineered (or GMO) Mean?

After my last post on GMO labeling, I was asked “What are GMOs?” Most people don’t really know much about it, and they certainly don’t know how extensively these organisms have already affected our food supply. To help avoid possible confusion, in this post ... [Continue reading →](#)

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 Post 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 →](#)

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