

# THE CULTIVATOR

July 2009

News From [The Cornucopia Institute](#)

Dear {first\_name\_merged\_here},

Here is the latest news from The Cornucopia Institute.

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## Organic Dairy Farmers' Rally, USDA Secretary Asked to Vigorously Enforce Organic Laws

An estimated 150-200 organic dairy farmers, and their supporters, from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa held a "demonstration" at the La Crosse County Fairgrounds in Wisconsin on July 16. Their goal was to convince Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to take immediate and aggressive enforcement action against a handful of "factory farms" allegedly saturating the market with illegal organic milk. Watch the video -- did we succeed?

Click [here](#) to see a [great YouTube video](#) from Cornucopia covering the rally.

Secretary Vilsack's comments indicate that the farmers may have been successful in their mission. "We are focusing on rules that will level the playing field so that small and medium size producers have a fair shot," said Vilsack, sparking applause from the crowd. "We are, as you are, asking questions about how producers can make so little and how others who are in the chain can make so much," added Vilsack.

Watch the video and be an important witness to help ensure follow-through by the USDA! And please forward this email to your friends and colleagues and encourage

them to view the clip as well.

To read more about this rally, click [here](#).

## Dean Foods Criticizes Cornucopia's Soy Report

Since the release of Cornucopia's report analyzing the soy foods industry, Dean Foods (owner of the Silk label) has pushed back hard seeking to discredit our report, [Behind the Bean](#).

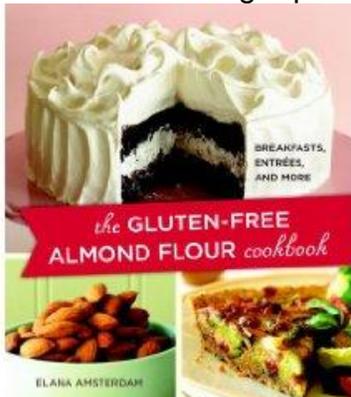
Interestingly, Dean has recently reformulated their entire Silk product line converting **almost all** their products to "natural" (conventional) soybeans. They did this quietly and without telling customers, retailers, or changing the UPC code numbers on the products. Many retailers have reported to us that they didn't find out about the change until their customers noticed and complained.

To add insult to injury, not only did the price of Silk products not go down when they switched to cheaper conventional soybeans, but they have even reintroduced three products with organic soybeans and raised the price on those.

Before Dean purchased Silk, the company was an organic pioneer, helping grow organics with a 100% organic product line. You can read the full text of our response to Dean's criticism of our soy report in this [FAQ posted on Cornucopia's web page](#).

## Raw Almond Lawsuit and Fundraising Incentive

The lawsuit seeking repeal of the controversial raw almond pasteurization mandate is continuing. Cornucopia is helping the farmers fighting the almond mandate and actively fundraising for the legal effort. Currently a legal appeal is being readied that will likely be filed in the next month.



You can help, too, and if you do, we can offer a gift from a dedicated almond enthusiast and supporter. Elana Amsterdam, of [elanaspantry.com](#), will provide a copy of *The Gluten-Free Almond Flour Cookbook* to anyone donating \$200 or more to the raw almond fund.

The new, full-color book contains healthy gluten-free recipes using almond flour. The author encourages the use of almond flour because "almond flour is readily available... high in protein and low in sugars." She says that, "after having tested just about every gluten-free flour out there, I can save you a lot of time and hassle when I say that almond flour is far superior to other flours in terms of taste, nutrition and ease-of-use."

We hope these offers will encourage you to give to the fight for truly raw almonds from American producers.

## Cornucopia Tracking Food Safety Reforms

Cornucopia is closely following Congressional activity focused on food safety legislation. Our increasingly industrialized and concentrated food production system needs a new regulatory focus; the system is broken.

The Congressional process has sparked a flurry of internet and email activity, with some warning that agribusiness and biotechnology lobbyists are conspiring to pass legislation outlawing organic farming and home gardens. We believe that harming organic and local producers is not the intent of these bills, but a one-size-fits-all food safety rule, especially preventative measures, designed with industrial-scale farms and processors in mind, could very well put smaller and organic producers at an economic and competitive disadvantage. These high-quality, owner-operated, and often "local" producers are an important part of the solution to our nation's food quality problems and must be protected!

Proposed legislation in the House of Representatives has been consolidated into one bill – HR 2749. As the bill moves forward, an intense campaign has been mounted to defeat it. That campaign, according to Consumers Union (a group we trust), is filled with misinformation. Click [here](#) to see what they have to say about the food safety bill.

A vote on HR 2749 could come in the very near future. Groups we trust, such as the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, are [recommending three key points](#) (that we agree with) that your member of Congress needs to hear: clarify that farmers are not food facilities (processors); make sure that any fees are fair with low/no fees for small businesses and larger fees for large businesses; and consider whole farm systems, like organic system management plans, when food safety standards are established.

## Short Takes and Appetizers

- **Organic vs. natural is a source of confusion in food labeling.** A new study shows wide confusion among American consumers about products aimed at the green market. Many mistakenly believe "natural" is a greener term than "organic." This [Chicago Tribune cover story](#), including analysis from Cornucopia, investigates the confusion and what's behind the controversy.
- **Study showing weed killer kills human cells intensifies debate over 'inert' ingredients.** Monsanto's Roundup has long been a top-selling weed killer. But now researchers have found that one of the herbicide's inert ingredients can kill human cells, particularly embryonic, placental and umbilical cord cells. Inert ingredients can amplify the effects of active ingredients (Roundup's Glyphosate) by helping them penetrate clothing, protective equipment and cell membranes, or by increasing their toxicity. More on this startling study can be found in [Environmental Health News](#).
- **Federal court upholds ban on genetically-engineered alfalfa.** The US Court

of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has upheld a nationwide ban on the planting of genetically-engineered (GE) Roundup Ready alfalfa pending a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Court determined that the planting of GE alfalfa can result in potentially irreversible harm to organic and conventional varieties of crops, damage to the environment, and economic harm to farmers. Cornucopia provided technical support, and is one of the plaintiffs, in the lawsuit brought by the [Center for Food Safety](#).

## More Tools

For those of you struck by the desire to more quickly track developments in the organic and farm community, you can now follow us on Twitter. About 1800 individuals are doing so. You can sign up for Cornucopia's "tweets" via [our page on twitter's website](#). And we are also using the popular social network, Facebook. This is one more way to stay up to date and in touch on organic food and farming issues for those who want to be "[friends](#)."



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The Cornucopia Institute is a non-profit group based in Wisconsin and working on food and farm policy issues concerning sustainable and organic agriculture. We depend upon our members and readers like you for support. Please visit our website at <http://www.cornucopia.org/> for more detail about our activities and how you can become involved or email us at [cultivate@cornucopia.org](mailto:cultivate@cornucopia.org).

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