

Green Mission News

February 2013 Green Mission News



“The danger of going over the fiscal cliff pales in comparison to going over the climate cliff.”

- Sandra Postel, National Geographic's Freshwater Initiative

External Article Links:

- How Corn Syrup Might Be Making Us Hungry-and Fat

news.yahoo.com/corn

- Living large in small houses

grist.org/living/living-large-in-small-houses/

- Slow Money, Manure and Prudence Woody Tasch

archives.greenmoneyjournal.com/article.mpl?newsletterid=44&articleid=604

- Biopsy for bioplastics

Can we afford to use bioplastics in our packaging? Can we afford not to use them? The debate is producing plenty of heat, reports Paul Gander

<http://www.foodproductiondaily.com/Packaging/Biopsy-for-bioplastics>

- Plastic pollution in the South Pacific subtropical gyre

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0025326X12006224

- Recent press concerning plastics pollution:

5gyres.org/whats_happening_now/press

- The End of the Farm Bill?

We must build a new policy framework for a fair, sustainable, and healthy food system

otherwords.org/the-end-of-the-farm-bill/

- Monsanto CEO acknowledges climate change, open to GMO labels, thinks veggies suck

<http://grist.org/news/monsanto-ceo-acknowledges-climate-change-open-to-gmo-labels-thinks-veggies-suck/>

- The Poison We Never Talk About in School

zinnedproject.org/posts/19122

- Don't Put a Fork in It

Despite consumer opposition, the FDA is one step away from approving genetically engineered salmon.

<http://otherwords.org/dont-put-a-fork-in-it/>

- Frankenfish or Cut Bait

www.themudflats.net/?tag=gmo-foods

- In Latin America, a growing backlash against genetically modified food (GMO)

<http://www.voxxi.com/growing-backlash-modified-food-gmo/#ixzz2Grt3yZQr>

- Are you the next sustainability leader?

Welcome to the Master's in Strategic Leadership towards Sustainability (MSLS) programme.

www.bth.se/msls

- How Walmart is Devouring the Food System

livinggreenmag.com/2013/01/18/green-business/how-walmart-is-devouring-the-food-system-infographic/

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

2012 was warmest and second most extreme year on record for the contiguous U.S.

www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/

- Soil Carbon Coalition

Put the carbon back where it belongs

soilcarboncoalition.org/

- EFSA identifies risks to bees from neonicotinoids

www.efsa.europa.eu/en/press/news/130116.htm?utm_source=homepage&utm_medium=infocus&utm_campaign=beehealth

also see video (3 1/2 mins): <http://youtu.be/ys4xcom6nnc>

- Insecticide 'unacceptable' danger to bees, report finds Campaigners say the conclusion by the European Food Safety Authority is a 'death knell' for neonicotinoid pesticides

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2013/jan/16/insecticide-unacceptable-danger-bees?CMP=twf

- Recycling Video: Can we become a Zero Waste planet? (3 minutes)

www.cawrecycles.org/recycling_videos

- The Economy of the Biosphere

www.yesmagazine.org/issues/what-would-nature-do/inside-the-down-to-earth-economy

- Federal Scientists Release Draft National Climate Assessment

www.ucsus.org/news/press_release/federal-scientists-national-climate-assessment-0357.html

- Shots of Fireball, Padma Lakshmi, and GMOs

The Year 2012 in All Its Regrettable Splendor

www.thestranger.com/seattle/shots-of-fireball-padma-lakshmi-and-gmos/Content?oid=15653781

- A video by Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert (11 min.) – Sustainable Food Systems' Conditions
The Big Picture and the Role of Business

www.naturalstep.org/en/video-karl-henrik-robert-big-picture-and-role-business

- Zero Waste Definition

<http://zwia.org/standards/>

- Zero Waste GUIDING PRINCIPLES

uszwbc.org/home/uszwbc-guiding-principles

- Reducing Food Waste

www.epa.gov/foodrecovery/

- White House Stalls EPA Report about children's exposure to toxics

A landmark Environmental Protection Agency report concluding that children exposed to toxic substances can develop learning disabilities, asthma and other health problems has been sidetracked indefinitely amid fierce opposition from the chemical industry.

www.ethics.harvard.edu/lab/blog/268-white-house-stalls-epa-report

- Australia adds new colour to temperature maps as heat soars

Forecast temperatures are so extreme that the Bureau of Meteorology has had to add a new colour to its scale. It is a sign of things to come

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/damian-carrington-blog/2013/jan/08/australia-bush-fires-heatwave-temperature-scale?CMP=tw_t_fd

- Episode 110: A Tale of Two Green Rooftops (video, 5 1/2 mins)

www.theperennialplate.com/episodes/2013/01/episode-110-a-tale-of-two-rooftops/

- Solar power cheaper than coal: One company says it's cracked the code

<http://grist.org/business-technology/solar-power-cheaper-than-coal-one-company-says-its-cracked-the-code/>

Full Length Articles Below:

- Poland bans cultivation of GM maize, potatoes

- Food poisoning

- Climate-Friendly Food Demands Animal-Friendly Farming

- We're Heading Into the Rapids All Wrong

- Farmers Join Hundreds to Protest Outside Monsanto Hearing and Demand End to - - -

- Monsanto's Campaign of Intimidation in Rural America Over GMOs

- Group Finds More Fake Ingredients in Popular Foods

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02 January 2013 - 18H41

www.france24.com/en/20130102-poland-bans-cultivation-gm-maize-potatoes

Poland bans cultivation of GM maize, potatoes

"MON 810", a variety of genetically modified maize developed by Monsanto Company is pictured on January 23, 2012. Poland on Wednesday imposed new bans on the cultivation of certain genetically modified strains of maize and potatoes, a day after an EU required green light for GM crops took effect.

AFP - Poland on Wednesday imposed new bans on the cultivation of certain genetically modified strains of maize and potatoes, a day after an EU required green light for GM crops took effect.

The centre-right government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk imposed farming bans on German BASF's Amflora strain of potato and US firm Monsanto's MON 810 maize or corn, according to a government statement Wednesday.

The ban on specific strains essentially uses a legal loophole to circumvent the EU's acceptance of such products.

Global environmental watchdog Greenpeace hailed the move, which will take effect on January 28.

"The government has kept its promises," Greenpeace Poland said in a statement.

Tusk had vowed to ban genetically modified (GM) crops in November on the heels of a Senate approval for the registration and sale of GM crops, which had been banned in Poland until then.

According to Tusk, under EU rules lawmakers had been forced to pass the blanket approval for GM crops which came into effect on January 1.

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Jan 02, 2013

Food poisoning

www.asianage.com/columnists/food-poisoning-299

Vandana Shiva

Food is supposed to provide us nourishment and health but because of the toxins it contains, what we consume has become a major threat to our health. Some toxic substances are added to our food physically, through adulteration, while some enter our food system chemically, through pesticide residues. And some toxins enter the food chain genetically, through genetic engineering of seeds and crops. Even food packaging can be a source of toxins in food.

While physical adulteration, like stones in pulses, can be removed, the chemicals can't be. The pollutants will stop entering our food system only when poisonous chemicals are banned. Genetic pollution and contamination of food is the new, big threat to food safety and it cannot be undone. Once toxic genes are put into a plant, they are in the genetic code. There is no rollback. Which is why the debate on biosafety of GMOs is so intense.

With growing consumerism and greed, food safety is being bypassed. The distance between growers and eaters is getting larger and being ignorant about what comprises our food is getting deeper. Traders adulterate food to make more money, and consumers, manipulated to focus on the cosmetic appearance, buy adulterated food not knowing what they are eating. Government agencies, which are supposed to inspect and stop adulteration, fail because of corruption and inadequate support.

We are eating hazardous substances every day. Copper salts are used to colour pickles and canned vegetables green. The craze for the cosmetic appearance of food has created a market for dyes injected in watermelon, peas, capsicum and brinjal. Brick dust in chilli powder, coloured chalk powder in turmeric, and papaya seeds in black pepper are old tricks.

With new chemicals available in the market, adulteration has reached new levels. Apples are sprayed with lead arsenate; turmeric and mixed spices are adulterated with lead chromate. These substances can cause anaemia, abortion and paralysis.

One of the worst tragedies of food adulteration was the 2008 Chinese milk scandal, which was a food safety issue involving milk and infant formula adulterated with melamine. Melamine is an industrial chemical used to manufacture melamine-formaldehyde resin, a type of plastic known for its flame retardant properties. When added to milk, it caused it to appear to have higher protein content. But melamine causes renal and urinary problems and its use in food production is universally banned. The milk scandal broke in July 2008. By November there were 300,000 victims, with six infants dying from kidney stones and other kidney complications.

If the Chinese were using melamine in milk, the Indians are using urea to make synthetic milk. Synthetic milk is produced by mixing urea, caustic soda, cheap cooking oil, detergents, water and a tiny bit of natural milk. It has the colour, the structure and even the fat levels of natural milk and thus clears the basic tests. Synthetic milk can cause loss of sight and hearing and is even said to cause cancer.

Oxytocin is a hormone secreted and stored by the posterior pituitary gland that contributes to the second stage of labour. It has uterine-contracting and milk-ejecting actions. Oxytocin is now available as an artificial drug for use in emergencies. The drug can lead to the rupture of the uterus and, in rare cases, rupture of the womb. While the oxytocin for humans is priced at `15 per ampule, veterinary oxytocin is priced at 50 paise per ampule.

The dairy industry uses it on animals in the mistaken belief that it increases milk production when all it does is make the milk come faster, while destroying the cow's reproductive system. The cow goes dry in three years and is abandoned.

Not only is the cow harmed, but those who drink milk from oxytocin-injected cows are also at risk, especially children. Oxytocin causes imbalanced hearing and weak eyesight. For expecting mothers, oxytocin increases the risk of post-partum haemorrhage and can inhibit breastfeeding. Because of hormones in food, minor girls are attaining early puberty. Oxytocin is also used for growing vegetables. Injected into a

pumpkin or squash, it doubles the size overnight.

Pesticides are becoming a major threat to our health. India has gone through three major tragedies — the Bhopal gas tragedy, the endosulfan tragedy in Kerala and the tragedy of Punjab’s cancer train — related to pesticides that should have woken us to the fact that pesticides kill and cripple.

We are using 750 times more pesticides than Europe, foolishly equating poisons with progress. A study carried out by the All-India Coordinated Research Project on pesticide residues in food under the India Council of Agricultural Research concluded that 51 per cent of all food items have pesticide residues, and 20 per cent had pesticide residues above permissible levels. Globally the figures are 21 per cent and two per cent respectively. Indians are being poisoned at much higher levels than the rest of the world. And these poisons have consequences for our health.

Dr Rashmi Sanghi, a research scientist at the LNM Institute of Information Technology, Jaipur, found organochlorine and organophosphorous pesticide residues in human breast milk. When other researchers analysed the blood samples of women with breast cancer in Jaipur and compared it to blood samples of women without breast cancer, they found significantly higher levels of pesticide residues in the samples from women suffering from cancer.

Even as we have an increasing disease burden due to chemicals and pollutants, there is an attempt to push GMOs despite the serious health risks they pose. We need to assess these risks on the basis of the Precautionary Principle. The principle implies that there is a social responsibility to protect the public from exposure to harm when scientific investigation has thrown data and evidence of health risks. Suppressing research on risk assessment of GMOs does not make the risks go away. A “don’t look, don’t see” policy does not make for safety.

The last Indian deserves healthy, nutritious and safe food. That is why we at Navdanya have started the campaign “Know your food, Know your farmer”. Join us, for the sake of earth and for the sake of your health.

The writer is the executive director of the Navdanya Trust

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Published on Thursday, January 17, 2013
www.commondreams.org/view/2013/01/17-5

Climate-Friendly Food Demands Animal-Friendly Farming

Why we need labels on all factory-farmed food

by Ronnie Cummins

A growing number of organic consumers, natural health advocates and climate hawks

are taking a more comprehensive look at the fundamental causes of global warming. And it's led them to this sobering conclusion: Our modern energy-, chemical- and GMO-intensive industrial food and farming systems are the major cause of man-made global warming.

How did they reach this conclusion? First, by taking a more inclusive look at the scientific data on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions - not just carbon dioxide (CO₂), but also methane and nitrous oxide. Next, by doing a full accounting of the fossil fuel consumption and emissions of the entire industrial food and farming cycle, including inputs, equipment, production, processing, distribution, heating, cooling and waste. And finally, by factoring in the indirect impacts of contemporary agriculture, which include deforestation and wetlands destruction.

When you add it all up, the picture is clear: Contemporary agriculture is burning up our planet. And factory farms or, in industry lingo, Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), play a key role in this impending disaster.

The science behind global warming is complex. Without question, coal plants, tar sands and natural gas fracking have contributed heavily to greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution, the major cause of global warming. We must unite to shut down these industries. Similarly, consumer overconsumption of fossil fuels represents another big piece of the climate-crisis equation. We absolutely must rethink, retrofit and/or redesign our gas-guzzling cars and our energy-inefficient buildings, if we want to reduce fossil fuel use by 90 percent over the next few decades.

But we also must address the environmental impact of factory farming.

When you add it all up, the picture is clear: Contemporary agriculture is burning up our planet.

Today, nearly 65 billion animals worldwide, including cows, chickens and pigs, are crammed into CAFOs. These animals are literally imprisoned and tortured in unhealthy, unsanitary and unconscionably cruel conditions. Sickness is the norm for animals who are confined rather than pastured, and who eat GMO corn and soybeans, rather than grass and forage as nature intended. To prevent the inevitable spread of disease from stress, overcrowding and lack of vitamin D, animals are fed a steady diet of antibiotics. Those antibiotics pose a direct threat to the environment when they run off into our lakes, rivers, aquifers and drinking water.

CAFOs contribute directly to global warming by releasing vast amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere - more than the entire global transportation industry. The air at some factory farm test sites in the US is dirtier than in America's most polluted cities, according to the Environmental Integrity Project. According to a 2006 report by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), animal agriculture is responsible for 18 percent of all human-induced greenhouse gas emissions, including 37 percent of methane emissions and 65 percent of nitrous oxide emissions. The methane releases from billions of imprisoned animals on factory farms are 70 times more damaging per ton to the earth's atmosphere than CO₂.

Contrary to popular arguments, factory farming is not a cheap, efficient solution to world

hunger.

Indirectly, factory farms contribute to climate disruption by their impact on deforestation and draining of wetlands, and because of the nitrous oxide emissions from huge amounts of pesticides used to grow the genetically engineered corn and soy fed to animals raised in CAFOs. Nitrous oxide pollution is even worse than methane – 200 times more damaging per ton than CO₂. And just as animal waste leaches antibiotics and hormones into ground and water, pesticides and fertilizers also eventually find their way into our waterways, further damaging the environment.

Factory farms aren't just a disaster for the environment. They're also ruining our health. A growing [chorus of scientists](#) and public health advocates warn that the intensive and reckless use of antibiotics and growth hormones leads to factory-farmed food that contains antibiotic-resistant pathogens, drug residues such as hormones and growth promoters, and "bad fats." Yet despite these health and environmental hazards, the vast majority of consumers don't realize that nearly 95% of the meat, dairy and eggs sold in the U.S. come from CAFOs. Nor do most people realize that CAFOs represent a corporate-controlled system characterized by large-scale, centralized, low profit-margin production, processing and distribution systems.

There's an alternative: A socially responsible, small-scale system created by independent producers and processors focused on local and regional markets. This alternative produces high-quality food, and supports farmers who produce healthy, meat, eggs and dairy products using humane methods.

And it's far easier on the environment.

Consumers can boycott food products from factory farms and choose the more environmentally-friendly alternatives. But first, we have to regain the right to know what's in our food. And that means mandatory labeling, not only of genetically engineered foods, but of the 95 percent of non-organic, non-grass-fed meat, dairy and eggs that are produced on the hellish factory farms that today dominate U.S. food production.

In 2013, a new alliance of organic and natural health consumers, animal welfare advocates, anti-GMO and climate-change activists will tackle the next big food labeling battle: meat, eggs and dairy products from animals raised on factory farms, or CAFOs. This campaign will start with a massive program to educate consumers about the negative impacts of factory farming on the environment, on human health and on animal welfare, and then move forward to organize and mobilize millions of consumers to demand labels on beef, pork, poultry and dairy products derived from these unhealthy and unsustainable so-called "farming" practices.

Opponents and skeptics will ask, "What about feeding the world?" Contrary to popular arguments, factory farming is not a cheap, efficient solution to world hunger. Feeding huge numbers of confined animals actually uses more food, in the form of grains that could feed humans, than it produces. For every 100 food calories of edible crops fed to livestock, we get back just 30 calories in the form of meat and dairy. That's a 70-percent loss.

With the earth's population predicted to reach nine billion by mid-century, the planet can no longer afford this reckless, unhealthy and environmentally disastrous farming system. We believe that once people know the whole truth about CAFOs they will want to make healthier, more sustainable food choices. And to do that, we'll have to fight for the consumer's right to know not only what is in our food, but where our food comes from.

Ronnie Cummins is a veteran activist, author, and organizer. He is the International Director of the Organic Consumers Association and its Mexico affiliate, Via Organica. <http://www.organicconsumers.org>; <http://www.viaorganica.org>

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January 4, 2013

[We're Heading Into the Rapids All Wrong](#)

We're Heading Into the Rapids All Wrong

by Sandra Postel

My experience running a rapid on the Payette River in Idaho offers a metaphor and lesson for our time.

A kayaker on the Payette River in Idaho.
Credit: Flickr/creative commons/Rick Hobson.

Lately, as I ponder our societal response, or lack of it, to the challenging times ahead – the droughts and floods and heat waves and crop failures, which we've tasted only as appetizers so far – I find myself recalling one of the scariest moments of my life.

Two decades ago I was thrown into a class-four rapid while rafting the South Fork of the Payette River in Idaho. For an interminably long few minutes, I thought my number was up.

The rapid was called Staircase, a five-mile run known for its riotous whitewater, deep holes, big waves and pointed rocks. It's a challenge for even seasoned kayakers, so barely shy of dangerous for anyone else. Although fatalities from running Staircase are rare, close calls are not.

What got me into trouble was that we paddlers didn't properly heed or execute our guide's commands. As a result, our boat headed into a giant wave at completely the wrong angle. My friend and I, manning the front of the raft, got pitched out.

The boat shot rapidly ahead, leaving us swirling in whitewater, ricocheting between



boulders, and gasping for air as the wild river had its way with us. The notion of “swimming” Staircase, even in a lifejacket, was a joke.

Within minutes, as I felt my energy draining away, I grasped the hard truth that Staircase might consume my last breath. Into the din of its roaring whitewater, I called out for help.

Whether due to luck, fate or providential intercession, my friend and I both survived Staircase. But I know it could just as well have gone the other way.

Today, society is making the same mistake in its approach to the coming turbulence due to climate change and water stress that our paddling crew made as we headed into Staircase: we’re not fully alert to the danger, executing a plan that will see us through, or adequately prepared for the consequences.

In other words, we’re heading into the rapids all wrong.

Instead of endless debates over appropriate income tax rates, we need to craft and levy [a carbon tax](#) that will bring our consumption of fossil fuels down to safe levels. The danger of going over the fiscal cliff pales in comparison to going over the climate cliff. Moreover, higher taxes on carbon fuels would [allow for a reduction in taxes on income](#), thereby penalizing work and savings less and climate-altering carbon emissions more.

Likewise, burning fossil fuels to de-salt seawater attempts to solve the problem of water shortage by further disrupting the climate, which will only worsen droughts and water shortage—therefore, no real solution at all. And proposals for more giant pipelines to move water from one place to another are akin to moving deck chairs on the Titanic. They might buy time, but they don’t solve the problem: we’re nearly all sunk if we don’t figure out how nine billion people can live sustainably on a finite water supply.

Spurring public and private investments in [water conservation](#), [efficiency](#), [recycling](#) and reuse; market shifts that result in greater value per gallon consumed; and consumer choices that shrink [our individual water footprints](#) remain the best options for sustainably meeting water demands – and [they have barely been tapped](#).

What ultimately saved me from Staircase was a relatively calm patch of water downstream that allowed my fellow paddlers to wait for me while I attempted to make it through the treacherous whitewater.

Fortunately, we still have some calm waters in which to plan and prepare for the turbulence ahead. But the appetizers of wild weather we’ve tasted in recent years will soon be served up as main courses. With each passing day of inaction, our options for reducing the dangers diminish.

It’s time to ask our political leaders and communities to work together on a realistic plan to see us – and our children and grandchildren— safely through the turbulent times ahead.

It’s all about taking the rapids at the proper angle.

Sandra Postel is director of the Global Water Policy Project and Freshwater Fellow of

the National Geographic Society. She is the author of several acclaimed books, including the award-winning Last Oasis, a Pew Scholar in Conservation and the Environment, and one of the "Scientific American 50.

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Washington- January 10, 2013

[Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association \(OSGATA\)](#)

Farmers Join Hundreds to Protest Outside Monsanto Hearing and Demand End to Monsanto's Campaign of Intimidation in Rural America Over GMOs

Jim Gerritsen

Protesters Near White House Also Call on President Obama to Halt Approval of Genetically Modified Crops and GMO Salmon Until Long Term Safety Tests Are Completed

Nearly 300 family farmers, activists, and members of Food Democracy Now! gathered in front of the White House today, directly after a hearing on the landmark [Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association et al. v. Monsanto](#) case. Citizens assembled to demand that Monsanto end their campaign of intimidation against America's family farmers over GMO- also known as genetically engineered (GE)- crops, and that President Obama halt approval of GE food. The demand for President Obama included stopping the approval of GE salmon until independent long-term safety tests can be conducted.

Thirty-one family farmers, plaintiffs in the landmark lawsuit OSGATA et al v. Monsanto, travelled to Washington, D.C., from across North America to attend the Oral Argument in the Appeal of Dismissal heard before the [U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit](#) and also to protest in demand of the right to farm without the threat of harassment by the world's largest biotech seed company. Monsanto has sued, or settled in court with, more than 844 family farms since 1997 over "patent infringement" after their seeds naturally spread to nearby farms.

A recording of today's complete Oral Argument in the OSGATA et al. v. Monsanto Appeal of Dismissal before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit is available [here](#).

"Family farmers need and deserve the right to farm. We have a right to grow good food and good seed for our families and our communities without the threat of trespass and intimidation," Jim Gerritsen, an organic potato farmer from Maine and President of [OSGATA](#), the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit, told the enthusiastic crowd. "We need Court protection so that our families will be able to carry on our farming tradition and help keep America strong," said Gerritsen.

After attending the Oral Argument to appeal the dismissal of the case, the farmers marched to Lafayette Park to bring attention to the Obama Administration's pending approval of 13 new biotech crops and AquaBounty's "Frankenfish," a genetically engineered "salmon."

"America's farmers deserve to be protected from unwanted contamination of their crops and the continued harassment by biotech seed giant Monsanto," said Dave Murphy, founder and executive director of [Food Democracy Now!](#), a grassroots farmer advocacy group and plaintiff in the case. "At the same time, our current regulatory structure here in the U.S. has failed America's farmers and consumers. The Obama administration needs to do the right thing to protect our farmers and make sure that new GE crops go through rigorous safety tests," said Murphy. "It's time that President Obama live up to his campaign promise to Iowa farmers in 2007 and label genetically engineered foods. It's the least that he could do."

Many farmers have been forced to stop growing certain crops to avoid genetic contamination and potential lawsuits from Monsanto. This case challenges the validity of Monsanto's genetically engineered seed patents and seeks Court protection for family farmers who, through no fault of their own, may have become contaminated by Monsanto's patented seed and find themselves accused of patent infringement. Their aggressive lawsuits have created an atmosphere of fear in rural America and driven dozens of farmers into bankruptcy.

The hearing today coincided with growing concern from millions of Americans over the pending approval of new GE crops, which many believe have not been properly tested through serious independent long-term safety tests.

Those concerns took on new urgency when only days before Christmas the Obama administration announced it was clearing one of the final regulatory hurdles before the pending approval of AquaBounty's "Frankenfish." If approved, it would be the first genetically engineered animal to appear on plates in the U.S.

Complete background on the OSGATA et al v. Monsanto lawsuit is available [here](#).

The Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA) develops, protects and promotes the organic seed trade and its growers, and assures that the organic community has access to excellent quality organic seed, free of contaminants and adapted to the diverse needs of local organic agriculture.

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Good Morning America – Tue, Jan 22, 2013 10:44 AM EST [abc-news-topstories.html](#)

Group Finds More Fake Ingredients in Popular Foods

by Jim Avila and Serena Marshall

It's what we expect as shoppers—what's in the food will be displayed on the label.

But a new scientific examination by the non-profit food fraud detectives the U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention (USP), discovered rising numbers of fake ingredients in products from olive oil to spices to fruit juice.

"Food products are not always what they purport to be," Markus Lipp, senior director for Food Standards for the independent lab in Maryland, told ABC News.

In a new database to be released Wednesday, and obtained exclusively by ABC News today, USP warns consumers, the FDA and manufacturers that the amount of food fraud they found is up by 60 percent this year.

USP, a scientific nonprofit that according to their website "sets standards for the identity, strength, quality, and purity of medicines, food ingredients, and dietary supplements manufactured, distributed and consumed worldwide" first released the [Food Fraud Database](#) in April 2012.

The organization examined more than 1,300 published studies and media reports from 1980-2010. The update to the database includes nearly 800 new records, nearly all published in 2011 and 2012.

Among the most popular targets for unscrupulous food suppliers? Pomegranate juice, which is often diluted with grape or pear juice.

"Pomegranate juice is a high-value ingredient and a high-priced ingredient, and adulteration appears to be widespread," Lipp said. "It can be adulterated with other food juices...additional sugar, or just water and sugar."

Lipp added that there have also been reports of completely "synthetic pomegranate juice" that didn't contain any traces of the real juice.

USP tells ABC News that liquids and ground foods in general are the easiest to tamper with:

Olive oil: often diluted with cheaper oils

Lemon juice: cheapened with water and sugar

Tea: diluted with fillers like lawn grass or fern leaves

Spices: like paprika or saffron adulterated with dangerous food colorings that mimic the colors

Milk, honey, coffee and syrup are also listed by the USP as being highly adulterated products.

Also high on the list: seafood. The number one fake being escolar, an oily fish that can cause stomach problems, being mislabeled as white tuna or albacore, frequently found on sushi menus.

National Consumers League did its own testing on [lemon juice just this past year](#) and found four different products labeled 100 percent lemon juice were far from pure.

"One had 10 percent lemon juice, it said it had 100 percent, another had 15 percent

lemon juice, another...had 25 percent, and the last one had 35 percent lemon juice," Sally Greenberg, Executive Director for the National Consumers League said. "And they were all labeled 100 percent lemon juice."

Greenberg explains there are indications to help consumers pick the faux from the food.

"In a bottle of olive oil if there's a dark bottle, does it have the date that it was harvested?" she said. While other products, such as honey or lemon juice, are more difficult to discern, if the price is "too good to be true" it probably is.

"\$5.50, that's pretty cheap for extra virgin olive oil," Greenberg said. "And something that should raise some eyebrows for consumers."

Many of the products USP found to be adulterated are those that would be more expensive or research intensive in its production. "Pomegranate juice is expensive because there is little juice in a pomegranate," Lipp said.

But the issue is more than just not getting what you pay for.

"There's absolutely a public health risk," said John Spink, associate director for the Anti-Counterfeit and Product Protection Program (A-CAPPP) at Michigan State University. "And the key is the people that are unauthorized to handle this product, they are probably not following good manufacturing practices and so there could be contaminants in it."

Spink recommends purchasing from "suppliers, retailers, brands, that have a vested interest in keeping us as repeat customers."

Both the FDA and the Grocery Manufacturers Association say they take food adulteration "very seriously."

"FDA's protection of consumers includes not only regulating and continually monitoring food products in interstate commerce for safety and sanitation, but also for the truthfulness and accuracy of their labels," the FDA said in a statement to ABC News.

Most recently the FDA issued an alert for pomegranate juice mislabeled as 100 percent pomegranate juice, as well as one for the [adulteration of honey](#).

The Grocery Manufacturers of America told ABC News in a statement that "ensuring the safety and integrity of our products – and maintaining the confidence of consumers – is the single most important goal of our industry," and that their members have "robust quality management programs and procedures in place, including analytical testing, to help ensure that only the safest and highest quality products are being offered to consumers."