

Green Mission News

May 2011 Green Mission News

External Article Links:

- **UN report: Medium size Organic farms would solve malnutrition**

http://civileats.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/20110308_UN_agroecology_report.pdf

- **Go green for natures healing powers**

<http://www.futurity.org/top-stories/go-green-for-natures-healing-powers/>

- **Growing Your Own Greens (a series of home garden videos)**

www.growingyourgreens.com/

- **California's Food System. Where Is It Headed?**

<http://rootsofchange.org/content/californias-food-system-where-it-headed>

- **New website: Generations of Organic**

<http://www.generationsoforganic.org/>

The site is designed to be an engaging online resource for people seeking easy-to-understand information about the fact-based benefits of organic food and farming.

- **Pale Blue Dot - Animation (Carl Sagan)**

<http://vimeo.com/22582065>

- **Organic Farming Can Feed Us All**

www.organic-center.org/reportfiles/EP193A.Halweil.pdf

- **Changing Education Paradigms (12 minutes)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&feature=related>

- **Farms become factories. Rivers of Waste. Communities under siege. Declining health.**

<http://www.cafothebook.org/>

- **Scenarios for a Sustainable Low Carbon Society**

http://www.wupperinst.org/en/projects/topics_online/low_carbon_scenarios/index.html

- **Stanford researchers find electrical current stemming from plants**

<http://nextbigfuture.com/2010/04/stanford-researchers-find-electrical.html>

- Factory Farms: Is It Time to Put CAFO's Out to Pasture? (10 min video)

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rebecca-gerendasy/factory-farms-is-it-time- b_851526.html

- THE WORLD BECOMES WHAT YOU TEACH

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5HEV96dLuY&feature=player_embedded#at=26

Full Length Articles Below:

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Published on Friday, April 22, 2011 by [People to People Blog](#)

On Earth Day, Recognize the Rights of Mother Earth

by [Maude Barlow](#) and [Shannon Biggs](#)

This Earth Day, we need to start envisioning a future based not on exploiting nature but on recognizing that nature has inherent rights.

Ironically, this week also marks the one-year anniversary of the BP oil spill, the worst one in U.S. history.

Beyond headline-grabbing catastrophes, every day we dump 2 million tons of toxic waste into the worlds water, the equivalent of the weight of the entire human population.

Every day we literally blow the tops off of mountains to release hidden coal.

And its all legal, because under current law, nature is nothing more that human property, like a slave.

But thanks to some innovative thinking by governments, municipalities and indigenous peoples, a wiser mindset is taking hold. And the United Nations has also begun to consider the rights of nature.

This may be the first step toward the adoption of a Declaration on the Rights of Mother Earth. A companion piece to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, this emerging declaration which would be backed by enforceable laws around the world seeks to redefine our human relationship with all other species from one of dominance to one of harmony.

Many places have already begun to change their laws in accordance with this new way of thinking.

On November 16, 2010, Pittsburgh became the first major U.S. city to recognize the legally enforceable rights of nature. Faced with dangerous gas-fracking, Pittsburghs city council

unanimously passed a cutting-edge law that stops gas-shale drilling by elevating the rights of communities and nature above the interests of energy corporations.

Nearly two-dozen other U.S. municipalities have passed similar ordinances, finding that existing laws cannot protect their local ecosystems and, by extension, their human health, safety and welfare.

Canadian communities are also wondering if legally recognizing rights for nature can stop the privatization of their public water systems and halt dangerous tar-sands drilling in the fragile Alberta region.

And these bold municipalities are not alone.

In 2008, Ecuador became the first nation in the world to rewrite its constitution to include rights for nature to exist, flourish and evolve.

This year, Bolivia is set to pass 11 separate laws recognizing the rights of Mother Earth.

These laws do not give rights to individual bugs or trees. Rather, they stop the kind of development that interferes with the existence and vitality of local ecosystems.

A worldwide movement, led by indigenous peoples, has emerged to support this cultural and legal shift.

Einstein said that problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them.

Every now and then in history, the human race takes a collective step forward in its evolution. The earth, and all its inhabitants, urgently needs this to be one of those times.

2011, Global Exchange

Maude Barlow chairs the board of [Food and Water Watch](#) and is the senior adviser on water to the president of the U.N. General Assembly. Her new book is "[Blue Covenant, The Global Water Crisis and the Coming Battle For the Right to Water](#)" (McClelland & Stewart, 2007).

###

Iowa organic farmer says non-GMO corn outperforms GMO

By [Ken Roseboro](#)

Published: April 11, 2011

Jason Wells, a farmer in Milton, Iowa, who grows both non-GMO and organic corn, says that the non-GMO corn variety he grows produces higher yields than genetically modified varieties.

Other farmers prefer non-GMO

Wells has grown a Pioneer Hi-Bred non-GMO corn variety called 34Y02. In 2009, Wells says the corn produced high yields. It was an outstanding hybrid with a yield of 257 bushels per acre.

He says the variety was one of Pioneer's best yielding corn varieties.

But he says the variety is not available for 2011. They took it out of their non-GMO lineup.

Wells says his experience is not uncommon. It seems to me that more farmers are saying their non-GMO corn is performing as well or better than GM corn. The natural traits are out there without doing GMO stuff. The seed companies do not like that.

Some farmers are questioning the higher cost for GM seed, Wells says.

Farms organic and non-GMO

Wells farms both non-GMO and organic crops. He has 850 certified organic acres where he grows soybeans, corn, oats, as well as pasture for 150 dairy cows.

Wells has farmed organically since 1998, and transitioned the dairy to organic in 2007.

He sells milk to Organic Valley, a leading producer of organic milk. Organic Valley has been very good to us. They are a stable company and will be there for us, Wells says.

He grows non-GMO corn and soybeans on 600 acres of rented land. He earns premiums of \$1.25 per bushel for non-GMO soybeans and \$.40 per bushel for corn.

Wells grows non-GMO corn and soybeans to earn the premiums and to avoid contaminating his organic crops. If I can add value I will, he says.

Increased cost for herbicides for non-GMO crops

This year Wells noticed a price spike on herbicides used with his non-GMO crops. He thinks this may be another way that farmers are being pressured to grow GM crops.

Roundup herbicide costs much less these days due to generic versions being available. As a result, Wells says it now costs farmers more to grow non-GMO corn and soybeans than GM even with the high cost for GM seed.

Weed resistance to Roundup is not widespread in his area of southern Iowa but Wells says: Farmers are talking about the problem, and some are starting to use other herbicides.

Upset about Roundup Ready alfalfa

Enhancing soil fertility is essential to organic farming, and like most organic farmers, Wells rotates crops each year, growing alfalfa hay for two years followed by soybeans and corn. The hay provides green manure for soil fertility and forage for cows, and breaks weed cycles.

Wells is concerned about the US Department of Agriculture's decision to deregulate Roundup Ready GM alfalfa. He was disappointed by the decision. I don't think it's needed; everyone I know who grows alfalfa doesn't use herbicides. There's a lot of good alfalfa without making it Roundup Ready.

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Open Space Resources and Preferred Growth Areas in the Catskills

http://www.osiny.org/site/DocServer/Catskill_Report_Private_Lands_final.pdf?docID=11181

Farmers in New York's Catskills can 'feed millions,' says report Major supply/demand gap exists but doesn't have to

by Sustainable Food News

April 27, 2011

The Catskills region of New York has the potential to produce enough healthy, locally grown food to feed millions of people in New York City and beyond, according to a report by Columbia University and the Open Space Institute.

The report pegged the annual value of demand for locally produced agricultural products in the New York metropolitan area at more than \$866 million.

And with existing local production at just \$147 million in sales each year, that's creating a huge supply and demand gap that the report concludes farmers in New York can fill.

The report said the four-county Catskill region contains 10 times the land needed to support population expectations through 2035, meaning growth can occur without negatively affecting open space resources.

Overall, the region encompasses 2.7 million acres, 530,000 of which are already conserved and 140,000 of which are developed.

After accounting for state and federal zoning regulations and physical obstacles, the region still contains more than 520,000 acres within which development could occur without negatively impacting the 1.6 million acres of significant open space resources.

Individually, for each of the four counties, the report found:

- Ulster County is the most developed of the four counties (7 percent of its land area). It also contains the most conserved lands (32 percent), and the least amount of preferred growth area (11 percent).
- A full 83 percent of Sullivan County's open space resources are in private ownership. The county also contains the greatest percentage (30 percent) of preferred growth area in the region, much of it concentrated in the center of the county, alongside existing infrastructure, like schools, roads, water and sewer services, and emergency facilities.
- Delaware County is the least developed of the four counties (only 4 percent of its land), and, despite significant regulatory and physical obstacles, it can increase development more than 6.5 times without directly affecting its open space resources.
- Twenty-four percent of Greene County is already conserved. Six percent of the county is developed, and it contains enough preferred growth area to triple that figure.

The report presents case studies of six farmers who have constructed their own models for resource protection and adaptation to changing markets.

The six farmers are:

- Mark Dunau, whose small, five-acre Delaware County operation has provided for his family for two decades and is now putting two children through college;
- John Gorzynski, whose knowledge of crop biodiversity helped him become a favorite at farmers markets in Sullivan County and at New York City's Union Square Greenmarket;
- Greg Swartz, a self-taught organic farmer who learned through two internships before starting his own farm from scratch;
- Richard Dirie, who converted his dairy operation to raw milk production as a last resort as prices for traditional dairy plummeted;
- Tim Tonjes, whose sales of innovative "value-added" dairy products have kept his family's operation going; and
- Marc Jaffe, a former Manhattan IT executive-turned-farmer who now supplies meat to high-end restaurants locally and in New York City.

The study concludes with a series of "what if?" scenarios: What if all available farmland in Sullivan County were in production? What if schools in Sullivan County all served local milk?

As the report contemplates economic and other impacts of increased local government advocacy for farmers, John Gorzynski believes, in the meantime, that consumers will continue to dictate the role local agricultural operations play in major metropolitan markets.

###

UNCONVENTIONAL ECONOMIC WISDOM

Gambling with the Planet

[Joseph E. Stiglitz](#)

Share <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/stiglitz137/English> on Twitter

DUBAI The consequences of the Japanese earthquake especially the ongoing crisis at the Fukushima nuclear power plant resonate grimly for observers of the American financial crash that precipitated the Great Recession. Both events provide stark lessons about risks, and about how badly markets and societies can manage them.

Of course, in one sense, there is no comparison between the tragedy of the earthquake which has left more than 25,000 people dead or missing and the financial crisis, to which no such acute physical suffering can be attributed. But when it comes to the nuclear meltdown at Fukushima, there is a common theme in the two events.

Experts in both the nuclear and finance industries assured us that new technology had all but eliminated the risk of catastrophe. Events proved them wrong: not only did the risks exist, but their consequences were so enormous that they easily erased all the supposed benefits of the systems that industry leaders promoted.

Before the Great Recession, Americas economic gurus from the head of the Federal Reserve to the titans of finance boasted that we had learned to master risk. Innovative financial instruments

such as derivatives and credit-default swaps enabled the distribution of risk throughout the economy. We now know that they deluded not only the rest of society, but even themselves.

These wizards of finance, it turned out, didnt understand the intricacies of risk, let alone the dangers posed by fat-tail distributions a statistical term for rare events with huge consequences, sometimes called black swans. Events that were supposed to happen once in a century or even once in the lifetime of the universe seemed to happen every ten years. Worse, not only was the frequency of these events vastly underestimated; so was the astronomical damage they would cause something like the meltdowns that keep dogging the nuclear industry.

Research in economics and psychology helps us understand why we do such a bad job in managing these risks. We have little empirical basis for judging rare events, so it is difficult to arrive at good estimates. In such circumstances, more than wishful thinking can come into play: we might have few incentives to think hard at all. On the contrary, when others bear the costs of mistakes, the incentives favor self-delusion. A system that socializes losses and privatizes gains is doomed to mismanage risk.

Indeed, the entire financial sector was rife with agency problems and externalities. Ratings agencies had incentives to give good ratings to the high-risk securities produced by the investment banks that were paying them. Mortgage originators bore no consequences for their irresponsibility, and even those who engaged in predatory lending or created and marketed securities that were designed to lose did so in ways that insulated them from civil and criminal prosecution.

This brings us to the next question: are there other black swan events waiting to happen? Unfortunately, some of the really big risks that we face today are most likely not even rare events. The good news is that such risks can be controlled at little or no cost. The bad news is that doing so faces strong political opposition for there are people who profit from the status quo.

We have seen two of the big risks in recent years, but have done little to bring them under control. By some accounts, how the last crisis was managed may have increased the risk of a future financial meltdown.

Too-big-to fail banks, and the markets in which they participate, now know that they can expect to be bailed out if they get into trouble. As a result of this moral hazard, these banks can borrow on favorable terms, giving them a competitive advantage based not on superior performance but on political strength. While some of the excesses in risk-taking have been curbed, predatory lending and unregulated trading in obscure over-the-counter derivatives continue. Incentive structures that encourage excess risk-taking remain virtually unchanged.

So, too, while Germany has shut down its older nuclear reactors, in the US and elsewhere, even plants that have the same flawed design as Fukushima continue to operate. The nuclear industrys very existence is dependent on hidden public subsidies costs borne by society in the event of nuclear disaster, as well as the costs of the still-unmanaged disposal of nuclear waste. So much for unfettered capitalism!

For the planet, there is one more risk, which, like the other two, is almost a certainty: global warming and climate change. If there were other planets to which we could move at low cost in the event of the almost certain outcome predicted by scientists, one could argue that this is a risk worth taking. But there arent, so it isnt.

The costs of reducing emissions pale in comparison to the possible risks the world faces. And that is true even if we rule out the nuclear option (the costs of which were always underestimated). To be sure, coal and oil companies would suffer, and big polluting countries like the US would obviously pay a higher price than those with a less profligate lifestyle.

In the end, those gambling in Las Vegas lose more than they gain. As a society, we are gambling with our big banks, with our nuclear power facilities, with our planet. As in Las Vegas, the lucky few the bankers that put our economy at risk and the owners of energy companies that put our planet at risk may walk off with a mint. But on average and almost certainly, we as a society, like all gamblers, will lose.

That, unfortunately, is a lesson of Japans disaster that we continue to ignore at our peril.

Joseph E. Stiglitz is University Professor at Columbia University and a Nobel laureate in Economics. His latest book, Freefall: Free Markets and the Sinking of the Global Economy, is available in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

###

{ed.: hopefully the connection to subsidized GMO yellow corn starts to show up? just as repetitious "studies linked corn syrup to obesity" helps bring authentic awareness. }

Published on Friday, April 29, 2011 by [Reuters](#)

Sweet Suit: Sugar Versus 'High Fructose Corn Syrup' in False Advertising Lawsuit

SAN FRANCISCO - Sugar producers think recent marketing efforts by manufacturers of high-fructose corn syrup aren't so sweet.

In a lawsuit filed last week, three sugar distributors say that equating HFCS with real sugar -- with slogans like "your body can't tell the difference" -- misleads consumers.

They accuse defendants, including Archer Daniels Midland Co (ADM.N) and Cargill [CARG.UL], of using the publicity campaign to offset growing customer concerns about obesity.

"This suit is about false advertising, pure and simple," said Inder Mathur, CEO of Western Sugar Cooperative, one of the plaintiffs.

Audrae Erickson, president of the Corn Refiners Association, said the lawsuit is without merit, as HFCS and sugar are nutritionally and metabolically equivalent.

"Sugar is sugar," Erickson said.

The United States is the biggest consumer and manufacturer of high-fructose corn syrup, with soft-drink makers the largest users.

The sweetener was added to beverages such as Coca-Cola in the early 1980s, but U.S. food makers have been edging away from it in recent years, trying out a return to sugar in some products after studies linked corn syrup to obesity.

However, HFCS has been able to regain market share recently amid surging sugar prices.
[ID:nL3E7DK0BJ]

The Corn Refiners Association has asked federal regulators to allow HFCS to be called "corn sugar." But the lawsuit says the defendants "jumped the gun" and started using the term before receiving approval.

Erickson said the Corn Refiners Association will "vigorously" defend its right to petition for the name change with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"We stand by the message in our ads and the science behind it," Erickson said.

The case in U.S. District Court, Central District of California is *Western Sugar Cooperative et al. v. Archer Daniels Midland Co et al*, 11-3473.

(Reporting by Dan Levine; Editing by Tim Dobbyn)

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Published on Friday, April 8, 2011 by [Think Forward](#)

U.S. Subsidizing Brazilian Cotton Protects Monsanto's Profits

by [Emelie Peine](#)

On February 18, Republicans in the House of Representatives defeated an obscure amendment to the House Appropriations bill by a 2-to-1 margin. The Kind Amendment would have eliminated \$147 million dollars that the federal government pays every year directly to Brazilian cotton farmers. In an era of nationwide belt tightening, with funding for things like education and the U.S. Farm Bill on the chopping block, defending payments to Brazilian farmers may seem curious.

In order to understand this peculiar political move, one has to look all the way back to 2002, when Brazil filed a case in the WTO challenging U.S. cotton subsidies. In 2004, the Dispute Settlement Body of the WTO [found in favor of Brazil](#), ruling that government subsidies afforded U.S. cotton producers an unfair advantage and suppressed the world market price, which damaged Brazil's interests. After multiple appeals the WTO upheld the original ruling, and by 2009 the U.S. still had not reformed its cotton programs. Brazil then asked the WTO for permission to retaliate against the U.S. by imposing trade sanctions. The WTO decided that Brazil was entitled to impose 100-percent tariffs on over 100 different goods of U.S. origin. Even more importantly, however, Brazil was entitled to suspend intellectual property rights for U.S. companies, including patent protections on genetically engineered seeds.

In WTO language, Brazil was allowed to suspend its obligations to U.S. companies under the Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. This constituted a

major threat to the profits of U.S. agribusiness giants Monsanto and Pioneer, since Brazil is the second largest grower of biotech crops in the world. Fifty percent of Brazils corn harvest is engineered to produce the pesticide Bt, and Monsantos YieldGard VT Pro is a popular product among Brazilian corn farmers. By targeting the profits of major U.S. corporations, the Brazilian government put the U.S. in a tough spot: either let the subsidies stand and allow Brazilian farmers to plant Monsanto and Pioneer seeds without paying royalties, or substantially reform the cotton program. In essence, Brazil was pitting the interests of Big Agribusiness against those of Big Cotton, and the U.S. government was caught in the middle.

The two governments, however, managed to come up with a creative solution. In a 2009 WTO framework agreement, the U.S. created the Commodity Conservation Corporation (CCC), and Brazil created the Brazilian Cotton Institute (BCI). Rather than eliminating or substantially reforming cotton subsidies, the CCC pays the BCI \$147 million dollars a year in technical assistance, which happens to be the same amount the WTO authorized for trade retaliation specifically for cotton payments. In essence, then, the U.S. government pays a subsidy to Brazilian cotton farmers every year to protect the U.S. cotton program and the profits of companies like Monsanto and Pioneer.

In 2005, I attended the committee meeting of Brazils foreign trade ministry where Pedro Camargo Neto a Brazilian trade lawyer and then-president of the Brazilian pork producers association proposed suspension of the TRIPS agreement as retaliation for U.S. non-compliance with the WTO ruling on cotton. It was a brilliant political tactic, and dramatically shows the power of private firms in both countries to influence trade policy in the WTO. When I interviewed him as part of my dissertation, Camargo said the Brazilian cotton case would never have been launched without political pressure and funding from Brazils powerful cotton industry. Despite facing substantial resistance from the Brazilian government in launching the case, he said, the producers were really backing it.

Today in the U.S., taxpayers are bearing the cost of the cotton subsidies and the cost of failure to reform them. Although [major news outlets](#) called the payments yet another insane perversion of already insane U.S. agricultural policy, it clearly wasnt just about preserving subsidies. In 2006, [Steve Suppan](#) anticipated the use and drawbacks of TRIPS suspension as a one of few tools of cross-retaliation available to poorer countries. However, because of the size of the market for genetically modified seeds there, TRIPS suspension was Brazils trump card. Apparently when the stakes are high enough for American business interests, the government will make sure that American taxpayers subsidize not just agriculture, but intellectual property, too.

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Emelie Peine is an assistant professor of international political economy at the University of Puget Sound.

