

Starbucks Holds the Hormones

After tens of thousands of calls and emails from healthy food advocates all over the country, Starbucks has committed to making 100% of the chain's milk supply free of artificial growth hormones by December 31, 2007.

The Starbucks announcement follows nearly two years of pressure from Food & Water Watch, which launched the Hold the Hormones Campaign in 2006, asking consumers to demand the company buy better milk.

"Our work has paid off," exclaimed Food & Water Watch Executive Director Wenonah Hauter upon receiving official word from Starbucks. "American consumers have made their voices heard: We want safer and healthier milk. We congratulate Starbucks for rising to the occasion."

Recombinant bovine growth hormone, or rBGH, is an artificial hormone that is often injected into dairy cows to increase their milk production. With a potential link between the hormone and higher risk of breast, prostate, and colon cancer in humans, rBGH is banned in all 27 countries of the European Union, Canada, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.



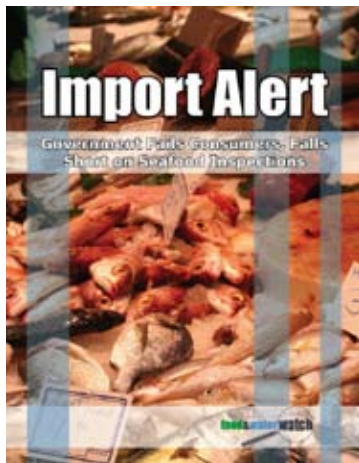
Food & Water Watch activists celebrate the victory in Seattle.

We look forward to other companies following Starbucks' lead and making the switch to healthier milk.

For more information on rBGH and the Hold the Hormones Campaign, visit www.HoldtheHormones.org. You can thank Starbucks directly at (800) 235-2883.

Tainted Imports Reveal Broken Food Safety System

The recent news about food has given consumers plenty to worry about, with *E. coli* contaminated spinach, *Salmonella* in peanut butter, and meat recalls making headlines. But lately the list of things to worry about got longer as a dirty little secret about our food supply got out – lots of our food is imported, and when it comes to figuring out whether imported food is safe, consumers are basically on their own.



Food & Water Watch analyzed seafood import inspection data in the recent report *Import Alert*.

The United States imported more than \$64 billion worth of agricultural goods in 2006, a figure that doubled over the past decade. More than 80

percent of seafood, more than a third of fruit and fruit juices, and about 12 percent of red meat are imported.

The main government agencies responsible for ensuring the safety of imported food are the Food and Drug Administration and U.S. Department of Agriculture. These agencies operate under different laws and budgets, so they have very different processes for regulating imported food.

Before a country can export meat, poultry, or processed eggs to the United States, USDA evaluates the country's food safety system to determine whether it is "equivalent" to ours. The agency also visits exporting plants to

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Farm Bill Update

At the end of July, the House of Representatives passed its version of the Farm Bill. While the House failed to fix misguided policies on corn, soybeans, rice, and other commodity crops, there was some good news.

Country of Origin Labeling

After lots of behind-the-scenes drama to head off threats to weaken existing plans for labeling, the bill now clarifies how country-of-origin labeling will be instituted for meat and produce. And it keeps the process on track so labeling will be required in September 2008. In light of the furious opposition by the meat, produce, and grocery industries, this is a major victory for consumers who took action to say they deserve to know where their food comes from.

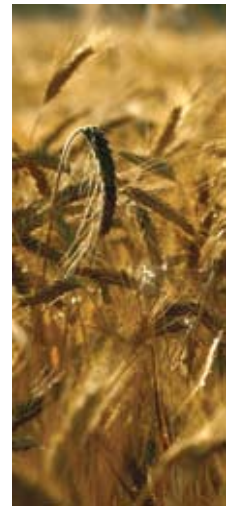
Organic Production

The House version of the bill includes funding to help farmers transition to organic production and more support for research on organic production methods.

Factory Farms

An attempt to lift the cap on payments to large farms from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program was defeated on the floor of the House. EQIP is a conservation program that gives grants to farms to improve their environmental practices. Removing the cap on farm size would allow large factory farms to receive grants to manage the vast amounts of manure their operations generate. The defeat of this amendment was good news for those trying to make factory farms pay to clean up the pollution they create.

Unfortunately, the House version of the Farm Bill leaves in place a broken system for commodity crops like corn, soybeans, cotton, and rice. The House missed an opportunity to reinstate supply management programs that



would stop the overproduction of these crops that leads to low prices for farmers and cheap feed for factory farms. Instead, they tinkered around the edges of bad policies that have been in place since 1996.

But the Farm Bill process is far from over. The Senate has to do its version of the bill this fall and then the two versions have to be merged together in a conference committee. Tell your Senators that you want a Farm Bill that:

- gives consumers country-of-origin labeling
- restores conservation programs like the Conservation Security Program
- supports organic production methods
- establishes supply management for commodity crops instead of encouraging overproduction.

You can contact them through www.senate.gov or (202) 224-3121. For more information on the Farm Bill, check out www.foodandwaterwatch.org/food/us-farbill

Check Out Food & Water Watch's Smart Seafood Guide!

We recommend that consumers make good seafood choices based on the following criteria:

- **Buy Local** – if you don't live near water, stick to U.S. fish.
- **Avoid imports** – less than 1 percent of imported seafood is tested for contaminants. Imported shrimp is especially contaminated.
- **Eat fresh seafood** – avoid processed seafood, which travels farther, uses more fuel, and lacks country-of-

origin labeling.

- **Avoid farm-raised marine finfish**, especially salmon. They can threaten wild fish populations and are fed chemicals that can harm consumers.
- **Eat a variety of fish** to reduce your exposure to possible seafood contaminants and to relieve pressure on wild populations.

See www.foodandwaterwatch.org/fish/know-fish for a list of which fish to buy.

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determine if they are complying with U.S. food safety standards. In addition to these annual inspection visits, USDA inspects about 10 percent of imported product as it enters the country.

FDA is responsible for the vast majority of food imports, with more than 160,000 food establishments around the world under their jurisdiction. Yet FDA does not have formal agreements with foreign governments and rarely visits foreign food plants. FDA estimates that it will be responsible for 11.7 million shipments of imported food this year and it will only be able to conduct inspection of about one percent of them.

Seafood is a good example of how little is being done to protect consumers from unsafe imports. Food & Water Watch recently analyzed the data from FDA's seafood import inspection program and found that from 2003 through 2006, less than two percent of seafood shipments were looked at by FDA inspectors and even less – 0.59 percent – was tested for bacteria or unapproved chemicals.

So what can be done about unsafe food imports?

The federal government needs to dramatically increase the amount of inspection of imported foods as they enter the United States and go to other countries to inspect exporting food plants. And Congress needs to give the FDA and USDA the money to do it.

Finally, consumers need to have information so they can act to protect themselves. Right now they don't because the meat, food processing, and grocery industries have spent millions to prevent a law requiring food to be labeled with its country of origin from going into effect. Country-of-origin labeling is required for seafood and should go into effect for meat and produce in September 2008. In the meantime, tell your elected officials and your grocery store that you want to know where your food comes from!



The Eat Well Guided Tour of America

This summer, Sustainable Table took the scenic (and delicious) route to the Farm Aid concert in New York City. Traveling cross country by bus, they visited some of the nation's most sustainable farms and restaurants. To read about their travels and to find sustainable food near you, check out www.sustainabletable.org/roadtrip.

Crops in Crisis: Oregon Strawberries

Larry Thompson's family has grown strawberries in Boring, Oregon since 1947, when "five acres was all you needed to make a living." Today, imports from Mexico and Chile make turning a profit more difficult.

Last year, \$220 million worth of strawberries were imported into the United States, and only \$1.5 million were grown domestically. The low wages paid to farm workers abroad make imported berries cheaper.

Thompson used to sell his berries to processors, but now with prices so low, he only sells directly to the public.

To grow strawberries today, "you have to love it," says Thompson, who now works seven days or 96 hours a week to keep up. Many farmers have given up the crop all together. If this trend continues, Oregonians could lose all access to local berries.




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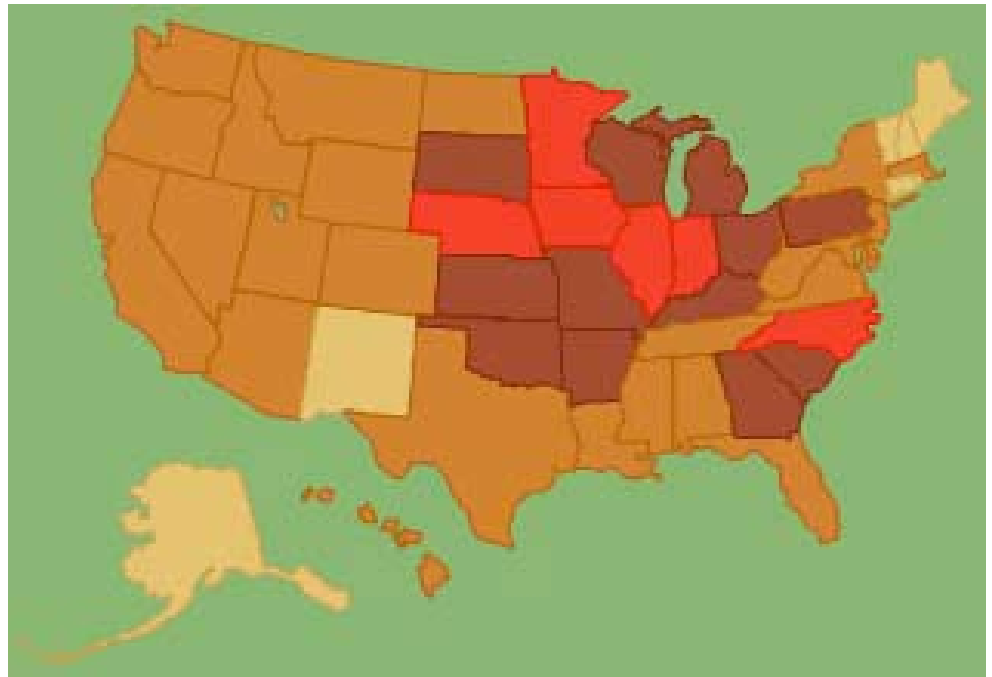
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Food & Water Watch is a nonprofit consumer rights group that challenges the corporate control and abuse of our food and water resources.

A Factory Farm Near You?

Americans from coast to coast are living with the human health and environmental costs of factory farms that cram together hundreds of thousands of animals in filthy conditions. These facilities produce huge quantities of manure that taint local air and water. And consumers thousands of miles away end up eating meat, poultry, and dairy products loaded with antibiotic-resistant bacteria and artificial hormones.

Food & Water Watch has developed an online map of factory farms throughout the United States. Check out the map to find out if there are factory farms in your state or county.



Visit www.factoryfarmmap.org for more information.



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