

# A World of News



## Quote of Note

“On average, roughly 85-90 percent of pesticides used for agriculture never reach target organisms, but instead spread through the environment.”

*State of the World 2001*, edited by Linda Starke, The Worldwatch Institute, 2001 (page 39)

### Organic news

- An Italian study conducted by the Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione has found organic pears, peaches and oranges have higher antioxidant levels than their conventional counterparts.
- Certain organic practices can help increase the number of beneficial microorganisms in soil, making it “weed suppressive,” according to microbiologist Robert Kremer of the Agricultural Research Service’s Cropping Systems and Water Quality Research Unit, Columbia, MO.
- Milk sprayed on grapevines once a fortnight helps control powdery mildew as effectively as sulfur and copper fungicides and shows potential for organic growers, according to Peter Crisp at the University of Adelaide, Australia.
- The Ritz has become the first hotel in London, England, to offer certified organic meals.
- A U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service report (Bulletin AIB777, September 2002) summarizes economic research on recent growth patterns in the U.S. organic sector. For a copy, call 1-800-999-6779.
- Worldwatch Institute has recommended the use of urban organic agriculture to help “green” cities and increase income and security for their inhabitants. In related news, the Chicago Community Trust and W.K. Kellogg Foundation are providing support for a farmers’ market, organic gardening project, and community grocery cooperative in a Chicago neighborhood.
- Real Mealz, a chain of organic fast food restaurants, is being launched in the Netherlands and Germany, with the first outlet opening in Germany.
- ARAMARK has agreed to purchase about 10 percent of its produce from Pennsylvania Local Organic Works, a seven-member organic cooperative, for its food service operations at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania.
- All 12 elementary schools in the Palo Alto Unified School District, Palo Alto, CA, now offer organic lunches.
- Organic Consumers Association is launching a global “Clothes for a Change” campaign asking major clothing retailers and manufacturers to: stop using genetically engineered cotton; start blending in organic or “transition to organic” cotton in their clothing; and guarantee that they meet independently verified Fair Labor standards.

### Environmental news

- A review article, “How Sustainable Agriculture Can Address the

Environmental and Human Health Harms of Industrial Agriculture,” published in the May 2002 journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*, is online at [www.jhsph.edu/environment](http://www.jhsph.edu/environment).

- A scientific review has found evidence of harm to wildlife populations and laboratory animals exposed to endocrine-disrupting chemicals. The report, “Global Assessment of the State-of-the-Science of Endocrine Disruptors,” is available at [www.who.int/pcs/pcs\\_new.html](http://www.who.int/pcs/pcs_new.html).
- A new study published in the August 2002 *Annals of Epidemiology* (Vol. 12, No. 6) shows farmers exposed to organophosphate pesticides have nearly a six-fold increased risk of suffering from depressive symptoms.
- *Hidden Costs: Farm Workers Sacrifice Their Health to Put Food on Our Tables*, a report released in August 2002 by Colorado Legal Services, Migrant Farm Worker Division, shows that Colorado farm workers frequently experience pesticide poisoning.

### International news

- **Argentina** — Organic farmers have increased from 220 in 1995 to over 1,500 in 2001, with area reaching 3 million hectares in 2001. Argentina exports around 90 percent of its organic produce, mainly to the European Union and the United States.
- **Canada** — Organic farmers in Ontario have reported that pollen from neighboring genetically engineered corn has contaminated their crops.
- **European Union** — An Eurobarometer opinion poll of 16,041 people found that 72 percent want farm policy to favor methods of organic production.
- **India** — The Indian Ministry of Agriculture has recommended that state governments earmark 50 percent of the farmland under government control for organic farming. Already, the Madhya Pradesh government has set aside half of its farmland for organic farming and identified a village in each block as an organic farming village.
- **Mexico** — Up to 75 percent of organic certification costs for Mexican producers will be refunded under government efforts to stimulate trade in organic products. In the past five years, organic farming has grown from 25,000 hectares to over 100,000 hectares, with exports to Europe, Japan, and the United States reaching \$100 million a year. ❖