

I S S U E

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This newsletter is published by the Organic Trade Association, the North American trade association committed to the promotion of organic products in the marketplace, and the protection of the integrity of organic standards. Its membership includes more than 1,200 producers, processors, distributors and retailers of organic foods, fibers, farm and garden supplies, and health and beauty products. OTA is your leading resource for information about this industry.

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## Beyond food: fashion show to highlight organic fiber

When you think of organic products, do you think only of food? If so, think again. As attendees to the Organic Trade Association's (OTA's) 2003 All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show slated for May 14-17 will learn, organically grown fiber is up and coming, and so are the fashions made from it.

Organic fiber will be featured at the Wear Organic! runway fashion show slated for 3 p.m. Friday, May 16, at the Austin Convention Center, Austin, TX, and in an Organic Fiber Pavilion at the accompanying trade show Friday and Saturday afternoons, May 16 and 17.

The list of participating companies in the Wear Organic! fashion show demonstrates the growing availability of organic fiber offerings. Participants will include Birdland Ranch Ecofashions, Cottonfield, Ecobaby Organics, Ecoganik, Nature USA, Nike, Organic Cotton Alternatives, Organic Essentials, Sense-Organics, Speesees, Sunshine Au Natural, and Under the Canopy.

"The time is right and the marketplace is receptive to

fashions incorporating organic fiber," according to Marci Zaroff of Under the Canopy who is co-directing the fashion show and taking part in the event.

"The goal is to educate both organic product shoppers as well as mainstream consumers and apparel companies about the importance of organic fiber. This show will have a strong educational component, and will

convey that consumers do not have to compromise their values or style. They can wear modern

fashions made with organic fiber, look great, and be socially and environmentally responsible at the same time," Zaroff said.

The fashion show will focus on four categories: children's wear; bed, bath and spa wear; rest, relaxation and recreation fashions (including yoga and athletic wear); and work, every day/career and casual wear.

"We are finding that mainstream consumers are now highly receptive to buying organic food, and we would like to see that interest extend to organic fiber," Zaroff

added, noting that this summer, her company will launch its embroidered organic cotton denim collection, as well as organic cotton blended with angora, silk, organic linen, and tencel.

Nike, for one, will be unveiling its Holiday 2003 Nike Organics collection at Wear Organic! Slated to appear in stores Nov. 1, this collection will feature a three-piece women's "comfort wear" line made of brushed certified organic cotton and Spandex. It includes a slim-fit sleek jacket, pullover with hood, and low-slung pants, and follows on the heels of the company's Spring '03 Nike Organics collection of shorts, capri pants, tank top and hoody made of certified organic cotton. Items from the Spring '03 line, currently available online and at Niketowns in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Newport Beach, Honolulu and Las Vegas, will also be featured.

"It is an exciting line, and an evolution of our 2002 comfort wear collection transitioned to organic cotton," said Nike spokeswoman Jill Zanger. She noted that the company aims to



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incorporate organic cotton into other existing lines. "These lines already have a connection to our consumer," she added.

Meanwhile, Ecoganik will launch its Ecoganik line of work and casual wear for adults at Wear Organic!

"We are committed to succeeding with organic fibers and natural materials. We have the expertise, existing infrastructure, and the desire to make this work," said Karen Lung, Ecoganik vice president and marketing director. Ecoganik formed in October 2002 because of demand from customers seeking organic clothing. Ecoganik's parent company is California Apparel, and its sister company markets the Cynthia Max clothing brand.

Likewise, Nature USA, a new division of Cotton Knit Trading Inc., will unveil its Nature USA basic collection at Wear Organic! This line features men's and women's underwear and loungewear made of certified organic combed cotton.

Kate Scott, designer and owner of Birdland Ranch Ecofashions, is truly excited about the fashion show and opportunity to be part of the Organic Fiber Pavilion at All Things Organic™. Her offerings will feature handmade tailored certified organic cotton fashions for women and children.

"There is this huge, wonderful world of organic fiber lifestyle options that people need to know about. It is a way to expand people's horizons and show that their dollars can count to make a difference," said Scott, whose designs help support sustainable environmental practices and protect the planet's fragile ecosystems by incorporating certified, color-grown organic cotton. Her company's finished products are handmade by small, worker-owned sewing co-ops in southeastern Arizona and Mexico using fair trade practices.

### Organic cotton use

2002 was a banner year for U.S. and Canadian companies to expand their use of organic cotton, add organic cotton to their product lines, or make commitments to convert to organic cotton in the near future. For example:

- > Cutter and Buck initiated a program to incorporate 10 - 15 percent organic cotton into two of its styles of men's shirts and has a 50 percent organic/conventional blend in a third style.
- > Early Winters converted its signature "Smith Rock" line to 100 percent organic cotton. In 2000, Norm Thompson Outfitters Inc., Early Winters' parent company, had announced that all divisions under its umbrella would convert their cotton apparel products to organic cotton by Spring 2006.

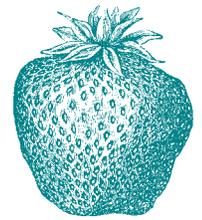
- > GAIAM launched its "Home" line of 100 percent organic sheets, pajamas and blankets, complementing its organic cotton yoga wear line in place since 2000.
- > After successfully introducing organic cotton long johns in Fall 2002, Hanna Andersson is looking at ways to expand this offering over the next several years.
- > Maggie's Organics/Clean Clothes, Inc., began providing conventional grocery stores with its line of accessories made with organic fibers. It also formed a partnership with a screenprinter using only PVC-free, water-based inks, and began a container program for tee shirts, all made with domestic organically grown cotton.
- > Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) in Canada converted its children's wear line to organic cotton, making its entire MEC-labeled clothing line 100 percent organic cotton.
- > Nike released its 100 percent organic cotton women's "Nike Organics" line in Fall 2002, complementing its program to blend 5 percent organic cotton with conventional cotton.
- > The Timberland Company initiated a plan to integrate organic cotton into its apparel line. From Spring 2003 to Spring 2006, the company plans to offer both 100 percent and blended products to consumers. It currently uses 100 percent organic cotton for its promotional tee shirts.



In addition to Wear Organic! and an Organic Fiber Pavilion, All Things Organic™ will include three organic fiber presentations during its conference sessions. Topics will cover Producing and Processing Organic Fiber Products, From Field to Fashion: How to Create a Finished Organic Fiber Product, and What to Consider in Marketing Organic Fiber Products.

For further information about All Things Organic, go to [www.atoexpo.com](http://www.atoexpo.com). To find sources of organic fiber products, visit The Organic Pages Online on [www.ota.com](http://www.ota.com), or the Home & Garden section of [www.theorganicreport.org](http://www.theorganicreport.org). ❖

# A World of News



## Organic news

- A study comparing the antioxidant levels in corn, strawberries and marionberries grown organically, sustainably (using fertilizer but no herbicides or pesticides) and conventionally showed significantly higher levels of antioxidants in the organic and sustainably grown items than in their conventionally grown counterparts. Findings from the study by food scientist Alyson Mitchell were published in the Feb. 26 print edition of the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.
- A third study conducted at the University of Washington's School of Public Health and Community Medicine confirms that consuming organic products lowers children's exposure to potentially damaging pesticides. Study findings appear in the March 2003 issue of the peer-reviewed journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.
- It is now illegal to sell non-organic food in the Iowa town of Vedic City. A town of about 125 people, Vedic City was created in 2001 in Jefferson County. The resolution adopted by the city council applies to businesses in the city, including two restaurants.
- Colorado College has an on-campus eatery featuring fresh and organic ingredients. The restaurant was launched by Wild Sage Foods, Inc., partnering with Sodexho.
- A pilot program for 285 children attending summer programs during 2002 at four elementary schools and two community centers in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, showed that children received a nutritious organic salad and fruit for lunch for less than a Canadian dollar a day (75 to 93 cents Canadian). OTA member Pro Organics, in collaboration with organic growers, suppliers and a retailer, participated in the seven-week program.

## Consumer trends

- Top food trends cited by consumers in *Bon Appetit* magazine's Sixth Annual "How America Eats" survey are comfort food (74 percent), health food (61 percent), and organic food (59 percent). In addition, those between ages 18 and 34 believe fast food is on the wane (79 percent), and that organic food (68 percent) is on the rise.
- A "Taste Trends" survey sent to chefs who participate in Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation showed fresh, local and organic foods are "hip and trendy" for cooking in 2003.

## International news

- Due to strong sales of organic products, Belgium supermarket chain Delhaize announced it would expand its sales of organic

food in its existing supermarkets rather than opening a chain of all-organic shops, according to just-food.com.

- Four European research institutes have joined forces to found the International Research Association for Organic Food Quality and Health. Founding members were the University of Kassel in Germany, Louis Bolk Institut in the Netherlands, the Research Institute of Organic Agriculture in Switzerland, and Biodynamic Research Association in Denmark. See: [www.organicfqhresearch.org](http://www.organicfqhresearch.org).
- In France, approximately 40 member companies of the Cosmebio Association have signed a manufacturers' charter for "organic and ecological cosmetics." The ecological and organic label guarantees that finished body care products contain at least 95 percent natural ingredients or ingredients of natural origin and 95 percent organic plant ingredients of the total plant ingredients (source: [www.organicTS.com](http://www.organicTS.com)).

## Environmental News

- Releasing draft new guidelines for evaluating the dangers posted by pesticides and other cancer-causing chemicals, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency now recognizes children are much more likely than adults to get cancer from exposure to certain chemicals, a fact regulators must take into consideration when evaluating safe levels of exposure for new chemicals and reevaluating ones in use. See [www.epa.gov/ncea/raf/cancer2003.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ncea/raf/cancer2003.htm).
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released the second *National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals*, summarizing exposure information, as measured in blood and urine samples, for 116 environmental chemicals that find their way into the human population through pollution or consumer products. This report is online at [www.cdc.gov/exposurereport](http://www.cdc.gov/exposurereport).
- A study entitled *Body Burden: The Pollution in People*, led by Mount Sinai School of Medicine, tested the blood and urine from nine individuals for 210 chemicals. Findings showed an

## Quote of Note

"Organic farming is not, as some wrongly perceive it, a 'return to the past' or 'farming by neglect.'

Growers employ sophisticated methods and up-to-date research to manage crops and livestock organically. Both small and large farms can use organic practices."

Miles Merwin,  
president of the  
Association for  
Temperate  
Agroforestry Inc.,  
in *The Temperate  
Agroforester*,  
January 2003.



## Fashion show to highlight organic fiber.

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average of 92 industrial compounds, pollutants and other chemicals, with 76 linked to cancer in humans or animals, 94 known as toxic to the brain and nervous system, and 79 linked to birth defects or abnormal development. The results are posted on the Environmental Working Group's web site ([www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org)).

### Organic resources

- California Certified Organic Farmers has developed a 40-minute video as an educational tool on organic food production, including its history, federal organic regulations, labeling guidelines, weed and pest management practices, the treatment of livestock, nutrition and health aspects, and the differences to non-organic agriculture and food. Contact 831-423-2263, Ext. 22, or go to [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org).
- Organic farming is practiced in approximately 100 countries, with the area under organic management approaching 23 million hectares, according to *The World of Organic Agriculture 2003—Statistics and Future Prospects*, now posted on the web (at [www.soel.de/inhalte/publikationen/s/s\\_74.pdf](http://www.soel.de/inhalte/publikationen/s/s_74.pdf)).



- The Organic Agriculture Information web site, developed by the Organic Agricultural Consortium, has been launched at [www.organicaginfo.org](http://www.organicaginfo.org). The site includes information on production, economic data, research results, farmer anecdotes, certification information, transition strategies and other subjects related to organic agriculture.
- The Danish Research Centre for Organic Farming has established Organic Eprints (<http://orgprints.org>), an open access archive of electronic versions of papers related to organic research.
- The Organic Materials Review Institute ([www.omri.org](http://www.omri.org)) has posted a list of newly compliant pesticide products from its OMRI Listed™ suppliers. The list shows pesticides that have been reinstated or recently added to the OMRI Brand Name Product List.
- The Dutch organization Sustainable Nutrient Management in Agriculture web site ([www.SNMA.nl](http://www.SNMA.nl)) provides detailed information to help farmers and agronomists understand organic and ecological farming and apply its principles in farming operations. ❖