



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 nearly 1,600 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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Organic food is found increasingly on the menu

Organic food is popping up in many foodservice venues throughout the nation. The reason? Foodservice concessionaires are making a concerted effort to offer sustainable and organic options as part of their corporate philosophy.

For instance, Delaware North Companies has undertaken “Project 21,” an initiative promoting sustainability and social and environmental responsibility. As part of this program, it has challenged more than 100 of its chefs to incorporate organic foods, fresh ingredients and sustainable options on their menus at such venues as Yosemite National Park, Sequoia National Park, Niagara Falls State Park, and the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

In the parks

Michael Gover, executive chef for Delaware North at The Yosemite Lodge at the Falls in California, admits he would not have begun offering organic and sustainable products on his own. However, he has been more than willing to take on the corporate challenge to seek organic products that are primarily locally produced.

Because organic products often are more expensive, Gover has chosen to do a lot more cooking from scratch to alleviate the costs.

Buying organic produce locally also affects menu planning.

“We change our full menu every six months. But, even within harvest



Diners at Yosemite Lodge.

Photo courtesy Delaware North Companies

in foodservice settings. The idea: to use foods grown and harvested in ways that are the most healthful and least harmful to the environment. Among ARAMARK’s national parks accounts are Lake Powell, Shenandoah National Park, and Mesa Verde.

Menus at ARAMARK dining facilities in parks provide guests with a selection of organic dishes using produce and foods grown and raised without pesticides or chemical

fertilizers, company officials said.

Likewise, Bon Appétit Management Company offers organic, local, sustainable produce in all of its 190 cafés in 26 states. Company clients include corporations such as Cisco Systems, colleges and universities such as American University and Oberlin College, specialty venues such as the Getty Center in Los Angeles, and one ballpark.

University settings

According to a 2004 DiningStyles consumer study done for ARAMARK, 12 percent of college students reported that organic ingredients were important to them. ARAMARK provides organic offerings at such universities as Yale University, University of Pennsylvania, George Washington

periods, we have items that come and go, so we have to do an update every six to eight weeks,” Gover said. “It used to be that you wrote the menus and bought the product to go with them. Now, harvests drive our menus.”

National park and resort concessionaire Xanterra Parks & Resorts Inc. began using sustainable seafood in 2001. Since then, it has expanded its sustainable cuisine menu offerings to include some organic products, ranging from soymilk to coffee to produce, and wine made from organically grown grapes.

Others on board

ARAMARK Corporation has a “PlanetEVERgreen program” which incorporates “sustainable cuisine”

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Organic

Organic on the Menu — *Continued from Page 1*

University, University of Hartford, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A July 5, 2005, article on *Brandweek.com* entitled “A Natural Way to Lure Students” reported that offering organic and natural food brands in their dining halls is a new tool for college administrators to attract students to their university.

Bonnie Gordon, spokesperson for Sodexo USA, said it has received the most requests for organic offerings from its college and university accounts. “We have seen a rise in greener initiatives, but organic is a big part of it,” Gordon said.

Several years ago, Sodexo entered into a licensing relationship with Herb 'n Farm, a new natural and organic food brand from Wild Sage Foods, Inc., of California. The first Herb 'n Farm opened at Colorado College in January 2003. Since it opened, sales have grown approximately 150 percent, according to Lauren Bell, who owns the Herb'n Farm brand and is founder of Wild Sage Foods. The casual sit-down eatery, which follows the college schedule, closes for the summer and during school breaks. “Despite this schedule, it has broken even, and all signs indicate it will be profitable this year,” Bell reported.

Ballpark fare

Meanwhile, even those heading for the ballpark can find organic fare. Leading the trend is Delaware North Companies Sportservice. Working with Dakota Beef, the company began selling organic Polish sausages and hamburgers at a portable cart at the all-star game at Comerica Park in Detroit in July, and continued to provide

Bringing topsoil to life

To celebrate Organic Harvest Month™, OTA has commissioned artist Helen Stevens to illustrate an additional coloring page for OTA's consumer web site, The O'Mama Report (www.theorganicreport.org). This coloring page may be printed out, but will also be interactive through the use of Flash animation.



The characters in the page will interact with an original musical composition, “Organic ‘Jam,’” by composer Eveline MacDougall. Characters in this song—which is sung in a round—include ladybugs, fiddleheads and worms that “come to life” with the talents of Flash animation artist Paul Hake. Kids can make the characters sing and can sing along. The score will be posted separately as well. Look for this feature in September at www.theorganicreport.com/pages/65_o_kid.cfm (click on “Organic ‘Jam’”).

the organic offerings at games throughout this year's season.

The Tiger Club at Detroit, meanwhile, has offered organic flank steak from Dakota Beef. With the success at Detroit, Delaware North planned to add organic offerings at other baseball and national parks that it caters.

Although not offering organic meat options, Bon Appétit Management Company offers organic fruit and vegetables at SBC Park, home of the San Francisco Giants.

Hospitals

Meanwhile, hospitals around the nation are starting to offer organic options, according to the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy's report, *Healthy Food, Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Communities: Stories of Health Care Leaders Bringing Fresher, Healthier Food Choices to their Patients, Staff and Communities*.

One example is the Cancer Treatment Centers of America, which operates two in-patient facilities: one in Tulsa, OK, and the other in Zion, IL. Meanwhile, Kaiser Permanente, a large nonprofit health plan headquartered in Oakland, CA, has started 14 farmers markets and farm stands at its medical facilities in California, Oregon and Hawaii, and aims to have 29 markets by the end of 2005. Some of the markets feature local organic producers certified by California Certified Organic Farmers.

Consumer demand

That organic fare is being offered in such venues should not be surprising as it reflects a nationwide trend for more organic offerings in foodservice.

The National Restaurant Association (NRA) has reported that more and more organic and natural products are finding their way onto restaurant menus. NRA's *2005 Restaurant Industry Forecast* shows that 46 percent of family-dining restaurant operators, 39 percent of casual dining operators, and 48 percent of fine dining operators report more orders for organic items now than they had two years ago. As a result, restaurants are responding to consumer demand by offering them more organic food choices.

Even so, there is more room for growth, according to speakers at the Institute of Food Technologists' annual meeting in July.

Doris Timmen, Levy Restaurants director of operations at McCormick Place in Chicago, said OTA, for its All Things Organic™ Conference and Trade Show, was the first client to request organic products at McCormick Place.

In another breakthrough, OTA is working with Haute on the Hill to provide an organic luncheon at the Rayburn House Office Building during OTA's annual Congressional Education Day event this September. Amy Willmarth, assistant director of sales for Haute on the Hill, confirmed that it is the caterer's first organic event at the U.S. House of Representatives.

“We have done a lot of vegetarian, vegan and kosher meals, but this is the first organic event that we're doing. Once we do one, I see a door opening,” she added. ❖

A World of News



Organic News

- Woodbury County in Iowa is offering tax incentives to farmers switching from conventional to organic production. Under its “Organics Conversion Policy,” the county will grant property tax rebates of up to \$50,000 each year for five years for farms that convert from farming techniques using pesticides to organic farming practices that comply with USDA’s National Organic Program.
- The W.K. Kellogg Foundation has given \$1.5 million to establish an endowed chair to support the new Agricultural Sustainability Institute at the University of California at Davis. Organic practices are among those to be studied at the institute.
- Publix Super Markets has announced plans to open two stores during 2006 in South Florida that will be dedicated to organic and natural foods.
- Funding from the Bullitt Foundation is helping to encourage and educate producers to grow organic potatoes in Idaho. Rural Roots, Potato Growers of Idaho, and the Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides are involved in the project.
- An organic ranching operation, Prather Ranch in Fall River Mills, CA, received one of the seven regional 2005 National Environmental Stewardship Awards given out at the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association’s summer conference.
- A review article published in the July issue of *Bioscience* (Vol. 55:7) concludes that soybeans and corn raised organically produce yields comparable to those grown conventionally while using 30 percent less energy, less water, and no pesticides. In the article, lead author David Pimentel of Cornell University highlights the results of the Rodale Institute’s 22-year Farming Systems Trial, which shows that soil on organic farms over time steadily improves in organic matter, moisture, microbial activity, and other soil quality indicators.
- Research using a Controlled Atmosphere/Temperature Treatment System effectively kills pests infesting apples, peaches, pears, cherries and nectarines without the use of pesticides, according to findings published in the July 2005 issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine. USDA entomologist Lisa Neven is testing this technology for possible use by organic food growers and shippers.

Environmental news

- Research at Simon Fraser University in Canada has shown that adult bumble bees exposed to the pesticide spinosad during larval development show signs of impaired foraging ability. Results, published in the May issue of *Pest Management Science*,

indicated that pesticide levels previously thought to be safe for pollinators may prove harmful to wild bees.

- BirdLife International has warned that more than a fifth of Earth’s bird species face extinction due to habitat destruction and the introduction of alien predators.
- Even low levels of pesticides cause stress for tadpoles, and can act in combination with other stressors to result in impaired growth and development, lower fecundity, and decreased survival rates, according to study results published in *Environmental Science & Technology* by researchers from Sweden’s Uppsala University and the University of Helsinki in Finland.
- Environmental toxins cost the state of Washington billions of dollars in health care costs annually, according to findings from a study led by Kate Davies at Antioch University Seattle’s Center for Creative Change. Davies estimated that environmental contaminants cause \$1.5 billion to \$2.2 billion in direct and indirect costs for childhood conditions and \$2.8 billion to \$3.5 billion in costs for adult conditions.
- A report, *Body Burden, The Pollution in Newborns*, released by the Environmental Working Group shows unborn babies in the United States are exposed to a variety of chemicals, including mercury, gasoline byproducts and pesticides. Umbilical-cord blood samples for ten babies taken by the American Red Cross revealed an average of 287 contaminants in the blood. Of the 287 contaminants, 180 have been shown to cause cancer in humans or animals, 217 are toxic to the brain and nervous system, and 208 cause birth defects or abnormal development in animal tests.
- Researchers at the University of Caen in France have found that Roundup, a glyphosate-based herbicide, is toxic to human placental cells at concentrations much lower than those found

Quote of Note

“Are foods better if they are organic? Of course they are, but not primarily because of nutrition. Their true value comes from what they do for farm workers in lower pesticide exposure, for soils in enrichment and conservation, for water supplies in less fertilizer runoff, for animals in protection against microbial diseases and mad cow disease, for fish in protection against contamination with organic hydrocarbons, and for other such environmental factors.”

—Marion Nestle, Paulette Goddard Professor of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health, New York University, New York City.

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Photo courtesy Delaware North Companies

Ballpark club restaurants
are starting to offer organic beef.
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in agricultural use, and this effect increases with concentration and exposure time.

- A lawsuit filed in June in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California against the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its administrator charges that the agency has ignored the special risk to farm children from exposure to hazardous pesticides. Filing the lawsuit were a coalition of farm workers, and environmental and public health groups.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released its *Third National Report on Human Exposure to Environmental Chemicals* detailing the latest data on the “body burden” of chemicals faced by those living in the United States.
- A bill banning lawn care pesticides on the grounds of day care centers and elementary schools has been signed into law in Connecticut. Under the legislation, public and private preschools and elementary schools can use integrated pest management techniques until July 2008. After that time, all pesticides, including fungicides, insecticides and herbicides, will be banned.
- Study findings published in the July 27 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* showed pesticide use in or near U.S. schools had sickened an increasing number of children and school employees between 1998 and 2002. Of 406 cases with detailed source information, 69 percent were associated with

pesticides used at schools, and 31 percent were associated with pesticide drift from nearby farmland.

International news

- In the United Kingdom, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has approved a range of statements that companies can use to promote the benefits of organic food and farming. ASA’s Committee on Advertising Practice (CAP) has said these can be used in advertisements and promotional leaflets, and as part of on-pack sales promotions.
- Organic farmland in Europe is not keeping up with the overall growth in the European organic food industry, according to Organic Monitor. Although organic fruit and vegetable sales in Western Europe grew by 26 percent between 2001 and 2004, the growth in the region’s organic farmland was just 14 percent.
- A ban on vending machines in secondary schools in France is set to go into effect in September.
- In Russia, a chain of vegetable boutiques featuring fresh organic produce is opening in Moscow later this year.
- Swedish food exporter IKEA has announced it will begin offering organic foods. ❖

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<http://www.ota.com/news/whatsnews.html>