



The Garbanzo Gazette

December 1, 2005



Growers Market's Weekly Newsletter

GROWERS MEETING DATE CHANGED

The date for the next Growers Meeting (Board Meeting) has been changed to December 13th at 6:30 pm. The meeting on December 6th will no longer take place. Sorry for any confusion.- Growers Board

DRY GOODS NOTES

Reminder -- due to poor crops this year -- all things almond are going up in price.

We have some new items for your enjoyment: Higher Power trail mix -- live OG ingredients; spicy thai and cheddar beer Kettle chips; Green & Black's OG chocolate ginger bars; "Just For Kids" traditional medicinal teas; Hatch 5-pepper enchilada sauce; Calistoga mineral water is back!!

As always if there is an item you would like to see at Growers let me know, maybe we can get it.

Thanks, Sue

RECYCLE ALL THAT CHRISTMAS FOAM!

Residents - Saturday, January 7th, 2006, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, Businesses - call 682-4339 for an appointment . Located at the Glenwood Transfer Site, 3100 E 17th Avenue. All material must be cleaned and dry. Materials accepted at this one-day event:

- #4 Polyethelene: bendable block foam
- #5 Polypropelene: block foam that is not brittle, hard to break up.
- #6 Polystyrene: block foam that is brittle and snaps easily
- Foam food trays, any color, also accepted, must be cleaned and dry
- Foam packaging peanuts, any color. Bagged separately. Sponsored by Lane County Public Works, Waste Management Division, Recycled by PC Plastics of Portland, Oregon

APARTMENT FOR RENT

Apartment for rent in south hills co-housing community. Shared organic garden, hot tub, and laundry -- all else is completely separate. Ideal for couple with child or children. Call 431-0699. Available January 1st, 2006.

ORGANIC MILK PRODUCER ACCUSED OF MULTIPLE USDA VIOLATIONS

CORNUCOPIA, WI: The Cornucopia Institute has filed a formal legal complaint with the USDA requesting a full investigation into allegations of multiple violations of federal organic regulations at the nation's largest organic dairy. The Aurora Organic Dairy, located in Colorado and with a herd approaching 6000 cows, appears to have violated numerous organic regulations governing the rearing of milk cows entering its vast factory farm operation.

Prior to filing the legal complaint, staff from the Institute visited a nearby ranch raising -- on a contract basis -- thousands of replacement cows for the Aurora Dairy. After an extensive investigation, review of records and discussions with the ranch owner, it was discovered that the ranch was never certified as an organic livestock facility.

Organic certification is the backbone of the USDA's organic program and is designed to be a firewall blocking unsound practices that produce food unfit for the strict standards expected of the organic food label. Livestock certification requires an onsite inspection by an accredited certifying agent, the filing of an organic management plan, and careful record keeping on animals entering and leaving the livestock farm.

"This is extremely troubling," said Mark Kastel, Senior Farm Policy Analyst for The Cornucopia Institute. "The owner of the ranch told us that he has never filed an organic livestock management plan or been visited by an organic inspector. Instead, he has been following the directives given to him by Aurora management for the handling of their replacement animals."

If the heifer ranch providing thousands of new cows has never been certified, then consumers might rightly question whether or not the dairy products made from Aurora's milk meet federal organic food and production standards. "Consumers are paying premium prices for products carrying the organic label. They must be assured that the practices used in producing the food are 100% organic, and not some cheap shortcut taken by suspect producers seeking to cash in on organics in the marketplace," said Kastel.

The Aurora Organic Dairy **specializes in processing "private-label" milk for large grocery chains.** According to a recent *New York Times* story and other industry sources, Aurora packages milk for Safeway, Wild Oats, Target and Costco, among others. They also supply milk to the nation's largest organic brand-name label,

Horizon, owned by the corporate dairy colossus, Dean Foods.

The Aurora Dairy continually requires news cows for its industrial approach to organic dairying. Rather than pasture their animals (another controversy broiling before the National Organic Standards Board), their thousands of milk cows are penned into small drylots. Confinement plus the high protein ration the cows are fed allows Aurora to milk the animals three times a day – a cheaper way of getting more milk from each cow. Because Aurora pushes their dairy herd so hard, they burn out their cows, then sell them off for slaughter and procure replacements.

Kastel explains that this stands in sharp contrast to smaller, family-scale organic dairies that pasture their animals: “While they can’t milk their cows three times a day, the animals are more relaxed, healthier, and lead longer lives. From the exhaustive research that we’ve done in the past year, family-scale organic dairy farms have cull rates that are so low they never need to buy replacement animals. Aurora’s approach, on the other hand, is not sustainable. Without a steady stream of replacement animals, they could not survive.”

Aurora’s confinement strategy was similarly directed of the ranch owner raising their new cows. According to the ranch owner, the only time the replacement cows were placed on pasture was when Aurora’s management asked that they be pastured due to negative publicity in the media about their farm or when they were concerned about a potential inspection of the premises.

Federal law does give farmers the ability to remove cows from pasture for “temporary” reasons based on weather, environmental, or health considerations. However, in their complaint, the Institute countered that Aurora’s claim that pasture is impractical, or not cost-effective, in arid Colorado is no excuse under the law.

But even Colorado’s dry climate need not prevent organic dairying if the farm owner truly wants to comply with federal organic rules. Farmers Meg Catell and Arden Nelson milk 400 organic cows twice a day near Windsor. Staff from the Institute visited the operation and found that they had excellently managed, irrigated pasture enjoyed by their dairy herd.

Cornucopia called on the USDA to make a full investigation of the numerous improprieties alleged in its complaint to the agency. They asked that USDA investigators make onsite visits, question certification agents, and carefully review all livestock management records.

“If remedial actions are required, the USDA should demand that they occur,” Kastel stated. “Anything less would make a mockery of the federal organic regulations that are so diligently observed by the vast majority of participants in the nation’s organic agriculture and food sector.”

- Will Fantle , Mr. Fantle is the Research Director for The Cornucopia Institute

NOTE: Photo galleries of the Aurora dairy and the replacement heifer ranch can be found on the Cornucopia Web page at www.cornucopia.org (click on photo galleries) along with a copy of the detailed legal complaint.

*The Cornucopia Institute, a nonprofit farm policy research group, is dedicated to the fight for economic justice for the family-scale farming community. Their **Organic Integrity Project** acts as a corporate and governmental watchdog assuring that no compromises to the credibility of organic farming methods and the food it produces are made in the pursuit of profit. 2006*

SHAMANIC APPRENTICESHIP

Shamanism is a spiritual practice that can help us re-connect with nature, ourselves & our ancestors. Shamanic practitioners work with a variety of spirits to heal, understand & grow. Creating positive change through compassionate action is the life work of a shaman. A true shaman is one who gives service to their community, tirelessly, lovingly. This will be a ten month, once-a-month, series of linked workshops, lasting from 5pm to 9pm on the third Saturday of every month. Our first class meets January 21st. Additionally, there will be an optional vision quest offered during the third weekend of August for those who feel called to go deeper. The cost of the course is just **\$35** per session (**10 classes X \$35 = \$350**), plus an additional **\$50** for the vision quest, or **\$400 total**. **A \$50 deposit is required to register you for the apprenticeship,** which will be applied towards the cost of the first two workshops. Your deposit is due by or before Friday, January 13th, 2006. People that are able to pay for the entire course in full are entitled to a \$25 discount (either \$325 or \$375.) Payment plans or partial trades may be possible, please enquire. To register, or for more information, please contact the instructor: *Lawrence Birch*, at 344-7534 or email: givingtree@earthlink.net website: www.givingtreefarm.com. Lawrence Birch has been a shamanic practitioner since 1997. He was trained in the Harner Method of Core Shamanism. He has studied with Alida Birch, Leslie Conton, Tom Cowan, Mimi Kamp, and other practitioners. His main area of focus is in working with the plant people.

Send comments or article submissions to garbanzo@lists.opn.org. If you don't have computer access, you can put articles in the garbanzo box at growers. Newsletter copy deadline is 5:00 pm Tuesday. Market hours are Tuesdays 5-7pm; Thursdays 2:30 to 7:30 pm and Fridays 3:00 to 6:30 pm. An orientation to Growers is held each Thursday at 1:30. The Growers email list includes an electronic banzo, events notices, and other misc. info. growers@lists.opn.org Growers Market: 687-1145