

A man wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and a straw hat is crouching in a lush green garden. He is reaching into a large leafy plant, possibly a squash or zucchini plant, to harvest. In the foreground, there is a stone wall with several bunches of fresh vegetables, including carrots and radishes. To the right, an open cardboard box is filled with fresh basil leaves. The background is filled with more green foliage and yellow flowers.

Organic Connections

MAR-APR 2010

The magazine of Peter Gillham's Natural Vitality

Anya Fernald

Getting Real with Sustainability

Marc Koska

Man Who Saved 9 Million Lives

Nell Newman

Defining Natural and Organic

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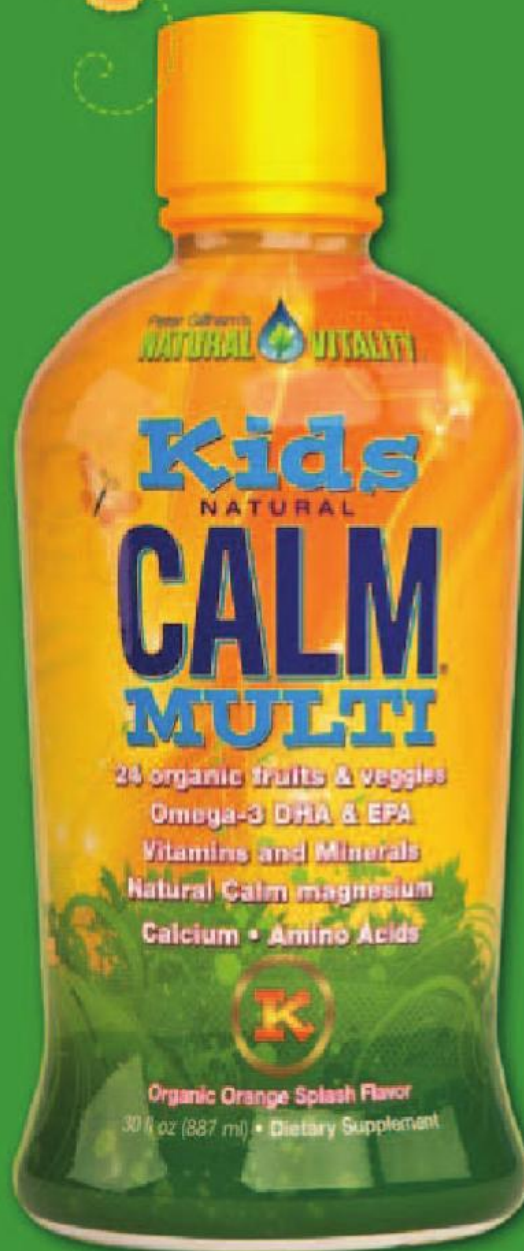
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Organic

24 organic fruits & veggies
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Are we getting what we pay for?

Americans love cheap food. We spend less of our incomes on food now than ever before. In 1949, we allotted 22 percent of our incomes to food. In 2009, that figure dropped to only 10 percent (about half of what the Japanese and French spend). Seems good until you correlate another set of statistics. Back in 1959, only 4 percent of children were overweight. Today that figure has climbed to 19 percent. In 1979, 28 percent of adults were overweight. Now it's a shocking 64 percent.

While we're paying less for our food, we are paying a steep price for our healthcare—more than 15 percent of our incomes—which works out to over \$140 per week *per person*. To put it even more in perspective, we are spending over 16 percent of the market value of all final goods and services made in America in a year (our Gross Domestic Product) on healthcare. That's greater than any other country. Yet we are by no means the world's healthiest people.

Our love affair with cheap food has brought us highly processed food and a very low ratio of nutrients per calorie. Here's how wild this can get. Denny's restaurants (with over 1,500 locations) promote their "Grand Slamwich" served with hash browns, which has 1,530 calories (by any measure, a lot of calories for one meal), 90 grams of fat, 44.5 grams of saturated fat (federal guidelines advise 20 grams per day), 550 mg of cholesterol (American Heart Association recommends less than 300 mg per day), and a whopping 3,720 mg of sodium (well above the recommended less than 2,300 mg per day—1,500 mg if you're middle-aged or older). And all that "food" runs just over \$7.50. Let's not even get into the hash browns with onions, *cheese* and *gravy*! Perhaps this is fitting from a chain that ran the ad campaign "I'm going to eat too much, but I'm never going to pay too much." Of course, we don't need to single out Denny's. There are plenty of such extreme examples from other popular restaurant chains.

So we've industrialized and consolidated our farms into giant factories that use pesticides, herbicides, growth hormones, antibiotics, genetic modification and other untested and even inhumane practices, all in the name of *low price*. The *high price* comes when we pay the doctor, the drugstore and the hospital. Perhaps it's time we as a country rethink all this. Wouldn't it make more sense to pay more for nutritious, non-toxic food and less for illness and disease?

Ken Whitman
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In this issue



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denoting a relation between elements of something such that they fit together harmoniously as necessary parts of a whole: *the organic unity of the integral work of art* • characterized by continuous or natural development: *companies expand as much by acquisition as by organic growth*.

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Sustainable-food expert Anya Fernald talks about what it takes to market healthy, environmentally sound products.



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The remarkable and inspiring story of British humanitarian, inventor and entrepreneur Marc Koska details how one determined individual was able to save 9 million lives and brings to view conditions we, in America, don't often think about.



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The daughter of Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, and the driving force behind Newman's Own Organics, talks candidly about natural and organic, safety issues related to biotech crops, and the increasing interest in sustainably grown foods.



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Anya Fernald

Getting Real with Sustainability

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There are challenges for anyone entering into a sustainable food business today. The titanic industrial agriculture machine that feeds the bulk of America provides cheap, assembly-line food that costs less to produce than nutritious food grown with consideration for the environment. The commercial media is largely supported by advertising revenues from this same machine and continues to entice consumers with the virtues of cheap, processed and “conventionally” produced food. The question becomes, how can a small-scale sustainable-food business survive in such an environment, bring their products to market, price them affordably, and effectively reach the consumer?

It is exactly this set of problems that Anya Fernald—along with her consulting company, Live Culture—is wholeheartedly and successfully addressing, for a growing roster of sustainable-food clients.

Great Taste and Top Chefs

Like a number of others—most notably some of today’s finest chefs, such as Alice Waters, Dan Barber and Wolfgang Puck—Anya came to an appreciation of fresh, locally grown produce through her palate. “I came to sustainable food from a fine-food perspective,” she told *Organic Connections*. “It was about cooking and quality food in general, eating well and serving good food, and things that tasted wonderful. And it was just immediately obvious, once I began understanding better quality food, that quality came from traditional holistic approaches to agriculture and food production.”

Love of great food is one of Anya’s prime motivating factors to this day. In addition

to being someone who is always discovering new things and cooking for herself, her family and a wide array of friends, she is a frequent judge on Food Network’s *Iron Chef America* and was also on the judging panel for the 2009 season of *The Next Iron Chef*.

Through her guest appearances on Food Network, she has seen the trend moving toward sustainability. “On the inside at Food

Network, when I’m there and talking to the people, many of the staff are composting, putting in roof gardens, getting rid of hormone-fed meat—they’ve obviously made a lot of progress internally,” Anya said. “Food Network also just did a special on the White House garden with a focus on local, sustainable food. So it’s obvious much more is on the horizon for them in this area.”



Sustainability is becoming increasingly popular among top chefs. Along with taste, Anya believes there is a personal connection as well. “I know a lot of chefs who have had personal transformation moments because they discovered the interaction around food—they like the humanity and the personal connection associated with making food. And when they go to a farmers’ market, or the farmer comes direct to their back door, they actually have a much more pleasurable experience. It takes more time and work than simply buying off a list, but there’s definitely a greater gratification and excitement around it.”

But the problem arises, how does one get this great taste—and the superior nutrition that causes that great taste—into the mainstream? “In my work, I face the constant struggle of figuring out how to produce better food for a cost that is within shouting distance of the cost of industrial mass-produced food,” Anya said.

Hitting the Price Point

Anya and her company are out to show that sustainably grown and produced food doesn’t have to break the bank—in fact, it can be obtained at a decent cost factor. Take, for example, the project that Live Culture created, an ongoing series of participatory conserved-food production events called *Yes, We Can (Food)*. “In helping make local fresh food more affordable for everyone, I considered simply scaling up the same tools that I use to make sustainable locally produced food affordable in my own life,” she said. “First up: canning. How do you make organic local handmade jam affordable? Make it yourself. *Yes, We Can* grew out of this thought process—figuring out how to make good food in large quantities affordable and, along the way (and not



incidentally), share the fun and exhilaration of doing it yourself.”

It’s a very interesting project. Basically, 80 people pitch in to buy fruit, jars and all the incidentals needed to make the product. Of those people, 60 pay approximately 85 percent of the cost of the inputs, and the other 20 pay the remaining 15 percent but also contribute four hours of their labor to actually

process and pack the product. *Yes, We Can* is run at break-even—they didn’t build profit into the model—with the goal of making the products as affordable as possible. The end result is \$3-a-jar jam (8 oz), \$3-a-jar pickles (16 oz) and \$3-a-jar tomatoes (32 oz), plus a whole host of other products. “The canning sessions are truly work sessions—not canning lessons,” said Anya. “Participants learn how to get their hands dirty and are given an overview of everything that’s happening, but are really contributing their labor to produce the product.”

Another project of Live Culture is the *Eat Real Festival*, a regular local event in Oakland, California. This festival, with its slogan “Putting the *food* back in *fast*,” is aimed squarely at the average consumer. Everything at the event is priced under five dollars. The last event witnessed 50 taco trucks serving sustainable street food to an estimated 70,000



Judges (l to r) Donatella Arpaia, Jeffrey Steingarten and Anya Fernald deliberate and decide which *Next Iron Chef* contestant should be sent home. At right is host Alton Brown.

people and included a butchering contest and exchange of home-canned and foraged food. "The concept is to market sustainable, healthy, environmentally sound products at an extremely affordable price," Anya explained. "And instead of trying to change someone's whole lifestyle, we look at coming in at an affordable price point for, say, protein. Let's start with hormone-free meat and organic milk, as those tend to be issues that somebody with a more limited food budget is focused on. Let's make the beginning changes and use that as a portal to coaching and getting more engagement on other categories."



and Bosnia. She then returned to her home state of California to lead a Farm-to-School program and to work as Program Director at the California Buy Fresh, Buy Local Campaign for CAFF (Community Alliance with Family Farmers). In 2007, Anya

launched the inaugural edition of the Slow Food Nation event in San Francisco, serving as Executive Director. Anya left Slow Food Nation in 2008 to found the Live Culture Company, which brings together the diverse aspects of Anya's background and training to advise and support the development of profitable, values-driven food businesses. "We've really grown in our first year," Anya related. "I think our client roster is very healthy. We've got a mix of clients from across the US and two in South America as well."

She is uniquely qualified to do so. After spending a year of her early career as a cheesemaker and another as a baker, Anya realized that such enterprises could use

THE CONCEPT IS TO MARKET SUSTAINABLE, HEALTHY, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND PRODUCTS AT AN EXTREMELY AFFORDABLE PRICE.

Getting the Show(s) on the Road

the unsustainability is linked to the fact that it's an oil-based system, requiring huge amounts of nitrogen and petroleum—many inputs that come from deep within the earth. I think that the increasing scarcity of those inputs is going to be one big driver."

She sees another propelling factor toward sustainability in the steadily increasing consumer demand to really know where food is coming from—known as *traceability*. "I use that word with caution because traceability also means highly expensive codified ways of tracking products through the value chain," Anya pointed out. "Another approach to traceability is knowing your farmer and feeling like this product is safe because you know who made it. They look you in the face once a month or once a year or once a week; that's the type of traceability and responsibility I'm referring to."



some business help. She assisted artisan cheesemakers in southeastern Sicily with business plans and shortly became involved with the Slow Food Foundation in Italy. From that position she developed and implemented a micro-investment program that supported small-scale artisan food producers in over 30 countries as varied as Madagascar, Sweden, Ecuador

launched the inaugural edition of the Slow Food Nation event in San Francisco, serving as Executive Director.

The approach she takes with these companies stems from the philosophy that sustainably produced products mean higher quality. "I'm saying to my clients, 'Increase the overall holistic approach to your production system and you're going to find that you are producing better quality products.' We are looking at it from a premium and quality production standpoint. How do you get the best quality product? How do you get the best flavor? How do you create something that's on an international level of quality? I constantly find that where someone is practicing agriculture that's in tune with the natural environment, they produce the better quality."

It doesn't necessarily mean that it's only the small companies that can produce quality products, either. "I want to make a distinction that big isn't bad, and small isn't necessarily good," Anya stated. "I actually think that a big part of the solution is going to be in larger-scale, more conventionally

For further information on Anya Fernald and Live Culture, please visit <http://livecultureco.com>.



Marc Koska

The Man Who Saved 9 Million Lives

Unique is a good word to describe Marc Koska. "Since I was a kid, I always wanted to get involved in a large intervention on a big scale," he told *Organic Connections*. "I was always looking for something. If I had lived 200 years ago, I would have wanted to be the guy who killed all the rats in the Black Death. And I started having that drive when I was about six."

Unlike many others, Marc never forgot his dream; as a young adult, he was always on the lookout—and one day he stumbled upon it. "Years went by and I didn't really settle into anything because I was still waiting for my big moment," he recounted. "Then in May 1984, I read a newspaper article that discussed the fact that reused syringes would be a major transmission route for HIV. That was exactly the bit that I was looking for." Marc was 23 at the time.

A Widespread Crisis

Marc spent the next two and a half years simply researching the problem itself. The issue was that in many third-world countries syringes for dispensing drugs to treat diseases would be used more than once, in a very misguided effort to save money. Although it was widely known by medical authorities that such a practice was dangerous and contributed to the spread of disease, incredibly nothing had been done about it.

"In the problem areas, you have either a skilled or unskilled medical practitioner blindly giving an injection to someone; and the injection is so *valuable* that the person basically trusts the practitioner—being 'second to God' (which I've heard many

times)—to do the right thing, but in fact it's not," Marc said.

The prediction from the article that Marc read in 1984, horribly enough, ended up being correct. The World Health Organization estimates that unsafe injections are

that unsafe injections annually cause 1.3 million deaths—more than malaria.

Marc certainly had his work cut out for him.

He conceived the solution as an inexpensive syringe that could be used for only one



Marc is with two brothers at a dump in Pakistan. These children (rag pickers) search through the waste looking for anything of value that can be recycled. On numerous occasions they prick themselves on used needles. Their father did just that in front of Marc and simply struck a match and held the flame to his hand, thinking this would stop infection (see inset above).

responsible yearly for 230,000 HIV infections. Additionally they are the cause of 1 million hepatitis C and 21 million hepatitis B infections. But the worst statistic of all is

injection and then disposed of. Knowing nothing at all about how syringes were made or how his potential solution could be implemented, he studied up on every

relevant patent and syringe design. He visited a multitude of syringe factories and studied plastic injection molding technologies in depth. He followed syringes all the way from manufacturing to end use and waste management.

All the while he was conducting this research he needed to eat and have a place to live, as no one was paying him. "I was self-funded," said Marc. "You know, I was just a kid and I was doing some decorating, some housework and rough building work simply to keep it going."

At the end of the two and a half years, the penny dropped. "I had an epiphany while reading all the patents that existed from other people. That insight was that the syringe had to be made on existing machinery, it had to be made for the same price, and it had to be used in exactly the same way so that there would be no training barrier. When this all

The Second Problem

When the syringes were being produced, however, Marc encountered a whole other problem. "Once I had broken through the barrier of making the product, I thought we would be able to start a steamroller going and it would have its own momentum," he related. "I thought that governments would naturally go, 'Oh, this is cheaper than using a syringe that transmits disease and which costs a lot of money.' But it turned out, after even a few years of sales and selling it to UNICEF, that no one was actually telling the public there was a danger in reusing syringes. It's a little bit like putting a safety belt in a car and not telling anyone what it's for. So I then had to go out and give the information to the public, because they had no idea that they had to demand this product."

The result was the founding—once again



This picture was shot in Delhi just around the corner from a five-star hotel. The child found this used syringe mixed in with the general rubbish discarded on street corners. The needle had been removed.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ESTIMATES THAT UNSAFE INJECTIONS ARE RESPONSIBLE YEARLY FOR 230,000 HIV INFECTIONS. ADDITIONALLY THEY ARE THE CAUSE OF 1 MILLION HEPATITIS C AND 21 MILLION HEPATITIS B INFECTIONS. BUT THE WORST STATISTIC OF ALL IS THAT UNSAFE INJECTIONS ANNUALLY CAUSE 1.3 MILLION DEATHS—MORE THAN MALARIA.

came together, the design for me was very easy. It took literally a minute to realize what it had to look like and do in order to deliver to those three criteria."

That design is ingeniously simple. The syringe looks like any other you may have seen, with one very notable exception: once the medication has been injected and the plunger has been pushed all the way to the bottom of the tube, if someone tries to pull the plunger back out to reload the syringe, it locks and breaks off, rendering the syringe useless.

Of course, it's one thing to have such a big idea—it's quite another to get it actually done. Marc labored for the next 15 years, butting up against vested interests and fixed methodologies, to actually begin producing syringes.

But through persistence his plan came to fruition. Since 2001, 1.8 billion K1 syringes have been sold from Star Syringe, the company Marc founded, and millions are used every day, providing single, safe doses of medicine that do not infect patients in the process. As a result, 9 million fatal infections have been prevented, saving an astounding 9 million lives.

by Marc—of the SafePoint Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating millions

safely. The SafePoint message is delivered through existing networks in community



Reporters rush to get their sound bites for the evening news at a press conference with Marc in Mumbai during SafePoint's successful safe-injection campaign.

throughout the world on the need for clean injections, with a goal that the over 40 billion injections given every year are given

education and healthcare, taking advantage of established infrastructure. Another arm of the organization, SafePoint Films, makes

SINCE 2001, **1.8 BILLION K1 SYRINGES** HAVE BEEN SOLD FROM STAR SYRINGE, THE COMPANY MARC FOUNDED, AND MILLIONS ARE USED EVERY DAY, PROVIDING SINGLE, **SAFE DOSES OF MEDICINE** THAT DO NOT INFECT PATIENTS IN THE PROCESS. AS A RESULT, 9 MILLION FATAL INFECTIONS HAVE BEEN PREVENTED, **SAVING AN ASTOUNDING 9 MILLION LIVES.**

dedicated short films (one to three minutes) that spark reaction, inform and change behavior. The first film was made in May 2007 in India and has been endorsed by former president Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

of all injections given in India were unsafe. SafePoint was formally registered in 2006 as a charity in the UK, but its work has long been established in its focus regions of India, Indonesia, Vietnam, East Africa and Pakistan.



Taken in Delhi by Koska in a small back-street clinic during SafePoint's India campaign. As you can see, the doctor keeps syringes on his desk as if part of a tool kit. Once they are used, they are placed back in the dish ready for the next patient. In some cases the patient is asked to pick a syringe for the doctor to use.

for nationwide distribution as part of an intensive safe-injection campaign in India.

"SafePoint has delivered the message into two countries so far: Uganda, where we've done very well and have changed the law, and now India, where we've changed the law on a public healthcare basis," Marc stated. "So all public hospitals and clinics have to use an auto-disable syringe whether it's made by me or not." To put this achievement into perspective, previously 62 percent

Recognition and the Road Ahead

Marc has now certainly been recognized for his work. In 2006 he was made an esteemed Officer of the British Empire (OBE) by the Queen, in recognition of his outstanding contribution to global healthcare; while last July he was a featured speaker at the TED-Global conference at Oxford—a renowned yearly event that hosts top innovators in many fields from all over the world.



A nurse in Kenya draws drugs from a vial into a K1 auto-disable Star Syringe.

But as he himself will tell you, there is much more to be done.

"We still only represent a very tiny portion of the market," he said. "What's yet to be done is to get the big boys involved so that whether it's through my product or not, we create a much better market for these syringes and get them being used wholesale, across the whole scene, ensuring that everyone receiving an injection is not being betrayed."

What Marc—and the rest of the world—is faced with is the frustrating fact that, although the major movers such as the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the UN recognize there is a problem with unsafe injections, we are still years away from the needed resolutions, changes in policy and mandates being passed. "Preventable tragedy makes me angry, to be honest—as I'm sure it does you," concluded Marc. "It's a terrible waste, and there's still so much more to be done."

And as long as there is a need, Marc will be there doing it.

For more information on Marc, his life and activities, please visit his website at www.marckoska.com.

For further data on Star Syringes, see their website at www.starsyringe.com.

To learn more about SafePoint Trust, visit www.safepointtrust.org.

Nell Newman

Defining *Natural* and *Organic*

by Bruce Boyers



Growing up as the daughter of Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward would have to give a person a pretty unique perspective on life. They were two of Hollywood's biggest movie stars, who, at the height of their respective

company would probably post losses or at best break even, Newman was pleasantly surprised when people around the world took to Newman's Own products in droves. Since its founding, the company has donated 100 percent of its profits to charity—and as of August 2009, that figure had topped \$280 million.

In 1993, Paul's daughter Nell decided to step up to the plate herself and established a purely organic division of the company, Newman's Own Organics.

A Natural Introduction

From childhood, Nell had been exposed to natural foods. At their rural Connecticut home, the Newmans had a garden and raised chickens. Nell was taught to cook by her mother and spent many hours fishing with her father. While in college she continued to experiment in the kitchen, and she is still the designated chef when home for family holiday dinners.

things being grown in people's backyards or whatever was wild.

"So I was amazed that, when I moved out here in 1988, there was a Wednesday farmers' market that had already been there for a couple of years, and as far as I know, it was largely organic. I had never seen anything like it. Then I ate at Alice Waters' Chez Panisse restaurant many times. I told my dad, 'Pop, organic does not have to mean heavy whole wheat!' I told him there was a world of organic out there that he wouldn't believe. And then when I was fundraising for a small non-profit, I kept looking at what Pop was doing and thinking, *That looks like an easy way to raise money for non-profits. Maybe I should start thinking about doing something a little different.* So I came up with this harebrained idea to do an organic division of Newman's Own and see if we could make a go of that. And it's done pretty well."

Indeed it has. Beginning with a line of pretzels, the company—with the motto "Great

I CAME UP WITH THIS HAREBRAINED IDEA TO DO AN ORGANIC DIVISION OF **NEWMAN'S OWN**
AND SEE IF WE COULD MAKE A GO OF THAT. AND IT'S DONE PRETTY WELL.

careers, moved out of Tinseltown to live and raise their family in Westport, Connecticut, away from the glitter and the noise. Paul Newman was not only one of the hunkiest men—and most talented actors—to ever cross a screen, he was a freethinker who actively spoke out against nuclear arms and the Vietnam War. He supported the environment, civil rights, women's rights and many other causes for much of his long life.

In 1982, the actor co-founded Newman's Own, a line of foods that he himself loved and helped to create. Thinking that the

Nell attended the College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor, Maine, graduating with a bachelor's degree in human ecology. She worked briefly at the Environmental Defense Fund in New York but, preferring a more rural environment, soon moved to northern California. It was there she rediscovered fresh, locally grown food.

"When I was in college, there was not a lot of organic," Nell told *Organic Connections*. "It was mostly nasty little wrinkled apples. Eden Foods had some stuff, but there simply wasn't a lot of fresh organic produce. It was just

tasting food that happens to be organic"—has expanded to include chocolate bars, Fig Newmans, Champion Chip Cookies, chocolate cups, Newman-O's, Pop's Corn, Alphabet Cookies, Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Balsamic Vinegar, dried fruit, Soy Crisps, Hermits, mints, coffee and Royal Tea. Of course, much more is planned.

The Importance of Defining "Natural"

Along the way, Nell made sure that the products for Newman's Own Organics were



truly organic. More than 70 percent of all ingredients used in the formulation of Newman's Own Organics foods are organic, and all products are certified by Oregon Tilth,

standard for 'all natural,' which I thought was real interesting because there isn't any," Nell said. "I now know how important that is. I was home about a month ago, and my

"Our housekeeper also bought for me what was labeled '16-grain bread,' and I thought that was really impressive. But then I looked at the packaging, and the ingredients listed were

IT'S CLEAR TO ME THAT A HANDFUL OF CHEMICAL CORPORATIONS HAVE RUSHED **GENE-ALTERED FOODS INTO OUR FIELDS AND SUPERMARKETS** WITHOUT CONDUCTING THE SCIENCE NEEDED TO DEMONSTRATE THE SAFETY OF THESE FOODS FOR OUR CHILDREN, THE ENVIRONMENT AND US. IN FACT, INDEPENDENT STUDIES COMING IN FROM UNIVERSITIES AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, BOTH HERE AND ABROAD, DEMONSTRATE THE **HAZARDS THAT THESE BIOTECH FOODS CAN PRESENT** TO OUR HEALTH AND TO THE NATURAL WORLD.

a leading organic certifier, following strict guidelines laid down by the USDA on organic production.

Nell has recently discovered just how important such stipulations are—and how necessary it is for retailers to help educate consumers to watch for them. As it turns out, it is equally important for products labeled "all natural."

"I saw an article the other day saying that Eden Foods had put out a call for having a

mom's housekeeper had gone out to buy a brand of soy milk that my mother has been drinking for years. She thought she was buying the right stuff, but when she brought it back I looked at the box and I thought that it looked like their organic product. But on closer inspection, it wasn't. It turns out they now have a line of organic and a line of conventional, but the original product has the same packaging; so unless you look, you won't know.

whole wheat, oats, corn syrup, barley malt—basically it had 2 or 3 grains and a bunch of filler. At the very bottom the label stated that there was 'no more than 2 percent of the following' and it listed the other 13 grains. It was mind-boggling! Basically wheat and filler. The consumer knows what the consumer wants, but the consumer doesn't always know what to look for. I think the retailer has a big responsibility to not just sell products but to sell good products. It's frustrating when you



realize that you've bought the wrong thing because you weren't paying attention, but it's hard to tell sometimes."

Genetic Modification

Like a number of other top food activists today, Nell is also speaking out on a matter many consider dangerous, and one which a lot of consumers are unaware of because the law doesn't require labeling: the genetic modification of crops. Not long ago, she wrote an excellent foreword to Andrew Kimbrell's book *Your Right to Know: Genetic Engineering and the Secret Changes in Your Food*.

"It's clear to me that a handful of chemical corporations have rushed gene-altered foods into our fields and supermarkets without conducting the science needed to demonstrate the safety of these foods for our children, the environment and us," Nell observed. "In fact, independent studies coming in from universities and government agencies, both here and abroad, demonstrate the hazards that these biotech foods can present to our health and to the natural world."

A major part of the problem that genetic engineering represents—especially to organic farmers—is cross-contamination. "Initially the party line from chemical companies was 'There will be no problem. The pollen only blows three feet. There will be no genetic crossing.' And of course they were wrong about that," said Nell. "It does happen and it's something that organic farmers have to deal with—hopefully not too often, but it is a problem. And it is a problem because organic farmers are out there working as hard as they can to grow a crop that has not been contaminated, and processors work as hard as they can to process that crop into an uncontaminated product, and they're doing everything possible. But the cross-contamination is sometimes out of their hands. It becomes a very expensive proposition for the organic farmer to make sure that nothing is contaminated."

In support of her statements, Nell points to a lawsuit recently won by the Center for Food Safety in which, for the first time in history, a court ordered the halting of plantings of a new genetically engineered crop. In





local congressmen to consider this a matter of importance. Without a doubt food safety is a big concern these days and you could certainly consider this a food-safety issue."

The Growing Market

"I believe, on a consumer level, interest in sustainably grown food is really increasing, which is indicated by the growth of farmers' markets. People are more interested in where their food is coming from and are willing to go that little extra bit to find it. It is an opportunity to get fresher produce

directly from the source. I also think that trend will help promote growth by having the buyer's dollar go directly to the farmer, and we'll continue to see an increase in farmers' markets and more ability to buy on a local level."

For more information on Newman's Own Organics, please visit www.newmansownorganics.com.

To learn more about the Center for Food Safety and their continuing work, visit <http://truefoodnow.org>.

2007, a US District Court in California ruled that the USDA illegally approved genetically modified alfalfa without first preparing a full Environmental Impact Statement taking into account the contamination of conventional and organic alfalfa. Monsanto, the defendant in the case, appealed twice. CFS defended its victory and in June 2009 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed the lower court decision, denying both of Monsanto's appeals, thus upholding a two-year-old nationwide ban on the planting of genetically engineered alfalfa.

As to why the government allows genetically modified crops to continue without testing, Nell—like many of us—suspects some "insider" work with the government. "I always wondered why," she said. "It seems to be such common sense and yet nothing appears to be happening. Then about five or six years ago, I read an article in *Mother Jones* and realized exactly why it's so hard to get something done about it. In this article, they actually followed the heads of all these big biotech companies as they left their jobs and went to work for the government and wrote policy and then went back to their former positions. It's a flowchart; it was an amazing article. For example, they worked for Monsanto and then they worked for the USDA and then they wrote food policy for two years and then they went back to Monsanto. After that, I understood why it was so hard."

Nell advises all of us who are in the know to keep ourselves informed and to keep others informed as well. "I think doing your homework, educating yourself about organics and the issues around them, is very important so that you can become an educated consumer. You can also join a non-profit that you think is actually doing a good job in terms of helping regulate these issues. The Center for Food Safety is a great one, and there are others. You can also pressure your



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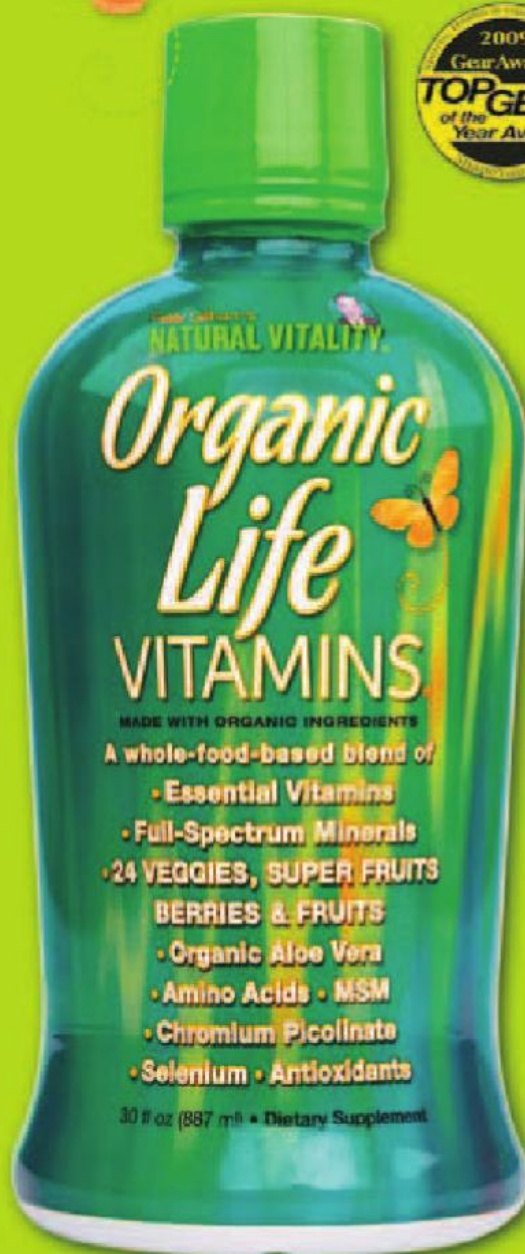
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