

THE greenREPORT



Winter 2003

Teaming Up for a Healthier World

Only by standing together can we effect lasting change so that our world will be a healthy environment for kids to grow, develop, achieve, prosper and raise healthy children when they grow up themselves.

Generation Green is committed to keeping you, our members, informed and involved. To ensure that your efforts are effective, we team up with other organizations that share our goals. Different organizations with different members, resources and strategies are often more effective when they team up. We've done that before, and we are pleased to announce our partnerships with the Children's Environmental Health Network (CEHN) and the Organic Consumers Association (OCA).

In 2003, we will be working closely with CEHN and OCA on two different initiatives that could mean much to children's environmental health.

Together with CEHN, Generation Green is tackling the issue of mercury. In the soil, the water, the air and our food, mercury finds its way into our bodies. This is potentially harmful to the

Cutting "Quicksilver" to the Quick

Where is mercury, also known as quicksilver? Sure, it's in old-fashioned thermometers, laboratories and science classes. But is it anywhere else? Yes. Everywhere, unfortunately.

In fact, most mercury that is released into the environment is released when coal, oil or natural gas is burned as fuel and when garbage that contains mercury is incinerated. This is not a good situation, but at least the exposure via air is generally minute, and spread over time.

But mercury can also be found in more concentrated and dangerous forms. For example, it can be found in various parts of the country in unhealthy amounts in the soil your kids play in and the water your family drinks.

The contamination of waterways also means that some of the fish and other seafood you eat may be contaminated with

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Better Lunches for Healthier Kids

An increasing amount of scientific evidence suggests that the physical environments to which children are exposed can profoundly impact their ability to learn. Children spend most of their waking hours outside of home in school, so it is important to make sure that schools are healthy places that promote children's well-being and their performance.



This is why Generation Green is teaming up with the Organic Consumers Association for a campaign to "Safeguard Our Students." This SOS campaign will focus on reducing children's exposure to pesticides by promoting integrated pest management and improving school nutrition programs.

The SOS campaign overlaps perfectly with Generation

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developing bodies of children, and even developing fetuses. Many people know the risks of lead, another metal to which children are too-often exposed, but mercury is also a very real threat, and one that can be dealt with if we mobilize and get government and industry to act on the problem.

Also, Generation Green is teaming up with OCA on their Safeguard Our Students (SOS) Campaign. The SOS Campaign works to make schools environmentally healthy places to learn and work, with an emphasis on healthy food. All too frequently, food is less than nutritious, packed with chemicals and hormones that are questionable at best, and possibly even irradiated. While Generation Green will continue to work on other important school-related issues like indoor air quality, we have expanded our efforts in promoting healthy school food. ■

Quicksilver Concerns

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unhealthy amounts of mercury.

The toxic metal can even be found in schools, thus exposing children to the metal more often than probably most adults are exposed. This can happen as a result of an accidental spill or exposure in science class (or dangerous pranksters who steal it from there), but it can also come from a leak in a mercury-containing device. There are plenty of those devices in schools, including thermometers, sphygmomanometers, barometers and mercury switches. In fact, the school nurse's office often contains some of the largest and most concentrated forms of mercury, in blood pressure devices and other equipment. Equipment made without mercury is available and we will work promote their use in schools.

But we also have another serious concern. School exposures are a risk for kids, but such exposures are infrequent. Even exposure from contaminants in the air, while a matter of huge concern (we should always be concerned about air quality), are fairly minute for most people in most parts of the country. But a more concentrated source exists, and it is one that children are much more likely to get large doses of mercury

from: fish. (That's where many of the mercury emissions in the air end up, having settled into the water.) No, not all fish contain mercury, but certain species tend to contain high mercury levels. Pregnant women who consume those kinds of fish can put their babies at risk. Even women considering pregnancy should avoid those fish. Mercury can severely damage brain development, and kids' brains are still very much works in progress, physically speaking, up to age 7.



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is supposed to protect us from just this kind of thing, but they have a sketchy record of making enforceable mercury standards and informing the public of risks. And they don't require labeling of risky fish, though they should. To find out more about mercury risks, visit our Web site at www.generationgreen.org. To get an action kit on mercury, contact Mary Guthrie at Generation Green by phone at (800) 652-0827 or by e-mail at mary@generationgreen.org

School Lunches, Generation Green & OCA

(continued from front page)

Green's concerns about food in schools: the lack of healthy choices and true nutrition, the over-reliance on pesticides to grow food and to manage pests in cafeterias and elsewhere, and too little reliance on sustainable agriculture.

The four goals of the SOS campaign are simple:

- KICK junk foods and junk food ads out of our schools.
- START converting school lunches to healthier menus, using organic and transition-to-organic ingredients (no pesticides, antibiotics, hormones, or genetically engineered ingredients).
- STOP spraying toxic pesticides on school grounds and in buildings and convert to integrated pest management practices.
- TEACH students about healthy food choices and sustainable agriculture.

In large part, the SOS campaign focuses on the nutritional quality of food served in schools, and it works to connect sustainable farmers with school lunch programs, goals that Generation Green supports. But there is another concern we share and that needs to be addressed: irradiation of foods.

Why are we concerned about this? Because the Farm Bill that Congress passed and President Bush signed into law in 2002 may help put irradiated foods into school lunches.

Yet irradiation of food destroys many nutrients and produces radiolytic byproducts that have not been studied or tested and might be harmful when ingested by children.



No mechanism has been mandated to inform parents if irradiated foods are used in their schools. And there are no requirements to label irradiated foods as such. Generation Green and OCA both find this intolerable, and will work against it.

For an action kit or other information on what you can do to help, contact Mary Guthrie by telephone at (800) 652-0827 or send her an e-mail at mary@generationgreen.org

Healthy Harvest

Fruits and vegetables are the staples of a healthy diet, right? Well, it's not always that simple. While an excellent source of vitamins and minerals, the health benefits of some fruits and vegetables are compromised by an alarming variety of pesticide residues. Organically grown produce can be a good solution, but is not always available or affordable.

Generation Green is at the forefront of the battle for pesticide tolerance policies that protect children. Until pesticide



Gary Hirshberg

residue standards improve, we can protect our families by learning which fruits and vegetables have less pesticide residue and serving them in our family's meals. Toward that end, Generation Green's executive director, Rochelle Davis, and David Joachim, an award-winning cookbook author, are writing a cookbook which will be published by Rodale Press in Spring 2004. The cookbook, which will be called *Fresh Choices*, will feature individuals who fight to protect children from

unnecessary toxic exposure, along with their favorite recipes using the fruits and vegetables that have the least amount of pesticide residues.

This issue, we feature Gary Hirshberg, the president of the Stonyfield Farm yogurt company.

Cream of the Crop: On a Mission With Stonyfield Farm

Spending a few minutes with Gary Hirshberg is like eating cold ice cream on a hot day. He's pure refreshment. And 100% organic. A longtime environmentalist, Hirshberg happened upon a great yogurt recipe back in 1983 at his small organic farming school in New Hampshire. His coup as an entrepreneur was turning that recipe into a \$90 million company under the guise of his deeper mission: environmental education. Take a look at the lid of any Stonyfield Farm yogurt container and you'll see a clever environmental message like "Let's Put a Lid on Global Warming" or "Make Your Voice 'Cow'nt' for Organic Standards."

Hirshberg is an ardent supporter of sustainable agriculture. "One of our most tangible accomplishments to date," he comments, "is the conversion of 80 farms from conventional to organic farming." Another of his objectives is to inspire huge multinational corporations to follow his lead. "I want to

show them that you can make more money by incorporating environmentally responsible practices into the fabric of what you do," he says.

Hirshberg knows that the future of the planet is in the hands of our children. "Kids don't necessarily choose food for its organic attributes," he admits. "But if it's delicious, then there's no compromise." Hirshberg's broad vision inspired Stonyfield's "Yo Baby" and other yogurt products for children. "We can help children to have a greater appreciation earlier," he says, "which will allow greater change to happen in their lifetimes, even greater than what's happened in ours." ■

Yogurt Waffles

What is yogurt but cultured milk anyway? The yogurt makes deliciously crisp waffles with a moist, fluffy interior.

- 1¾ cups whole-grain pastry flour or unbleached flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup organic 2% milk
- ¾ cup (4 ounces) organic yogurt
- ½ cup canola oil
- 1 tablespoon sugar



Preheat a waffle iron. In a big bowl, mix the flour, baking powder and salt.



Separate the eggs, putting the whites into a small bowl and the yolks into another small bowl. Whisk the milk, yogurt, and oil into the yolks. Stir the milk mixture into the flour mixture until moist yet still lumpy.

Beat the egg whites with a mixer on medium speed for 2 minutes. Increase to high, add the sugar and beat until stiff peaks form when the beaters are lifted, about 5 minutes. Fold the egg whites into the batter just until the whites are almost incorporated (fold gently to avoid deflating the whipped whites).

Coat the waffle iron with spray oil and scoop about one-fourth of batter onto the grids, spreading gently. Close the lid and cook until the steam is almost gone and the tops are golden. Lift the waffle from the iron with a fork. Re-oil the grids and repeat with the remaining batter. Makes about four 8" waffles.

To be notified when *Fresh Choices* is available for purchase, contact Rochelle Davis, executive director of Generation Green, by phone at (800) 652-0827 or by e-mail at rochelle@generationgreen.org

rBGH: How to Steer Clear

Packed with nutrients, milk can go a long way toward strengthening bones, preventing high blood pressure, and warding off stroke. The calcium in milk is particularly good for developing healthy bones and teeth in young children.

But there's a new substance in milk that many folks don't know about: recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone

(rBGH), also known as Bovine Somatotropin (rBST). Genetically engineered by chemical giant Monsanto, rBGH is injected into cows, where it triggers the release of a naturally-occurring hormone called Insulin-like Growth Factor One (IGF-1) which speeds up a cow's metabolism so that it produces 25% to 30% more milk.



With increased milk production comes increased profits for dairy farmers. That sounds good in theory.

The problem is that IGF-1 gets absorbed into your bloodstream when you drink milk from rBGH-injected cows. A number of studies, both on lab animals and humans, have shown that elevated blood levels of IGF-1 may increase risk

for prostate, colon, and breast cancers.

When you consider the potential health problems and the fact that the U.S. dairy industry already produces an estimated quarter million tons of surplus milk every year, rBGH use begins to look absurd.

Both Canada and the European Union have found the potential animal and human health risks associated with rBGH great enough to ban its use.

The Codex Alimentarius Commission, the U.N. Food Safety Agency representing 101 nations worldwide, has also ruled against rBGH. In the U.S., however, milk from cows injected with rBGH milk isn't even required to be labeled as such.



So, look for organic milk, yogurt, and butter in your grocery store. They're a little more expensive, but as demand goes up and supply goes up, prices will come down. You can even find organic cheeses and ice creams in today's supermarkets. Or look for imported cheeses from Europe, which are rBGH-free by default. If you can't find completely organic dairy products, look for the label "rBGH-free." 🌱



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