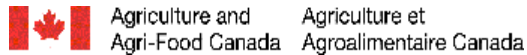




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Kids Learn to Eat Local

By Howard Weiss-Tisman, Reformer Staff Brattleboro
Brattleboro Reformer; Thursday, May 24, 2007

Eating local spinach is good for you, a group of third-graders at Oak Grove School said Wednesday. It can also help stop global warming and might do something toward saving the world's coral reefs.

But perhaps the most surprising observation that came out of an afternoon spent sampling the locally grown vegetable in the school lunchroom is the simple fact that it tastes good.

"When kids try spinach on TV shows, it's like, 'Yuck,'" said Catey Yost, 9, after finishing off her third spinach sample. "They always use spinach on TV shows 'cause they think it's funny and they want kids to laugh. We think spinach is awesome."

She then came up with a long list of afternoon cartoons that recently used spinach as a foil for demonstrating poor eating habits.

"They did it on 'Arthur' and 'Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends' and 'My Gym Partner's a Monkey,'" Catey said, though she got into a heated debate with classmate Dante Vaidya about whether it was Jake or Adam who threw up after being forced to eat spinach on one of the programs. It was Jake, they finally agreed.

Nauseous cartoon characters or not, the spinach was flying off the sample table at Oak Grove as the school kicked off its first session of the statewide Food Education Every Day, or FEED, program. FEED is a collaborative project of the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Food

Works and Shelburne Farms.

The three groups work to bring locally grown vegetables to Vermont schools, and also to help promote curriculum that stresses nutrition, agriculture awareness and local food.

Since starting the program about 10 years ago with one school in northern Vermont, hundreds of schools in the state have now taken part in one of the projects.

The Legislature two years ago passed a bill that funded FEED for a one-year trial basis, and in the last session Gov. James Douglas signed a new law that will continue to fund FEED every year.

Last year when the state money was made available, FEED coordinator Dana Hudson said she expected about 30 schools to apply for the grants.

More than 60 school districts, representing more than 100 schools, applied for the funding.

The Brattleboro schools -- including Oak Grove, Green Street and Academy -- were among 12 in the state that won a grant this year.

"We found out by the interest that this was really important for schools," Hudson said. "It's good for children's health and Vermont agriculture. There was a lot of support in the Legislature to make this a permanent program."

And in the Oak Grove lunchroom Wednesday, the teaching and learning about the power of local food was evident.

"Local vegetables can stop global warming," Dante, 9, said. "When they transport the spinach, like from far away, they heat up the oil and make smoke and the smoke turns into pollution and it heats up the air. It's the transportation. There's not that much we can do to reverse it, but we can help bring it down."

Sheila Humphreys, a paraeducator at Oak Grove who is coordinating the program at the K-6 school, said every grade is taking part in eating and learning about locally grown produce. Each of the three Brattleboro schools is talking about and sampling local fruits and vegetables beginning with spinach this week and running right through next fall with green peppers, tomatoes and apples.

The younger grades are learning songs about vegetables and the upper grades are learning more about the transportation and nutrition issues surrounding local food.

And for the next few weeks and into next year, they will be sampling local produce.

"There's been a movement growing in Vermont looking at how we can improve nutrition and eat more local fruits and vegetables," Humphreys said as she dished up a small, plastic sample cup of the spinach that was grown at Walker Farm and Dwight Miller Orchards. "It's good for the local agriculture economy and good for kids."

At the third-grade table, Catey said she would choose spinach over chocolate, since she can only eat chocolate on Friday and Saturday and Sunday.

Ashlyn Spencer, 9, said spinach could rule the universe.

"It just tastes better," Dante said, as he sucked down his juice box. "It's not frozen or had something done to it. It's just like a leaf. I don't have a garden at home but I'm gonna get one."

Howard Weiss-Tisman can be reached at hwTisman@reform-er.com or 802-254-2311, ext. 279. http://www.reformer.com/search//ci_5973356

Cruciferous Veg May Cut Bladder Cancer Risk

By Stephen Daniells

Increased intake of cruciferous vegetables may slash the risk of bladder cancer by 30 per cent,

says new research, that attributes the benefits to the isothiocyanate content.

Epidemiological and animal studies have shown that diets high in cruciferous vegetables result in fewer instances of certain cancers, especially lung, colon, breast and ovarian cancer, but no previous study has as yet reported risk reductions against bladder cancer, said the researchers.

"This is the first epidemiological report that isothiocyanates from cruciferous vegetable consumption protect against bladder cancer," wrote lead author Hua Zhao from the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

Bladder cancer is diagnosed in about 336,000 people every year worldwide, and it is three times more likely to affect men than women, according to the European School of Oncology.

The new study, published in the International Journal of Cancer, investigated the potential of dietary isothiocyanates to reduce the risk of bladder cancer. Diets were assessed using epidemiologic and food frequency questionnaires. The study involved 697 newly diagnosed bladder cancer cases and 708 healthy controls matched by age, gender and ethnicity.

The researchers report that the average daily intake of isothiocyanates was significantly lower in those with bladder cancer than for the healthy control subjects.

The highest intake of isothiocyanates was associated with a 29 per cent reduction in bladder cancer risk compared to the lowest intake, said Zhao and co-workers. Greater protection also observed in subjects over 64 years of age, men, and smokers.

The researchers suggest that the protective effects of the isothiocyanates against bladder cancer may be due to the increased exposure of the organ to the compounds - the majority of compounds produced by isothiocyanate metabolism are excreted through the urine, they said.

"Our data provide strong evidence that consumption of ITCs from cruciferous vegetables protect against bladder cancer," they concluded.

The cancer-fighting properties of broccoli, a member of the crucifer family of vegetables, are not new and previous studies have related these benefits to the high levels of active plant chemicals called glucosinolates. These are metabolised by the body into isothiocyanates, and evidence suggests these are powerful anti-carcinogens. The main isothiocyanate from broccoli is sulforaphane.

Some broccoli-extracts are currently available on the market, such as Cyvex's Nutrition's BroccoPlus, combines six per cent glucosinolates with sulforaphane, delivering high doses of these compounds in powder form, and B&D Nutritional Ingredients' sgs-100, a broccoli seed extract from a plant strain that is reported to be unusually high in sulforaphane glucisnolate (SGS).

Source: International Journal of Cancer; Volume 120, Issue 10, Pages 2208 - 2213

"Dietary isothiocyanates, GSTM1, GSTT1, NAT2 polymorphisms and bladder cancer risk"

Authors: H. Zhao, J. Lin, H. Barton Grossman , L.M. Hernandez , C.P. Dinney, X. Wu

Organic Farming Booming in Canada, Agriculture Census Suggests

By Tim Cook, Canadian Press

May 17, 2007 Statistics Canada has reported a nearly 60 percent increase in certified organic farming for 2001 to 2006. With organic business booming, many large retailers have taken notice. This boom has left only these large retailers, and not the smaller local producers, available to fill the gap. "I'd say the No. 1 issue right now in the organic industry is there are not enough domestic suppliers," says Laura Telford, with the Ottawa-based Canadian Organic Growers.

While local suppliers are still benefiting greatly, some argue that the lower prices of these large

importers will remain as stiff competition. The hope right now among Canadian organic producers is that the demand for organic foods and the demand for locally grown foods will intersect.

Full article:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/news/national/story.html?id=d367fa51-fa5d-4c55-b97f-8510e8fbd414&k=76045&p=2>

Canadian Organic Food Sales Grow Past \$1 Billion

OACC, Truro

Studies commissioned by the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada (OACC) show that retail sales of 'Certified Organic' food in Canada were worth more than \$1 billion in 2006 and that consumers in British Columbia eat more organic food than consumers in other provinces.

Supermarkets of mainstream grocery chains have responded to consumer demand and now sell over 40% of all organic food sold in Canada. According to data provided by the Nielsen Company, supermarkets sold \$412 million worth of organic food products in 2006. This represented 28% growth from 2005 to 2006, with 31% growth in pre-packaged products and 22% growth in fresh product.

Supermarkets in Alberta are showing the highest growth in sales from 2005 to 2006 (44%), followed by BC and the Maritimes (34%), Ontario (24%) and Quebec (21%).

The Nielsen Company also estimates that \$175 million is sold through smaller grocery stores, warehouse clubs, drug stores and other specialty stores.

Information obtained from industry sources indicates that large natural food store chains and the independent health food stores account for \$329 million and organic food box delivery companies add another \$20 million.

Direct sales of certified organic produce at farmers markets across the country and at the farm gate are estimated to be worth at least \$50 million.

Organic food is more popular in BC than in other provinces. A striking 26% of all Canadian organic food sales are in BC which has only 13% of Canada's population.

Continued growth is expected over the next few years with the introduction of a Canada Organic logo when the new federal Organic Products Regulations are implemented.

Ralph Martin, the OACC Director, expressed appreciation for practical collaboration to OACC funding partners, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Alberta Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands and the Nielsen Company. "Real numbers help Canadian farmers and processors understand the potential for organic products sourced in Canada. Let's meet our own market with our own products".

The Report "Retail Sales of Certified Organic Food Products, in Canada, in 2006" can be found on the OACC website: www.oacc.info/index_e.asp

For more information contact: Ralph Martin at rmartin@nsac.ca or 902-893-6679

Organic Shortage Holds Back High-potential Market, Analyst

By Jess Halliday

25/05/2007 - Europe's first Whole Foods Market is set to open in London in two weeks' time, but the vast potential of the organic market is being curtailed by a shortage of organic produce, according to Organic Monitor.

The US company currently has 193 outlets in its home country and in the UK, including its five Fresh and Wild stores in the UK. The new 80,000 sq ft store, which will take up two floors of a former department store, will open to much fan-fare on June 6.

The opening was initially planned for August 2006, but was then postponed to February 2007. Organic Monitor analyst Amarjit Sahota told FoodNavigator.com that one of the major reasons behind the nine-month delay was the shortage of organic supplies. WFM simply could not fill its shelves.

He said that even before WFM retailers were grappling with a shortfall in organic produce. Quite simply, not enough organic fruit, vegetables, grains and dairy are being produced in the UK - and the same is true all across Europe.

This is a problem not only for retailers, who look to sell organic produce in its natural form, but also for food manufacturers looking to develop food products using organic ingredients.

For instance, Sainsbury's is selling 'transitional organic' milk, as it cannot source enough organic milk from the UK. Tesco and Asda, on the other hand, have sought to get around the problem by sourcing dairy from mainland Europe, according to Sahota.

There is certainly potential for the UK organic market to grow. Organic Monitor estimates that the UK organic food & drink market grew by an impressive 25 per cent last year to £1.97bn (€2.9bn).

The shortage of organic produce to meet demand could curb development of the market in general.

The UK's Soil Association has also expressed concern over the organic supply. In March it criticised the government's decision to end funding for organic vegetable and potato trial, calling the decision a potential threat to the sector.

On the positive side, and presuming it can keep its shelves replete, Sahota said that the advent of WFM will be a "real boost for the UK organics market".

Of course, one store alone will have a big impact. But if this proves a success, WFM will look to open 40 stores in the UK alone, after which it may turn its attention to mainland Europe.

But Sahota thinks that European expansion is still a few years off. "Europe is more fragmented than the US, and US companies commonly make this mistake."

The superstore is renowned for selling at competitive prices, and will make organic foods more widely available.

Prices are not as high as in existing, smaller organic food shops in the UK, such as Planet Organic, which can only buy in stocks in smaller volumes.

WFM will be able to buy in bulk so its prices will be more on a par with mainstream supermarkets. But while organics take up only a small proportion of the shelf space in mainstream supermarkets, WFM is entirely dedicated to organic and natural products.

WFM has clearly chosen the location of its first store carefully. The typical WFM customer is educated, middle-class and has purchasing power - a good match with South Kensington demographic slant.

But Sahota said that although such stores will not be frequented by all consumer groups, mainstreaming of organics is already happening.

For instance, Tesco has reported that 80 per cent of its customers buy at least one organic product, he said. Asda, which typically positions in a low-cost platform, recently announced a range of organic ready meals for children - a first amongst the big-5.

Canada Raising Limits on Pesticide Residues

By Kelly Patterson, CanWest News Service; Ottawa Citizen

May 08, 2007 Canada is set to raise its limits on pesticide residues on fruit and vegetables for hundreds of products. The move is part of an effort to harmonize Canadian pesticide rules with those of the United States, which allows higher residue levels for 40 per cent of the pesticides it regulates. Proponents of this change feel that the difference in regulation standards has hurt possible trade opportunities with the US. Others have stated that Canada should not be measuring its standards against any nation, especially those of the United States, whose regulations are below those of the EU.

Full article:

<http://www.canada.com/topics/bodyandhealth/story.html?id=2fa3e7f8-9c83-4ea9-ad60-c13b548fe688&k=6929&p=2>

Canadian Agriculture: Impacts of the Emerging Ethanol Sector

What will happen to Canadian agriculture now that the “buzz” surrounding ethanol is becoming a reality?

Recent commitments by the Canadian federal government have added momentum to plans by ethanol producers. In eastern Canada, the ethanol industry is more developed while in the west, the effects are just starting to be felt.

We are already seeing the ripple effects of the rapidly expanding ethanol market in the US and other parts of the globe. Now it's Canada's turn. What will happen to Canadian agricultural markets and agribusiness as the ethanol sector expands? Who will benefit and who will suffer? The prospect of new demand for agricultural commodities is attractive, for both the rural economy and the environment. In countries where the renewable fuels industry is further advanced, major shifts in usage are directly and indirectly affecting markets and business practices, but not all of the effects have been predicted – or positive. All players in agriculture and related sectors – marketers and handlers, livestock feeders, processors, input suppliers, transportation providers, lenders, public policymakers and investors – need knowledge and foresight to adjust effectively to changes in the marketplace.

Informa Economics is responding to this need with a multi-client study, Canadian Agriculture: Impacts of the Emerging Ethanol Sector. This study will analyze the implications of an expanding ethanol industry on players in the agricultural sector. This syndicated study offers value to participants by providing the benefits of a comprehensive study at a fraction of the cost. For more information see: <http://www.informaecon.com>

Assessing Canola Oil Production for Bio-Diesel on Prince Edward Island

With funding from the AAFC Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI) program two of Prince Edward Island’s progressive business consultants Bruce Matheson and Wayne MacKinnon have been studying the potential for the Island to participate directly in the global bio-diesel fuel industry, through the establishment of an on-Island processing plant fuelled primarily by locally produced canola (or other) feedstock.

“Our province’s ability to participate in this industry is determinate on its capability to produce (or acquire) the required feedstock inputs to fuel a bio-diesel processing facility,” said MacKinnon. “With the increasing world-wide demand for feedstock inputs for bio-diesel production, it is probable that the province will not be able to acquire feedstocks (such as canola) from other jurisdictions, and therefore, the question becomes one of can we produce sufficient feedstocks internally to create a viable, cost-effective, bio-diesel industry, and what are the parameters within which we will need to operate.”

This is a question not only posed for our province, but also for many other communities seeking to participate in the bio-diesel industry as processors.

The farmer led group whom contracted the consultants to do this study hopes that the project will be significant in that it will assess the province’s ability to produce sufficient canola stock for a bio-diesel industry and also consider emerging feedstock research in such areas as algae (currently being researched at the University of Prince Edward Island).

This project will deliver an up-to-date assessment on Prince Edward Island’s bio-diesel potential, both as of today, and for the future based on achieving a conversion to canola production and emerging results in alternative feedstock research.

It is expected to achieve a realistic approach (model) for the promotion of a bio-diesel industry in the province, and to set out the changes necessary to activate this bio-diesel industry.

In the short-term, the project has revealed lessons about the magnitude of effort that will be required to align the farm community, the provincial and federal governments, and industry to achieve a bio-diesel industry in the province. This alignment to be the key to establishing Prince Edward Island’s bio-diesel potential. Lessons can be learned from the efforts invested in realizing the beef processing facility and the re-invented hog processing plant on the Island.

The next step for this project, is to discuss with farm organizations and the incoming provincial government how an alignment can take place to produce a synergy that will achieve a bio-diesel capability, and provide for an environment where the farm community is confident that a conversion to canola production will provide positive and long-term financial results for their businesses.

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