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To illustrate how little has changed in four years, other than conditions becoming worse, the 2008 Nader/Gonzalez campaign is posting these policy positions on various injustices, necessities, and redirections that were prepared initially for the 2004 Nader/Camejo campaign. Such a short historical context should give our supporters and viewers an even greater sense of urgency to stop the corporate interests' and the corporate governments' autocratic control -- and the resulting deterioration -- of our society and country.

A Family Farm: Consumer Agricultural Policy

American agriculture is being dominated by two contrary trends in the 21st Century. First, conventional family farm agricultural production is being destroyed by low prices and lack of market access due to mergers, acquisitions by big agribusinesses and their monopsony power over farmers. Second, there is a boom in more sustainable agricultural production and consumption due to increased consumer awareness and demand for healthy, fresh, and nutritious food. Federal policy must focus on the farm and food system as a continuum that provides many benefits. We must advance the production, marketing, use and disposal of food and fiber in accordance with consumer, environmental, worker and family farm standards of justice and sustainability. Additionally, we must challenge misallocation of resources caused by the growing concentration and wealth by agribusiness, chemical, biotechnology and financial corporations over the food and fiber economy. This entails shifting government policy to provide research and information relevant to independent food producers, organic farmers, insuring open and competitive markets, promoting new food infrastructures, and preventing pollution and degradation of natural resources.

Department of Agriculture Devolves into the Agribusiness Industry Department

Ralph Nader concurs with *USDA, Inc.: How Agribusiness has Hijacked Regulatory Policy at the U.S. Department of Agriculture*. The report illustrates how an agency that President Lincoln once described as the "People's Department" has become the agency for Agribusiness over a series of Administrations during the last several decades supporting big corporate farming that destroys the environment, produces often unhealthy food, and undermines traditional farming, families, and their rural way of life.

USDA Inc. highlights what occurs in many federal agencies: appointees are representatives of industry and trade associations, their lawyers, and lobbyists. It is a prime example of how Washington, DC has become corporate-controlled territory. The Department of Agriculture epitomizes this big-business takeover of government. For example:

- Current USDA Secretary Ann Veneman previously served on the board of biotech company Calgene (later taken over by Monsanto)
- Veneman's Chief of Staff, Dale Moore, previously served as director of legislative affairs for the National Cattlemen's Association

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- USDA Deputy Secretary James Moseley was a co-owner of a large factory farm in Indiana, Infinity Pork LLC
- Deputy Under Secretary Floyd Gaibler, was the executive director of the dairy industry-funded National Cheese Institute
- Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations Mary Waters was a senior director and legislative counsel for ConAgra Foods, one of the country's largest food processors.

The voices of consumers, environmentalists, and family farmers have been shut out. As a result of this agribusiness takeover, the short-term profits of a few economically powerful companies come before protection of the environment and the family farm, production of healthy food, and the interests of consumers. USDA has:

- **Blocked Regulation for "Mad Cow Disease":** USDA has resisted strict safety measures and testing procedures (recommended by most independent experts) and blocked efforts by meatpackers to install their own testing mechanisms, for fear that consumers might come to think meat from other meatpackers unsafe. USDA has also prevented country-of-origin labeling, preventing consumers from having information relevant to their food purchases, after a breakout of mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) in Canada.
- **Allowed Captive Supply in Meatpacking:** Meatpacking is dominated by a handful of giant corporations, forcing ranchers into one-sided contracts favoring the packers. USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers, and Stockyards Administration is required to guard against anti-competitive practices but has looked the other way. GIPSA Administrator Donna Reifschneider previously served as president of the National Pork Producers Council.
- **Weakened Meat Inspection Policies:** Despite a resurgence of problems like E. coli bacteria, listeria, and other hazards, USDA has endorsed a watered-down version of the meat trade association proposal, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), while at the same time relying on the questionable procedure of irradiation for dealing with contamination.
- **Advocated for Biotech Foods:** USDA Secretary Veneman has been a strong advocate of biotech, vilifying critics, downplaying safety concerns by scientists, and falsely claiming that biotech's opponents are blocking solutions to world hunger. See <http://www.genewatch.org/>. USDA leadership has continued the previous Administration's opposition to the overwhelming desire by consumers to have genetically engineered food products labeled in the supermarkets.
- **Promoted "Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations":** Massive livestock facilities, which house and feed 1,000 or more animals in closely confined conditions, contribute greatly to agricultural pollution. These factory animal farms produce enormous quantities of manure, polluting water, air, and land. USDA has promoted factory animal farms with little concern for the impact on the environment or smaller farms. The official in charge of regulating these massive livestock facilities, Deputy Secretary James R. Moseley, was a partner in Infinity Pork LLC, a factory animal farm that raised 50,000 hogs annually.

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The Nader Campaign endorses the proposals of the Organization for Competitive Markets:

- Re-appraisal of ethics rules, in order to prevent government officials from overseeing policies that directly affect the interest of their former employees
- Enhancement of Congressional oversight over regulatory appointees
- Independent evaluation of the viability of USDA's dual role as both a promoter of U.S. agricultural products and a regulator of food safety
- Further research on revolving-door conflicts-of-interest at USDA

The past and future financial interests of many regulators (who usually return to their industries) are getting in the way of effective legislation, effective regulation that advances protection of the environment, the public health, and a diverse farm economy. With each decade the perspectives of family farmers, consumers, and environmentalists are being increasingly shut out of USDA and being replaced by the destructive policies and demands of giant agribusiness corporations.

For a PDF of the report: *USDA, Inc.: How Agribusiness has Hijacked Regulatory Policy at the U.S. Department of Agriculture*, visit www.agribusinessaccountability.org.

See also the Organization for Competitive Markets, at www.competitivemarkets.com.

Food Safety

The Nader campaign is concerned about food safety in the United States. Agribusiness has taken control of the Department of Agriculture, ramping up advocacy for biotech food and support for agribusiness production approaches, while weakening inspection policies and limiting regulation of food. At the same time, increased consumer awareness and demand for healthy, fresh, and nutritious food is resulting in the production of more healthy, organic foods.

Federal policy must focus on the farm and food system as a continuum that provides many benefits. We must advance the production, marketing, use, and disposal of food and fiber in accordance with consumer, environmental, worker, and family-farm standards of justice and sustainability. The Nader campaign favors shifting government policy to provide research and information relevant to independent food producers and organic farmers, thereby insuring open and competitive markets, promoting new food infrastructures, and preventing pollution and degradation of natural resources. We support the following campaigns of the Center for Food Safety (CFS):

- Genetically Engineered Food
- Food Irradiation
- Mad Cow Disease

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- Aquaculture
- rBGH/Hormones
- Sewage Sludge, and
- Organic Foods

These issues are described by the CFS below.

Genetically Engineered Crops

The genetic engineering of plants and animals is looming as one of the greatest and most intractable environmental challenges of the 21st Century. Already, this novel technology has invaded our grocery stores and our kitchen pantries by fundamentally altering some of our most important staple food crops.

By being able to take the genetic material from one organism and insert it into the permanent genetic code of another, biotechnologists have engineered numerous novel creations, such as potatoes with bacteria genes, "super" pigs with human growth genes, fish with cattle growth genes, tomatoes with flounder genes, and thousands of other plants, animals and insects. At an alarming rate, these creations are now being patented and released into the environment.

Currently, up to 40 percent of U.S. corn is genetically engineered as is 80 percent of soybeans. It has been estimated that upwards of 60 percent of processed foods on supermarket shelves--from soda to soup, crackers to condiments--contain genetically engineered ingredients.

A number of studies over the past decade have revealed that genetically engineered foods can pose serious risks to humans, domesticated animals, wildlife and the environment. Human health effects can include higher risks of toxicity, allergenicity, antibiotic resistance, immune-suppression and cancer. As for environmental impacts, the use of genetic engineering in agriculture will lead to uncontrolled biological pollution, threatening numerous microbial, plant and animal species with extinction, and the potential contamination of all non-genetically engineered life forms with novel and possibly hazardous genetic material.

Despite these long-term and wide-ranging risks, Congress has yet to pass a single law intended to manage them responsibly. This despite the fact that our regulatory agencies have failed to adequately address the human health or environmental impacts of genetic engineering. On the federal level, eight agencies attempt to regulate biotechnology using 12 different statutes or laws that were written long before genetically engineered food, animals and insects became a reality. The result has been a regulatory tangle, where any regulation even exists, as existing laws are grossly manipulated to manage threats they were never intended to regulate. Among many bizarre

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examples of these regulatory anomalies is the current attempt by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to regulate genetically engineered fish as "new animal drugs." Yet, at the same time, the FDA claims it has no jurisdiction over genetically engineered pet fish like the Glofish.

The haphazard and negligent agency regulation of biotechnology has been a disaster for consumers and the environment. Unsuspecting consumers by the tens of millions are being allowed to purchase and consume unlabeled genetically engineered foods, despite a finding by FDA scientists that these foods could pose serious risks. And new genetically engineered crops are being approved by federal agencies despite admissions that they will contaminate native and conventional plants and pose other significant new environmental threats. In short, there has been a complete abdication of any responsible legislative or regulatory oversight of genetically engineered foods. Clearly, now is a critical time to challenge the government's negligence in managing the human health and environmental threats from biotechnology.

CFS seeks to halt the approval, commercialization or release of any new genetically engineered crops until they have been thoroughly tested and found safe for human health and the environment. CFS maintains that any foods that already contain genetically engineered ingredients must be clearly labeled. Additionally, CFS advocates the containment and reduction of existing genetically engineered crops.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org

Mad Cow Disease

For over 30 years, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Department of Agriculture have been flirting with a mad cow disease epidemic. The public has largely been kept in the dark about regulatory decisions leading toward this potential public health catastrophe and even about the dangers associated with eating contaminated meat and meat products. Recently, some of the glaring deficiencies in the regulation of the U.S. meat production system were revealed when a cow with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) was discovered in Washington.

Mad cow disease, or BSE, belongs to a group of related brain-wasting diseases known as "transmissible spongiform encephalopathies" (TSEs). While TSEs are known to occur spontaneously, they also are spread through cattle herds by feeding infected nervous system tissue to other animals. Beginning in the 1970s, the meat rendering industry began processing dead, dying, disabled, and diseased animals for use in livestock feed--and pet feed--as a way to increase the protein consumption of cattle, pigs, sheep, and poultry (cattle can get the disease by eating less than one gram of diseased meat and bone meal fed to them as a protein source). Consequently, these quasi-cannibalistic feeding practices quickly spread the fatal TSE diseases,

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resulting in hundreds of thousands of diseased animals, some of which ended up in the food supply in Britain and Europe. Over 140 people in Britain have been infected with vCJD from contaminated beef.

Humans who eat contaminated beef products are at risk of contracting the human version of mad cow disease known as new variant Creutzfeld-Jakob disease (vCJD). The disease slowly eats holes in the brain over a matter of years, turning it sponge-like, and invariably results in death. There is no known cure, treatment, or vaccine for TSE diseases.

Tissue from infected cows' central nervous systems (including brain or spinal cord) is the most infectious part of a cow. Such tissue may be found in hot dogs, taco fillings, bologna and other products containing gelatin, and ground or chopped meat. The process of stripping every last piece of meat from a cow carcass, including connective tissue from bone, can contaminate this meat with infected nervous system tissue. Transmission of vCJD between people has also occurred in over two-dozen cases as a result of transplants or injections of body tissue from infected people.

Despite the adoption of additional safeguards following the discovery of mad cow in the United States, the FDA still allows the risky practice of recycling animal offal into feed: ruminant animals (cattle, sheep, goats, deer) are fed to non-ruminants (pigs and poultry), and these non-ruminants are rendered and fed back to ruminants. Such practices are banned in Britain and Europe. Also, in spite of the wake-up call the FDA and the USDA recently received, only a small percentage of slaughtered or soon-to-be slaughtered cows are tested for BSE in the U.S. By contrast, Britain tests 70 percent of its beef cattle and Japan tests 100 percent.

So far, none of the vCJD cases diagnosed in the U.S. have been linked to domestically-produced beef, but this fact may have little bearing on the reality of the situation: the disease has a long incubation period and few dementia-related deaths in the U.S. are investigated. Creutzfeld-Jakob disease is not yet a reportable disease with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

CFS seeks to make CJD a reportable disease so occurrences can be tracked, and to plug the loopholes that still exist in FDA and USDA regulations, i.e., require testing of all cattle over 20 months of age and ban all animal products from feed.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org/mad_cow_di3.cfm

Aquaculture

The farming of fish and seafood, often referred to as aquaculture, is the fastest growing sector of the world food production industry--and one of the fastest growing threats to our water environments and native species. More than 100 fresh and marine water species are farm-raised in

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open-water net pens, land-locked ponds and fully enclosed land-based systems. Rapidly increasing demand for fish and fish products has outpaced our regulatory agencies' ability to manage emerging environmental and human health threats from the burgeoning aquaculture industry. The exponential growth in the industry has created enormous pressure on fresh water and marine environments and native, non-farmed species. In the absence of minimal state and national regulatory standards, this country's 4,000 aquaculture facilities are largely left to their own designs.

The environmental problems arising from the industry are altering the biodiversity of entire ecosystems. Some of the impacts include the introduction of non-native farmed fish species that diminish or replace indigenous fish populations; the propagation of deadly fish diseases; and the over-fishing of vast quantities of non-commercial fish to feed carnivorous farmed fish, such as salmon. Yet fish are not the only organisms affected--federally protected marine mammals and birds are continually harmed by entanglement in net pens and by the concentration of harmful wastes and industrial drugs and chemicals escaping into open waters.

Consumption of aquaculture-bred fish is raising serious human health and food safety concerns as well (almost all the catfish and trout, and close to half the salmon and shrimp sold in the U.S. are raised in aquaculture facilities). Farmed fish often receive large doses of antibiotics to protect them from disease and are exposed to a variety of pesticides used to kill parasites and body fungi--all of which accumulate in the fish's tissues.

CFS is working to activate and educate federal agencies, consumers, chefs, grocers, fish retailers and legislators on the need to protect seafood consumers and our water environments from the dangers posed by existing aquaculture practices.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org/aquacultur.cfm

rBGH/Hormones

With little regard for the cows or the humans that eventually eat them, the beef industry pumps growth hormones into upwards of 80 percent of beef cattle raised in the U.S. each year. These hormones are intended to boost growth rates and increase body mass--think cows on steroids. Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture does not allow producers to treat chickens or pigs with hormones, the agency does permit the practice for cattle and sheep.

In addition to hormones used to increase milk production (see rBGH), there are six hormones approved for use in beef cattle. Two of these hormones, estradiol and zeranol, are likely to have negative human health effects, including cancer and impacts on child development, when their residues are present in meat. Concerns about these potential health impacts have left many scientists doubtful of the safety of hormone use in meat production.

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The negative environmental impact of hormones entering waterways from livestock feedlots also is cause for alarm. Researchers have found that fish can exhibit significant effects from this pollution, e.g., females begin to exhibit male characteristics, and vice versa, in areas of high hormone concentrations.

The European Union has criticized the use of hormones in meat production since the 1980s due to strong concerns about their safety. The EU prohibited the use of hormones for non-therapeutic purposes in 1985, and banned the importation of U.S. beef in 1988 to avoid importing hormone-treated meat. Since then, there has been a heated dispute between the United States and the EU over the ban, and, in a 1999 ruling, the World Trade Organization (WTO) decided in favor of the US. However, in April of that year, the EU's Scientific Committee on Veterinary Measures relating to Public Health (SCVPH) released a report indicating that the use of the six growth hormones posed a risk to consumers. The EU ban remains in place.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org/rbgh_hormo.cfm

Sewage Sludge

Every time you flush your toilet or clean a paintbrush in your sink, you may be unwittingly contributing fertilizer used to grow the food in your pantry. Beginning in the early 1990s, millions of tons of potentially-toxic sewage sludge have been applied to millions of acres of America's farmland as food crop fertilizer. Selling sewage sludge to farmers for use on cropland has been a favored government program for disposing of the unwanted byproducts from municipal wastewater treatment plants. But sewage sludge is anything but the benign fertilizer the Environmental Protection Agency says it is.

Sewage sludge includes anything that is flushed, poured, or dumped into our nation's wastewater system--a vast, toxic mix of wastes collected from countless sources, from homes to chemical industries to hospitals. The sludge being spread on our crop fields is a dangerous stew of heavy metals, industrial compounds, viruses, bacteria, drug residues, and radioactive material. In fact, hundreds of people have fallen ill after being exposed to sewage sludge fertilizer--suffering such symptoms as respiratory distress, headaches, nausea, rashes, reproductive complications, cysts, and tumors.

The compounds added and formed during the sewage treatment process create an unknown and unpredictable product, one that should fall under the category of hazardous waste. Monitoring and regulating the content of these dangerous combinations has fallen terrifyingly short of protecting public health and the environment. Currently, no records are kept on the date or location of these lethal land applications, allowing these toxins to enter the soil of our nation's cropland untraced.

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Despite the apparent danger of using sludge in food production, federal regulations are woefully lax. The EPA monitors only nine of the thousands of pathogens commonly found in sludge; the agency rarely performs site inspections of sewage treatment plants; and it almost never inspects the farms that use sludge fertilizer. Regulations governing the use and disposal of sewage sludge have been criticized by both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Research Council, as well as numerous medical professionals, engineers, and activists.

CFS seeks to end the use of sewage sludge as an agricultural fertilizer--first through an immediate moratorium on its application to croplands. CFS strongly suggests that the government launch an independent investigation into all specific claims that sludge has caused harm to people, animals, and the environment.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org/sewage_sludge.cfm

Organic and Beyond

An historic struggle is currently raging in this country over the future of food in the 21st century. A grassroots movement for organic, ecological and humane food is now challenging the decades-long dominance of "industrial" corporate-controlled agribusiness. While industrial agriculture still dominates our crop fields and supermarkets, organic agriculture is now expanding faster than any other sector in U.S. food production. It is now a \$9 billion industry growing at 20 percent per year. Moreover, thousands of farmers and producers are even pushing beyond organic to establish food production systems that are locally based, humane, and socially just and that encourage biodiversity.

Despite organic agriculture's positive growth, it has reached a critical juncture in its struggle for a more sustainable food future. On October 21, 2002, national organic standards became law. While these standards are worthy of celebration, they are not the final word in the protection and promotion of organic food systems.

Unfortunately, the future of organic food is in the hands of an Administration and a regulatory agency -- the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) -- that are backed by powerful agribusiness interests, all of which are openly hostile to the organic and beyond alternative. In less than a year from passage, the Bush administration has sought to seriously undermine the national organic standards in a number of significant ways, including creating numerous potential loopholes that would allow placing unacceptable chemical materials on a list of substances approved for organic use; a number of unapproved additives to be used in processing organic foods; eliminating outdoor access requirements for poultry; eliminating the requirement that livestock feed be 100 percent organic; and forcing small-scale, farmer-based organic certifiers out of the program. If the Bush administration's current policies are continued, the integrity of all organic food could be fatally compromised, and this crucial alternative to industrial agriculture would be lost.

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CFS seeks to maintain strong organic standards that live up to the quality and integrity that consumers expect from organic foods while evolving the ethic by promoting agriculture that is local, small-scale and family operated, biologically diverse, humane, and socially just. The ultimate goal of the Organic & Beyond campaign is to replace the industrial agriculture model with a new vision of farming with the natural world.

On the Web, visit: www.centerforfoodsafety.org/organic_an.cfm

Hemp: A Plant that is Consistent with a Sustainable Future

In September 2004, the Bush Administration decided that it will not appeal to the US Supreme Court a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision (February 6, 2004), *Hemp Industries Association v. DEA*. The decision allowed the sale and consumption of hemp food products in the United States. Three years ago the Drug Enforcement Administration issued a rule attempting to ban hemp food products. For more information on the decision, visit: <http://www.votehemp.com/>.

Nader's Position on Hemp

Ralph Nader supports industrial hemp as a renewable resource with many important uses: fuel, fiber, food, paper and other uses. Industrial hemp is a commercial crop grown for its seed and fiber and the products made from them such as oil, seed cake, and hurds (stalk cores). Industrial hemp is one of the longest and strongest fibers in the plant kingdom, and it has thousands of potential uses. In need of alternative crops and aware of the growing market for industrial hemp - particularly for biocomposite products such as automobile parts, farmers in the United States are forced to watch from the sidelines while Canadian, French and Chinese farmers grow the crop and American manufacturers import it from them. Federal legislators, meanwhile, continue to ignore the issue. They have failed to hold a hearing or introduce a bill that would remove industrial hemp from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration list of illicit substances. The United States should implement a licensing system, similar to the one that Canada has in place, that ensures only legitimate farmers are allowed to grow industrial hemp from seeds certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The certified seeds would guarantee that the psychoactive substance in the plant is so low that it has no effect (analogous to the negligible amount of psychoactive material in poppy seeds).

Grown in rotation, industrial hemp increases the yields of future crops grown on the same field. Because it is weed resistant, hemp production is less reliant on herbicides, and because it is naturally bright, paper made from hemp requires no chlorine bleach, which produces environmental toxins, in addition to its rail transportation risks.

As a fast-growing plant, it can be a good candidate for biobased fuel blends, helping to minimize our reliance on petroleum. This is why James Woolsey, former head of the CIA strongly supports legalizing industrial hemp agriculture. It is already making automobiles more sustainable by replacing toxic and difficult to recycle glass-filled car parts.

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One of the most promising technologies to come from the hemp plant is bio-composites -- plastics reinforced with natural fiber. Already, more than 2 million automobiles made in the United States by Ford and DaimlerChrysler contain interior parts made from hemp fiber. These parts are lighter, cost less to manufacture and recycle more easily than conventional fiberglass-reinforced parts. Although they are the most promising large market for industrial hemp, biocomposite automobile parts are not the only products that could rely heavily on industrial hemp. If a domestic supply of industrial hemp were available, Interface, Inc., the largest commercial carpet company in the world said it would produce industrial hemp carpets. And, the clothing manufacturer Patagonia would be able to use domestically produced hemp rather than hemp from China. Other opportunities for industrial hemp use exist in the beauty products, clothing and paper markets.

Hemp seed is one of the very few significant dietary sources for omega-3 Essential Fatty Acid, which is chronically deficient in the American diet. Alternative sources for omega 3 are increasingly important as fish and fish oil supplements. These traditional omega 3 sources, have been found to be contaminated in many cases with unhealthy levels of mercury and other environmental contaminants.

The U.S. government is waging an expensive and unnecessary war against industrial hemp. In 1999, the U.S. Customs Service seized a shipment of hemp seed from Canada, intended for use as bird feed. The New York Times called this "one of the more bizarre episodes of Washington's campaign to curb illicit drug use." In October, 2001, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued a rule banning the sale of foods produced from industrial hemp. The Hemp Industries Association (HIA) sued to force the DEA to rescind its rule, and last February they won their case in a unanimous 3-0 decision by the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. In a continuing waste of taxpayer money, however, the U.S. Department of Justice has petitioned for a rehearing of the *HIA v. DEA* decision by the full Ninth Circuit, asserting that the three-judge panel misread the law.

In March 1998 a petition was filed with the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Department of Agriculture by a coalition of farmers, businesses, environmental groups and others seeking the enactment of regulations permitting the domestic production of a crop known as industrial hemp. Groups petitioning included Essential Information, Resource Conservation Alliance, AHA - Vote/American Hemp Association, The Body Shop, Co-op America, Institute for Local Self Reliance, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Joe American Horse, North American Industrial Hemp Council, Patagonia Inc., Penokee Mountain Products Co., Preston Parish, Farmer, Rainforest Action Network, Real Goods, Rethink Paper, Tierra Madre Co., Neal Jorgenson, Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, U. of Wisconsin Madison, Wisconsin Agribusiness Council, Wisconsin Federation of Cooperatives, Wisconsin Fertilizer and Chemical Association, Wisconsin Industrial Hemp Initiative, Wisconsin National Farmers Organization, Ohio Hempery, Deep E Co. Interface Inc. Without addressing the substance of the issue the DEA denied the petition during both Clinton and Bush II administrations.

Even more shameful is the government's ongoing assault on First Native American sovereignty in the persecution of Alex White Plume for growing industrial hemp on the Pine Ridge reservation in

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South Dakota in accordance with Oglala Sioux Ordinance No. 98-27, under which growing hemp is legal and growing marijuana is not. In 2000 the DEA raided South Dakota's prime ridge Indian reservation, near the Black Hills. The DEA used helicopters and agents spread across White Plume's property on the Pine Ridge Reservation to uproot the growing plants. These Native Americans were trying to eek out a living in an area that is one of the poorest in the nation with a per capita income of one-quarter the nation's average. The Lakota claim they have the right to grow hemp on their land under the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty that encouraged the Oglala to take up farming as a way to end their nomadic travels across the plains. The treaty gave each family the right to take up to 320 acres for farming, and promised free seeds and supplies.

U.S. farmers, universities, and workers should be allowed to benefit from the research development of bio-composites and from the other outcomes of growing industrial hemp in the United States. These benefits can only be realized with reasonable regulations.

More and more state legislatures are recognizing the importance of hemp as a cash crop. State laws concerning research on the use of hemp, the economic impact of hemp and decriminalizing the cultivation of industrial hemp have been passed in Hawaii, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Montana, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia. For a detailed review of legislative activity on hemp see: http://www.votehemp.com/state_legis.html

There are a lot of companies, large and small, involved in importing hemp and hemp products in the U.S. Among them are Ford, DaimlerChrysler, Johnson Controls, Wal-Mart, Michaels, The Body Shop, Dr. Bronner's Magic Soaps, Living Tree Paper Company, and the list goes on and on with all kinds of manufacturers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, and Mom & Pop's. See <http://www.thehia.org/membersites.cfm> for a listing of members of the Hemp Industries Association. The North American Industrial Hemp Council, a trade association, is made up a variety of corporations including International Paper, Booz Allen Hamilton, Interface Research Corp., as well as government officials, academics and researchers to advocate for hemp production in the United States. See <http://naihc.org/>

Hemp has long been demonized by the DEA, other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations to advance their dragnet agendas -- and their budgets -- to the detriment of legitimate U.S. businesses and consumers. In September, 2003 the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture passed a resolution urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to "collaboratively develop and adopt an official definition of industrial hemp that comports with definitions currently used by countries producing hemp." The Canadian Mounties, the British Bobbies, and the French Gendarmes have all found a way to address the law enforcement issues associated with industrial hemp while allowing their country's farmers to grow and profit from the crop. U.S. law enforcement officials should be able to adopt similar reasonable standards.

For additional information on the hemp food ban and industrial hemp in general, visit:

The Hemp Food Industry Association, on the Web at: www.hemp.co.uk/

Vote Hemp, on the Web at: www.votehemp.com/