

## The Almonds are Falling

Two handlers of conventional (non-organic) almonds each had an instance where the almonds they packed were contaminated with Salmonella. These two instances occurred over a period of 6 years. A few folks got tummy aches. This so roused the folks who control the almond industry that they mandated that the entire crop be fumigated. This is doubly tragic in that the almond crop has been short for the past three years. Finally, when they got a bumper crop, the largest ever, of 1.3 billion pounds, instead of rejoicing in the bountifulness of this California earth, albeit so abused, they can think of nothing better than to fumigate it. Your American heritage - fumigated! Something like 600,000,000 pounds will be treated with the remainder exported to civilized countries where fumigation is forbidden.

Now the real culprit is large scale mechanization. Nothing can compare with the speed and fury of modern harvesting - as much as 700 acres of almonds are harvested per day. The trees are shaken mechanically and the almonds are hauled to the edge of the orchard where they are piled up into a mountain and covered with a tarp. Now these almonds are moist and with the sun beating down this is an ideal breeding ground for any sort of untoward bacilli. Conventional orchards are lunar landscapes, there is no cover crop of mixed grasses and legumes. There is no biodiversity. The cow manure, often in liquid form, that is dumped on the orchard is bound to mix with the almonds. Whereas in organic orchards there is a rich, very diverse covering of plant life. This layer of life acts as a natural buffer reducing the danger of contamination. Also fresh manure is not used in organic orchards it must be composted first.

Instead of fumigation they could have encouraged more orchards to become organic. They could have altered the way the almonds are harvested. The analogy with the unspeakably filthy conditions in slaughter houses applies:- instead of cleaning them up, their solution is to irradiate meat.

The substance chosen to fumigate the crop is a delight called propylene oxide. It is a carcinogen. It used to be used as a fuel additive for racing cars but this was discontinued as it proved too dangerous. No one gets near the stuff unless dressed in a space suit equipped with a respirator, goggles, rubber hands and boots. Furthermore it is an explosive. It produces more explosive energy per pound than anything short of nuclear, but without the "environmental problems" of radiation, you'll be edified to know. (Those almonds in your breakfast granola might help start your day with more of a bang than you ever imagined!)

Archaeologists in coming bright years will be amazed. After digging through layers of petrified excrement they will shake their heads in disbelief as they decipher the newspaper scraps. Here a generation allowed its food to be fumigated, sterilized, "pasteurized", irradiated and genetically mutated. Not one of its elected representatives spoke out. Not one presidential candidate muttered a word about the slow poisoning of America.



***I should have stopped after the  
"pasteurized" almond smoothie.***

Reprinted from Living Tree Community Foods