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INTERNATIONAL

# NEWS TO USE

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News To Use: Coffee Talk

## Coffee Talk



*Coffee Talk is Wellcorps International's quick scan of the latest news and developments in emerging health and science, politics and environmental activities. Be sure to tune in regularly for News To Use at the office or in class, and don't forget to use the convenient click-through links to PDFs and websites – your source for facts behind the headlines!*

### Pharma-Crops – Do You Know What's Growing In Your State?

Most of the genetically engineered (GE) crops currently on the market are food or feed crops that have been modified for agronomic purposes – to better repel pests or to be compatible with chemical pesticides. A new generation of crops is now being modified for different purposes – to produce medicines or industrial compounds such as plastics.



Many of these substances are being produced in corn and other food crops visually indistinguishable from their non-industrial counterparts. Contamination of food crops with drugs or industrial chemicals could occur through seed mixing and cross-pollination. The potential contamination of food crops with the hundreds, if not thousands, of drugs or industrial compounds promised by this industry poses new and serious risks to the safety of the food system. Pharmaceutical and industrial compounds also pose potentially serious risks if released into the environment.

In July 2007, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its long-awaited draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the regulation of genetically-engineered (GE) organisms, and presents a ban on food crops as one option for overseeing pharmaceutical and industrial crops. This report also presents a weaker option which many scientists believe could be catastrophic for human health.

Take time to understand this very important health issue by reading this report as well as the Union of Concerned Scientists position paper. What is decided in the coming months will have far-reaching impacts on human health and international trade consequences, potentially affecting the United States' ability to ship food crops abroad and your family's well-being.



[USDA Introduction of Genetically Engineered Organisms – Draft Environmental Impact Statement July 2007](#)

[Union of Concerned Scientists Position Paper – Pharmaceutical and Industrial Crops](#)

## Nanoparticles In Your Favorite Cosmetics & Skin Care – Beauty And The Beast?

It seemed like a great idea on the surface – making sunscreen in skin care and cosmetics products more easily applied and less noticeable on the skin. However, leading scientists are now raising serious concerns about nanosized particles in some of the country's leading brands.

Zinc oxide and titanium dioxide are two of the materials utilized in sunscreen products to reflect the skin-damaging rays of the sun away from the body. In earlier formulations, these ingredients would give products a white, hard-to-mask look on the skin. Today, these ingredients along with a host of other chemicals, are being produced on a nanoscale of size, so that application goes on in one, smooth stroke, leaving no visible residue.



What concerns research scientists is that in the age of nanotechnology, what you put on your skin is actually going through your skin.

Nanoparticles are so small that they easily penetrate the various layers of skin, migrating through cell walls directly into capillaries. From capillaries these tiny particles, some of which are metallics and minerals, enter blood vessels, and from blood vessels flow directly into arteries. Once inside arteries, these nanoparticles travel throughout the body. In fact, so small are these 'revolutionary advancements in skin care technology' they are able to pass through the blood-brain barrier, accumulating in brain tissue. Some scientists fear the resulting damage to human health will far exceed that of fat-laden diets on arterial structures, and potentially result in an exponential rise in Alzheimer's- and Parkinson's-like diseases due to brain damage from the accumulation of these nanosized particles.

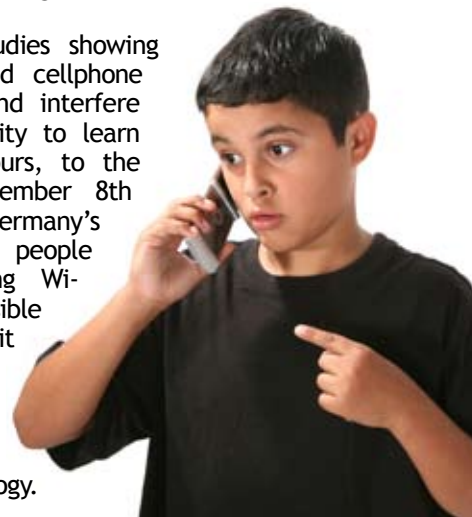
Before you apply that lipstick, eye shadow and cosmetic base, be sure you know exactly what is in the cosmetics of your choice. If the product insert and packaging does not indicate

the exact compounds and chemistry of the product, contact the manufacturer and make certain your favorite fashion accessory is not a smooth-finished ticket to future health challenges.

## Wi-Fi & Mobile Phone Usage – Convenience or 'Asbestos of the 21st Century'?

With Wi-Fi hot spots as numerous as coffee shops and mobile phones fast becoming the only way kids communicate, more and more science is emerging which points toward the health hazards of our wireless generation.

From cognitive studies showing that one 20-second cellphone call can disrupt and interfere with a child's ability to learn for up to two hours, to the most recent September 8th announcement by Germany's government that people should avoid using Wi-Fi wherever possible because of the risks it may pose to health, scientists in every country are raising concerns over this widespread technology.



The warning, from the EU's European Environment Agency (EEA) follows an international scientific review which concluded that safety limits set for the radiation are "thousands of times too lenient", and an official British report last week which concluded that it could not rule out the development of cancers from using mobile phones.

Professor Jacqueline McGlade, the EEA's executive director, said at a conference on September 16th: "Recent research and reviews on the long-term effects of radiations from mobile telecommunications suggest that it would be prudent for health authorities to recommend actions to reduce exposures, especially to vulnerable groups, such as children." The report suggests that delay could lead to a health crisis similar to those caused by asbestos, smoking and lead in petrol.

The EEA's initiative will increase pressure on governments and public health bodies to take precautionary action over the electromagnetic radiation from rapidly expanding new technologies. ***On September 8th, the German government began advising its citizens to use wired internet connections instead of Wi-Fi and landlines instead of mobile phones.***

The scientific review, produced by the international BioInitiative Working Group of leading scientists and public health and policy experts, says the "explosion of new sources has created unprecedented levels of artificial electromagnetic fields that now cover all but remote areas of the habitable space on Earth", causing "long-term and cumulative exposure" to "massively increased" radiation that "has no precedent in human history".

[Electrosmog – What Price Convenience?](#)

[Subjective Symptoms, Sleeping Problems and Cognitive Performance In Subjects Living Near Mobile Phone Base Stations](#)

[BioInitiative Report – A Rationale For A Biologically-Based Public Exposure Standard For Electromagnetic Fields \(ELF and RF\)](#)

## Global Climate Change – Recent Releases

As our *Mercury on the Mind* and *Think Before You Shuffle* articles clearly point out, industrialization and the ill-advised spread and uncontrolled consumption of technology is having far-reaching and negative effects on human health. Far from being doomsday reports, these investigative and journalistic pieces provide alternatives and solutions available to everyone in daily life.



However, the ability to change and make correct decisions requires information and education – and that’s not always an easy task. In the area of climate change and emerging environmental disasters, and their dramatic effects on human civilization, courageous individuals are taking action to make information available to everyone. Here are two late-breaking examples.

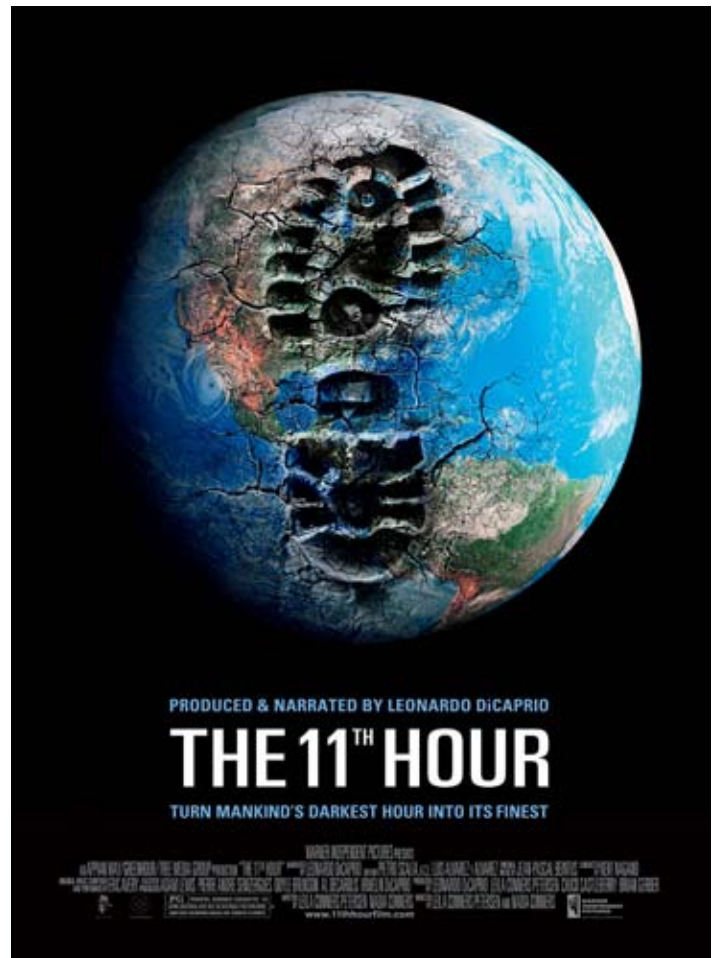
After three Freedom of Information lawsuits against the Bush White House, concerned citizens were finally able to obtain the Pentagon’s report, *An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security*. A chilling assessment of what could happen in the event of continued climate change within the boundaries of the United States, and its global implications on regional stability, this report provides an excellent framework for classroom discussions and further research.

The United Nations predicts that by the middle of the century there could be 150 Million environmental refugees. Is this what President Bush was referring to when he was forced to finally release the Pentagon’s report on global climate change as he shrugged and simply said, “People will adapt”?

[An Abrupt Climate Change Scenario and Its Implications for United States National Security](#)



Additionally, Wellcorps International invites you and the people you care about to support actor Leonardo DiCaprio’s latest film, *The 11th Hour*. This ground-breaking presentation, chronicling the Earth’s plummet by humankind into pending environmental catastrophe, is a must-see for the entire family. Including many forward-thinking environmental scientists and sustainable business leaders, *The 11th Hour* is not only a recap of what has gone wrong with humanity’s quest for technology and globalization, it provides a hopeful, right direction for solving our immediate challenges.



[Leonardo DiCaprio's The 11th Hour](#)