

## News Net Briefs

### USDA says almonds must be pasteurized

USDA has rejected a request by the Almond Board of California for a delay in new pasteurization requirements for almonds. The requirements went into effect Sept. 1. ABC had earlier recommended a six-month extension, citing a lack of adequate capacity in place to meet treatment needs.

### Farm sues Taco Bell

Boskovich Farms Inc., Oxnard, has filed a libel lawsuit alleging Taco Bell linked the farm's green onions to an *E. coli* outbreak. "Taco Bell engaged in an irresponsible and intentional crusade to save its own brand at the expense of an innocent supplier," according to Thomas Girardi, a Boskovich attorney, in the *Los Angeles Times*.

### Panic hits wheat pits

Tight wheat supplies led to panic buying Aug. 24, stoking inflation fears. Wheat was fetching \$7.54 a bushel, according to the Chicago Board of Trade, as Canada warned of a 20% smaller harvest and Japan and Taiwan moved to shore up stocks. The International Grains Council predicts a 7 million-ton shortfall in 2007-08.

### Clampdown delayed on U.S. illegal workforce

A federal judge temporarily barred the U.S. government from forcing companies to fire workers who lack a social security number after unions argued the move would affect legal employees.

### Antibiotics boost resistance to food-poison medicine

USDA researchers have shown that feeding chickens the antibiotic tylosin to promote growth — not to treat disease — greatly increases the number of erythromycin-resistant *Campylobacter* on chicken carcasses, reports the *Journal of Food Protection*. Erythromycin is a drug vital for treating severe food poisoning in humans.

### Study links diabetes to high-fructose corn syrup

Researchers say soft drinks sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup may contribute to diabetes, particularly in children. Drinks containing the syrup have reactive compounds shown to trigger cell and tissue damage that could cause diabetes, a growing epidemic. The study was presented at the American Chemical Society.

### Organic meat sales rise more than 20%

Retail sales of organic meats in the U.S. saw double-digit increases in 2006, according to the Organic Trade Association. Sales of organic poultry, beef, pork, lamb, sausage and deli meats all rose by more than 20%, a survey shows. Organic beef sales were \$65.7 million in 2006 vs. \$49 million the year before, a 34% jump.



BUSINESS WIRE PHOTO

**REMOTE EMERGENCY WATER:** The Solar Cube delivers purified water from a contaminated well in Pakistan.

# Solar Cube pumps clean water anywhere

By **LEN RICHARDSON**

**I**f a natural disaster strikes, clean drinking water and emergency electricity can now be made readily available to affected communities through the innovative Solar Cube. It also offers a way to provide water to remote areas. The Solar Cube is being introduced for the first time in the U.S. by Spectra Watermakers Inc., San Rafael.

Completely portable and easily assembled on site, the Solar Cube is powered by sunlight and wind, and can provide up to 3,500 gallons of clean drinking water per day from polluted water or salt water — enough to sustain hundreds of families during a disaster. It also can create enough energy for emergency disaster officials to power refrigeration for medical supplies, keep a laptop online, or ensure crisis communications equipment stays operational.

The Solar Cube is easy to install and can be set up and running within an hour. Training on how to install and operate is included in the purchase price. The Solar Cube filters and purifies water from any number of sources, including seawater, river or creek water, well water, or polluted freshwater. It is currently the only product available that integrates solar and wind power, water delivery, water prefiltration, and water treatment in one self-contained unit.

### Successful installations

The Solar Cube has been introduced into remote areas of Asia and South America where no clean drinking water or electricity is available. It provided drinking water and electrical power to several villages in Pakistan after the major earthquake in 2005. Currently, the Solar Cube is being used in isolated villages in Venezuela and Pakistan.

In Karachi, Pakistan, the product is providing more than 2.5 gallons of free, clean drinking water a day to 1,000 families as a result of a government-planned water program, which is taking place in the state of Balochistan over the next three years.

"We were chosen out of 170 different companies to work on this project because the Solar Cube has been in Pakistan for one year already and has

### Key Points

- Solar Cube delivers clean drinking water and electricity during a disaster.
- The innovation can provide up to 3,500 gallons of purified water per day.
- Cost is about a penny for every gallon of water produced.

been very efficient there," says Ralph Hangartner, a spokesman for Trunz, the Swiss manufacturing company that partnered with Spectra Watermakers Inc. in the venture.

The Solar Cube also can be used to provide water and electricity to remote locations or for developers working in rural areas.

"If New Orleans had the Solar Cube when Hurricane Katrina struck, water for the troubled city would have been readily available," says Bill Edinger, president of Spectra Watermakers Inc. "The cube's pump could have been placed in the flooded streets of brackish water and would have filtered out up to 3,500 gallons of potable water a day per

unit. This machine has the ability to save lives."

### How it works

The Solar Cube works by placing a pump, which is attached to the machine, into a polluted water or saltwater source. The water pumps through a series of filters to remove large matter. At the final stage, the water filters through a reverse osmosis membrane, which is so fine it dispels all bacteria, viruses, salts and dangerous chemicals.

Power is generated by 24-volt batteries charged by both the integrated photovoltaic solar panels and a wind-powered generator. "The machine can run 24 hours a day, particularly if you have any wind at all," Edinger says.

If the cost is calculated over a conservative estimate of seven years, the Solar Cube actually costs less than \$15 a day, or about a penny for every gallon of clean drinking water it produces. Once assembled, the system cleans its own filters and has a service life of at least seven years. Learn more at [www.spectrawatermakers.com](http://www.spectrawatermakers.com).

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