



“10 Really Good Reasons To Buy Organic”

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1. ORGANIC FOOD TASTES GREAT!

It's common sense-well-balanced soils grow strong healthy plants which taste better. Simply try an organic orange or vine ripened tomato for a sweet and juicy flavor treat! Recent research indicates organic foods may contain more nutrients as well.

Great chefs just can't get enough of it. Across the continent many leading restaurant chefs are using organic produce. Many have joined together in "Chefs Collaborative 2000" designed to encourage production of superior tasting foods through sound environmental practices

You get delicious, nutritious foods when you buy certified organic products- an everyday practice that's also good for Mother Earth

2. CERTIFIED ORGANIC PRODUCTS CARRY A GUARANTEE

Starting in 1996, all food products labeled organic must be in compliance with the US organic law. **Certification is the public's guarantee that products have been grown and handled according to strict procedures without toxic chemical inputs.** Farmers and processors alike must keep detailed records. All practices and procedures are annually inspected by a third-party certifier. All farms and handlers are required to maintain organic management plans. No prohibited substances are applied to the land on which organic food is grown for at least three years.

3. ORGANIC PRODUCTION REDUCES HEALTH RISKS

Many EPA-approved pesticides were registered long before extensive research linked these chemicals to cancer and other diseases. Now, the Environmental Protection Agency considers as potentially cancer causing 60% of all herbicides (weed killers), 90% of all fungicides (mold killers), and 30% of all insecticides (insect killers).

Children, farmers and farm workers are particularly vulnerable. According to the 1933 National Academy of Sciences study Pesticides in the Diet of Infants and Children, pesticide regulation and monitoring are outdated and flawed. Risk assessment is based on adult consumption, assuming exposure to only one pesticide at a time. IT does not take into consideration our multiple exposures to chemicals in water, rug shampoos, common household cleaners, flea powders and dozens of substances common in our modern environment. The 1993 report Pesticides in Children's Food stated that, "the average child exceeds the EPA lifetime on-in-a-million risk standard [of cancer] by his or her first birthday."

Reducing the number of exposures to all toxic chemicals should be everyone's goal.

4. ORGANIC FARMERS BUILD SOIL

Soil is the foundation of the food chain and the primary focus of organic farming. By building healthy soil, plants are better able to resist disease and insects. Each small piece of living soil contains thousands of microorganisms which help retain water and provide nutrients to the plants. Organic farmers foster soil fertility through proper tillage and crop rotation.

Chemical-intensive agricultural practices result in farms with deal soil so lacking in nutrients it requires large amounts of fertilizer. Reduced organic matter diminishes the soil's ability to retain moisture. The result is expensive irrigation using ever larger amounts of water. The resulting runoff takes the soil and chemicals with it.

We're facing the worst topsoil erosion in history due to our current agricultural practice of chemical intensive, mono-crop farming. The U.S. Soil Conservation Service estimates over 3 billion tons of topsoil are eroded from the U.S. crop lands each year, 25 billion tons globally. "Sediment loading" in streams is a major factor in the decline of our fish population. One third of all fish species nationwide are threatened or endangered.

5. ORGANIC FARMS RESPECT OUR WATER RESOURCES

Water makes up two-thirds of our human body mass. It covers three-quarters of our plant. While it may seem that there's an unlimited supply of clean water, consider the current status report:

The EPA has found 98 different pesticides in the groundwater of 40 states, contaminating the drinking water of over 100 million people. The agency has identified agriculture as the number one non-point polluter nationwide.

The elimination of polluting chemicals and nitrogen leaching, coupled with soil-building efforts, protects and conserves water resources from nitrogen contamination and sediment loading. Organic agriculture requires less water because the humus in its living soil retains moisture.

6. ORGANIC PRODUCERS LEAD IN INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

Organic farmers have led the way, largely at their expense, with innovative on-farm research aimed at reducing pesticides and minimizing agriculture's impact on the environment. Organic agriculture's best known production techniques include:

- Cover cropping (green manure)
- Use of beneficial insects
- Crop rotation and diversification
- Botanical and biological pest control
- Composting
- Close observation of natural soil, plant and wildlife systems
- Cultural and mechanical weed control

Organic farming is not taught in standard textbooks. Farmers trying to shy away from the 42 billion pounds of petrochemicals applied each year on food and fiber crops could find it difficult. Fortunately, a network of thoughtful farmers share on-farm research through journals, conferences, electronic mail and, in some states, through the Land Grant colleges.

7. ORGANIC FARMING HELPS KEEP RURAL COMMUNITIES HEALTHY

Rural communities across the nation have watched employment shrink, family farms nearly disappear and a sense of future for the young move towards the cities. Many organic producers are independently owned and operated family farms- a nearly extinct breed in this country. In the last decade the U.S. has lost more than 650,000 family farms- 175 farms per day. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) predicts that by the year 2000, half the US farm production will come from 1% farms.

Organic farming, often done on smaller acreage farmed more intensively, is one of the few survival tactics left for the family farm and the rural community.

8. ORGANIC PRODUCERS STRIVE TO PRESERVE DIVERSITY

President Clinton has placed the loss of biodiversity (the existence of a large variety of species) at the very top of his environmental concerns. Just a few years ago, the biodiversity was not a common topic. The good news is that many organic farmers and gardeners have been aware of the problems for decades, collecting and preserving seeds, and growing unusual varieties. "This living treasures of seeds", says Kenny Ausubel in Seeds of Change, "comprises billions of years of evolution and at least twelve thousand years of human selection for agriculture."

9. ORGANIC FARMERS WORK IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

We are just beginning to understand the impact of chemical-intensive agricultural practices on the environment. Organic agriculture represents the balance demanded of a healthy ecosystem: birds and beneficial insects control pests; wild life is an essential part of a total farm and encouraged by including forage crops in rotation and by retaining fence rows, wetlands and other natural areas.

When you buy organic produce, you're helping farmers build a healthy environment for wildlife.

10. ORGANIC ABUNDANCE - FOODS AND NON FOODS ALIKE!

In the past decade, we've seen exciting developments in organic production of many food items, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and grains to name a few.

The most visible non-food item is cotton. the one crop most experts said could not be grown organically. Cotton is sprayed with more toxic pesticides, in greater amounts, than any other crop in the nation. In California's San Joaquin Valley alone, 100,000 acres are sprayed annually. Yet, once again, organic farmers are showing that it can be done, and done profitably.

Purchasing organic today ensures more organic choices tomorrow.