

Top 10 Reasons To Buy Organic

1 PROTECT FUTURE GENERATIONS

"We have not inherited the Earth from our fathers, we are borrowing it from our children."

– Lester Brown

The average child receives four times more exposure than an adult to at least eight widely used cancer-causing pesticides in food. Food choices you make now will impact your child's future health.

2 PREVENT SOIL EROSION

The Soil Conservation Service estimates more than 3 billion tons of topsoil are eroded from the United States' croplands each year. That means soil erodes seven times faster than it's built up naturally.

Soil is the foundation of the food chain in organic farming. However, in conventional farming, the soil is used more as a medium for holding plants in a vertical position so they can be chemically fertilized. As a result, American farms are suffering from the worst soil erosion in history.

3 PROTECT WATER QUALITY

Water makes up two-thirds of our body mass and covers three-fourths of the planet. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates pesticides—some cancer causing—contaminate the groundwater in 38 states, polluting the primary source of drinking water for more than half the country's population.

4 SAVE ENERGY

American farms have changed drastically in the last three generations, from family-based small businesses dependent on human energy to large-scale factory farms. Modern farming uses more petroleum than any other single industry, consuming 12 percent of the country's totally energy supply. More energy is now used to produce synthetic fertilizers than to till, cultivate and harvest all the crops in the United States.

Organic farming is still based on labor-intensive practices such as hand weeding and green manure and crop covers instead of synthetic fertilizers to support soil.

5 KEEP CHEMICALS OFF YOUR PLATE

Many pesticides approved for use by the EPA were registered long before extensive research linking these chemicals to cancer and other diseases had been established. Now the EPA considers 60 percent of all herbicides, 90 percent of all fungicides and 30 percent of all insecticides carcinogenic. A 1987 National Academy of Sciences report estimated that pesticides might cause an extra 4 million cancer cases among Americans. The bottom line is that pesticides are poisons designed to kill living organisms and can also harm humans. In addition to cancer, pesticides are implicated in birth defects, nerve damage and genetic mutations.

6 PROTECT FARM WORKERS

A National Cancer Institute study found that farmers exposed to herbicides had six times more risk than non-farmers of contracting cancer. In California, reported pesticide poisonings among farm workers have risen an average of 14 percent a year since 1973 and doubled between 1975 and 1985. Field workers suffer the highest rates of occupational illness in the state. Farm worker health is also a serious problem in developing nations, where pesticide use can be poorly regulated. An estimated 1 million people are poisoned annually by pesticides.

7 HELP SMALL FARMERS

Although more and more large-scale farms are making the conversion to organic practices, most organic farms are small, independently owned family farms of fewer than 100 acres.

It's estimated the United States has lost more than 650,000 family farms in the past decade. Organic farming is one of the few survival tactics left for family farms.

8 SUPPORT A TRUE ECONOMY

Although organic foods might seem more expensive than conventional foods, conventional food prices don't reflect hidden costs borne by taxpayers, including nearly \$74 billion annually in federal subsidies. Other hidden costs include pesticide regulation and testing, hazardous waste disposal and cleanup, and environmental damage. For instance, if you add in the environmental and social costs of irrigation to a head of lettuce, its price would range between \$2 and \$3 dollars.

9 PROMOTE BIODIVERSITY

Mono-cropping is the practice of planting large plots of land with the same crop year after year. While this approach tripled farm production between 1950 and 1970, the lack of natural diversity of plant life has left the soil lacking in natural minerals and nutrients. To replace the nutrients, chemical fertilizers are used, often in increasing amounts.

Single crops are also much more susceptible to pests, making farmers more reliant on pesticides. Despite a tenfold increase in the use of pesticides between 1947 and 1974, crop losses due to insects have doubled—partly because some insects have become genetically resistant to certain pesticides.

10 TASTE BETTER FLAVOR

There's a good reason why many chefs use organic foods in their recipes—they taste better. Organic farming starts with the nourishment of the soil, which eventually leads to the nourishment of the plant and, ultimately our palates.



For more information about organic food and farming, contact CCOF at 1115 Mission Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, call (831) 423-2263, or visit our website at www.ccof.org

PESTICIDE LEVELS



A CONSUMER'S GUIDE TO SHOPPING & EATING 'GREEN'



Below is a reference list to help you make informed decisions about when to insist on buying organic, pesticide-free produce.

TOP 20 MOST CONTAMINATED ALWAYS BUY ORGANIC

1. Peaches
2. Apples
3. Sweet Bell Peppers
4. Celery
5. Nectarines
6. Strawberries
7. Cherries
8. Kale
9. Lettuce
10. Grapes (imported)
11. Carrots
12. Pears
13. Collard Greens
14. Spinach
15. Potatoes
16. Green Beans
17. Summer Squash
18. Pepper
19. Cucumber
20. Raspberries

TOP 20 LEAST CONTAMINATED ENJOY IN SEASON

1. Onions
2. Avocado
3. Sweet Corn (frozen)
4. Pineapples
5. Mango
6. Asparagus
7. Sweet peas (frozen)
8. Kiwi
9. Cabbage
10. Eggplant
11. Papaya
12. Watermelon
13. Broccoli
14. Tomatoes
15. Sweet Potatoes
16. Grapefruit
17. Honeydew Melon
18. Cranberries
19. Cantaloupe
20. Winter Squash

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