

FOOD QUALITY – OUR CHOICE

P & V COMMODITY SUPPLIES

BENEFITS OF EATING ORGANIC FOOD

What we have to know

Organic crops are grown while adhering to strict protocols which include no use of prohibited synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

The soil in which the crops are grown cannot have banned substances applied to it for a minimum of three years prior to harvest.

In addition, animals used to produce organic meat, dairy products, or eggs cannot be treated with antibiotics or growth hormones which is the norm on convention farms.

Why is organic food a better option

It conserves our soil: The no-tilling method, mulching of crops, and other practices used by organic farmers helps conserve topsoil. Many conventional approaches to farming cause extreme loss of soil. The amount and quality

(nutrients present, and composition) of soil is critical to crop production and feeding the growing human populations.

In traditional farming, soil is lost at the rate of about 6 tons/acre/year. And yet it takes

about 100 years to regenerate just one millimeter of soil. Conserving what we currently

have is crucial to the future of our farms and food supply.



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FOOD QUALITY & POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS

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The total amount of plant nutrient fertilization, specifically, nitrogen, is lower in organic agriculture.

The difference in the amount and plant availability of plant nutrients has some effect on plant development and overall plant composition.

The long-term use of mineral phosphorus fertilizer has contributed to increased cadmium concentrations in agricultural soils.

There are indications that crops produced by organic farming, specifically cereal crops, have comparatively low cadmium concentrations, although this is not certain.

This is highly relevant to human health because food is the dominant route of human exposure to cadmium in non-smokers.

Conserves biodiversity:

Organic farming helps to simultaneously adopt biodiversity conservation efforts by utilizing more environmentally conscious practices. It reduces the amount of synthetic chemical pesticides added to the environment, which consequently lessens the harm done to native plants, pollinators, humans and other wildlife.

Permaculture – a system of sustainable agriculture that renews natural resources and enriches local ecosystems, and agroforestry are other options

that help invest in healthy ecosystems.

Water systems: Synthetic fertilizers often used in traditional farming do contaminate our waterways. Fertilizers end up in local water supplies via runoff from large rain storms (and extreme weather events increase in frequency as humans continue negatively impacting climate change) and can lead to nutrient imbalances in larger water systems, which cause anoxic environments and “dead zones” – these, are places in the water where animal life cannot survive.

Sometimes, these fertilizers also cause red tides and other toxic algal blooms that can be deadly to humans.

Human health: non-organic additives, like pesticides, are harmful to human health via ingestion of toxic chemicals through residue consumption or environmental exposure (inhaling pesticides after they are sprayed over a crop).

There are also problems with the use of antibiotics in meat and its by-products, for it leads to the creation of “super-bacteria” that are resistant to human drugs during treatment.

THE TALK ABOUT GMO

What is it about ?

It's difficult to write about organic farming without mentioning the threat GMOs impose to conventional farmers.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) are plants, animals, or fungi whose DNA have been altered using genetic engineering. GMOs can help to mitigate global hunger by engineering foods to be resistant to droughts, unharmed by pests, and produce greater crop yields.

For such results to occur, organisms are genetically engineered with the genes of another organism to create a variant that would not occur naturally.

Such strides in food science come with their fair share of objectionable and environmentally destructive practices. Many GM seeds are marketed as being pesticide-resistant, which allows farmers to douse their fields with large amounts of toxic chemicals.

Not only do these chemicals harm native plants and animals (especially pollinators) and humans, but they also create pesticide-resistant weeds, damaging insects, fungi, and bacteria, which necessitates the use of more extreme toxic chemicals to produce the same effect. Large companies which

own and manufacture GM seeds, profit off of the environmental havoc they cause through the promise of quick solutions at the expense of the land and the farmers who work it.



References:

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The development of environmentally sustainable and healthy food systems is an international priority and, in this article, we discuss how organic food and organic agriculture can contribute to this in relation to public health. Furthermore, some evidence linking principles and rules of organic production to human health is also discussed

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