



Organics

In the News

December 14, 2011

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Overview

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- History
- Definitions
 - Crop standards
 - Livestock standards
- Organic Labeling
- Why people choose organic
- Research studies
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In the News

NewsHour Extra: Organic Food Fight -- February 8, 2006 - Windows Internet Explorer
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june06/organic_2-08.html

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Online NewsHour:
A report on the USDA's decision to add an "organic" label.

Organic Food Fight Posted: 2.08.06

As organic foods grow in popularity, members of the big food manufacturers are eager to get in on the action. But in doing so, some companies have pushed to lower organic standards.

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Organic food has traditionally been associated with a certain subculture: granola, health food and Birkenstocks. But lately organic foods have been moving more into the mainstream.

In an industry where typical growth is around 1-2 percent, organics have recently seen growth in the 20 percent range.

Some small organic companies have been bought by big "agribusiness" companies, and supermarkets like Giant have begun to market organic foods under their own store brands.

The most popular organic foods supermarket, Whole Foods, has grown into a megastore with \$4.7 billion in sales last year.

What is organic?

WHOLE FOODS MARKET
The organic supermarket Whole Foods prospered with \$4.7 billion in sales last year.

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Is "organic" too mainstream?

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Organic Foods Controversy

August 18th, 2009 - By Maureen O'Hagan, The Seattle Times



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Is organic food more nutritious?

In the News

The 'Organic' Stamp - Does It Mean That Food Is Safer? - NYTimes.com - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/04/dining/04.cert.html?pagewanted=all

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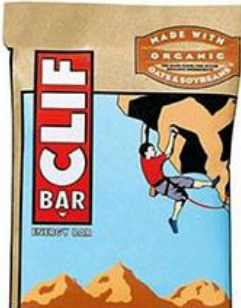
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It's Organic, but Does That Mean It's Safer?

By KIM SEVERSON and ANDREW MARTIN
Published: March 3, 2009

MOST of the chicken, fruit and vegetables in Ellen Devlin-Sample's kitchen are organic. She thinks those foods taste better than their conventional counterparts. And she hopes they are healthier for her children.



Lately, though, she is not so sure.

The national outbreak of [salmonella](#) in products with peanuts has been particularly unsettling for shoppers like her who think [organic food](#) is safer.

The plants in Texas and Georgia that were sending out contaminated peanut butter and ground peanut products had something else besides rodent

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Organic Industry Statistics

- U.S. sales of organic food and beverages have grown from **\$1 billion in 1990 to \$26.7 billion in 2010**.
 - 7.7% growth from 2009 to 2010
- Organic food and beverage sales represented 4% of all food and beverage sales in 2010.
 - Organic fruits and vegetables lead, making up 11% of all fruits and vegetable sales
- Mass market retailers (**mainstream supermarkets**, club/warehouse stores, and mass merchandisers) sold **54%** of organic food in 2010.
 - “Natural” retailers followed, with 39% of organic food purchases

History of Organic

- Organic production has been practiced in the U.S. since the late 1940s.
 - Began as small experimental garden plots
- Growth in organic production stimulated need to verify that products were actually being produced according to certain standards.
- Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) in the 1990 Farm Bill.
 - Required USDA to develop national standards for organically produced agricultural products
- In 1992, the USDA appointed the National Organic Standards Board and established the National Organic Program (NOP)

Federal Organic Organization

- **National Organic Program (NOP)**
 - Responsible for developing and implementing the federal organic standards.
 - Accredits state and nonprofit agencies and private organizations seeking to certify organic producers and handlers.



Federal Organic Organization

- **National Organic Standards Board (NOSB)**
 - Assists U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in developing standards for substances and practices to be used in organic production.
 - Consists of 15 Congressional appointee members from all regions of the U.S.
 - Farmers/growers (4)
 - Handlers/processors (2)
 - Retailer (1)
 - Scientist (1)
 - Consumer/public interest advocates (3)
 - Environmentalists (4)
 - A USDA-accredited certifying agent (1)

What is Organic?

- “Organic is a labeling term that indicates that the food or other agricultural product has been produced through approved methods. These methods integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.”
 - National Organic Program (NOP), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

From: **National Organic Program**

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/ams.fetchTemplateData.do?template=TemplateC&navID=NationalOrganicProgram&leftNav=NationalOrganicProgram&page=NOPConsumers&description=Consumers&acct=nopgeninfo>

Crop Standards

- Land must have had no prohibited substances applied to it for **at least 3 years** before harvest of an organic crop
- Soil fertility and crop nutrients will be managed through tillage and cultivation practices, crop rotations, and cover crops, supplemented with **animal and crop waste materials** and allowed synthetic materials.



Crop Standards



- Crop pests, weeds, and diseases will be controlled primarily through management practices including **physical, mechanical, and biological controls**. When these practices are not sufficient, a biological, botanical, or synthetic substance approved for use on the National List may be used.
- Operations must use **organic seeds** and other planting stock **when available**.
- The use of **genetic engineering, ionizing radiation and sewage sludge is prohibited**.

Livestock Standards

- Livestock standards apply to animals used for meat, milk, eggs, and other animal products sold, labeled, or represented as organic.
- Animals for slaughter must be **raised under organic management from the last third of gestation**, or no later than the second day of life for poultry.
- Producers must feed livestock agricultural **feed products that are 100% organic**, but they may also provide allowed vitamin and mineral supplements.



Livestock Standards

- **Dairy animals** must be managed organically for at least **12 months** in order for milk or dairy products to be sold, labeled, or represented as organic.
- Preventive management practices must be used to keep animals healthy. Producers may not withhold treatment from sick or injured animals. However, **animals treated with a prohibited substance may not be sold as organic.**
- Ruminants must be out on pasture for the entire grazing season, but **not less than 120 days.** These animals must also receive at least 30% of their feed from pasture.

Livestock Standards

- All organic livestock are required **access to the outdoors year-round**. Animals may only be temporarily confined due to documented environmental or health considerations.
- Organically raised animals **must not be given hormones to promote growth or antibiotics for any reason**.



Organic Labeling

- **“100 percent organic”**
 - Must contain (excluding water and salt) only organically produced ingredients
- **“Organic”**
 - Must consist of at least 95% organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt)
- Products meeting either of these requirements may display the USDA organic seal and a statement of organic percentage



100% Organic or Organic?

- Annie's Organic Tropical Treat Bunny Fruit Snacks



MADE WITH ONLY THE BEST INGREDIENTS: ORGANIC TAPIOCA SYRUP, ORGANIC CANE SUGAR, ORGANIC TAPIOCA SYRUP SOLIDS, ORGANIC WHITE GRAPE JUICE CONCENTRATE, PECTIN, CITRIC ACID, ASCORBIC ACID, COLORS (TURMERIC, BLACK CARROT JUICE CONCENTRATE, ANNATTO), NATURAL FLAVORS, SODIUM CITRATE, ORGANIC SUNFLOWER OIL, CARNAUBA WAX (FROM PALM LEAVES).

Organic Labeling

- **“Made with organic ingredients”**
 - Processed products made with at least 70% organic ingredients can use the phrase “made with organic ingredients” and list up to three of the organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel.
 - USDA organic seal cannot be used
- **Processed products that contain less than 70% organic ingredients**
 - Cannot use the term organic anywhere on the principal display panel
 - May identify the specific ingredients that are organically produced on the ingredients statement

Misuse of Labels

- Penalty of **up to \$11,000** can be levied on any person who knowingly sells or labels as organic a product that is not produced and handled in accordance with the NOP's regulations.
- There are no restrictions on use of other truthful labeling claims such as “no drugs or growth hormones used” or “free range.”
 - USDA Process Verified only
 - Preapproval of label claims is based on producer testimony only



From: **National Organic Program Fact Sheet: Organic Labeling and Marketing Information**
and

http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/sustainability/documents/farmsanctuary_appraisal.pdf

Organic v. Natural v. Grass-fed Beef

	ORGANIC	NATURAL*	GRASS-FED
Antibiotic use	No	Maybe	Maybe
Hormone use	No	Maybe	Maybe
Grain-feed allowed	Yes	Yes	No
Organic feed	Yes	No	No

*According to USDA, the only requirements for “natural” are:

- Minimally processed (processing does not fundamentally alter product)
- No artificial ingredients
- No added color

Why do people choose organic?

- Perceived health benefits (higher nutrient levels)
- Perceived lower levels of pesticide residues
- Perceived lower levels of antibiotic and hormone residues
- Perceived environmental benefits
- Perceived food safety benefits

Are any of these reasons valid?

More nutrients in organic?

- **Unclear at this point**
- Valid scientific research is scant
 - Research that has been conducted focuses on very specific foods and conditions
 - Some studies show organic produce has higher levels of some nutrients, others show conventional produce has higher levels, and some show no difference at all.
- In general, organic produce **may** have higher levels of vitamin C, trace minerals, and some phytochemicals
- Any noted differences probably have more to do with post-harvest handling, time after harvest, soil conditions, and climate

Lower levels of pesticides?

- **For the most part, yes**
- **Important to note:**
 - Measured pesticide residues on **ALL** produce (organic or conventional) **cannot exceed government thresholds for safe consumption**
- USDA analysis shows that organically grown foods generally have fewer and lower pesticide residues than conventionally grown
- When residues are found in **excess of 5%** of the EPA tolerance level, the organic certifying agency must investigate.

Lower antibiotic and hormone levels?

- No antibiotics or growth hormones permitted in organic livestock.
- Conventional and organic meat, dairy, and eggs must meet established tolerance limits for antibiotics and hormones.

Safety of growth hormones

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is responsible for ensuring that animal drugs and medicated feeds are safe and effective for animals, and that food from treated animals is safe for humans to eat.
- Residue levels of growth hormones in food have been demonstrated to be safe, as they are well below any level that would have a known effect in humans.
- The European Union does not allow the use of growth hormones in livestock production

Safety of antibiotics

- The FDA considers treatment with registered antibiotics and growth hormones safe for animals, humans and the environment.
- It is argued that the widespread use of antibiotics to treat non-life threatening problems in both human and animal medicine (including "sub-therapeutic" applications common in conventional industrial livestock operations) has speeded the evolution of antibiotic resistant pathogens.
 - Results are mixed, but the FDA monitors the development of drug resistance in relation to food production

Environmental benefits?

- **In general, yes**
- The Organic Standards Board centers the definition of organic production on ecological principle.
 - “Organic agriculture is an ecological production management system that **promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity.**”
 - “The principal guidelines for organic production are to **use materials and practices that enhance the ecological balance** of natural systems and that **integrate the parts of the farming system into an ecological whole.**”

Environmental benefits?

- In general, research does point to some environmental benefits of organic farming with respect to:
 - Maintaining or building soil quality
 - Lessening ground and surface water contamination
 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
 - Encouraging biodiversity
 - Conserving water and energy resources
 - Recycling waste

Research Challenges

- There is not one system or set of practices that typifies non-organic production
- Accepted criteria and indicators for assessing agricultural impacts on the environment vary, and are still evolving
- The entire food chain should be considered in any assessment of a food's environmental "friendliness." Post-harvest processes including transportation, storage and preserving, packaging, and waste management, are responsible for many environmental impacts
- Research in this area is not immune to the influence of vested philosophical, economic and political interests present on both sides of the organic vs. non-organic debate

Food safety benefits?

- **NO**
- Organic standards do not directly address food safety.
- All food, organically or conventionally produced, must meet the same local, state, and federal food safety standards.

Harmons' Organic Products

- We offer a variety of Organic products in most categories
 - Produce
 - Meat
 - Bakery (local flour for artisan breads)
 - Dairy
 - Grocery
 - Baby food
 - Dog food
 - Health and Beauty products
- Labeled with green “Organic” shelf tag



Certified organic stores

- Station Park
- Bangerter Crossing
- Emigration Market
- **What does this mean?**
 - Voluntary certification not required by the USDA
 - Being a “certified organic” retailer provides an extra level of assurance to customers that the integrity of organic products is being maintained
 - As a “certified organic” retailer, we are inspected by a third party agency



Handling of Produce

- Organic and non-organic produce must be kept separate on the shelves and in storage
 - Separate produce on the shelves with an organic “barrier” or in a dedicated section, clearly labeled
 - Organic produce cannot be stored below non-organic produce
 - Separate carts for stocking/storing organic (yellow)
 - Green aprons when stocking organic
 - Must wash hands prior to stocking organic
 - If organic is comingled with non-organic, organic sticker removed and sold as non-organic
- Must keep paper trail of organic transactions

Organic Produce



Guidance to Customers

- All food must meet food safety guidelines, regardless of production method
 - This also applies to pesticide, hormone, and antibiotic residue levels
- “Organic” says nothing about the nutritive value of food—there are plenty of organic “snack foods” that do not provide much in the way of nutrition
- Customers have personal reasons for choosing organic
 - It is not up to us to persuade or discourage them from choosing organic
 - Our job is to provide a variety of organic and non-organic products so our customers have choices

QUESTIONS?

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