Organic - part of the solution!

FOOD QUALITY & SAFETY: nontoxic and nutritious

Organic standards aim to incorporate human, environmental and animal health considerations into food production and processing. Organic systems are holistic, focussing not only on how to achieve the desired product qualities, but also on the methods and processes by which it is done. Attention given to nurturing environmental health in organic production seems to pay off in terms of nutritional value.

Some harmful compounds organic consumers don't need to worry about...

• Pesticide residues. Pesticide levels in organic products are usually around ten times lower than in conventional products, with many showing no trace at all.

• Nitrate residues. There is lower nitrogen application in organic farming, explaining why studies consistently show lower levels of nitrate in organically produced crops.

• Antibiotic residues. Organic standards forbid the preventative use of antibiotics in animal husbandry, as well as their use for growth-promotion.

• Hormone residuals. Growth-promoting hormones may be present in animal products from outside the EU, but are banned in organic agriculture world-wide.

• Mycotoxins. Despite prohibition of fungicides, organic food and feed show mycotoxin levels lower than or equivalent to those in conventional products.

A growing number of studies and meta-studies confirm the following nutritional advantages of organic food products...

• Higher secondary metabolite content in plants, including vitamin C, B-group vitamins and flavonoids; higher content of minerals including iron, magnesium and phosphorous.

• Higher content of fat-soluble vitamins and polyunsaturated fatty acids in organic milk and meat (the crucial Omega 3 to Omega 6 ratio is higher in organic produce).

• And, yes, better taste! Organic products have won out over conventional in a large number of sensory tests.

Organic food products are also regulated by rigorous processing standards which ban irradiation, colouring agents, synthetic sweeteners, synthetic flavouring, GMOs, GMO derivatives and trans fatty acids, among other things, in order to **maximise nutritional and sensory integrity of ingredients and minimise resource wastage.**

EU Policy

According to the European Commission and former Agricultural Commissioner Mariann Fischer-Boel, the production of high quality food is a major competitive advantage of the EU's agri-food sector, crucial to maintaining its profitability. Organic standards provide a water-tight assurance of safety, quality and conscientiousness that covers the whole product life cycle from seed to package. They should be capitalised on as representing the essence of what consumers in the EU and around the world want from European food products.

Many organic producers aim for on-farm processing and shorter routes to market. These approaches have significant advantages for maximum freshness and minimum contamination risk; quality standards created for industrial processing and long shelf lives should be therefore be modified to make these approaches more feasible.

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Read more on organic farming and Food Quality & Safety and see the sources used: http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/factsheets/foodquality.php.