



WHY ORGANIC?

MOSES ORGANIC FACT SHEET

Why Buy Local & Organic Foods?

Buy locally and organically grown food! Good reasons abound. Here's a few!

Increase health benefits

Studies show that organically grown food contains higher levels of many nutrients, including Vitamin C, iron, magnesium and phosphorus, due to the healthy, fertile soils where they are grown. Antioxidants, important for disease prevention, are also present at higher levels in organic produce. Milk from cows grazed on pasture is higher in conjugated linoleic acids (CLA) which have been linked to cancer prevention. By buying locally, your food's nutritional content is maintained through shorter storage and transport times.

Promote food safety

Besides following all regular federal and state food safety rules, organic producers have an additional set of stringent regulations to minimize food safety risks. Organic farmers are the only producers in the nation with a federal regulation and third party oversight on raw manure applications and compost-making, thus minimizing contamination from E.coli and other harmful pathogens. Also, organic farmers are prohibited from feeding livestock any animal byproducts, plastic pellets, or urea- or manure-containing formulas, all of which are allowed on conventional farms. Conventional farming also relies on toxic herbicides and pesticides, many of which persist in the environment and in our bodies for long periods of time. Other practices, many that have not yet had their long term health risks assessed, are also prohibited from organic production. These include the use of sewage sludge, irradiation, growth hormones and genetically-modified organisms.

Preserve the environment

Locally grown food comes short distances to market, thereby reducing carbon dioxide emissions

and harmful packing materials. Conventional farms pollute our groundwater with repeated applications of toxic fertilizers. Organic and local farms provide safe habitats for a wide variety of birds, insects and other animals, and use soil conservation techniques to protect farmland from runoff and erosion. With three billion tons of top-soil lost every year in the U.S., good soil stewardship is no longer "optional" - it's a matter of life and death for our planet.

Foster biodiversity

Decentralized, local farming maintains more crop varieties since local farmers grow what's best for their specific environment and microclimate, and also aren't limited to varieties that ship well and last a long time. Organic practices promote diverse soil life and rely on multiple varieties, wild plants and animals as a means to combat pests and disease. Genetically-modified organisms, prohibited in organic production, are killing pollinator species and threatening the genetic integrity of many life forms by cross-pollinating with wild and cultivated varieties. It is critical to maintain wild and heirloom varieties, as they are our planet's living library of genetic material and



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may be important as medicine, food, or for currently unknown reasons in the future.

Local farmers offer products grown for flavor and freshness.

Support your local economy and communities

Buying local food keeps your dollars circulating in your community, keeping jobs and money in the local area, and family farms alive. Getting to know the farmers who grow your food builds relationships based on understanding and trust, the foundation of strong communities. Investing in local food systems means an investment in healthy communities. Less than one half percent of the money spent on food is for locally produced food. Just think of the economic impact in our communities and on our family farms if 10% of our food was purchased from local farmers!

Enjoy exceptional flavor

Taste the difference in fresh, local food and judge for yourself. A vine ripened tomato from your local farmer's market tastes far better than one shipped from distant states and countries. Local farmers offer products grown for flavor and freshness rather than for shipping endurance and shelf life. Fruits and vegetables shipped long distances can spend as many as fourteen days in transit before they arrive in the supermarket.

When you buy local food, you vote with your food dollar. This ensures that family farms in your community will continue to thrive. You also ensure that healthy, flavorful food and a healthy, diverse environment will be available for future generations.

USEFUL LINKS

www.mosesorganic.org

Free resources including the Organic Resource Directory, Certification Guidebook, Organic Fact Sheets, details on upcoming events and trainings, plus subscribe to the free Organic Broadcaster. The MOSES website is your source for farmer oriented news.

www.localharvest.org

Find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food in your area.

www.landstewardship.org

Food and Farm Connection section includes a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Directory, and recipes using local foods.

www.rodaleinstitute.org

Supports farmers and consumers with research and resources, including a resource directory and Farm Locator™.

www.organic-center.org

The latest news and research on why organic food is better - with a consumer resource section.

MIDWEST ORGANIC
& Sustainable Education Service
MOSES

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) provides a variety of resources for farmers interested in learning more about organic and sustainable farming. Visit: www.mosesorganic.org

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