



WHY ORGANIC?

MOSES ORGANIC FACT SHEET

# Why Buy Local and 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 topsoil 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



*Studies show that organically grown food contains higher levels of many nutrients.*



*Local farmers offer products grown for flavor and freshness.*

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

### **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.

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

### **USEFUL LINKS**

#### **[www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org)**

Free resources including our Organic Resource Directory, Certification Guidebook, and more. Download Organic Fact Sheets, learn about upcoming events and trainings, subscribe to the Organic Broadcaster, your source for farmer oriented news.

#### **[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)**

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

#### **[www.landstewardship.org](http://www.landstewardship.org)**

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

#### **[rodaleinstitute.org/new\\_farm](http://rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm)**

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

#### **[www.organic-center.org](http://www.organic-center.org)**

The latest news and research in organic agriculture- with a consumer resource section.

#### **[www.crcworks.org](http://www.crcworks.org)**

Crossroads Resource Center "Finding Food in Farm Country" studying the economic impact of food and farming.

**MIDWEST ORGANIC**  
& Sustainable Education Service  
**MOSES**

Visit [www.mosesorganic.org](http://www.mosesorganic.org) for more resources and tools, including our Organic Resource Directory and the Organic Broadcaster Newspaper. Plan to attend our annual Organic Farming Conference in February. To find upcoming events including MOSES trainings and field days visit our web calendar at: [www.mosesorganic.org/events.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/events.html)