

Is it Really Organic?

By Dr. C. A. Fischer

Make sure you know where your food comes from when shopping. According to Wikipedia, organic foods are made according to certain production standards that allow certain non-organic fertilizers to be used. Ideally, it is best to get your organic produce from your own organic garden. When home gardening is not possible get your organic produce from local farmers who still control their own seed and grow organically.

As an alternative, there is a way to safely shop in a grocery store when buying organic produce. The key is the bar code label. The tiny annoying stickers appear on almost all fresh fruits and vegetables. The stickers actually contain the secret code to whether the fruit is organic, conventional or genetically modified. Only conventional, non-organic fruits and vegetables have bar code stickers that have only 4 numbers. Both the organic and genetically modified bar code stickers have five numbers each.

Organically grown fruits and vegetables have a 5 number bar code that begins with the number 9. Organic fruits and vegetables are required to be in separate areas in supermarket. The bar code sticker helps to confirm which type of produce is actually being purchased in case the food item has been put in the wrong location.

There is no requirement that supermarkets inform customers which fruits and vegetables being sold are genetically modified (GM). Genetically modified foods were first marketed in the early 1990's, and have Monsanto's Roundup™ pesticide added to the genes of the plant. Genetically modified foods have a 5 number bar code that begins with the number 8.

Reading the bar codes will tell the truth about the source of the fruits and vegetables. This means that a regular banana bar code would be 4011, an organic banana would be 94011 and a GM banana would be 84011.??

If you cannot find organic produce, the Environmental Working Group (EWG) has put together a list of the best and the worst non-organic fruits and vegetables. They list the foods that contain the most and least pesticide residues found on conventional foods.

The top 5 with the highest pesticide load are peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery and nectarines. The 5 least pesticide residue foods are mangos, pineapples, frozen sweet corn, avocados and onions. To see the full list of 45 foods visit: <http://www.foodnews.org/fulllist.php>.

In the world of organic food there is organic produce, and manufactured items with organic ingredients. Why is it that some of the ingredients of your favorite organic health foods have changed over the years, where more sugar has been added or canola oil has replaced the other oils? The reason for these changes is the shift in ownership of many of the organic health food manufacturers.

According to Wikipedia, since the early 1990's organic food production has had growth rates of around 20% a year, far ahead of the rest of the food industry. Organic food accounted for 1-2% of food sales worldwide as of April 2008. The increased sales have made organic food more profitable, making it more attractive to commercial food giants.

Since 1999 large commercial food conglomerates have quietly been buying up the organic food companies. Coca-Cola now owns Odwalla, the maker of organic juices and smoothies, while Pepsi recently acquired Naked Juice. General Mills owns both Cascadian Farm, the maker of fruit jams and other products, and Muir Glen, the maker of tomato soups and sauces.

In 1999 Heinz invested in the formation of a strategic alliance called the Hain Celestial Group. Many of the organic manufacturers like Garden of Eden, Health Valley, Celestial Seasonings and 18 other companies are in this group. In 2003 the Hain Celestial group formed an alliance with Cargill, a commercial food manufacturing company. The ongoing collaboration with Cargill Health & Food Technologies has allowed the companies in the Hain Celestial Group to manufacture new alternative products, like Rice Dream milk.

To see a chart of who owns each of the organic food manufacturers visit: www.cornucopia.org/who-owns-organic/.

According to a study published in the Journal of American Nutrition, organically grown fruits and vegetables have twice the amount of beneficial minerals compared to those grown by conventional methods. Enjoy eating organic food now that you know what is really organic and what is not.

Disclaimer: The recommendations in this article are not to be taken as medical advice. Please consult a qualified holistic wellness health care practitioner for your toxicity or stress analysis, and for specific recommendations on your personal health issues.

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