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Organic Food: Truth or Fallacy?

By Margot B

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Every food scare – about chemicals, additives, and genetically modified ingredients and mad cow disease, is followed by a rise in organic food sales.

In most supermarkets we are able to find organic food; fresh produce, milk, eggs, cereal, frozen food, and even junk food. I prefer organic food, assuming it to be safer, more nutritious.

But, notice that the label on Organic Cow has changed – now it is "ultrapasteurized," – this ensures that the milk will stay fresh, allowing it to be shipped all over the country.

An organic TV dinner in the frozen foods section advertises its chicken to be raised without chemicals and allowed "to roam freely in an outdoor yard", the rice and vegetables grown without synthetic chemicals. The list of ingredients is extensive; natural chicken flavor, high-oleic safflower oil, guar and xanthan gum, soy lecithin, carrageenan and natural grill flavor – and with the assurance that most of these additives are organic, and no doubt are.

The organic food industry has become a \$7.7 billion business, the fastest growing category in the supermarket, and has attracted the attention of agribusiness corporation, which the organic food movement always presented as an alternative. The biggest organic farms are owned and operated by conventional mega-farms.

Agribusiness has sought to re-define the romantic word 'organic' to make it as broad as possible; to make it easier for the big companies to get into the organic food business by allowing food additives,

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ascorbic acid to xanthan gum, and synthetic chemicals to be used in 'organic' food; a cow to feed on pasture; a factory farm to be labeled organic. These modifications will take effect next year.

The real farm food grown on the real family farm is not always the same food contained in our frozen TV dinners. Now that agribusiness owns the organic food companies, is 'organic' on the road to becoming meaningless? The whole meaning of 'organic' is changing.

The word 'organic' doesn't make any health claims. It is not a health, nutrition, or food–safety claim. It is a production standard – and we make

our own health claims to this word. We bring our own personal beliefs to the word 'organic'. The truly organic small family–farmer is going to have to replace the word 'organic'.

"I don't care if the Wheaties are organic—I wouldn't use them for compost. Processed organic food is as bad as any other processed food." says Eliot Coleman, a Maine farmer and writer whose organic techniques have influence two generations of farmers.

Is "industrial organic" a contradiction in terms?

Resource: L.A.Times, May 13, 2001

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/13/magazine/13ORGANIC.html?pagewanted=1>

By Margot B/Writer, Editor, & Web Site Developer, June 8 2001

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The Facts About Organic Baby Food

By A. Pruder

Quite simply, organic baby food is that which is processed without the use of artificial pesticides and/or synthetic fertilizers. While many note organic food as being either store–bought, garden grown or gathered in the wild, the correct association is certified organic foods, which are produced and labeled according to strict regulatory standards. In a number of countries, including the United States, the use of the word `organic' in the commercial market, without the proper certification, is prohibited by law.

Organic Food: Truth or Fallacy?

Organic baby food is most commonly found in a supermarket and will be labeled accordingly. Because of its nature, organic baby food is more expensive than other types. Processed organic baby food typically includes only those ingredients that are organic and has no artificial food additives. While there seem to be a number of benefits to using organic baby food, the most common reason for purchasing this type of product is the overall quality. Increased nutritional value, the absence of residues from artificial pesticides and better taste are all positive benefits of organic baby food.

Organic baby food, because it is believed to be fresher, often carries an improved taste over other baby foods. Because organic farms are small, their products are most commonly sold close to home. Therefore, organic baby food and other products feature a fresher taste simply because they are fresh.

By 2003, organic food products were available in 20,000 natural food stores and 73% of commercial grocery stores. While many believe that organic baby food is helpful, others are not as certain. Some believe that farming and organic fertilization may carry its own risks that may be passed along in organic baby food.

The main debate lies with the better approach to manufacturing organic food. Is it more healthy to use artificial and synthetic products in food processing or natural fertilizer and organic farming methods? There are both sides to any debate and the questions surrounding organic baby food is no different. There is legitimate concern over contamination and safety of organic food and products, but an exact determination as to which side of the table is right has yet to be decided.

The information in this article is to be used for informational purposes. It should not be considered as, or used in conjunction with, professional medical advice or recommended feeding for your infant, toddler or young child. Prior to beginning any food preparation involving the use of organic baby food, consult your child's physician for additional information and/or a recommendation regarding the use of organic baby food as part of your child's food intake.

Want to learn more about organic baby food? Make sure you visit our site at:

for access to additional organic baby food tips and information.



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