

Biological Farmers of Australia

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What is the squawk about organic eggs?

Consumers are making their feelings known when it comes to ethical and healthy eating by choosing organic eggs. According to the Biological Farmers of Australia's (BFA) recent Australian Organic Market Report this sector of the organic industry is growing faster than any other with 75 per cent growth in organic retail sales over the past two years.

So what is the fuss about organic eggs and what constitutes a certified organic egg?

According to Australian organic standards, certified organic is free range plus a lot more. The major points of difference include some of the highest animal welfare standards; the best means to avoid synthetic additives and chemicals (including antibiotics, chemical used on-farm and in processing); and chicken feed must be a minimum 95 per cent organic with any remaining ingredients needing to satisfy stringent requirements.

BFA General Manager Holly Vyner says that buying certified organic food, including eggs, is a guarantee that animals are protected by some of the most rigorous animal protection regulations.

"For chickens, including egg production, Australian organic standards prohibit debeaking, comb or toe removal, battery production, overcrowding and the use of poly peeper (permanent blindfolds).

"When comparing meat birds, organic chickens take 65-80 days to grow as compared to the antibiotic-fuelled 35-40 days taken by a conventionally reared bird and therefore have a higher production cost. The results, in terms of taste and texture, along with animal welfare concerns, are the reason many prefer organic," she says.

"If you want eggs the way they would be if you raised them at home, then certified organic is your choice."

Consumers must be aware to look for a "certified organic" symbol such as the Australian Certified Organic Bud logo, which is the most prominent mark for a guarantee that what they are purchasing is truly organic.

"You must look for 'certified organic' rather than just 'organic' otherwise you have no guarantee that the producer is respecting organic standards. Certified organic allows you to be confident about where your food has come from. The Australian Certified Organic Bud logo is the most recognised and won the Choice Award this year for the Best Food Endorsement Program," says Holly.



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