

Buy Organic for 20 good reasons:

(For further details including sources for research visit www.bfa.com.au)

1. Reduce chemical runoff and residues in drinking water, waterways and coastal areas. Runoff is the main cause of diminishing marine life, animals and plants. Over 29,500 tonnes of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and plant growth regulators are used each year in Australia (Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, 2006)*.

2. Restore soils for productive cropland and secure the future of Australian agriculture. Approximately 50 million hectares of Australia's agricultural land (around half the total area) have topsoils that are marginally acidic or worse (Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, 2006)*. Organic farming systems are based on the principle of land and soil regeneration and best environmental practices.

3. Increase the resilience of farms during drought. In the wake of the 2002/2003 drought, the agricultural sector saw a loss of over 100,000 jobs over a period of five years, from 2002 to 2007, that have yet to be fully restored (AgriFood Skills Australia, 2008). Organic farms have a greater resilience in times of drought. A 21-year trial showed that organic crops saw a margin of 38–196 per cent greater yield than comparable conventional crops (Rodale Institute, 2011).

4. Increase biodiversity and save disappearing native animal habitats. For decades scientists worldwide have carried out studies with the clear conclusion that organic farming significantly supports biodiversity, with up to 50% more plant, insect and bird life found on organic farms (Soil Association, 2011).

5. Eliminate use of growth hormones, antibiotics and genetically engineered drugs and feeds in livestock. Resistant bacteria such as vancomycin-resistant *Enterococci* (VRE) are known to spread via the food chain from the use of hormone growth promotants (HGP). A recent ban on the use of HGPs by the European Union resulted in a reduction of VRE in animals and its effects on the general public. (World Health Organization, 2011). In Australia around 40 percent of cattle are raised using HGPs, with a total of 6.56 million HGP doses used on farms and in the feedlot industry in the period from 2006 to 2007 (Meat & Livestock Australia, 2008).

6. Ensure humane treatment of animals. Scientific evidence indicates that practices such as battery hen farming, and the use of sow stalls, inflict continuous intense suffering on animals throughout their confinement leading to acute physical and behavioural problems (RSPCA). Organic livestock is grown in a way that conforms to natural processes of growth and development.

7. Reduce landfill, which has greenhouse consequences. With waste generation increasing on an annual basis, approximately 1.6 tonnes of waste were generated for every Australian in 2002-03. Of the 32.4 million tonnes generated, almost half (47 per cent) were food and garden waste from the municipal stream (Productivity Commission, 2006). By recycling and choosing organic methods, Australians can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect precious ecosystems (Department of Environment and Conservation (NSW), 2006).

8. Safeguard the integrity of food. Certified organic provides a guarantee that product has been grown, handled, packaged and distributed avoiding risk of contamination of the product to the point of sale. Full traceability is maintained along the chain.

Help to ameliorate climate change. Agriculture is accused of being responsible for about 30 per cent of global warming due to CO2 emissions, however conversion to organic agriculture can:

9. Capture CO2 back into the soil in the form of humus. A 23-year research project shows that if only 1000 medium sized farms converted to organic production, the carbon stored in the soil would be equivalent to taking 117 440 cars off the road each year (The Rodale Institute®, 2003).

10. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by eliminating synthetic nitrogen fertilisers. Agriculture in Australia is the second-highest contributor of greenhouse gases (15.2 per cent in 2008) and accounts for most of the country's methane and nitrous oxide emissions, which are caused by fertilisers and crop residues (Department of Climate Change, 2010). Organic standards prohibit the use of nitrogen fertilisers, which lowers emissions and provides both economic and environmental benefits (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, 2011).

Research shows that consuming organic means that you can:

11. Eat produce that is better for you.

A comparison of nearly 100 studies and development of research methods has concluded that the nutritional premium of organic food averages 25%. The differences documented in the study are sufficiently consistent and sizable to justify a new answer to the frequently asked question – "Yes, organic plant-based foods are, on average, more nutritious".

12. Avoid eating up to two kilograms of food additives every year. Many food additives have been linked with symptoms such as allergic reactions, rashes, headaches, asthma, growth retardation and hyperactivity in children (Heaton, 2004).

13. Avoid GMOs. Independent testing of the long-term health effects of GMO foods on humans has not been carried out. The many exemptions from GE labelling laws in Australia make it impossible to know which grocery items use GMO-derived ingredients. Certified organic foods are a great way to avoid GMOs. (BFA 2009)

14. Lower the incidence of neurodevelopmental problems in children which can be caused or made worse by prenatal and early life exposure to pesticides and chemicals that contaminate our food. Three separate United States university studies likened the effects of organophosphate (OP) insecticides exposure during pregnancy to that of high lead exposure, impacting the cognitive development of children (Engel et al., 2011).

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15. Virtually eliminate dietary exposures to insecticides known to be developmental neurotoxins. Findings were reported in two University of Washington studies involving school-age children (Barr et al., 2006).
16. Reduce hormone disruptors caused by pesticides. The European Union says that hormones such as chemical insecticides and herbicides used commonly in food production can interfere with our body's natural hormones and reproductive organs, which may cause low sperm counts and increase the risk of cancer (Orton et al, 2011) and may cause early onset of puberty among young girls (European Commission, 2007).
17. Give infants the nutrient building blocks they need for a healthy future. Ninety per cent of dairy and meat products from organic sources have been shown to increase levels of healthy fatty acids in breast milk (Rist et al., 2007).
18. Reduce the risk of infants' exposure to pesticides. A 1995 Victorian study of breastmilk found that infants are regularly exposed to several pesticides at levels greater than the 'acceptable daily intake' (Ahokas et al., 1995).
19. Reduce the risk of cancer. On average organic foods contain about one-third more cancer-fighting antioxidants than comparable conventional produce (Benbrook, 2005).
20. Eat the best-tasting food. Many Australians who consume organic products every day do so because they believe that organic tastes best.

"Organic is not a luxury; it's how food is supposed to be."

Shane Heaton, nutritionist

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