

Safely Organic

Outspoken

By ANON

We have talked before about how organic is arguably the first and best EMS (environmental management system) amidst a sea of clean and green claims with often less substance. Well try on that organic is the safest way to consume foods, safest in the truest sense of that term, which includes health and nutrition, as well as confidence that what you are consuming is natural and has cautiously avoided ingredients which we to this day know little of in terms of their long term effects let alone their interaction with other synthetic agents in the real world (as opposed to the laboratory).

Just think for a minute. How do you think a conventionally grown and stored tomato or apple lasts as long as it does without applications of fungicides or similar? Organic produce ironically gets blamed for not lasting as long as conventional. If picked and stored correctly, shelf life can be extended, but every natural thing in life has a defined life span. The more we attempt to extend that life-span - playing with nature once again - the more risks we take on.

And then there is the "combinatorial" issue. The argument that chemicals deemed "safe" by our government regulators in isolation may have unknown effects when in combination with other classes or similar classes of chemicals also on the food or used throughout its life. This is to not even mention the long term unknown impacts of single chemicals only discovered decades later. Look for instance at DDT, which was viewed as a cancer agent and only discovered decades later as a hormone mimicking agent. The worst might be still yet to come.

Let's not just focus on synthetic agri-chemicals, all those invisible products that are put on our foods while still on the farm, or worse after they have been harvested and are sitting in storage. Away from the farm there are then the hundreds upon hundreds of approved syn-

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thetic food ingredients, aids and additives used in the manufacture of modern foods. Organic foods fundamentally restrict this list to a few dozen, and these are based on their nature and need. So just think if you have only been consuming certified organic foods

over the past years, you have avoided consuming a vast number of agents, again with unknown combinatorial effects, which have future unknown impacts on our health and wellbeing.

One that always amazes me is a class of synthetic food colours. There are half a dozen colours prescribed for restricted doses only in foods, be-

cause they are known carcinogens - cancer causing agents. And guess where these mostly end up? Kids lollies!

The one regular furphy against organics of course has been the use of manure on the farm. Manure! Farm animals - naturally raised and managed farm animals - are an integral part of an organic farm - have been for millennia. Recycling of wastes is also an integral sustainable and safe way for farms to ensure healthy soils and in turn health

foods. The organic industry has for years led the way with mandatory composting of manures, ironically not what can be said for most conventional industries. And case after case shows, if anything, organic is safer on these counts.

The key point to the whole story of course is that no-one seems to be focusing on health - which is not just about lack of disease. Healthy food is about healthy soils, healthy animals and farms which in turn have the opportunity to produce healthy humans who consume foods arising from those farms. This is why organics focuses so much on the health and nutrition of the soil. In terms of safety, health has to come first.

So why the regular attacks on organic foods being less safe or less healthy for you? Because to the uninitiated it represents such a threat to the established order of making and selling food. But you only have to look under the surface to realise that this way of food production is the way of the future - if we are to have a safe and healthy one. So next time you are purchasing certified organic foods, know that you are participating in a movement towards safer and healthier foods as well as farms. And who doesn't want that? ■

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