

**Media Release, Biological Farmers of Australia, 14
September 2009**

The Organic Advantage
**RESEARCH VERIFIES ORGANIC
NUTRITIONAL BENEFITS**

A new report by the French Agency for Food Safety (AFSSA) has found that organic foods are more nutritious and contain less pesticides and nitrates, which have been linked to a range of health problems including diabetes and Alzheimer's.

Shane Heaton, Nutritionist for the Biological Farmers of Australia, says the research is a thorough and critical evaluation of the nutritional quality of organic food, and has found organic foods have higher levels of minerals and antioxidants as well as a raft of other benefits.

"This is what an unbiased review of the available evidence reveals," he says, "contrary to another recently released review commissioned by the UK Food Standards Agency and widely reported in the media as showing organic food has no significant benefits over non-organic food."

"This review does the question justice by comparing not just a handful of nutrients but also dry matter content, antioxidant content, pesticide levels, and nitrate content. Organic wins out over ordinary food in every respect."

In 2001, the French Agency for Food Safety (AFSSA) set up an expert working group to perform an exhaustive and critical evaluation of the nutritional and sanitary quality of organic food. The AFSSA says they aimed for the highest quality scientific standards during the evaluation.

The selected papers referred to well-defined and certified organic agricultural practices, had the necessary information on design and follow-up, valid measured parameters and the appropriate sampling and statistical analyses. After more than two years of work involving about 50 experts from different fields of organic agriculture research, a final consensus report was issued in the French language in 2003.

The current study published in English in the peer reviewed scientific journal *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* is a summary of this report and the relevant studies that have been published since 2003.

The conclusions of this study challenge the findings of the recent UK Food Standards Agency study that was widely criticised by international experts for using flawed methodology and a conclusion that contradicted its own data.



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The full scientific report can be found at http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/organic/ASD_Lairon_2009.pdf

The major points of The French Agency for Food Safety study are;

1. Organic plant products contain more dry matter (more nutrient dense)
2. Organic plant products have higher levels of minerals
3. Organic plant products contain more anti-oxidants such as phenols and salicylic acid (known to protect against cancers, heart disease and many other health problems)
4. Carbohydrate, protein and vitamin levels are insufficiently documented
5. 94–100% of organic foods do not contain any pesticide residues
6. Organic vegetables contain far less nitrates, about 50% less (high nitrate levels are linked to a range of health problems including diabetes and Alzheimer's)
7. Organic cereals contain similar levels of mycotoxins as conventional ones
8. Organically-bred cattle have more lean meat and more polyunsaturated fatty acids than their conventional counterparts
9. Organic chicken fillets contain 2–3 times less fat and are significantly higher in n–3 fatty acid content (with reported anti-cancer effects and other health benefits).

ENDS

For media enquiries, please contact Jan Nary on ph (07) 3350 5716 ext 275 or email jan.nary@bfa.com.au

The BFA is working to improve organic industry growth and education in Australia. Ask about your copy of the Australian Organic Market Report to see how the organic industry is achieving its goals. More information is available at http://www.bfa.com.au/index.asp?Sec_ID=260

DON'T MISS THE ROADSHOW!

The BFA Organic Roadshow - a line-up of fascinating speakers on many aspects of organic production and marketing –will be coming to Qld and WA between September and November.

For more information ph (07) 3350 5716 ext 232; email events@bfa.com.au; visit www.bfa.com.au.



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