

Buy Organic – for healthier people and a healthier planet!

The Biological Farmers of Australia (BFA) has a vision for the organic industry in Australia – to grow organic food sales to 10 per cent of the food market in Australia by 2020. Assist the organic industry to achieve its goal.

BUY ORGANIC FOR 20 GOOD REASONS:

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. Approximately 30 000 tonnes of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and plant growth regulators are used each year in Australia (OzProspect, 2003).
2. Restore soils for productive cropland and secure the future of Australian agriculture. Forty-eight per cent of Australian croplands have topsoils that are marginally acidic or worse (Land & Water Australia, 2001). Organic farming systems are based on the principle of land and soil regeneration and best environmental practice.
3. Increase the resilience of farms during drought. In the wake of the 2002/2003 drought 100 000 agricultural sector jobs were lost (Australian Government, 2004). 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 (AJAA, 2003).

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 (Soil Association, 2000).
5. Eliminate use of growth hormones, antibiotics and genetically engineered drugs and feeds in livestock. In Australia there remain 12 antibiotics that can be used as growth promoters. More than 500 000kg of antibiotics were used each year in the 1990s. Resistant bacteria such as Vancomycin-resistant enterococci (VRE) are known to spread via the food chain (Collignon, 2003).
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. Composting and recycling of nutrients is a major feature of organic

farming systems, which, in Australia, recycle hundreds of thousands of tonnes of putrescible industrial and other waste each year. Still 8.4 million tonnes (40 per cent) of the total waste stream consists of compostable organic material (1998/99 EPA Landfill Levy Data).

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 (17 per cent in 2004). The Australian Greenhouse Office says that fertiliser emissions accounted for two-thirds of all cropping emissions. Organic standards prohibit the use of nitrogen fertilisers (Cotton Research and Development Corporation, 2007).

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT CONSUMING ORGANIC MEANS THAT YOU CAN:

11. Eat produce that is better for you. Two independent comprehensive studies each analysing around 40 previously published





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

Shane Heaton, BFA nutritionist

studies comparing the differences between organic and conventional foods have concluded that there is overwhelming evidence that organic food is more nutritious. In Shane Heaton's report it is found that on average organic is higher in vitamin C, mineral levels and phytonutrients – plant compounds that can be effective against cancer (Heaton, 2001, Worthington 2001).

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 makes it impossible to know which grocery items use GMO-derived ingredients. Certified organic foods are a great way to avoid GMOs.

14. Lower the incidence of neurodevelopmental problems in children, perhaps including ADHD and autism. Abnormal neurodevelopment in children can be caused or made worse by prenatal and early life exposures to pesticides and chemicals that contaminate our food (Guillette, et al., 1998).

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 (Lu, et al., 2006).

16. Reduce unwanted interference by many pesticides with our sex hormones. This in turn should reduce the prevalence of erectile dysfunction, the number of people

suffering from loss of sexual drive and a host of estrogen-related health problems (EXTOXNET).

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 breastmilk (British Journal of Nutrition, 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' (Quinsey, 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. 

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For a list of ways and locations to buy organic, visit www.bfa.com.au

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