

Organic food vs. inorganic food

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There is much debate on which is better for one's health and for the environment – organic food or conventional (non-organic) food. One of the primary resources detailing the advantages of organic foods is by Jillian Michaels, who is the author of *Master Your Metabolism*. Through exhaustive research, she discovered that, basically, the more chemicals one ingests through our water, food, and environment, the more likely one is to have problems with their metabolism (Michaels 28-29). Her book not only covered the effects that processed foods have on our bodies, but also discussed the adverse effects of chemicals inherent in everything from the cotton we put on our bodies, to the chemicals in our shampoos, body lotions, and cosmetics, to the chemicals in our Scotchguarded furniture (Michaels 171-177). Her theory is that, because, in part, of the multitude of chemicals that are so much a part of everybody's very existence, our hormones get out of whack, and that is a large part of why we gain weight or are unable to lose it (Michaels 33). That said, switching to organics is not a foregone conclusion, mainly because organic food is higher priced than non-organic food, which is one of the major drawbacks of eating organics. Additional research shows that there is, unfortunately, little consensus about the efficacy of switching to organics, either on our individual bodies or the environment. Research indicates that conventionally grown food is as healthy as organically grown food (Rosenbloom), while there is also thought that organic farming is actually more harmful to the environment than conventional farming, due to the fact that organic farms require more land per yield than conventional farms (Leonard). Meanwhile, other studies show just the opposite – that organic food has more nutrients than conventional food (Heaton), and that organic system can increase the world food supply by 50% (Pollan). This <https://assignbuster.com/organic-food-vs-inorganic-food/>

paper will explore these pros and cons in more detail and draw a conclusion on whether or not consuming organic food is more advantageous than consuming and buying non-organic food. The first consideration concerns the environment – is organic farming more advantageous towards the environment than non-organic farming? At least one agronomist, Norman Borlaug, indicates that organic farming is worse for the environment than non-organic farming. Borlaug has won a Nobel Peace Prize and has been an outspoken advocate of synthetic fertilizers. His theory is that organic farming takes up more land than conventional farming does because the use of synthetic fertilizers and conventional farming leads to greater crops being grown on less land than traditional organic farming. The methods used by organic farming – crop rotation and composting – leads to more land being used to grow the same amount of crops (Leonard). Under this theory, because organic farming requires more land to grow the same amount of crops as conventional farming, organic farming is worse for the environment for obvious reasons. Moreover, organic farming uses more land because there is a great deal of nitrogen that must be used to grow these crops, and, if a farmer were to get this nitrogen organically, the farmer would need more cattle to supply the manure and this would also require more land for this cattle to graze (Leonard). Although Borlaug is adamant that organic farming is bad for the environment, his is not the last word on the debate. Michael Pollan, who has authored many books on the food business and the unsustainability of the practices that we follow, has stated that the current method of food production is not sustainable for a multitude of reasons. First, the chemical fertilizers and pesticides which are used in current conventionally grown food are reliant upon energy sources that may become

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unreliable, such as petroleum and natural gas. Pollan contends that the conventional method of growing crops is also contributing to global warming - as much as 37% of global warming is caused by our current methods of growing crops, according to Pollan. This is because of the amount of petroleum used in chemical pesticides, the amount of natural gas used in fertilizers, and the fossil fuel which is used in transportation, packaging, and production. Pollan also states that the current way of growing food is inefficient - the crops are grown with synthetic fertilizers, while the cattle are grown in feedlots. Instead of using the cattle to fertilize the soil, the manure in the feedlots is wasted. A better way of farming, which Pollan states have worked in large scale farms in countries such as Argentina and China, is for the cattle to graze on land for five years, then crops are grown for three years where the cattle were raised.