

Essay on defining organic farming

[Food & Diet](#), [Organic Food](#)



Position Paper: The Omnivore's Dilemma

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Introduction

People who want to stay healthy and active in life are now shifting their beliefs about food consumption. Considering that choices abound when it comes to the type of foods available in the market today, the American population is beset with alternatives to healthy eating instead of depending too much on traditional industrial methods for food production or the hunting and gathering style of yesteryears. At the middle of the debate is Michael Pollan's stand on organic farming, which he details in his book, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. Pollan implied that even though food companies claim that their farm produce are organic, these companies still employ farming methods used by industrial agriculture farmer, which makes the farm products not as organic or as fresh as what they claim. Because of such insinuations, Pollan's stand on organic farming is whether it is good for the planet and for people's health. I believe that organic farming is good for the health and for the planet because it nourishes humans and the soil, is less expensive to produce, is resistant to pests and diseases, and has longer tolerance level to drought.

Organic farming means growing fruits and crops naturally and without the aid of fertilizers. Because of this, crops are believed to be more nutritious and are able to retain their original flavors, thus, they are tastier than chemically produced fruits and vegetables. The same concept applies to animals that are grown in organic farms. Cows, pigs, and chickens, among

others, are said to be organic farm animals when they feed only on grass and water for sustenance. In some instances, cows may be fed with fish to help increase omega-3 in cows' milk and meat. As what Pollan claims, organic farm animals are most often left on their own devices considering that the animals are left to graze for about 24 hours. Even the grasses that animals feed on are free from pesticides and germicides, and are instead made healthier and fit for animals to eat by fertilizing with animal manure. Because of this, people who prefer to eat organically-grown vegetables, fruits, crops, and animals are assured that they are eating clean, pest-free, natural, and fresh products.

Advantages of Organic Farming

Organic farming benefits from using natural products and recycling these same natural products. For instance, kitchen compost and dried foliage that would otherwise be thrown away may be used as natural fertilizers. In addition, because organic farming is characterized by using only biologically tested pest control techniques, animal manure, and special cultivation methods for higher soil productivity, farmers' profits increase as these techniques help in lowering down farmers' investment overhead. It also guarantees consumers that what they are buying, and consequently eating, are devoid of traces of any unnatural sources of food, thus, by-products are naturally healthier for human consumption.

Organic farming also allows farmers to get rid of weeds and other plant pests when they make use of methods intended for organic farming. Methods such as hand-weeding, use of green manure, crop rotation techniques, and application of table salt and borax, aid in restoring damaged soil, which

guarantees high crop quality. These also help ward off pests and plant diseases.

While Pollan agrees that big-name companies such as Whole Foods, widely known as one of the companies that produce organic foods, follow farming methods applicable to organic farming, he also questions whether vegetables and fruits coming from organic farms in remote ranches and farmlands are indeed organic. Considering that transporting the food crops from one location to another could make the farm produce stale and old, Pollan makes a valid point. How can food items coming from remote farm areas maintain the look of freshness after travelling long hours if they are not sealed in containers that use chemicals that will help preserve the freshness and quality of the food product? Because of such, big companies offering organic foods might have to answer to the quality requirements of certain food items.

Another option comes up and that is to buy food products from the local farm markets. These items may not have the required organic farming certification, but ensure to follow the high standards set by organic farming boards. Thus, given a choice whether to buy organic products from certified companies from distant farm areas and locally grown crops and vegetables, Pollan believes that the latter is the better option of the two. I tend to agree with his viewpoint if I am more concerned about purchasing fresh food items and because I can be assured that local farmers tend to work using the natural ecology.

Organically produced food products have a high market, especially for those who want to lead a healthy lifestyle and eat nutritious and poison-free foods.

Although it may take more conscious effort and time from the farmers, consumers are assured of the many benefits of consuming organic foods. Not only are humans benefitted, but the environment as well. Thus, it becomes a profitable and sustainable option for local farmers as it also helps humans prevent health problems associated with consuming food produced using traditional farming methods.