



Which Growing Method is Best?

Whether you are buying organic, non-organic, local, or imported, your food has almost certainly been grown with the help of pesticides.

What's the same?

Pesticides are approved for use in both organic and non-organic (i.e. conventional) farming. Pesticides help farmers protect food and fiber from destructive pests, weeds, disease and fungus.

Farmers use a combination of tools and techniques, like cover crops, prairie strips, drip irrigation and conservation tillage to maintain **soil health and water quality**.

All farmers strive for **sustainability** and the health of their land. The tools farmers can use vary between conventional and organic production, but the goal is the same – maintain soil fertility and produce healthy crops.

Whether you reach for the “organic” label at the store or not, the food grown through either organic and conventional agriculture is **safe**. Furthermore, research shows no difference in nutritional value between organic and conventionally grown foods.

All growing methods use an **integrated and comprehensive approach**, turning to Certified Crop Advisors, agronomists, and fertilizer experts to stay on top of pests, disease, and nutrient requirements. It's important to identify the problem and use tools to isolate and eliminate the pest issue without compromising the ecosystem.

What's different?

Pesticides used on organic farms must be naturally derived. Conventional farms can use synthetic pesticides. Naturally derived pesticides are not inherently better for the environment – it's just a question of where the chemicals in the pesticides originate. In fact, in some cases the chemical structures of the organic and synthetic pesticides are the same.

While organic crops have genes that have been modified in a variety of ways (such as cross breeding) only non-organic agriculture uses what are referred to as “**GMOs**.” GMOs help growers reduce the use of pesticides as well as fuel, reducing the carbon footprint of farming.

Generally speaking, certified organic food costs more but there are reasons behind that **higher price tag**. For example, weeds are a major issue in any crop field. Since organic fields have fewer options to control weeds chemically, labor costs are higher because fields are often hoed by hand. Many types of organic crops have a significantly lower yield and it often takes more land to grow less food, leaving less land for forests, grasslands and wildlife.

Bottom Line

While there are many differences between organic and conventional farming, there are also many similarities further illustrating there is no “right” or “wrong” way to farm. All growers must make the best decision for their specific land and crop. It's all about choice!



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