

The demand for organically produced food is increasing. This increased demand is making organic foods more readily available for consumers at places such as grocery stores, health food stores, farm markets, and public markets.

### What is “Organic”?

Organic refers to the way agricultural products are grown and processed. Organic products are produced according to specified standards, which, among other factors, are minimally processed without artificial ingredients, preservatives, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, medicines in animal production, genetically modified organisms, and certain food processing and preservation substances to maintain their integrity.

Organic farming emphasizes a minimal environmental impact by promoting the sustainable health and productivity of the soil, plants, animals and people. Organic farming can contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, that contribute to global warming.

### What are some Examples of Organic Products?

Organic foods are becoming available in a wide variety of products such as:

- meat, fish, eggs

- fruits & vegetables
- pasta
- prepared sauces
- frozen juices
- dairy products
- cereals
- bread
- soups
- chocolate
- cookies
- beer, wine, vodka
- and more!



### Why People Go Organic

There are many reasons why people buy organic food. Some popular reasons include:

- Environmentally friendly production methods

- Elimination of the possibility of ingesting small levels of pesticides in foods
- Foods grown by locally owned, small family farms
- Perceived better flavor or nutritional content

### **Are Organic Foods Healthier?**

There is currently no scientific evidence that shows organic foods are safer, more nutritious, or healthier than conventionally grown food products. Both organic and conventional foods contain vitamins and minerals which can benefit your health. It is important to choose a variety of foods that fit into a healthy lifestyle.

### **What Does "Certified Organic" Mean?**

A food product labelled "certified organic" has:

1. Met the *Canadian Organic Standards*
2. Passed a yearly inspection
3. An audit trail has been kept by the producer

1. Certified organic means the food product has been grown according to the *Canadian Organic Standards*, which include no synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, biosolids and irradiation to preserve food or genetically modified organisms or genetically engineered seed/ stock. Animals are not subjected to intensive feedlots, or to antibiotics or growth hormones. Farmers also use management techniques such as well-designed crop rotations, replenishment of organic matter, use of green manures and composting.

2. Certified organic products are inspected annually for compliance and must provide producer identification on their labelling. Farms can lose their certification if they fail to meet any one of the standards.

3. Certified organic products have an audit trail to ensure that a product can be traced back to the producer and to the records detailing how that product was produced.

### **How do Producers Become Certified?**

A third party – known as a certifying body – verifies a farm's production methods. An agent from one of the more than 30 certifying bodies across Canada visit farms to ensure that the producer complies with the standards of practice.

### **Atlantic Certified Organic Co-operative**

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Information for this fact sheet is adapted from Think Farm at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/thinkfarm>

A copy of the *Canadian Organic Standards* can be found at <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/ongc-cgsb/internet/bio-org/index-eng.html>

For more information on food safety, visit the Department of Agriculture's food safety website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/agri/foodsafety>