

Understanding organic food in such a way that what it means and why it matters.

Paul Mercy*

Department of Food Safety, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway

Introduction

As more people look for healthier and more sustainable options, interest in organic food has increased recently. What does "organic" actually mean, and why does it matter? The idea of organic food, its guiding principles, and the advantages it provides to both consumers and the environment will all be covered in this article.

Defining organic food

Food that is labelled as organic is defined as being produced and grown using organic farming methods. Natural methods are emphasised in organic farming in order to improve soil fertility, encourage biodiversity, and reduce the use of synthetic chemicals, pesticides, antibiotics, and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). The objective is to establish a sustainable food production system that is ecologically balanced [1].

The principles of organic farming: No Synthetic Chemicals: Synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fertilisers are not allowed in organic farming. To maintain healthy soil and safeguard crops from pests and diseases, natural alternatives like compost, crop rotation, and biological pest control are used. Preservation of Soil Health: Using techniques like crop rotation, cover crops, and the addition of organic matter, organic farmers place a high priority on maintaining and improving the fertility of their soil. These techniques result in healthier and more sustainable farming systems by enhancing soil structure, water retention, and nutrient cycling. Animal Welfare: Standards for organic farming take animal welfare into account. Animals must have access to pasture, not be routinely given antibiotics or growth hormones, and be fed a natural diet that satisfies their nutritional requirements. Conservation of Biodiversity: Organic farming promotes biodiversity by fostering habitats for beneficial wildlife such as birds, insects, and other animals. It encourages the protection of natural ecosystems and seeks to reduce the detrimental effects of agriculture on biodiversity.

The benefits of organic food: Healthier Food: Because organic food lacks synthetic chemicals, it is frequently thought to be healthier. When compared to their conventionally grown counterparts, organic fruits, vegetables, and grains have been found to have higher concentrations of some nutrients and antioxidants. Lessened Risk of Chemical Exposure:

Organic farming methods significantly reduce the use of synthetic pesticides, lowering the risk of chemical exposure. For vulnerable populations like young children, pregnant women, and infants, this is especially crucial. Environmental Sustainability: By reducing soil erosion, enhancing water quality, and conserving natural resources, organic farming aims to minimise its detrimental effects on the environment. It encourages ecologically sound agricultural methods that safeguard ecosystems and maintain long-term ecological balance. Support for Local Farmers: Purchasing organic food helps support regional farmers who use environmentally friendly farming practises. It supports regional economies and food systems by fostering the development of a more resilient and diverse agricultural sector.

Understanding organic food and its significance is crucial in today's food landscape. Organic food refers to products that are grown and processed using organic farming methods, which prioritize sustainability, environmental conservation, and the well-being of consumers. In this article, we will delve into what organic food means and why it matters, exploring its benefits for health, the environment, and sustainable agriculture. The term "organic" in the context of food refers to the specific methods and practices employed in its production. Organic farming emphasizes natural and ecological approaches, avoiding the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, growth hormones, antibiotics, and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Instead, it focuses on sustainable farming techniques that promote soil health, biodiversity, and the responsible use of natural resources [2].

Organic food matters for our health as it reduces exposure to potentially harmful chemicals. By avoiding synthetic pesticides and other agrochemicals, organic farming minimizes the risk of pesticide residues in our food. Additionally, organic food is often richer in nutrients and antioxidants, which can contribute to improved overall health and well-being. Choosing organic food is an environmentally conscious decision. Organic farming practices prioritize soil conservation, water management, and biodiversity preservation. By promoting natural pest control, crop rotation, and composting, organic agriculture reduces soil erosion, protects water sources from contamination, and supports the health of ecosystems. It also contributes to mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting carbon sequestration in soils [3].

*Correspondence to: Paul Mercy, Department of Food Safety, Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Oslo, Norway, E-mail: hach@member.tokyo.jp

Received: 06-Jun-2023, Manuscript No. AAJNHH-23-107319; Editor assigned: 08-Jun-2023, Pre QC No. AAJNHH-23-107319(PQ); Reviewed: 23-Jun-2023, QC No. AAJNHH-23-107319; Revised: 26-Jun-2023, Manuscript No. AAJNHH-23-107319(R); Published: 30-Jun-2023, DOI: 10.35841/ajnhh-7.3.155

Organic food matters for sustainable agriculture. Organic farming methods prioritize soil fertility, using practices such as cover cropping, crop rotation, and organic matter addition to enhance soil health. By focusing on long-term sustainability and minimizing reliance on non-renewable resources, organic agriculture supports the resilience of agroecosystems and helps to maintain soil productivity for future generations. Organic food production adheres to strict animal welfare standards. Livestock raised for organic meat, dairy, and eggs have access to outdoor areas, ample space for natural behaviors, and are fed organic diets. This emphasis on animal welfare ensures that animals are treated humanely and contributes to the ethical considerations associated with organic food [4].

Organic food matters for supporting local communities and small-scale farmers. Organic farming often occurs on smaller, family-owned farms, and purchasing organic products helps to sustain their livelihoods. By choosing organic, consumers can contribute to the resilience of local food systems, support local economies, and foster community well-being. Choosing organic food allows consumers to make informed choices about the food they eat. Organic certification provides transparency and assurance that products meet specific organic standards. This empowers consumers to align their values and dietary preferences with the food they purchase, supporting a more transparent and accountable food system [5].

Conclusion

Understanding organic food entails more than merely being aware of the absence of synthetic chemicals in its cultivation.

It includes a wholistic method of farming that places an emphasis on maintaining healthy soil, preserving biodiversity, and using sustainable agricultural methods. By choosing organic food, consumers can potentially improve their health, lessen their exposure to pesticides, and help the environment. A promising alternative to conventional agriculture, organic farming highlights the significance of sustainable food production for human and environmental well-being.

References

1. Dangour AD, Lock K, Hayter A, et al. Nutrition-related health effects of organic foods: a systematic review. *Am J Clin Nutr.* 2010;92(1):203-10.
2. Mie A, Andersen HR, Gunnarsson S, et al. Human health implications of organic food and organic agriculture: a comprehensive review. *J Environ Health.* 2017;16(1):1-22.
3. Vigar V, Myers S, Oliver C, et al. A systematic review of organic versus conventional food consumption: is there a measurable benefit on human health?. *Nutrients.* 2019;12(1):7.
4. Kahl J, Alborzi F, Beck A, et al. Organic food processing: a framework for concept, starting definitions and evaluation. *J Sci Food Agric.* 2014;94(13):2582-94.
5. Richetin J, Caputo V, Demartini E, et al. Organic food labels bias food healthiness perceptions: Estimating healthiness equivalence using a Discrete Choice Experiment. *Appetite.* 2022;172:105970.