

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S  
*Herbal Legacy Newsletter*

## **Organic vs. Conventional Produce – What Should I Buy?**

by Traci Sellers

May 28, 2008

Because I advocate so highly that 70% of your diet by volume should be fresh, live produce: high water content vegetables and fruit, this is a question I get asked a lot. I'd like to go over the pro's and cons of both, so that you can make an informed decision, and get what's right for you and the people you feed.

Recently I had the opportunity of comparing the two in a way that changed my perception of both. Our family had decided to go out to eat at a restaurant we knew would have excellent food choices that would allow us to keep our high dietary standards: Sweet Tomatoes, the Salad Buffet Restaurant. (Not to be confused with Green Tomatoes, a chain here in the South that is also a buffet of all the same foods, except they are breaded and deep fat fried.) This restaurant was a considerable drive from where we were, so Kal decided that on our way there he would stop for a small appetizer. We stopped in to the Life Café in Marietta. He grabbed a little to go container of fresh organic salad greens, organic sprouts and organic raw hummus, and was kind enough to share bites with me on our way to the restaurant. It was delightful and fresh, and I looked forward to filling a whole plate with the live, raw goodness I knew awaited me at Sweet Tomatoes, as I had eaten there many times when I first made my transition to increase the amount of live food in my diet when we were living in Salt Lake City, UT.

I filled my plate with great anticipation and as we sat together eating our salads, we both realized that we were both experiencing the same thing. This raw salad, though almost identical to the appetizer we had shared, was not nearly as good. It just lacked a dimension of energy and nourishment that the organic salad had. **FOR THE FIRST TIME, AFTER EATING LIVE FOOD FOR 8 YEARS, I COULD TASTE THE DIFFERENCE.** This had never before happened to me, and I have eaten organic produce plenty of times. Now, I am investigating new sources for our staple produce, looking into organics, because the difference was so profound. I am ready to make the switch. Before you assume that I am 100% PRO for organic, read on.

My experience at the restaurant brought to light what I have always assumed, Organic Is Better. AND the question remains, is that what I should buy? For ME, the answer *now*

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is yes. But if you had asked me a month ago, a year ago, 8 years ago, the answer would have been NO. Why? Because then, it would not have been congruent for where I was in my transition. When I first started to change, simply switching from dead food to live food was reward in and of itself, and I tell you now, as I will continue to tell anyone who takes my classes, *you don't need organic produce to be healthy*. I would take a live, conventionally raised salad over an organic white flour pasta any day. (Of which there are tons of varieties, I am not sure why people go to the trouble to grow organic wheat, only to refine the goody out of it.) Food that is alive has more power to nourish us than dead-processed organic food any day.

So PRO for conventional produce, IT IS ALIVE. And if you are at the point in your transition where the choice is between dead and alive, choose *alive* conventional produce.

Second issue, Cost. Where are you at financially? It is true that the cost and availability of organic produce is improving. This is going to be helped tremendously by your willingness as a consumer to choose organic (it is a supply and demand thing). And although the margin of cost difference is decreasing, it is still a reality. I have to share with you something that one of my students said in a class I taught recently where the question of Organic vs. Conventional came up. She says she looks at that margin of difference between the organic choice and the conventional, chooses the organic and says to herself, "I'm worth it." I loved her candor and attitude. Yes, I too am worth it. 50 cents, a dollar? I am worth it.

On the flip side, does going for organic place such a strain on your budget that you feel like you can't get very much, if any at all? If this is where you are, and the question is conventional produce or no produce, *buy conventional*. The road to being Truly Healthy is paved with live vegetation. Keep your road full of produce, because that matters more than whether or not it is organic.

A few years back, I tried to switch to all organics and found that I couldn't get nearly the same volume I could in conventional. Then, at home, I was cringing whenever someone wanted a piece of fruit! I was rationing it out, so there would be enough to last until the next grocery day. I had tension and stress over my family *eating too much produce*.

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Whoa! I teach this! No way did I want them to not eat their produce! No way did I want *tension* around my live food! For me then, I would rather have my family partake freely and lovingly from a case load of conventionally raised oranges than a small basket of hoarded organic oranges. So PRO for conventional produce, it is cheaper.

Now the pesticide question. That is why we want organic, right? Because there are no pesticides on it. I would just like to put the pesticide issue into perspective. In my Principles book (available as a free download if you haven't gotten in yet at <http://www.bestfoodist.com>). I have a chart that shows pesticide residues in common foods in parts per million. In a potato, the pesticide residue is .003. In a piece of animal flesh, it is .281, nearly 300 more parts per million in every bite. It would take you almost a year of eating conventionally grown potatoes to get the same amount of pesticide residue that one serving of chicken contains. Why? Because not only do the animals bodies collect and concentrate the poisons into their flesh, their feed is allowed to have 20% more pesticides used than that of crops grown for human use.

So if you are weighing the pros and cons pertaining to pesticides, consider what else is on your plate besides the produce. You can also reduce surface pesticides significantly by scrubbing well (root vegetables) or peeling (fruits) your produce. For those who have already eliminated the more concentrated sources of pesticides from their diet, or for those battling a serious health condition, the question becomes, poison or no poison? It is one more thing your body will have to eliminate, and the organic produce has far less or none. So PRO for organic, it *is* better.

As I blog along here, more issues between conventional and organic produce keep coming to mind that I haven't addressed. I think the examples I have given here though, express the point I want to make sufficiently. I am neither pro-organic or pro-conventional, I am PRO-Produce! Eat food that is alive.

The decision to go organic is going to depend on you as an individual. Where are you at in your transition? Are you just starting to add in produce or have you been a long time user? If you are still working on how to get off of processed foods, white flour, sugar and dairy, focus on that. If you have a handle on eating healthfully and the difference

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between an organic salad and a non organic one is *profound*, it is time to make the switch. Wherever you are, be sure to savor every bite.

Love from your friend,

Traci

<http://www.bestfoodist.com>