

[GE_News] It's Official: organic really is better
GM WATCH daily list <http://www.gmwatch.org>

1. Official: organic really is better
2. Eat your words, all who scoff at organic food

EXTRACTS: ...[the new] research has shown up to 40% more beneficial compounds in [organic] vegetable crops and up to 90% more in [organic] milk. It has also found high levels of minerals such as iron and zinc in organic produce. ...the evidence of the nutritional differences has been mounting. Last summer a 10-year study by the University of California comparing organic tomatoes with those grown conventionally found double the level of flavonoids - a type of antioxidant thought to reduce the risk of heart disease. Other studies show milk having higher levels of omega3 fatty acids, thought to boost health.

1. Official: organic really is better
Jon Ungoed-Thomas
The Sunday Times, October 28 2007
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article2753446.ece>

THE biggest study into organic food has found that it is more nutritious than ordinary produce and may help to lengthen people's lives.

The evidence from the GBP12m four-year project will end years of debate and is likely to overturn

government advice that eating organic food is no more than a lifestyle choice. The study found that organic fruit and vegetables contained as much as 40% more antioxidants, which scientists believe can cut the risk of cancer and heart disease, Britain's biggest killers. They also had higher levels of beneficial minerals such as iron and zinc.

Professor Carlo Leifert, the co-ordinator of the European Union-funded project, said the differences were so marked that organic produce would help to increase the nutrient intake of people not eating the recommended five portions a day of fruit and vegetables. "If you have just 20% more antioxidants and you can't get your kids to do five a day, then you might just be okay with four a day," he said.

Researchers grew fruit and vegetables and reared cattle on adjacent organic and nonorganic sites on a 725-acre farm attached to Newcastle University, and at other sites in Europe. They found that levels of antioxidants in milk from organic herds were up to 90% higher than in milk from conventional herds.

As well as finding up to 40% more antioxidants in organic vegetables, they also found that organic tomatoes from Greece had significantly higher levels of antioxidants, including flavo-noids thought to reduce coronary heart disease. Leifert said the government was wrong about there being no difference between organic and conventional produce. "There is enough evidence now that the level of good things is higher in organics," he said.

2. Eat your words, all who scoff at organic food

Jon Ungeod-Thomas The Sunday Times, October 28 2007

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/health/article2753546.ece>

ITS unassuming location belies its importance. Sandwiched between Hadrian's Wall and the busy A69 road to Newcastle upon Tyne is a 725-acre farm that will help to determine the nation's future eating habits. In a unique experiment, its rolling pastures and ploughed fields have been split into two so that conventional and organic produce can be grown side by side. It has enabled scientists to test the alternative foods rigorously and answer a question that most shoppers ask themselves on a regular basis: is buying organic better for you?

Findings from the GBP12m European Union-funded project, the biggest of its kind and the first to investigate systematically the physiology of produce from the different farming techniques, will be peer reviewed and published over the next 12 months.

But already one conclusion is clear: organically produced crops and dairy milk usually contain more "beneficial compounds" - such as vitamins and antioxidants believed to help to combat disease. "We have a general trend in the data that says there are more good things in organic food," said Professor Carlo Leifert, leader of the QualityLowInput-Food (QLIF) project. The research has shown up to 40% more beneficial compounds in vegetable crops and up to 90% more in milk. It has also found high levels of minerals such as iron and zinc in organic produce.

However, the evidence of the nutritional differences has been mounting. Last summer a 10-year study by the University of California comparing organic tomatoes with those grown conventionally found double the level of flavonoids - a type of antioxidant thought to reduce the risk of heart disease. Other studies show milk having higher levels of omega3 fatty acids, thought to boost health.

Over the past four years, the QLIF project, involving 33 academic centres across Europe and led by Newcastle University, has analysed the 725-acre farm's produce for compounds believed to boost health and combat disease.

Like other studies, the results show significant variations, with some conventional crops having larger quantities of some vitamins than organic crops. But researchers confirm that the overall trend is that organic fruit, vegetables and milk are more likely to have beneficial compounds. According to Leifert, the compounds which have been found in greater quantities in organic produce include vitamin C, trace elements such as iron, copper and zinc, and secondary metabolites which are thought to help to combat cancer and heart disease.

Patrick Holden, director of the Soil Association, said the research could help to contribute to a "seismic" change in the food industry: "If you know there are significant nutritional differences in these foods, any sensible citizen would conclude it must have health implications."