

Championed by informed consumers, environmentalists and even high-performance athletes, a movement towards a natural diet is gaining increasing traction among mainstream shoppers. Simply put, they are demanding a better choice – for our bodies and our planet – nourishment, the way Mother Nature intended.

organic foods

When the ancient Greeks started the Olympic Games in 776 BC, athletes had their own special performance regimen, including nutrition.

Milo of Croton, for example, a wrestler of legendary strength who won five successive Olympics from 532 to 516 BC, ate 9 kilograms of meat, 9 kilograms of bread and 8.5 litres of wine a day, according to ancient records.

Today's athletes view sports and nutrition quite differently. And many of them say organic food is essential to their well-being and performance.

Ashleigh McIvor – after a long list of impressive, international Ski Cross results dating back to 2003 – became the first-ever Olympic Ski Cross champion during the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver.

As an elite athlete, she says, "It is important that I fuel my body with the healthiest food, as it impacts my overall well-being, strength, stamina, and ultimately, my performance on the hill."

Ms. McIvor decided to support the organic movement in 2005, at the urging of her sister, an environmental sciences student at the time.

"As an athlete, I spend most of my time outdoors. I am a true nature lover and I care deeply about protecting the planet," she says. "Every small step counts, and the food you choose to buy has an impact on the long-term health of the planet."

When Stonyfield, a Quebec-based organic yogurt brand, presented Ms. McIvor with the



Canadian Olympian Ashleigh McIvor is among the Canadians who choose organic foods. Beyond her concern that she "fuel her body with the healthiest food," Ms. McIvor says, "I care deeply about protecting the planet. Every small step counts, and the food you choose to buy has an impact on the long-term health of the planet." PHOTO: JERBUCK.COM

opportunity to become an ambassador for its Clever Awakening social-media campaign – to inform Canadians about organic food – Ms. McIvor felt it was a good fit. She will be leading an online conversation through www.stonyfield.ca.

According to a recent Ipsos Canada online survey, "Fifty-one per cent of Canadians feel they

are not well informed about the products from organic farming, and 62 per cent are interested in learning more," says Iannick Melancon, brand manager with Stonyfield.

"That is why we asked an elite athlete such as Ashleigh to partner with us; we want to engage the public through an inspirational Canadian who

embraces our mission and demonstrate that eating organic is better for your health, the health of your community and the health of your planet."

Ms. McIvor says, "Stonyfield wants to do its part to demystify the subject of organics," adding that Organic Week, currently running between October 9 and 16, will contribute to that effort.

Clara Hughes, a six-time Olympic champion in speed skating and cycling between 1996 and 2010, is also a proponent of organic food.

"Eating organic is a big part of my daily regime," she says. "What I fuel my body with also impacts my state of mind and energy level."

Ms. Hughes spent the Vancouver Olympics – where she won a bronze medal in the 5,000 meter speed skating event – in a condo in Vancouver, making organic smoothies and other favourite meals.

"I was eating the best food – homemade bread and soup, smoothies just the way I like them," she says. "I felt I had an advantage over the international

skaters who weren't at home."

As an athlete, one of Ms. Hughes' sponsors is organic company Natura. She speaks publicly about the benefits of eating organic. "I [like] the idea of...serving as an example to people that good food choices result in good energy."

Gary Roberts, an NHL star and Stanley Cup champion who played from 1986 to 2009, is also an advocate of eating organic. "I've been buying my meat [from Beretta Organic Farms] since 2000," he says. "In my work now, as a hockey life-coach for elite young players, I [supply] them with an organic post-workout meal."

As well, each of his players receives a nutrition package that includes an organic food-choice list and organic recipes.

Mr. Roberts began eating organic when he was 27 to avoid pesticides, growth hormones, etc. "If I hadn't taken such good care of myself nutritionally, I wouldn't have played until I was 43. It was as much about what I did off the ice as what I did on it."

or-gan-ic –adjective

Organic production is a holistic system designed to optimize the productivity and fitness of diverse communities within the agro-ecosystem, including soil organisms, plants, livestock and people. The principle goal of organic production is to develop enterprises that are sustainable and harmonious with the environment.

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New research demonstrates organic farms use less energy.

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Organic Week celebrations are happening across Canada.

online? Tuck in at www.organicbiologique.ca and www.organicweek.ca.

Organic Week 2010

Were there any organic foods on your Thanksgiving table this year? It would have been good timing since Monday was also the beginning of Organic Week in Canada.

The Canadian organic sector has declared October 9 to 16 national Organic Week.

Organic Week partners, including the Canada Organic Trade Association, Canadian Organic Growers and various regional and provincial partners, believe in the benefits of organic agriculture systems and want to spread the word.

Events across the country include restaurant contests, performances and organic farm tours, to name a few. (Read more about some special events on page 4 of this report.)

And organizers are also asking organic food enthusiasts to plan events in their own communities.



It could be a book club discussion, a recipe contest or a film night illustrating the ideas behind organic food. There are plenty of suggestions and listings at www.organicweek.ca.

This week also promotes the "Canada Organic" logo. Finding the logo on a food product tells the shopper that it meets Canada's new national organic food production regulations and standards.

Well timed, this week wraps up on Saturday, World Food Day – a good time to ask: how is your food grown?

CELEBRATE NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK WITH OUR ORGANIC CHAMPIONS!



Canadian Organic Growers
Cultivons Biologique Canada



Organic farming saves energy and emissions

Q&A with
Derek Lynch
 Canada Research Chair,
 Organic Agriculture, Nova
 Scotia Agricultural College



Your recent research has shown that organic farming systems use less energy than traditional practices. Can you describe your findings?

Earlier this year, I worked with Dr. Ralph Martin and Dr. Rod MacRae to conduct a comprehensive review of over 120 scientific publications comparing the energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of organic farm systems with those of traditional farms.

What we found was quite significant: at least a 20 per cent energy savings at the farm level through organic versus conventional farming practices.

At the same time, we were able to dispel the common myth that transport contributes substan-

tially to the overall energy costs of a food product. In the U.S. and EU, this represented an average of only 11 and 9 per cent respectively of farm-to-table food energy costs, while the farming system represented 30 to 50 per cent. This points to the fact that how a food is grown has more impact on its energy "footprint" than how far it has travelled.

What are the main energy differences between organic farming systems and non-organic?

In organic farming systems, producers do not use nitrogen fertilizer, which is very energy intensive to produce, or pesticides and herbicides. These contribute to the embedded energy costs of the prod-



Organic farming systems don't involve the use of nitrogen fertilizer, pesticides or herbicides, and use at least 20 per cent less energy to operate than traditional farms. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

ucts produced on the farm.

The federal government, under the Growing Forward Policy Frame-

work, recently committed \$6.5 million to Canada's Organic Science Cluster. This national research program is being led by the Organic Agriculture Centre of Canada at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College and the Organic Federation of Canada. The research will contribute to our knowledge of how organic methods can benefit all agriculture, from fruit horticulture to dairy production systems, to environmental sustainability overall.

Is there any precedent where consumers are told this product is carbon-neutral or has

a lower climate-change impact?

Tentative steps have already been taken towards GHG labelling in other parts of the world.

In Europe, the Nature and More labelling and tracking scheme provides consumers with information on the GHG emissions associated with a product.

And a Swedish initiative, Climate Labelling for Food, is working to decrease climate impact by setting food production standards. This is complemented by a food-labelling system through which consumers can make conscious climate choices and

businesses can increase their competitive power.

While we don't yet have a label that speaks to energy use and the climate, we do have the Canada Organic label. I would encourage people to consider organic as the best way of knowing how your food has been produced. Canada's organic standards require that farmers follow fundamental organic principles of environmental sustainability, which promote biodiversity, minimize soil erosion, and recycle renewable resources, decrease pollution and increase soil fertility through non-chemical means.

organic fact

In 2009, Canada formalized its Organic Products Regulations, which call for consistent labelling rules, an easily recognized national logo and strict enforcement of Canada Organic certification requirements by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

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Organics growing by leaps and bounds

While organic food sales make up a small percentage of total retail food sales in Canada – 2.5 per cent – that number speaks volumes when compared to organic food sales in 2006, which had 0.9 per cent of the market.

“The Canadian organic sector has been growing 20 to 35 per cent a year – a fairly breathless pace – for many years,” says Matthew Holmes, executive director, Canada Organic Trade Association (COTA). “Even last year, in the thick of the recession, we saw a slowing down of that growth, but it was still growth. While other sectors were retracting, some of our members had their best years on record.”

The retail value of organic food products sold in Canada in 2008 was estimated at \$2 billion, according to a 2008 Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada study. That’s double the sales in 2006.

Mr. Holmes says, while the organic industry began in the ’60s and ’70s as a change movement, today’s market drivers are significantly different.

“In addition to those buying ethnic and specialty foods, which have a lot of crossover with organics, the drivers are new parents and baby boomers,” he says.

Steve Cavell, CEO of Organic Meadow, a co-op consisting of over 100 organic family farms, says other market drivers are salad greens, cereals and dairy products.

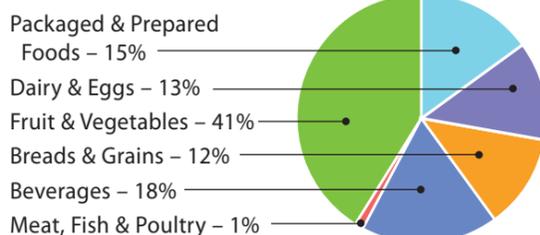
Organic Meadow is an example of an organization that has experienced incredible growth. “Our first run of organic milk was 700 litres...and today we are at 12 different dairies for cheese, butter, ice cream and yogurt production, with distribution coast to coast, and representation on the shelves of all major grocery stores except Safeway,” he says.

Due to market demand, Organic Meadow recently partnered with Steen’s Dairy Ltd. to build Ontario’s first new dairy in decades. “We went from a 1,200-square-foot plant to a 20,000-square-foot plant,” he says.

While Organic Meadow has no plans to export outside of Canada anytime soon, other organic companies are thriving on the international market.

Invermere, B.C.-based Kicking Horse Coffee finished 2009

Organic food sold in Canadian supermarkets

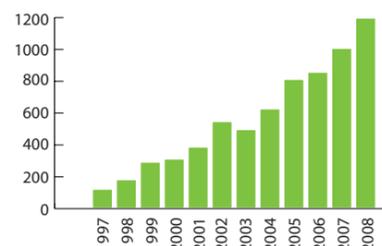


Canada’s organic sector has been growing 20 to 35 per cent a year even despite the recession. “While other sectors were retracting, some of our members had their best years on record,” says Canada Organic Trade Association executive director Matthew Holmes.

with a 13 per cent increase in sales despite the economy. “We’re probably experiencing an average

of 30 per cent growth domestically this year, and also in the U.S.,” says Leo Johnson, co-owner of

Number of certified organic processors and handlers



Canada Organic: The new, regulated regime for organic food

Canada’s organic sector had an important year in 2009, with the establishment of the federal Organic Products Regulations. These previously voluntary standards – the rulebook for organic farmers and processors – have been in development since 1999, and are now a mandatory basis for certification.

“The Canadian government implemented this regime at the urging of the organics sector itself,” says Michel Saumur, national manager of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) Canada Organic Office. “The industry felt there was abuse of the term organic, with organic claims being made fraudulently on behalf of products that did not comply with organic principles.”

Consistent labelling rules, a new, easily recognized national logo and strict enforcement by the CFIA are part of the Canada Organic certification requirements. A review of organic products will also be conducted by CFIA’s team of national inspectors at the border, animal processing plants, egg-grading stations and retail locations.

The CFIA’s Canada Organic Office oversees all organic activities, including certification, in Canada.

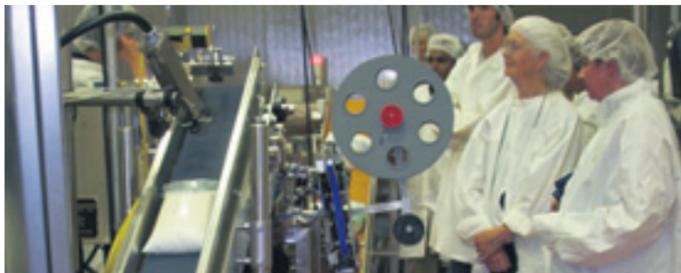
“In order to be certified, the farmer or processor must have an organic plan and be able to demonstrate that their practices don’t risk the organic integrity of the product,” says Mr. Saumur.

This mandatory organic certification will:

- protect consumers against misleading or deceptive labelling practices;
- reduce consumer confusion about the definition of organic;
- facilitate the access of Canadian organic products to foreign markets that require regulatory oversight; and
- support further development of the domestic market.

organic fact

Total Canadian retail sales of organic products through all market channels was \$1 billion in 2006 (\$412 million through retail channels, representing close to 1% of total retail food sales) and \$2 billion in 2008.



Bags of one per cent Organic Meadow milk roll off the line in the new, state-of-the-art, 20,000-square-foot dairy in Guelph, Ontario – a partnership of Steen’s Dairy and Organic Meadow Co-op Inc. PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Kicking Horse Coffee – an organic, fair trade coffee that is nearing the top five organic coffee companies in the world.

Efforts by the Canadian organic industry to expand globally are buoyed by a recent \$152,500 commitment from Agriculture Canada’s AgriMarketing Program.

That brings COTA’s international-strategy budget to \$300,000 in 2010-11 and will support Canada’s emerging organic sector in staying ahead of international market trends by participating in international trade shows, developing promotional materials and building a long-term international strategy for the organics sector.

“With this second year of support, we can begin the work of building a brand for Canadian organic products in our target international markets,” says Mr. Holmes. “The global organic market is expanding rapidly, and this support will allow Canada to establish itself as a supplier of quality organic products.”

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Celebrate Organic Week in style

With sales that leapt from \$1 billion in 2006 to \$2 billion in 2008, the industry is showcasing the growing organic food movement, including organic farms, chefs, retailers, restaurants and its new logo from Thanksgiving Day, October 9 to World Food Day, October 16.

How can you celebrate that success?

HAVE AN ORGANIC BEER
Organic Week got an early kick-off at an organic Oktoberfest, October 2, sponsored by Beau's All Natural Brewery at Vankleek Hill, Ont.

Speaking from there by phone, and nearly drowned out by the sound of bands and celebration in the background, Laura Telford, national director of Canadian Organic Growers, said the turnout numbered in the thousands and was drawing people from Montreal and Ottawa to the small town's fairgrounds on the Ontario-Quebec border.

What does Oktoberfest in a small community in eastern Ontario have to do with a national celebration of organic food? According to Dr. Telford, Beau's Oktoberfest celebration is the essence of Organic Week, which aims to connect people to great organic food and drink. It's also about celebrating how far the organic sector has come in a few short years, she says.

RECOGNIZE THE NEW CANADIAN ORGANIC CERTIFICATION

During Organic Week, retailers across the country are highlighting organic products with promotional materials provided by the federal government.

Matthew Holmes, executive director of the Canada Organic Trade Association, says the organic sector will also showcase its products and processes to parliamentarians at an organic reception on Parliament Hill, in Ottawa, October 18.

"The event will also serve as a thank-you to the government

Today's organic dairy options

When shoppers pick up a litre of organic milk, or any other organic food, they're choosing a product that comes from an entirely separate production chain.

"A lot of what differentiates an organic dairy product is what happens on the farm," says Iannick Melancon, brand manager at Stonyfield. "It's about how it's grown and produced, how the animal is treated, what it is fed versus traditional dairy cows and how the farmers live."

Organic food systems also minimize processing and forgo the use of toxic, synthetic pesticides. Organic dairy cows do not receive hormone treatments or antibiotics (except if the animal is suffering, in which case the milk is removed from the dairy herd until she recovers).

"Communities benefit from living near a farmer who doesn't use chemicals and properly composts his manure before he spreads it," says Steve Cavell, CEO of Organic Meadow. "As well,

people benefit from drinking milk that has had a minimum amount of processing. In Canada, by law, it has to be pasteurized, but it doesn't have to be fine filtered or ultra heat treated or any of those things."

Sandra Bourdeau, a dietician with the Dairy Farmers of Canada, says both organic and conventional dairy products contain the same 16 essential nutrients.

With regard to other nutritional components, a recent study by Newcastle University published in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture, demonstrates that cows with an organic, forage-based, grass diet in the UK produced milk higher in beneficial fatty acids, antioxidants and vitamins than cows raised on conventional, high-input farms.

Ms. Bourdeau says another difference between organic and conventional dairy products can be taste, a distinction that is most apparent in cheese products.

organicfact

A study published in the journal Pediatrics concluded that exposure to organophosphate pesticides at levels common among U.S. children may contribute to the prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder.

for the new Organic Products Regulations – which guarantee that organic products sold in Canada now meet our national standards and requirements – with teeth for enforcement," says Mr. Holmes.

The industry will present a selection of organic foods including maple syrup and duck from Québec, beef and squash from Ontario, wild rice from Saskatchewan and fresh vegetables from local organic growers.

"We'll highlight organic farms and also provide MPs with literature and information on the growing organic sector in Canada," Mr. Holmes says.

PRACTISE MAKING PURPOSEFUL FOOD CHOICES

Shopping and eating organic is an acquired skill. Dedicate this week to practicing that ability by eating only organic foods, drinking only organic

beverages and considering where everything you eat or drink comes from before you consume it.

Visit www.organicweek.ca to find some of the restaurants, hotels, community halls and farmers' markets organizing special Organic Week meal experiences.

"There is growing interest in organic food," says Dr. Telford, "People are looking for a more sustainable food alternative."

This report was produced by RandallAnthony Communications Inc. (www.randallanthony.com) in conjunction with the advertising department of The Globe and Mail. Richard Deacon, National Business Development Manager, rdeacon@globeandmail.com



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Organic farmer reveals soul behind the practice



Organic farming veteran Jerry Kitt is up before dawn every day, making sure his bison, chickens, turkeys, pigs – and the laundry he hung out to dry – are all where they are supposed to be. PHOTOS: SUPPLIED

It's a windy, fall day west of Grande Prairie, Alberta, and Jerry Kitt is on the phone, watching some leaves, and some laundry, blow by the window of his log home.

He's been up since five or six – always before sunrise – to feed his animals and do his morning chores.

“My goal is to have the healthiest animals,” says Mr. Kitt. “I look at their nutritional needs, their needs for space and free range, their needs for shelter, and in so doing, I'm able to grow animals that are almost always in perfect health.”

An organic meat farmer, Mr. Kitt has been busy getting his turkeys ready for Thanksgiving.

“When the 300 chicks arrived in the beginning of June, they were about the size of a large egg,” he wrote in his September

Issue of Farm News, published on his First Nature Farms website. “Now, just three-and-a-half months later, we are carrying 180 kilograms of food to them every day. By the time Thanksgiving comes, they should weigh 7.5 kilograms each, an increase of 140 times.”

Mr. Kitt moves his turkeys onto a new pasture, commenting on how much they love the fresh green grass. Sadly, few turkeys raised in Canada get to see the sunlight, let alone stroll outside. Yet, on Mr. Kitt's farm the animals enjoy – and occasionally abuse – such liberties.

“I had 80 juvenile delinquent pigs escape from their pen,” says Mr. Kitt. “It was actually kind of fun. We don't really chase anything. I just entice them with food and get their curiosity so they come back.”

He makes sure not to bring anything onto his farm that isn't approved by the Canada Organic standard.

“If I'm sourcing wheat to feed my turkeys, I will only purchase wheat from an organic farmer,” he says. “Same thing if I'm looking for organic straw for bedding for my pigs.”

Lunchtime is in the early afternoon.

“I eat mostly organic. I may not know the producers that grow the food, but I can appreciate what they are doing,” says Mr. Kitt. “They have made the decision to work closer with nature; look at long-term sustainability rather than short-term profit.”

Mr. Kitt is joined at his table by WWOOFers, a nickname to describe his visitors from World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF). Through

WWOOF, volunteers from all over the globe help on organic farms in return for food, accommodation and opportunities to learn about organic practices.

Afternoons are always spent back out on the farm, mixing new feed, working on the neighbour's tractor or making sure nothing crazy is happening. “Hundreds if not thousands of variables can happen. I always expect the

unexpected, and it happens every day,” says Mr. Kitt.

After a busy day, he heads out to play the accordion at the seniors' centre and plans to get home in time to check his e-mail then head to bed.

With 14 cows, 90 bison, 2,000 chickens, 300 turkeys and goodness knows how many pigs, tomorrow should prove to be interesting. It always does.

organic fact

The number of certified organic operations in Canada continue to grow. In 2008, there were 3,800 certified producers in Canada, and an additional 1,200 certified processors/handlers – up 40 per cent from 2006.

NATURAL PEST CONTROL

Organic growers favour good bugs over pesticides

Crop-damaging pests can cripple a farming operation. Conventional methods of dealing with this problem would include spraying the crop, often indiscriminately killing all surrounding insects – whether beneficial or damaging. A case in point, toxic pesticides have been implicated in the collapse of the bee colonies that much of the world's agriculture depends on for pollination.

Organic farmers take a different approach, with both large international and small local farms alike relying on natural predators – beneficial insects – to deal with pests.

The Green Cane Project in Brazil is the world's largest organic project, with more than 14,500 hectares of organically certified sugar cane. The project, run by the Balbo Group, allows sugar cane harvesting to take place without burning the cane.

Crofter's Organic, a Canadian organic jam producer, is a supporter of the

project, bringing the organic sugar into Canada for use in its products.

One key method used to keep the cane healthy is beneficial insects. The group's Sao Francisco Mill boasts an entomological laboratory where natural enemies are raised and then released into the fields to control unwanted pests.

“Micro-wasps,” also referred to as parasitic wasps, inject into the larva of the pests that do the damage. A second generation of wasps then emerges, parasitizing the bugs and preventing them from damaging the crops.

The results of avoiding chemical-based farming practices at The Green Cane Project are impressive: four to five times more biodiversity than conventional cane fields; hundreds of beneficial insects, micro-organisms and earthworms have re-appeared; beneficial predator populations have resulted in a 90 per cent reduction in pest damage to crops; and

yields of cane have increased by more than 20 per cent.

A similar technique is being tested on Canadian soil by organic strawberry farmer John Wise alongside researchers from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

Brandie MacArthur, a Nicola Valley, B.C., farmer currently transitioning Mountain Monkeys Organic Delights to be certified organic, says bugs are her best allies. “We have a passive approach to insects in general, no longer upset about pests like aphids, because, by putting plants outside of the greenhouse at the right time, other insects such as wasps and ladybugs come and feast on them,” she says.

As well, Ms. MacArthur says earthworms do the tilling for her, and tomato hornworms top the farm's tomato plants naturally, at exactly the point in the season when it would have to be done by hand.

“Nature really does take care of itself,” she says.

COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH

Holistic attitude drives consumers and producers

The whole story on organic food involves three dimensions rather than one.

There are those who choose to eat organic because of the obvious environmental benefits of organic farming practices. Then, there are those making a health choice, or those who are conscious of the positive community and social ramifications of eating organic.

“It's a holistic approach that works from the soil up,” says Maureen Kirkpatrick, standards coordinator at The Big Carrot, a Toronto-based co-op and health food store with over 60 worker-owners. “It's about the integrity of the whole system; for all of the organisms below the soil, and the ones like us walking around on top of it.”

With regard to the environment, Laura Telford, Canadian Organic Grower's national director, says, “The soil is alive, and that is the basis for healthy, living plants and ecosystems. When we spread fertilizers and synthetic chemicals on the earth, crop yields improve, but the natural balance between soil organisms is disrupted, ultimately diminishing the soil's capacity to produce food. Excess chemicals also end up in the water system, which impacts wildlife and humans alike,” she says.

Different soil organisms serve different functions. Some fix atmospheric nitrogen into a form plants can use and help hold it in the soil, thus delaying the release of harmful emissions, while others create natural soil tillage to better manage nutrients and rainfall, says Dr. Telford.

A 2004 analysis of 76 studies comparing the impact of organic versus conventional farming demonstrated that biodiversity is higher on organic farms, including greater numbers of species that have experienced declines in range or abundance.



Organic food industry experts agree more Canadians need to pay attention to where their food comes from, how it is grown, the environmental footprint it leaves behind and who they are supporting by buying it.

PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

“Organic farming is sustainable from an environmental point of view, but it is also about the health of people and our communities,” adds Ms. Kirkpatrick. “All of the spraying conventional farmers do can subject themselves and their families to greater health risks such as increased cancer rates. Everyone has the right to work in a safe environment, and that extends to the people who grow our food.”

Jodi Latremouille, co-owner of Footprints Harvest, an organic food delivery service in Merritt, B.C., that sources certified organic products for its clients, describes how organics is

also a lifestyle, with widespread social benefits: “It encourages a shift in perspective that forces us to create time for our families and community. We can take a step back from this endless cycle of frenzied consumption and spend some time...creating experiences such as cooking and eating together, working in the garden and spending a morning at the farmers' market.”

She comments on the holistic aspect of eating organic: “There are a lot of issues that surround us; poverty, the environment and our health. These issues are directly related to how we eat.”



Organic farmers manage to raise healthy crops without the use of toxic synthetic pesticides by relying on nature's bugs to battle one another. Beneficial insects – the non-crop-harming, natural predators of crop-eating pests – include ladybugs and even wasps. PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM



IN STORES NOW

This logo tells you that products have been inspected and certified under the Canadian Organic Regime, overseen by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA).

Canada has implemented mandatory national organic standards and labelling rules. Make sure the products you buy are certified organic and meet Canadian requirements.

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