Food movements driving market shift

Consumers ask more questions and choose organic

By Matthew Holmes
Executive Director, Canada Organic Trade Association

Food has become a cultural phenomenon, and consciousness about the food on our table is at an all-time high. Terms like “foodie” and “organic” are tossed around our mega-grocery stores, on our smartphones, and even in reality TV shows. Food has transcended into a foodie culture where we are more conscious about what we put in our bodies, more aware about the source of our food, and more curious about the journey and the practices behind it.

Food is no longer a commodity; it is a symbol of our society. People are more aware of their choices, and this awareness has led to a shift in consumer behavior. The shift isn’t just about what we eat, but who we think produced it. People want to know where their food comes from and how it was grown.

In 2012, the global food market was estimated at $7 trillion. This huge market is being driven by the desire for healthier, more sustainable, and more ethical food. The Millennials are leading the way, and they are demanding transparency and accountability from the food industry.

The role of social media in this shift cannot be underestimated. Social media has become a powerful tool for food advocacy. People can easily share their experiences and recommendations with others, and this sharing helps to create a community around food. The United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) organic program has benefitted from this trend, as social media has helped to raise awareness about the benefits of organic food.

Organic food sales have been growing steadily, with a 14.7% increase in sales in 2012. This growth is driven by the increasing awareness about the benefits of organic food, as well as the desire for healthier and more ethical food.

Canada is a global leader in organic food production, with an estimated $3.6 billion in organic sales in 2012. Organic sales have grown at an average rate of 12% per year over the past decade, and this growth is expected to continue.

Organic food is produced according to national standards and is certified by government-regulated organic organizations. The standards ensure that the products are grown and processed without the use of synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, or GMOs. Organic food is also often produced using traditional farming practices that are friendly to the environment.

Organic food is not always more expensive than conventional food. In fact, organic food can be just as affordable as conventional food, and the price difference is often due to the higher cost of production and certification.

Organic food is not only good for our health, but it is also good for the environment. Organic farming practices help to reduce carbon emissions, protect soil and water quality, and promote biodiversity.

Organic food is a way of life, and it is gaining popularity around the world. With its benefits for health, the environment, and the community, organic food is here to stay.

North American sales of organic food were estimated at $8.1 billion in 2012, representing a 14.7% increase from 2011. Organic food is a growing market, and it is expected to continue growing in the future.
Organic. It’s our way of leaving the earth a bit better.

Profile
Programs grow organic farmers

Hannah Jones and Brian Dyck of Broadfork Farm, River Hebert, N.S., are active participants in the Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network’s (ACORN) Growers’ Apprenticeship and Mentorship programs. Through their programs, ACORD facilitates curriculums-guided, farm-based apprenticeships to aspiring organic farmers, mentorship support to newly established growers in the Atlantic region, and targeted events offering educational and networking opportunities for new entrants to organic agriculture.

To learn more, visit www.growafarmer.ca and www.broadforkfarm.com.

By the numbers

$3.7 billion
Value in 2010 of the total Canadian consumer market (up from $3.2 billion in 2005)

3,732
Organic farms in Canada employing more than 13,500 people (agriculture)

Source: COTA

PROUD TO SUPPORT NATIONAL ORGANIC WEEK
Purveyors of Certified Organic, humanely raised and 100% Canadian, chicken, beef and fish. We believe that every choice and every product has a story to tell. Every day we choose to do something better for the animals we raise, the land we farm and the planet we share. With every choice, we hope to provide you with the highest quality and the best experience, while ensuring the health of our families, the health of your family and the health of the planet.

“Organic ambrosia apples farmers growing Jonagold apples. We can make good choices and buy certified organic products, which give us the assurance that this fruit hasn’t been sprayed with synthetic pesticides, isn’t GMO and is grown in a way that is beneficial to the environment.”

Linda Edwards, a spokesperson for the Ambrosia Organics Growers, an organization that represents 39 organic ambrosia apple farmers growing Jonagold apples.

We need to support and buy organic products, which give us the assurance that this fruit hasn’t been sprayed with synthetic pesticides, isn’t GMO and is grown in a way that’s beneficial to the environment, says Edwards. “People want those organic apples because it’s healthier for the environment and the people who work on the farm and for the communities we live in.”

Source: COTA

Canada’s highest weekly buyers of organic groceries

67% of those who identified as non-caucasian ethnicity
66% of British Columbians
63% of families in Canada’s largest cities
62% of families with children under two years old
62% of families with children under five years old
61% of university educated

PURCHASES OF ORGANIC PRODUCE, MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS"
COTA 3 • AN INFORMATION FEATURE FOR CANADA ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION

Organic Foods

The Globe and Mail Monday, September 23, 2013

Organic Food Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution Channel</th>
<th>2006 Sales ($ Millions)</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
<th>2012 Sales ($ Millions)</th>
<th>Market Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supermarkets, Mass Merchandisers and Drug Stores</td>
<td>$431.6</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>$391.7</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail (including Online)</td>
<td>$174.7</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>$430.6</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Health Stores and Online Retail/Delivery Services</td>
<td>$329.8</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>$864.7</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Direct Sales: Farmers’ Markets, Co-ops, Farm Direct Sales</td>
<td>$78*</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>$377.6</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodservice (institutions)</td>
<td>$50.0</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$371.0</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ops/Buying Clubs</td>
<td>$5.0</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>$15.0</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Organic Food Sales: $1,001.1 M</td>
<td>$2,978.6 M</td>
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*2006 farm-direct sales figures include box delivery schemes (CSAs and on-line delivery services). 2012 figures include on-line delivery services with natural health stores.

A study found that the agroecology of organic agriculture, that is, the non-genetically modified foods that are grown in a sustainable way, is fundamentally different from that of non-organic foods. The study concluded that organic foods are healthier and more nutritious than their non-genetically engineered counterparts, and that there is a growing body of evidence to support this claim.

Certification helps families make informed choices

The Globe and Mail Monday, September 23, 2013

Biotech companies are interfering with evolutionary processes that have taken thousands—even millions—of years to perfect. Genetic engineering is altering the natural order in bees. And while GMOs are claimed to increase crop yields, a recent study used rats to show that the development of herbicide-resistant GM crops has contributed to a rapid increase in the use of herbicides, a trend that has led to a factor in colony collapse disorder in bees. According to GMO opponents, a new revolution in agriculture is underway, with a new generation of crops being developed that are more sustainable and affordable than ever before. GMOs are considered to be a continuation of selective breeding, but the alteration of life forms.

Arran Stephens, CEO and "chief gardenkeeper" of Nature’s Path, says that his company is opposed to GMOs and will continue to push for the ban. "To help support organic standards and to protect the health of our planet, we will continue to work with our partners and consumers to ensure that we are providing them with the best choice for their plates and our planet!

BC Organic Ambrosia

Gift from Nature

Savour the honeyed sweetness and juicy crunch of Organic Ambrosia!

Organic Ambrosia is a sweet, low acid apple that is slow to brown when sliced. Ideal for snacks, salads and desserts.

Ask your local grocer for BC Organic Ambrosia – the original Ambrosia.

Get the full story on Ambrosia at www.organicambrosiaapple.ca

Photo by Lone Jones Photography.

The Big Carrot

the big carrot.ca

348 Danforth Avenue

Ontario’s 1st Certified Organic Retailer

As Ontario’s leading certified organic retail, we believe that organic is the best choice for our plates and our planet!

Natural Foods Market 416.466.2129
Wholistic Dispensary 416.466.8432

The Big Carrot

Celebrating 30 Years on the Globe and Mail's 2013 ‘Best of the Best’ List

Organic Trade Association Fair Trade Organic Collection at VanHoutte

Available in K-Cups® packs, ground and whole beans according to variety.
Healthy Canadians understand the advantages of organic foods. In fact, Canadians bite into $3 billion worth of organic food annually, supporting nearly 4,000 certified organic producers in Canada. The Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) is a proud partner of Organic Week, helping to raise awareness and educate Canadians on the benefits of organic and the Organic Products Regulations. Learn more at chfa.ca.

**OPTIONS**

**Strict national regulations govern producers**

With Canadians spending close to $3 billion a year on organic food, the need to ensure that they are actually getting what they pay for has become paramount. “Our sector has fought long and hard to achieve the standards that are required for products to be labeled organic,” says Helen Sherrard, president of the Canadian Organic Growers (COG) and chair of Canada’s organic standards committee. “A misin consumer demand for organic food and other products, however, means some manufacturers are trying to slip through the market with products that aren’t actually organic. The sad fact is that they are organic when they are not.” She says, “They’ll use ‘natural’ and all kinds of other empty words.”

Even points out that foods labeled with the Canada Food Inspection Agency’s (CFIA) logo are not automatically certified to Canada’s stringent national organic requirements, which are overseen by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). What that means is that “on top of all the other health and safety requirements that producers must adhere to, they also have to meet additional standards for organic certification.”

“The Organic Products Regulations were created as a response to consumers’ demands to protect organic food and to protect against misleading or deceptive labelling practices; reduce consumer confusion about the definition of organic,” explains the CFIA. “A label consumers trust is one that is accurate and truthful about what products are and are not. Products labeled as organic should adhere to national organic standards, which are established by the Canadian food inspectors to ensure that these products meet the requirements set out in Canada’s Organic Products Regulations (OPR). The OPR ensure that food products are labeled correctly and that the consumer is provided with trustworthy information about these products.”

According to the CFIA, the CFIA enforces these regulations to ensure that consumers are provided with reliable information about the products they are purchasing. “The CFIA is committed to ensuring that the products Canadians consume are safe, nutritious, and meet their expectations.”

**Higher standards**

Canadian organic standards ensure that foods that carry the term “organic” are produced with the least possible impact on the environment and animal welfare. “Certified organic products must meet the CFIA’s rigorous standards for production, processing, handling, and storage,” explains the CFIA. “These standards are based on the most up-to-date scientific research and are regularly updated to ensure that products continue to meet the highest standards for quality and safety.”

**The benefits of organic**

Organic foods are healthier and naturally the best products to buy. “Organic foods are grown without harmful chemicals and are raised or handled in a way that is healthy and natural,” explains the CFIA. “This means that organic foods are produced in a way that is kinder to the environment.”

Organic foods are also better for your health. “Organic foods are produced in a way that is kinder to the environment,” explains the CFIA. “This means that organic foods are produced in a way that is kinder to the environment.”

**Organic Week**

Organic Week is a celebration of organic food, products, and practices. It is an opportunity to shine a light on the benefits of organic food and to raise awareness about the importance of supporting organic farmers and businesses. “Organic Week is a time to celebrate the hard work of organic farmers and to recognize the benefits of organic food,” explains the CFIA. “It is a time to come together to share our love for organic food and to support those who are working to provide us with healthy, nutritious, and sustainable foods.”

**About Organic Week**

Organic Week is a national celebration of organic food, products, and practices. It is an opportunity to shine a light on the benefits of organic food and to raise awareness about the importance of supporting organic farmers and businesses. “Organic Week is a time to celebrate the hard work of organic farmers and to recognize the benefits of organic food,” explains the CFIA. “It is a time to come together to share our love for organic food and to support those who are working to provide us with healthy, nutritious, and sustainable foods.”

**For more information**

To learn more about Organic Week, visit OrganicWeek.ca. To learn more about the CFIA, visit CFIA.gc.ca. To learn more about the organic products industry, visit CHFA.ca.