

Access to Healthy Foods

The organic industry is committed to providing healthy and safe food to all Americans. Over the last decade, innovation, growth and research have made organic more accessible than ever, and an emerging choice not only in homes, but also in schools and institutions.

PARENTS ARE OPTING FOR ORGANIC AS THE BEST CHOICE FOR THEIR KIDS

Organic food is minimally processed and produced without the use of toxic pesticides, antibiotics, synthetic hormones, artificial ingredients, colors or synthetic preservatives. Over 700 chemicals are prohibited in organic food including chlorpyrifos, which has been linked to neurological damage to children. **Research has shown that eating organic, even occasionally, dramatically reduces pesticide exposure in children, and lowers associated cancer risk later in life.**¹

Over 700 chemicals are **prohibited** in organic farming, food, and products



Millennial parents are now the biggest group of organic buyers in the U.S. Over 25% of Millennials in America are parents, and that figure is expected to jump to 80% in the next 10–15 years.

In a survey of U.S. families' attitudes toward organic, all buying groups—ranging from Heavy to Light—indicated that baby food was the most important category to choose for buying organic. Food targeted to kids was also among the categories most important for buying organic.² Federal programs that feed children should reflect these shifting demographic changes.

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY FOR ORGANIC IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT FEED WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Schoolchildren should have the opportunity to receive healthy, nutritious, affordable organic food in their school meals when available, without increasing costs. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 authorized an organic food pilot program under which school food authorities could explore opportunities to build relationships with local organic companies, farms and food providers to make organic foods available to schoolkids within the confines of the existing cost structure. This pilot program was authorized at \$10 million per year through appropriations, but was never funded. Congress should reauthorize this pilot program and include funding in annual appropriations legislation.

ASK: Support an Organic Food Pilot Program in the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.

ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION
Bold Steps to
PROMOTE and PROTECT
ORGANIC

FOCUS
ON SOLUTIONS

CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

EMBRACE
INNOVATION

PLAN FOR
THE FUTURE

Access to healthy foods is especially important for pregnant women and children under the age of five during the critical stages of development. Congress should improve access to organic foods within the existing cost structure and parameters of the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. Congress should consider how organic foods can help the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and states fulfill the recommendations of the recent National Academies of Sciences report that calls for increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and offering more choices to improve the attractiveness of the program.³

ASK: Increase access to organic food within the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program and require USDA and states to consider how organic can be an affordable option.

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- 1 Asa Bradman, *et al.* Effect of Organic Diet Intervention on Pesticide Exposures in Young Children Living in Low-Income Urban and Agricultural Communities. *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 123:1086–1093.
Cynthia L. Curl, *et al.* Estimating Pesticide Exposure from Dietary Intake and Organic Food Choices: The Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis (MESA). *Environmental Health Perspectives*. 123:475-483.
Julia Baudry, *et al.* Association of Frequency of Organic Food Consumption With Cancer Risk: Findings From the NutriNet-Santé Prospective Cohort Study. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. 2018; 178(12):1596-1606.
 - 2 Organic Trade Association. *2017 U.S. Families' Organic Attitudes and Behaviors Study*.
 - 3 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. Review of WIC food packages: Improving balance and choice: Final report. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.