

# Top 10 reasons why organic is important

## 1. Organic farming techniques improve the soil.

This is of vital importance because soil is at the heart of all food production. Whereas conventional, chemical-intensive methods deplete soil, organic principles add life to the soil and healthy soil produces healthy food.

## 2. Organic foods are free of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The vast majority of prepared and processed conventional foods contain GMOs. Many consumers remain skeptical of this new technology, as the long term health and ecological implications are largely unknown.

## 3. Organic foods are not irradiated.

Irradiation damages the quality of food and a diet high in irradiated foods has not been proven safe over the long term.

## 4. Biodiversity is improved.

Diverse systems are more resilient as they are less prone to disease and infestations. Irradiation using radioactive materials is an environmental and health hazard.

## **5. Organic farming does not use synthetic pesticides.**

Synthetic pesticides are not only a danger to personal health, but are a threat to farm workers, local ecosystems, waterways and the surrounding communities.

## **6. Waterways are not contaminated by chemical runoff from conventional farms.**

This includes pesticide runoff, as well as nutrient and pathogen runoff associated with the raising of livestock in an industrial manner.

## **7. Reduced reliance on chemical and agribusiness corporations is better for farmers.**

As agribusiness corporations concentrate and consolidate power at both the input and output ends, they have been able to amass huge fortunes at the expense of farmers. In 2004, Canada's farming community lost \$7.5 Billion, while the six largest agribusiness corporations profited more than \$10 Billion. Organic agriculture gives farmers and farm communities another option.

## **8. Animal cruelty.**

Organically raised animals are raised more ethically. While conventionally raised chickens are subjected to life in a battery cage, organic chickens have the ability to stand up, walk around and access sunlight. Pigs, turkeys and cows have access to pasture, fresh air and sunlight.

## **9. Organically raised animals are not given antibiotics.**

The overuse of antibiotics in factory farms has contributed to pollution problems and outbreaks of many deadly diseases, including Lysteriosis, E-Coli, antibiotic-resistant MRSA (methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus).

## **10. We pay the cost one way or another.**

Whereas organic farming internalizes the cost of growing food and treating animals well (this is why it costs a bit more at the checkout), conventional farming tends to externalize these costs. The air, soil and water pollution, the proliferation of disease from factory farms, the loss of soil and farm communities costs North American's between \$7 and \$20 Billion per year.

# **TOP 6 WAYS TO EAT ORGANIC ON A BUDGET**

## **1. Eat simply and eat at home.**

The last few years have seen Canadians preparing and eating fewer meals in the home, choosing, rather, to eat in restaurants and fast food outlets. This is not a path to good health and it certainly will not save you money.

## **2. Start an organic food buying cooperative.**

All it takes is a group of 5 or more friends and a bit of organizing and you can get organic grains, flours and baking supplies at 15 – 50 per cent below retail. For more information please email Ashley Lubyk at [ashley@greencalgary.org](mailto:ashley@greencalgary.org).

### 3. Buy in bulk at your local organic grocer.

Sunnyside Market, Community Natural Foods, Amaranth Whole Food Market and Planet Organic all offer 10 per cent off most products when purchased by the case. Bulk bins are also a great place to look for bargains and bulk spices are heaps cheaper than those prepackaged in little glass jars. Weigh 2 Go is a bulk food-only store that allows people to buy as little or as much as they need. Bring your own containers to fill and avoid having to take those pesky plastic bags. Also keep in mind that the prices for organic foods at many of the natural food markets are better than those found at some of the big box grocery stores.

### 4. Eat in season.

Whether you shop at the farmers' market or at the grocery store, peaches will be cheaper (and tastier) in August than in February, and apples will be cheaper in September than in June when the previous years crop is nearly done and most are coming in from Chile. This is the time to stock up and cook, dry, jam, preserve and prepare for the winter months when fresh food is hard to come by, less enjoyable to eat and expensive to buy.

### 5. Eat less meat.

If you are an omnivore, and eat meat, you might want to consider cutting back. Good, ethically ised meat is expensive and eating less of the stuff is better for your health and for the planet. Instead of filling up on meat, use it to add flavour to dishes. Indian recipes are great for this. When you do buy meat, consider bulk purchasing directly from a farmer. You can get friends or family together for this or if you have a large family consider stocking up the freezer. Several farmers at the Calgary Farmers' Market have bulk discounts for people interested in purchasing a quarter, half or whole bison, elk or cow.

### 6. Plant a veggie garden or join a community garden.

This will produce the best tasting, freshest food that will blow the 100 mile diet out of the water. The Community Garden Resource Network - <http://calhort.org/gardening/community.aspx> - has resources on existing community gardens in the city, as well as resources on getting one started. If you aren't an experienced gardener, don't be discouraged. Simply ask around. Talk to friends, family members or coworkers and you're bound to find someone that would love to help you get started. Workshops for first-time gardeners usually take place in the spring and Green Calgary always lists these events on its "Upcoming Events" section on the homepage - [www.greencalgary.org](http://www.greencalgary.org)

## PRODUCED BY GREEN CALGARY

***Empowering Calgarians to create healthy homes and communities by providing environmental education, products and services.***

Green Calgary offers a variety of programs to help achieve mandates of waste reduction and water protection including Environmental Education; Healthy Homes Calgary; Commercial Environmental Services (formerly Calgary Materials Exchange); EcoStore - selling environmental products that reduce our environmental footprint; Information Services & E-newsletter.

809 Fourth Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2P 0K5

Phone: [403] 230 1443 | Fax: [403] 398 0605

[info@greencalgary.org](mailto:info@greencalgary.org) | [www.greencalgary.org](http://www.greencalgary.org)