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FAMILY ALBUM RADIO

Should We Go Organic?[1]

Kate Welch, Linda Bobroff, and Amy Simonne[2]

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Choosing what to feed my family is no easy task. In addition to seeking meals that can be ready for our harried schedules and differing tastes, today when I go to the grocery store I also have to make decisions about whether or not to buy organically grown or raised foods. Many consumers worry that pesticides used in conventionally grown produce may increase our risk of cancer. But is this concern based in reality?

The US Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, monitors pesticide residues to make sure our exposure is below health concern level (US Environmental Protection Agency, 2003). Additionally, annual Food and Drug Administration-conducted studies have shown that "levels of pesticide residues in the U.S. food supply are well below established safety standards" and do not increase our risk for cancer (US Food and Drug Administration, 2005).

And what about the claim that organic foods are nutritionally superior to those grown by conventional methods? According to a study conducted by the University of California, organically grown berries and corn did contain 60% more antioxidants than those conventionally grown. However, most of the food we eat has not been tested to determine if organically grown varieties are more nutritious. Dr. Kathleen Merrigen, director of the agriculture, food and environment program at Tufts University has said that we can't say that organic foods are nutritionally better for us, but "we rely on intuition that food from an environmentally sound system is probably healthier."

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2. Kate Welch, student, Linda Bobroff, associate professor, and Amy Simonne, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

So should we go organic? In the end, it's a personal preference. Organic foods may be healthier, but if we choose to buy conventionally grown produce, we can feel safe from excessive pesticide residues thanks to monitoring by the EPA.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://radiosource.net/radio_stories/391.mp3

http://radiosource.net/radio_stories/391.wav

References

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