Organic Food

What is the difference?
Opinion....

• What is organic food?
• Why would someone chose to eat organic food?
• Why does everyone not eat organic food?
Majority of our food...

- Think about what you eat in a day...
- How much of that food is processed? (It had to go through some kind of process to be able for you to eat)
- Do you know where your food came from?
- Is there anything that is bad about the food you eat?
Research

- Our current food often times:
  - Include chemicals and ingredients to help preserve the food (increase shelf time).
  - Are given fertilizers and pesticides often made from harmful chemicals to help the product grow.
  - Such as meat, are given growth hormones and antibiotics that we in turn eat.
  - Are processed and lose some nutritional value (including vitamins and minerals).
  - Come from farms and companies that do not give much thought to the impact they are leaving on our environment (more to come).
Natural Foods

• There is NO entity that certifies natural food through the USDA

• Natural food products by definition:
  ▫ Contain no artificial ingredients, coloring ingredients, or chemical preservatives
  ▫ Are no more than minimally processed
  ▫ Examples: fruits and vegetables (they have usually just been washed and taken to the store)
Natural does NOT mean...

• That the animal was raised out in the natural world
  ▫ Or it was fed foods that were found in nature
• That pesticides were not used to keep bugs away
  ▫ Or that it was vine/plant ripened
  ▫ Many farmers may pick produce early and ripen it through a chemical process (possibly a chemical that is in the air- this is not a preservative)
Organic

- A food certification system from the USDA
- Various entities have the power granted by the USDA to monitor a company and allow use of the slogan:
  - “Certified Organic by...”
- It is a process of inspecting ingredients, facilities and practices
  - Practices include employee treatment
- Companies pay a fee for the certification
  - Must keep thorough records
Organic foods

- Guidelines include specific treatment for animals, soil and plants
  - Can’t use most of the common methods of fertilization and getting rid of bugs
  - All products used must be natural (none can be synthetic)
  - Animals must receive natural food, no antibiotics or growth hormones and allowed time outside.
How did Organic come to be?

• A board of 15 members were assigned by the Secretary of Agriculture (from many different areas)
• Goal was to create a set of agricultural standards for food that was all natural ingredients and methods of processing.
• Was set forth in 1990
• These regulations accommodate a wide variety of regions and products in the States
Ways farmers are organic

• Crop rotation- each year they plant crops in new places
  • Each crop takes certain nutrients from the ground, moving the crops allows the nutrients to come back to that area

• Animal grazing
  ▫ Animals, like goats, cows and pigs eat vegetation- they can keep plants back and stir the soil at the same time

• Animal fertilization-
  ▫ Animals have their own methods of fertilizing and as long as they are being fed good food, they will fertilize well
• **Natural pesticides-**
  ▫ There are certain plants that contain natural pesticides to keep away bugs and NOT harm consumers of the food

• **Renewable resources-**
  ▫ Farmers do as much as they can to incorporate natural environments (not watering after it rains, not destroying trees that add nutrients to the ground to plant something else)

• **Biodiversity-**
  ▫ By having a variety of crops, farmers can keep their soils rich. This also allows them to not be dependent on ONE single crop
100% Organic
Use of the USDA Organic Seal is optional.

Organic
(95% or more Organic Ingredients)
Use of the USDA Organic Seal is optional.

Made with Organic Ingredients
(At least 70% Organic Ingredients)

Less than 70% Organic Ingredients
(Ingredient list only)
Levels of organic

- **100 Percent Organic**
  - All ingredients must be organic, and only organically produced ingredients and processing agents

- **Organic**
  - 95% of ingredients must be organically produced

- **Made with Organic Ingredients**
  - Processed products that contain at least 70% organic ingredients
Nutritional Value of Organic

- Environmentally superior to conventional, chemical dependent agricultural
  - Products are not infested with bugs, use natural ingredients for health
  - Large scale companies can be organic but often times it is hard- so much to take care of and be aware of
- Organic is better for you
  - Every step of processing reduces the nutritional value
  - Additives decrease nutrition
  - Fruits and vegetables that are picked before ripe lack nutritional value
Negatives of Organic

• Expensive
  ▫ Still new in society
  ▫ Until it is mass produced, we will pay more for it

• Hand to find
  ▫ Not available everywhere and not all products are the same at each store

• Newer tastes
  ▫ Not filled with as much salt that we have come to love
Alternatives

• Be Local!
  ▫ An idea to know farmers and business owners in your own area and support them
  ▫ This is beneficial for many reasons
    • Supports local economy (instead of monies benefitting other locations)
    • Products are fresher and healthier for you- traveled less, ripe when you get them
    • Relationship with a farmer means you get to ask questions about their practices and decide yourself
Locations of Organic food

- Super markets
- Natural foods stores
- Farmers Markets (need to ask farmers about their practices)
Assignment

• You are going to interview 4 people you know (at least two have to be adults) about their knowledge about organic food.
• You will record the answers and bring them back to class for a discussion
Discussion

• How did your interviewees react to the questions:
  ▫ When you hear the word organic, what do you think of?
  ▫ Do you purchase organic food, why or why not?
  ▫ Why is it beneficial to eat organic food?
  ▫ What are the downsides of buying and eating organic food?
  ▫ What is the availability of organic food at the places you shop?
  ▫ What is your overall opinion about organic food?
Assignment

• After interviewing 4 people, include their responses and your own feelings about organic food to answer the question below in a paragraph.

• Would you or would you not buy organic food and why? (5-7 sentences)
Resources

- http://www.organicfoodinfo.net/