

# TWELVE



# REASONS to Buy Local and Organic



**Freshness.** Locally grown organic fruits and vegetables are usually harvested within 24 hours of being purchased by the consumer. Produce from California can't be that fresh.



**Soil Stewardship.** Soil health is essential for the survival of our species. Conventional farming practices are rapidly depleting topsoil fertility. Creating and sustaining soil fertility is the major objective of organic growers.



**Taste.** Produce picked and eaten at the height of freshness tastes better.



**Energy Conservation.** One fifth of all petroleum now used in the United States is used in agriculture. Buying locally grown organic foods decreases dependence on petroleum, a nonrenewable energy source, because organic production systems do not rely upon petroleum derived fertilizers and pesticides. Buying from local producers prevents long distance shipping, so energy is also conserved at the distribution level.



**Nutrition.** Nutritional value declines, often dramatically, as time passes after harvest. Because locally grown produce is freshest, it is more nutritionally complete.



**Environmental Protection.** Soil erosion; pesticide contamination of our soil, air, and water; nitrate loading of our waterways and wells, and the elimination of biodiversity are some of the problems associated with today's predominant farming methods. Organic growers use practices that protect soil, air, and water resources as well as promote biodiversity.



**Health and Safety.** About 80 percent of American adults say they are concerned about the safety of the food they eat. Pesticides and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) are not permitted in an organic production system. Choosing organic food is a way to minimize you and your family's exposure to harmful pesticide residues, which have been linked to cancer and other medical problems.



**Cost.** Conventional food prices don't reflect the hidden costs of the environmental, health, and social consequences of industrial production practices, such as correcting a water supply polluted by agricultural runoff, or obtaining medical treatment for pesticide induced illness. When these and other hidden costs are taken into account, as they should be, organic foods are seen clearly for the value they are, even if they cost a bit more.



**Regional Economic Health.** Buying locally grown food allows you to support your neighbor, keeps money in your community, and helps protect farmland by making farming more profitable, improving everyone's quality of life.



**Community.** Eating locally allows consumers to get to know who raises their food and find out how it was produced, fostering a connection between farmers and the community. Regional food production systems also enable people to influence how their food is grown and provide interesting job and self-employment opportunities.



**Variety.** Organic farmers selling locally are not limited to the few varieties of produce that are bred for long distance shipping, high yields, and shelf life. Instead, they raise and sell wonderful, unusual varieties you will never find on supermarket shelves.



**Passing on the Stewardship Ethic.** When you buy locally produced organic food, you cannot help but raise the consciousness of your friends and family about how food buying decisions can make a difference in your life and the life of your community.

## Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association

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