



Introduction:

The Organic Food Production Act of 1990 established the National Organic Program (NOP) under the direction of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), an arm of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Organic production is a system that is managed in accordance with the Act and regulations in response to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Organic products are a commodity at both the local and national level; resulting in increased land and water issues. Farmers at local and national level have different standards and certification procedures. This mediates how consumers use their purchasing power to either support local or national companies.

LOCAL - OREGON

FARMER

The Issue:

Local organic farmers fear the weakening of the meaning and standards of organic products with big corporation's steamrolling the organic market. Lowering standards will have detrimental effects on the environment and local rural economies.

The Effects:

- Buying organically means supporting a multi-billion dollar alternative to conventional farming practices, but what does organic mean? (Pollen 2001)
- Affordable organic alternatives to conventionally farmed products are coming at the cost of the environment and the breakdown of the organic movement.
- Corporations that produce organic products have negative impact on the environment similarly to those of conventional farming practices (i.e. water usage).
- Local organic farmers remain stewards of the land, working to decrease the human impact on the environment and local ecosystems. (Klonsky and Tourte 1998)

Local organic farms work to:

- Decrease nitrate runoff
- Increase soil organic matter and organisms
- Promote biodiversity
- Reduce energy consumption
- Promote active community involvement
- Provide economic development in rural communities
- Offer competitive wages and safe working environments for their employees

Impact of the corporate takeover of organics:

Increased consumer demands for organic products result in a blurred perception of organic standards.

Raising the question, are organics truly a sustainable earth-friendly alternative to conventionally farmed products or a passing trend?

Corporations leave an ecological footprint bordering on that of conventional farming methods organics were created to combat.

Organic products are priced at the retail price, which results in a misconception of the cost for farmers to farm organically

Opposition of local organic farms:

- Increased acquisition of local organic farms by corporations
- Decreased environmental integrity by the organic industry
- Drives the price of organic products down, negatively affecting profitability of local organic farming
- Results in an organic industry that closely reflects conventional agriculture

Supporting local organic farms:

- Maintains integrity of the organic industry
- Organic continues to represent an agricultural movement that strives to improve water, soil, and biodiversity health
- Builds small community support and economy

ORGANIC FOOD PRODUCTS

CONSUMER

Position...

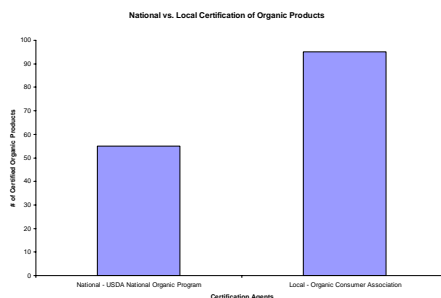
Local- Basing purchases on a lifestyle choice that recognizes and values the importance of local purchasing and the support of a local economy and community

Benefits...

- Buying local is a better feeling of **community** through family markets, farmers markets, and co-ops.
- Fresher **quality**. By eliminating the middleman distributor, "field to table" allows the environmentally friendly system of organics to continue through the growing, processing, and purchasing of the product.
- Lower prices**- buying direct saves money that is spent on harvesting, transporting and processing.

Certification...

- Oregon Tilth**- Non-profit organization that advocated sustainable approaches to agricultural production systems and processing, handling and marketing. Each nationally certified agency has over 1000 products certified
- The Food Alliance**, Non-profit organization promoting sustainable agriculture by recognizing and rewarding local farmers that comply with requirements.



No More Local Organic Grocery Retailers...

- Consumers are obligated to purchase organic products at mass produced corporations.
- Loss of community value and ability to support local economy.

If Only Local Organic Grocery Retailers...

- Less examples of national scares, reliance on one company is reduced.
- Reduction of distributors minimizes environmental degradation that is felt through national production as well middleman costs.

FARMER

The Issue:

- Every consumer has the right to choose between organic and conventional foods
- The price should not be the limiting factor to healthy options
- USDA organic certification

The Effects:

- Increased number of acreage converted to organic production in order to meet the rising demand for organic products
- Consumption of organic products has continued to increase by 20% each year for the past 7 years
- The result of lower prices for organic products makes them more accessible to a broader range of consumers

Impact of the national growers of organics:

- Supporting organic food production versus conventional food production
- Sustains the growing demand for environmental quality through the production of environmentally friendly products
- Society will increasingly value production that provides environmental services- such as ecosystem services

Opposition to national organic farms:

- Lowering USDA organic standard due to high demand
- Small organic farmers have to seek niche markets
- Small organic farmers potentially need additional certification- private and state certification in order for recognition

Supporting national organic farms:

- The management and the logistics are simple
- Provision of the same price and the same quality of organic products

ORGANIC CROP PRODUCTION

Founding Principles and Practices

Biodiversity	Diversification & Integration of Enterprises	Sustainability	Natural Plant Nutrition	Natural Pest Management
Rotation Green Manure	Rotation Animal Manure	Rotation Green Manure	Rotation Green Manure	Rotation Green Manure
Cover Crops Composting Intercropping	Composting Intercropping Farmscaping	Cover Crops Intercropping Biocontrol	Animal Manure Composting Natural Fertilizers	Cover Crops Composting Intercropping
Biocontrol	Mulching	Farmscaping	Foliar Fertilizers	Biocontrol
Farmscaping Buffers		Animal Manure Composting Mulching Buffers		Farmscaping Sanitation Tillage Fire Natural Pesticides

CONSUMER

Position...

A consumer purchasing organic products based on lifestyle choices who recognizes USDA approved products for national distribution and convenient shopping

Benefits...

- Assurance the product is safe due to products being organically certified by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Organic Program.
- Grocery retailers such as Wal-Mart Super-Centers are now carrying organic products in over 2000 of their stores and 100 smaller neighborhood market locations to help "modernize its image and broaden its appeal to urban and other upscale consumers" regardless of local economy or interest.
- Retailers aiming at providing a one-stop shopping experience to help consumers save time and fuel cost due to research on shopping patterns show that many consumers consider it easier to find the organic alternatives they want if they are mixed with conventional selections on the shelves.

Certification...

- USDA National Organic Program has 55 domestic accredited certifying agents
- Each nationally certified agency has over 1000 products certified
- There are fewer national certification agencies than local primarily because local agencies do not mass produce multiple products, instead concentrate on certain items, thus more agencies are needed to fulfill the demand of the local interest.

No More National Organic Grocery Retailers...

- Failure to recognize nationally certified labels, so only local labels (less well known) will be available where the trust has not yet been established.
- No more convenient one-stop shop

If Only National Organic Grocery Retailers...

- More national distribution would put local farmers out of business because of shipping costs.
- Mass production of products keeps prices low.

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