

The US Organic Experience



What Does Organic Mean?



USDA National Organic Program (NOP) started in 2000.

Organic crops cannot be grown with **synthetic fertilizers, synthetic pesticides or sewage sludge.**

Organic crops cannot be genetically engineered, **Non-GMO.**

Animals must eat only organically grown feed (without animal byproducts) and can't be treated with **synthetic hormones or antibiotics.**

Animals must have access to the outdoors, and ruminants (hoofed animals, including cows) must have **access to pasture.**



Why is Certified Organic Important



Certified Organic foods provide comfort, knowing strict standards have been met.

In order to be Certified Organic it **must be Non-GMO**.

Increased nutrients in organic foods.

Higher levels of Omega-3 Fatty Acids in organic dairy, meats and eggs.

Less recalls of organic foods.



Who is Organic?



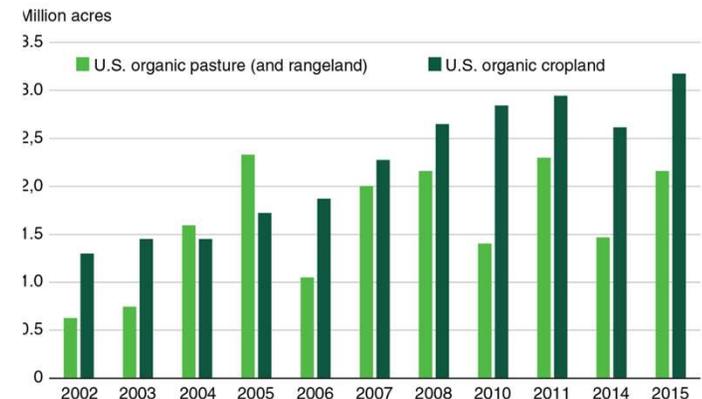
There are 14,217 certified organic farms in the US, less than 1% of total farms.

Organic food sales in the US now exceed \$45 billion which is approximately 5% of total food sales.

Only 1% of sales comes from organic farm sales.

Only 5 million acres are certified organic (~0.50%).

On average we lose 175 farm acres per hour in the US.



Benefits of Organic & Pastured



Eggs

- 33% Less Cholesterol
- 25% Less Saturated Fat
- 67% More Vitamin A
- 2X More Omega-3s
- 3X More Vitamin E
- 7X More Beta Carotene



Beef, Lamb & Poultry

Lower in total fat.

Higher in beta-carotene

Higher in Vitamin E

Higher in B-Vitamins,

Higher in Minerals; Calcium, Mg, K

Higher in total Omega-3s

How to Access Organic Foods



Farmers Markets - It's a great way to get to know the farmer.

CSA - Good way to access fresh local food but some complications.

Direct Marketing - The best of all worlds.



Supermarkets - Can be a good source of organic foods but read the label!

Out of season foods are artificially ripened. Tomatoes ripened with Ethylene gas.

Many foods travel in excess of 1500 miles during their trip to the market burning lots of fuel.

Read the Labels - It's Important!



Many, but not all, of the catchy phrases on packaging these days do not have an official standing from the USDA or FDA. It's important to know what they mean.

Country of Origin - Not all countries have the same standards and requirements.

Cage Free - The animal lives outside of cages but does not describe living conditions.

Pastured - There are some standards for chickens (108 sq/ft) but for the rest is meaningless.

All Vegetarian Diet - For chickens it means they never go outside.

Grass Fed - Unless it is Certified Grass Fed it can mean many things.

Free Range - Can have many meanings.

All Natural - Means minimally processed.

Farm Fresh - Wow, on packaged foods with a 6 month expiration?



Which One is Organic?



When you think of organic do you think of green pastures and roaming animals?



Both examples of egg layers are organic.

A supermarket chain boosts a 700,000 hen house but these chickens are overly crowded and never see sunlight.



Both of these examples of lettuce are organically.

They have similar nutrients but the taste can be very different.



What Happened?



According to a Washing Post article the farm on the right, Aurora Organic Dairy, located in Colorado is a supplier of organic milk to stores such as Costco, Walmart and other major retailers. It has **15,000 cows on 6000 acres**. Organic dairies are required to allow the cows to graze daily throughout the growing season.



The large food companies recognized the new trend in consumers wanting more access to organic food.

These large companies are cashing in on the more profitable organic foods through mass productions following the letter but perhaps **not the spirit of the law**.

So Much Corn!



Shortly after WWII corn production in the US began a rapid rise. Why?

100 years ago a farm produced 20 bushels per acres, today its over 200!

Corn is mostly produced at below cost of production.

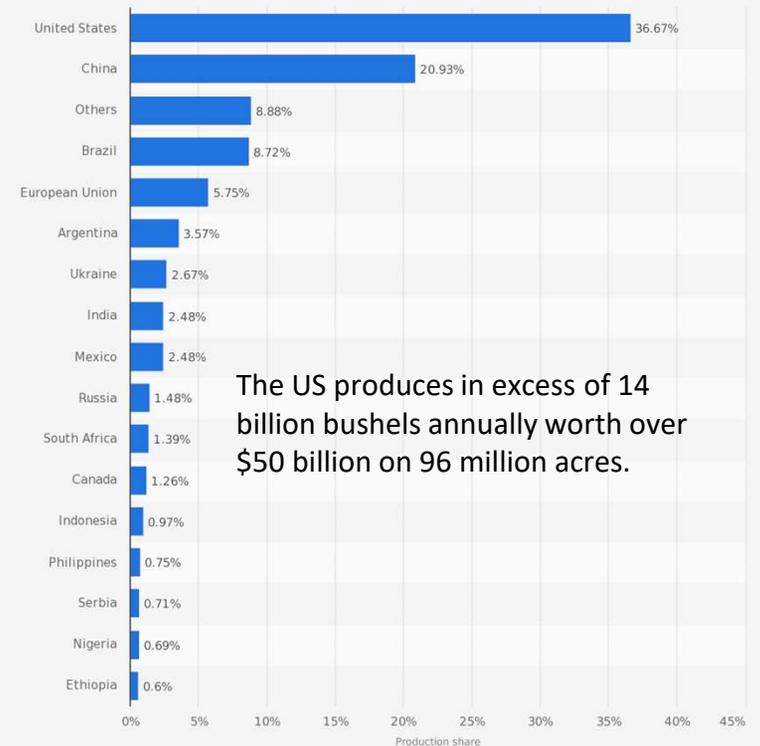
It is one of the most highly engineered foods - GMO.

High fructose corn syrup can be found in many foods **ketchup, cheese, snacks, batteries, peanut butter, salad dressing, popular soft drinks, jellies, sweeteners, juice, charcoal, diapers, meats and fast food.**

It is fed to farm raised fish.

Cows were not meant to eat corn!

Distribution of global corn production in 2016/17, by country*



The US produces in excess of 14 billion bushels annually worth over \$50 billion on 96 million acres.

Sources
US Department of Agriculture; USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
© Statista 2018

Additional Information:
Worldwide; 2016 and 2017

What is Glyphosate?

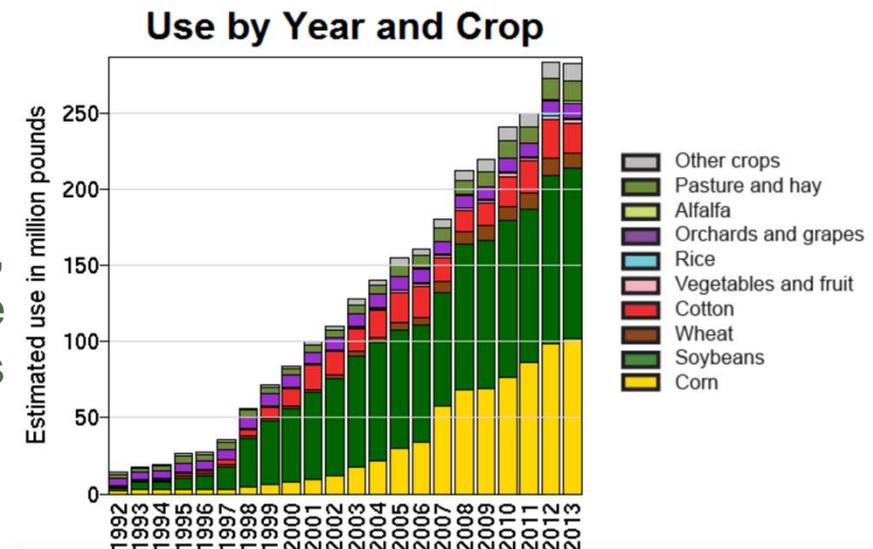


Glyphosate is the active ingredient in the herbicide used in Roundup. Monsanto developed Roundup resistant crops (GMO) including corn and soybeans. The crops can be sprayed with the herbicide killing the weeds and leaving the corn or soybean plant unaffected.

Over 90% of the US Soybean crop uses Glyphosate.
Corn is not far behind.

In 2015 the World Health Organization group, IARC, put glyphosate in a cancer-risk category one level below widely recognized harmful activities like smoking.

Traces of Glyphosate has now been found in breakfast cereals and in orange juice.



Why Grass Fed is So Important?



E. Coli O157:H7

About 2000 people in the US are hospitalized each year because of it, about 60 dying (CDC).

Cows fed a high corn diet increase fermentation in the gut that the stomach acid juices may not be able to kill the bacteria. It then enters the intestines and exits the body in the feces.

Subsequently, hamburger filler in some food operations is treated with **ammonia** and **ammonia hydroxide**.

Large chicken processing plants kill bacteria by washing the chickens in a **strong chlorine solution**.

It can now be found in **spinach, lettuce, raw milk products, even raw cookie dough**.



Food Recalls on The Rise



Food recalls by the FDA have increased 92% since 2012, while the amount of meat recalled by the USDA has risen 83%.

The biggest reasons: **Salmonella, E. coli and Listeria.**

According to the CDC there are **76 million food-bourn illnesses** per year resulting in over **300,000 hospitalizations** and over **5000 deaths.**

The foods that cause this are generally the same year to year and include; fish & shellfish, chicken, eggs, beef, pork, diary and leafy vegetables.

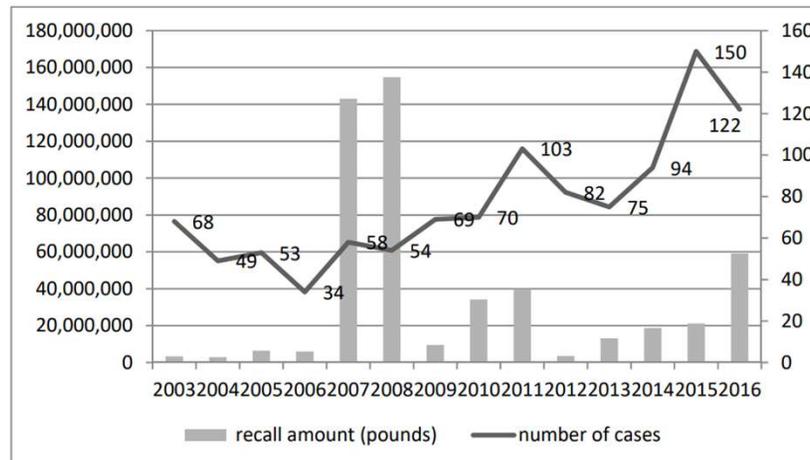


FIGURE 1. Number of recall cases and total amount in pounds: 2003-2016

Why No-Soy



The CDC lists Soybeans as one the Top 8 Allergens in the US.

Over 90% of the US crop is Genetically Modified and sprayed with Glyphosate.

Please see a hand-out I have at the end of the presentation for more reason why to avoid soy based foods.



Why Does Organic Cost More?

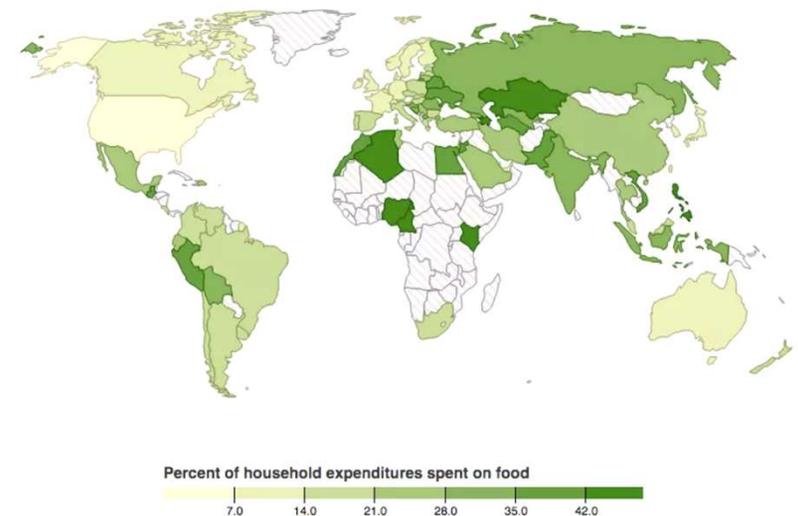


The better question; “**How can large food companies produce food at such low prices?**”

Large food companies have taken their conventional food production models and are now applying them to an organic division.

The small family farm generally has a husband and wife team working it with at least one of them having a job off farm to make ends meet.

The direct costs are feed, fuel, utilities, taxes, infrastructure, additional labor. With indirect costs of personal labor working 70 hour work weeks (no weekends), tons of paperwork, marketing, traveling, and selling.



Crimea, GMO Labeling, Trade Wars



Unintended Consequences

In 2014 Russia invaded and annexed Crimea. At that time, Russia was the second largest importer of dairy products such as butter and yogurt. The US was their largest importer.

The US and the EU imposed economic sanctions against Russia including dairy products.

US imposed tariffs on Chinese imports, and China, who buys roughly half of the US exports of soybeans, went elsewhere for their beans.

Over the past decade, the U.S. has lost 17,000 dairy farms, a decline of about 30%



SOVA Farm

An Organic Experience



SOVA Farm – Small Organic Farm



Our farm, 200 miles north of NYC and just over a 3 hour drive from the GWB. The farm is on 217 acres.

We take a holistic approach to farming keeping a closed system using the grass and hay from the farm to feed the animals. The fields are grazed on a rotational basis. The animal's manure provides the necessary fertilizer.

We produce organic pastured brown eggs, organic broilers, organic grass fed lamb and organic hay and sell at Farmer's Markets in Cooperstown and Binghamton, NY as well as delivery to stores in CT and Brooklyn.



Organic Pastured Soy-Free Eggs



Eggs are collected a few times a day.

Each egg is washed, air dried and then candled before being packaged.

Generally, our eggs are sold to customers in less than a week.

Our hens enjoy roaming fresh pasture, eating fresh grass and the occasional insect or worm.

They sleep in the “Egg Mobile” as well as lay their eggs in the nesting boxes.

The hens and the Egg Mobile are moved every 3 to 4 days to fresh clean pasture.



Organic Soy-Free Broilers



After 3 weeks in the brooder the chickens go outside.

They have plenty of room, safe from predators, constant access to fresh grass, insects and the occasional worm.

Their houses are moved daily to fresh pasture.

Our organic broiler chicks arrive at our local Post Office at 2 days old.

They spend 3 weeks in the brooders, under heat lamps with on-demand food and fresh water.



Organic - Grass Fed Lamb



Our sheep have access to pastures everyday of the year. In the warm months they graze the fields on a rotational basis, moving to a new pasture every 4 to 5 days.

In the winter months they are on pasture during the day, eating hay from the farm, and at night they sleep in the barn. They also start the lambing process during this time as well. We raise St. Croix sheep that are hair sheep.

They shed their heavy winter coats in the spring rather than shearing the wool.



Honey - Beware the Ingredients



It is very important to know where your honey is coming from! Only 40% of the demand can be met by domestic production.

There has been a problem of with some importing countries diluting honey with such things as rice syrup to increase their profits.



We have over 40 hives on our farm that produce 4 types of honey depending on the time of year.

Honey from the East Coast cannot be certified organic because bees will fly up to 3 miles away from the hives in search of pollen and nectar.

Wonderful Product Partners



Upstate New York has many food artisans that produce a variety of organic and grass fed products. Our cool summers and with plenty of rain produce lush grasses for animals to eat and vegetables.

We are now providing our neighboring farmers access to a wider customer base by bringing their goods to various drop points in New York City.

We are working with two groups to bring you **the best quality in taste and ingredients.**

The Group of Twelve - We are working with an Amish community who have generations of expertise in making dairy products including cheeses from raw milk, grass fed milk and yogurt. **G**ross fed beef, chicken and lamb. Pastured pork and delicious produce.

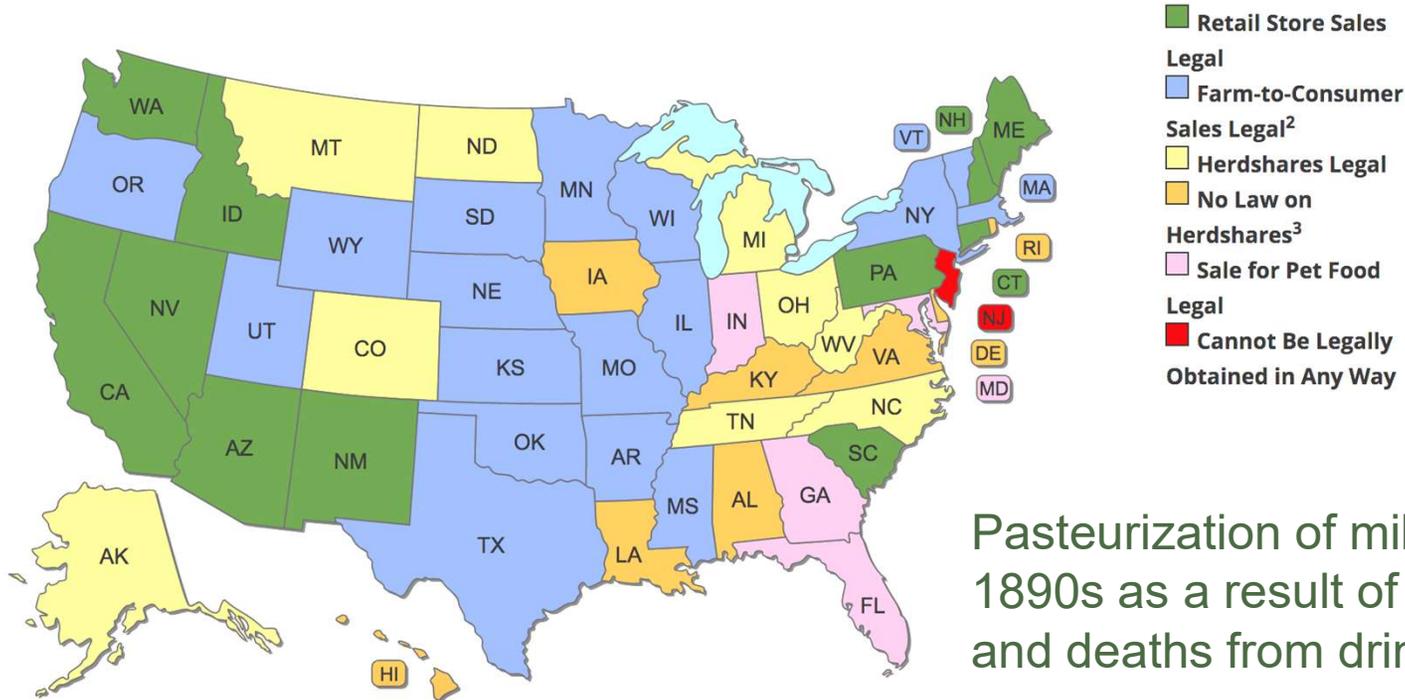
It is such pleasure to work with people of such high integrity, honesty and a sense of community.

Local Food Artisans - There are plenty of wonderful and passionate farmers around us making grass fed butter, organic maple syrup, organic granola and goat cheeses.

Got (Raw) Milk ?



State-by-State¹ Review of Raw Milk Laws



I drink it every day!
Along with 10 million
other people in the
US.

“Drinking raw milk or eating raw milk products is like playing Russian roulette with your health.”

John F. Sheehan, Director,
US Food and Drug Administration

Pasteurization of milk in the US started in the 1890s as a result of the widespread illnesses and deaths from drinking raw milk.

Pasteurization is the process of heating milk just below the boiling point in order to kill possible pathogens.

Unfortunately, it kills the bacteria and enzymes which allows your body to absorb the minerals and vitamins.

Direct to You



SOVA Farms commenced a Direct to You service that enables you to purchase what you want, when you want it and have it delivered to a location near you for pick-up based upon a predetermined schedule.

Currently, lower Manhattan; Brooklyn, NY; Bergen County, NJ (Fort Lee, Teaneck, Dumont, Closter, Fair Lawn); Westport and Greenwich, CT.

Please go to our website to sign up and see our full product offering: SOVAFarm.com



Come Visit Us



Come visit us and see how we produce your food, treat our animals and maybe help in the daily chores.

4 Bedrooms, 2 Full Baths

Full Kitchen, Living Room

Sitting Room, Dinning Room



This house was part of the Underground Railroad in the 1850's, helping southern African slaves escape to their freedom.

We are listed on Airbnb:

SOVA Farm



What Should You Do?



Buy Truly Organic

Buy Local

Get to Know Your Farmer

Recommended Reading & Viewing



Books

Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side Of The All-American Meal
Eric Schlosser

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals
Michael Pollan

The Third Plate: Field Notes on The Future of Food
Dan Barber

Movies

Food Inc. (Netflix)

Rotten (Netflix)

Sustainable (Prime)

Food Matters (Prime)

Websites

The Weston A. Price Foundation
<https://www.westonaprice.org/>

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Both ends of this rainbow where on our farm!