

Organic Milk FAQ

What's the difference between organic milk and regular milk?

There is no difference between organic and regular milk. Both contain the same unique package of nutrients that makes dairy products an important part of a healthy diet. An 8-ounce serving of organic or regular milk offers the same amount of nine essential nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D and potassium.

Is organic milk safer than regular milk?

No. Strict government standards ensure that regular milk is just as pure, safe and nutritious as organic milk. According to USDA and the American Dietetic Association (ADA) conventionally produced food is equally as safe as organically produced food: www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_4143_ENU_HTML.htm.

What about labels that claim that organic milk contains no pesticides, antibiotics or hormones?

Both organic milk and regular milk are natural and pure. Stringent government standards that include testing all types of milk for antibiotic and pesticide residues ensure that both organic milk and regular milk are wholesome, safe and nutritious.

Label statements on organic milk refer to farm management practices, not to the milk itself. While organic dairy farmers use only organic fertilizers and organic pesticides and do not give their cows supplemental hormones, the milk itself is no different from regular milk.

Hormones

Hormones are present naturally in all milk. While some dairy farmers use a supplemental hormone for their cows, the safety of this use has been affirmed and reaffirmed by leading national and international health and agricultural organizations over the past 15 years. Carton to carton, bottle to bottle, there is no significant difference in the level of hormones in any milk.

Antibiotics

All milk is tested for antibiotics to ensure it meets the government's stringent quality and safety standards, so you can be assured that both organic and regular milk are free from antibiotics.

It's important to note that dairy cows are not routinely treated with antibiotics. If a cow develops an illness, both organic and conventional dairy farmers would treat the cow with the same antibiotics. The cow is taken from the milking herd, treated, and is not put back into the herd until her milk tests free of antibiotics. On an organic dairy farm, that cow would permanently exit the herd.

On both organic and conventional dairy farms, every tanker load of milk is strictly tested for antibiotics. Any tanker that tests positive - and this is extremely rare - is disposed of immediately, never reaching the public.

Pesticides

The most recent FDA data available (2003) indicate that all of the milk tested was found to be completely free from pesticide residue. And when looking at the last 10 years of FDA data, milk and milk products consistently contained the lowest amount of pesticide residues when compared to other agricultural products.

The bottom line is that strict government standards ensure that regular milk is just as pure, safe and nutritious as organic milk. For more information on food safety, visit:

www.nationaldairycouncil.org/NationalDairyCouncil/Nutrition/Safety/foodSafetyfactsheet.htm

If I buy organic, am I doing more to help support small family farms?

Not really. There are large and small farms in both the regular and organic categories. Organic farming has more to do with farm management practices than the size of the farm itself. Of the 63,000 dairy farms in America today, the majority are smaller farms with less than 200 cows. The vast majority of U.S. farms – big and small – are family owned and operated.

Is organic milk fresher than regular milk?

Dairy farmers and processors work hard to provide fresh milk – organic and regular – to the marketplace. Most milk, including organic milk, is delivered to stores within a few days of milking. With modern distribution systems, both types of milk may travel hundreds of miles from farm to retail outlet.

Does organic milk taste better?

The taste of milk, regardless of whether it is organically or conventionally produced, can differ slightly from bottle to bottle and season to season. Factors that may impact taste include location of the farm, breed of the cow, variations in cows' feed from farm to farm, and even the time of year. Milk that is ultra-pasteurized for longer freshness may have a slightly different taste. People should do their own "taste test" to see which kinds of milk they prefer.

Why does organic milk cost more than other milk?

It is costly for dairy farmers to follow the government standards that are required to receive the "certified-organic" label.

Organic farming is a management style and some people choose to purchase organic milk to show support for organic farming practices. The type of milk you choose is a matter of personal preference as all milk is nutritious and wholesome.

References / Additional Sources of Information:

USDA Organic Standards: www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Consumers/Consumerhome.html

USDA General Milk Safety Standards: www.ams.usda.gov/dairy/stand.htm

American Dietetic Association on Organic Foods:

www.eatright.org/cps/rde/xchg/ada/hs.xsl/home_4143_ENU_HTML.htm

Dairy Farming Today: www.dairyfarmingtoday.org

*Contact Dairy Management, Inc. at 800-853-2479/
www.nationaldairycouncil.org for more information*