

Mother's science-based view: Organics and Whole Foods are 'scam of the decade'

"USDA Certified Organic."

These words may conjure notions of wholesomeness, healthiness, freshness and responsible consumer habits. I myself have traversed an arc from skepticism of the touted benefits of organics, to a complete boycott.

As a mother, now with two children, pressure has been building to switch to an organic diet. To alleviate well-placed family concern, my husband and I started purchasing organic apples, strawberries, and some of the other fruits and vegetables from the Environmental Working Group's "Dirty Dozen" list. Never mind that in my estimation, organic apples in our area are at least 50 percent more expensive than conventional.

[Editor's Note: For a comprehensive analysis of the claim that GMOs and the herbicide glyphosate are linked to autism, read: [Will my child be born autistic if I eat GMOs? A scientist's view](#)]

So-called "Dirty Dozen" isn't so dirty

Long story short, I'm glad I know better now. I'm not a fan of getting bamboozled. I have no qualms about saying that the EWG "Dirty Dozen" list is unsubstantiated. There is no compelling reason to buy organic, yes, even the Dirty Dozen. The Farmer's Daughter USA does an excellent job [explaining why](#) the scientific methodology behind the EWG list is flawed. In addition to flawed methodology, the pesticide residue on conventional produce is only a miniscule fraction of the amount one would need to consume to have any discernible effect. For example, a child would have to consume an impossible [1,500 servings](#) of conventional strawberries in one day before any effect occurred.

I will unabashedly say that "organic" food is the scam of the decade. We [already know](#) that organic food is no more nutritious than its conventional counterparts. You may be thinking, "Well, I buy organic to avoid toxic pesticides." Alas, the idea that organic farming doesn't use pesticides is brilliantly pervasive, and has likely helped the massive growth of the 63 billion dollar organic industry. In fact, organic farmers often have to use more so-called "natural" pesticides to achieve the same effect of synthetic pesticides. Just like conventional produce, organic produce [shows pesticide residue](#) in laboratory tests. Make no mistake, the pesticides used in organic farming are no safer than those used in conventional agriculture.

For me, boycotting organic is justified

I didn't previously go as far boycotting organic, but I can no longer handle the pesky cognitive dissonance. Even after I learned that there is no reason to buy organic, I'd purchase organic bananas if the conventional fruit was too green. I'd pick out a box of organic cookies if it was on sale. Then, a slow resentment started to build. The word "organic," often juxtaposed with other faddish words like "natural," began to irk me. At least I knew that I was paying a premium for an empty image; a perpetually unfulfilled promise of added health, and a sorry excuse to feel righteous.

Many consumers purchasing these products don't know better, so for that reason among others, I decided

to opt out of this lie. Not only is there no tangible reason to buy organic, but it contributes to the sad weakness of America's critical-thinking skills. The organic industry perpetuates the “natural is better” [fallacy](#). Supporting this industry with my family's money is like personally hindering scientific progress.

I've never set foot in a Whole Foods, and never will

If you shop at Whole Foods and care whatsoever what I think, don't fret. I've heard from lots of people that it's a really nice store with fancy cheeses, amazing bakery items, and a wide selection of ready-to-eat vegetarian options. That's fine my friends, go nuts (do they have really good nuts, too?) In my opinion, Whole Foods helps promote the pretentious, judgmental [false dichotomy](#) that non-GMO and organic foods are somehow healthy and wholesome, while regular old food is junk.

This company that grossed more than 14 billion dollars in fiscal year 2014 — almost the same revenue as [Monsanto](#), although [Whole Foods](#) is growing faster — devotes an entire section of its website to how “[Values Matter](#).” This is an extensive section that self-righteously implies that Whole Foods upholds and sets the standards for food consumption morality, and that all other grocers are merely followers. Whole Foods shoppers get to bask in the trickle-down effect of these so-called “values.” I would never have believed that Whole Foods actually had a “[Values Matter Anthem](#).” Alas, this pompous anthem truly does exist.

Spare us the value judgement, Whole Foods. This type of moralizing emanates not just from Whole Foods, but from the larger organic movement over all. The Big Organic Behemoth's rhetoric creates a deceptively discordant image of people who care about their health versus those buying conventional food. The tacit message is that those neglecting to buy organic are lazy, parsimonious, poor, or gluttonous. Perhaps the mom choosing conventional produce is selfish, and doesn't care about her child's well-being. This exploitation of guilt to sway parents to shell out for organic food is, sadly, quite pervasive.



GMO Free USA, please spare parents the unnecessary guilt trip.

These so-called “values” are completely ideological. Worse, Whole Foods is a leader in promoting the fallacy that GMOs should be avoided. The Whole Foods website states:

“We are the first national grocery chain to set a deadline for full GMO transparency and our GMO labeling go further than the state laws and initiatives for labeling that are pending. This means we are the first to do a lot of this work and will be paving the way for those who follow.”

This is clearly an attempt by Whole Foods to paint itself with the brush of a pioneer. It's as if this company expects other grocery chains to thank Whole Foods for its seemingly groundbreaking work in GMO transparency. The truth is, this is yet another marketing ploy. The only way Whole Foods is paving is the way to scientific illiteracy.

As I've [discussed previously](#), the overwhelming scientific consensus agrees that GMOs are safe. Genetic modification has the potential to feed and nourish the world's growing population in the most sustainable manner possible. I personally will no longer buy into the organic scam. The idea that parents like me don't care about our kids is ludicrous. In fact, I WANT BETTER for my children. I want them to grow up knowing how to spend their money wisely. I want them to be able to smell a scam from a mile away. I want them to grow up in a more scientifically savvy country than America is today, and I'm doing my best to make that happen. **My children love fruits and vegetables, but there is no way on this green, genetically dynamic earth that I'll buy an organic fruit again.** Except on the rarest of occasions like the other day when I bought organic apple juice by mistake. I'll have to be more careful.

This piece was adapted from: [Why This Mom Boycotts Organic and Will Never Shop at Whole Foods](#)

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Additional Resources:

- [Consumers willing to pay premium for organics, but benefits mostly psychological](#), Genetic Literacy Project
- [Myth busting: Are synthetic pesticides, used with some GMOs, more dangerous than natural ones?](#) Genetic Literacy Project