

## USDA organics chief silent on whether organic is safer, healthier

Are consumers right to think that organic food is safer and healthier?

It seems like a straightforward question, especially for Miles McEvoy, the chief of the National Organic Program at USDA.

But in an interview Wednesday, McEvoy wouldn't speculate about any health benefits of organic food, saying the question wasn't "relevant" to the role of the National Organic Program. Nor would he say whether growing consumer demand for organics reflects widening public skepticism of conventional U.S. agriculture.

Maybe McEvoy is unwilling to tout organics over conventional agriculture because, after all, conventional agriculture is the larger part of the USDA's realm. Or maybe he thinks, as some others do, that the science on organics is too tentative.

Whatever the case, the 57-year-old veteran of the movement was willing enough to talk specifics about how his group decides what foods deserve the USDA's coveted "organic" label.

While McEvoy steered away from the health question, he did hold forth on other topics, including animal treatment and whether consumers can trust "organic" imported food from China and other countries.

Here are excerpts, lightly-edited for clarity.

**Lots of consumers buy food with the "organic" label because they believe that the food is healthier and safer than conventional. Are they correct?**

I am not going to be able to respond to that. It's just not...We are a regulatory program that regulates the organic label, to ensure that anything that has that label meets the requirements.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Is organic food safer and healthier? The guy in charge of U.S. organics won't say.](#)**