

Chef Tom Colicchio, Rep. Pingree lead group to convert Cuba into major US organic supplier

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Cuban farms could one day help to feed Americans' burgeoning appetite for organic food.

...U.S. officials and executives from major food companies, including Honest Tea, Stonyfield Farm and Global Organics, are eyeing the island as a potential supply of organic products, looking to take advantage of its close proximity and decades of farming without chemicals.

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"Cubans have this incredible opportunity," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, who has been promoting the idea, adding that "there is no doubt that if they grow it, there would be a market for" those organic products in the United States.

It could be a beneficial relationship for both sides. U.S. food producers are already relying on imports from South America, Europe and Asia to keep up with Americans' demand for organic produce, dairy, meat and packaged foods. Meanwhile, Cuban farmers have had to work their land without chemical fertilizers and pesticides since the early 1990s when the Soviet Union collapsed. If Congress lifted the Cuban embargo, they would have easy access to a market willing to pay top prices for their goods.

To be sure, there is a long way to go before organic Cuban oranges start appearing in Whole Foods. At the top of the list is persuading a GOP-led Congress to end the Cuban embargo — something many believe will wait until Cuban President Raul Castro steps down.

Read full, original post: [U.S. companies make case for keeping Cuba organic](#)