

Thankful for science: How pesticides made your Thanksgiving meal possible



his year, you're going to pay [24 percent more](#) for a turkey, a tough bite out of the wallet for poor people and a dose of reality for economists and armchair pundits who claimed prior to today's "stagflation" that higher prices are no concern.

Imagine how much higher prices would be if food suffered the yield losses that occur without modern pesticides. This year I am thankful for my health and my family but also science. Outside my house are signs thanking healthcare workers, delivery people, and farmers – and if they made one for science, including vaccines and pesticides, I'd own it.

Yet a number of people who flipped to being pro-science on vaccines are still in the denier camp when it comes to food and even energy. I'd be thankful if that changed without a worldwide disaster to motivate them.



Credit: Hank Campbell

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a dramatic change in vaccine acceptance. In California, we used to have a problem where wealthy elites didn't accept even the MMR – our state alone had more vaccine

deniers than the rest of the US combined. That changed in 2021. Earlier this year, rich people in San Francisco paid doctors to get vaccines before the plebians who do all the labor in the state.

They discovered that disease was no longer an intangible “values” issue that they could deny or replace with acupuncture or [the homeopathy and oxygenated herbs sold by journalists](#) like CNN’s Chris Cuomo.

Now they need to realize neither is food.

In 2021, “organic” food is still a placebo for those same wealthy people who denied vaccines under the same naturalistic fallacy at the start of 2020, but in an organic food world that turkey wouldn’t just cost 24 percent higher, it would be 100. Nearly everything we eat relies on the growing of crops. Turkeys, for example, need corn and soy, along with wheat, barley, and canola. [About 75 pounds of it](#) for a large Thanksgiving bird. Everything that increases the cost of growing those crops increases the cost of the main course in a traditional Thanksgiving meal and nothing increases the cost like using old, less-effective “organic” pesticides.

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There is a reason modern pesticides were invented and it was not because, as lawyer-run activists groups like to suggest, farmers operating on razor-thin margins are stupid and buy whatever some slick salesman tells them to buy. It is because just like in antibiotics, old products get less effective over time. The losses when using no pesticides are astronomical while the costs for organic are not just higher than regular food in stores, they mean [dramatically increased cost to the environment](#). With turkeys you will pay \$20 more for an organic label but your Thanksgiving doesn’t end there. Pumpkins used in pie are 66 percent more expensive if they carry the organic seal, [finds USDA’s November report](#), while squash is 35 percent more expensive. Carrots are as much as 111 percent more per pound.

All for a label. that means nothing except that organic industry lobbyists, trade groups, and salespeople have exempted certain synthetic ingredients from being called synthetic, or they have declared older pesticides are organic. They even claim that foods created using mutagenesis – literal chemical and radiation baths to force mutations – are organic, while targeted genetic precision engineering is “Frankenfood.”

COVID-19 caused rich people in Manhattan and San Francisco to rethink their vaccine denial, and if they care about the poor as much as they claim to when filling out surveys and endorsing politicians, they will use the same newfound critical thinking when it comes to food as well.

That would mean a happy Thanksgiving in 2021 and every year after that as well.

Hank Campbell founded Science 2.0 in 2006, and writes for USA Today, Wall Street Journal, CNN, and more. His first book, *Science Left Behind*, was the #1 bestseller on Amazon for environmental policy books. Follow Hank on Twitter [@HankCampbell](#)

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