

Viewpoint: Beyond marketing — Why claims that “organic = better” do not stand up to scrutiny

Is organic food, grown without synthetic chemicals, healthier than conventionally grown food? Roughly [40 percent](#) of Americans say at least some of the food they eat is organic, so quite a few eaters clearly believe it is.

However, there is no reliable evidence showing that organically grown foods are more nutritious or safer to eat. In 2012, a [review](#) of data from 237 studies conducted at the Center for Health Policy at Stanford University concluded there were no convincing differences between organic and conventional foods in nutrient content or health benefit. The organic ban on synthetic chemicals also fails to improve food safety in the U.S., since the use of pesticides is now significantly regulated in conventional farming (insecticide use today is 82 percent lower than it was in 1972), and because produce in supermarkets has been washed to remove nearly all of the chemical residues that might remain.

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Intuition tells us foods grown without manufactured chemicals are more “natural” and therefore better for the environment, safer to eat and helping small local farms. Even the fact that organic foods are more expensive seems a reason to think they are better. But in this case, intuitive thinking takes us in the wrong direction. If we follow the science, organic food loses its apparent advantage.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)