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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Why buy organic foods?

The higher cost of organic foods often deters consumers from experiencing the value of organically produced foods. But while foods that are grown organically may sometimes cost more, they also offer value you won't find in conventionally grown foods.

1. They're healthier. Organic foods are typically higher in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants and are free of GMOs, synthetic pesticides, chemicals, and fertilizers. Organic foods meet all government safety standards that other foods must meet, plus the specific requirements outlined for organic certification.

Conventional produce grown with pesticides contain several times the amount of pesticides as the organic equivalents, and the residue can't be peeled or washed away from most produce. For example, 98% of the peaches tested by the USDA in 2002 showed evidence of at least one pesticide.

Widespread use of antibiotics and growth hormones in meat, poultry, eggs, and milk benefit consumers at first, but antibiotic use in animals helps promote antibiotic-resistant strains of bacteria. The Consumers Union claims that milk from treated cows is linked to an increased cancer risk for the consumer.

2. They're environmentally sound. Many conventional farming practices cost taxpayers billions of dollars in environmental damage and federal subsidies, while organic growers protect soil sustainability and water quality and contribute to biodiversity.

3. They're better for farmers. Organic farming protects the health and welfare of farm workers by limiting exposure to harmful synthetic pesticides, chemicals, and fertilizers. And organic farming, particularly when sustainable practices are used, better preserves and fortifies the land for farmers of future generations.

4. They're more humane. Animals on organic farms are typically treated more humanely.

"It all boils down to taste," says Steve Watts, General Manager of the Los Alamos Cooperative Market. "Remember how food used to taste when it was all from local sources? That's what organic foods taste like."

Grocery Manager Phil Kearney says, "Organic food tastes better because it was grown in real living soil as opposed to the nutrient poor, chemical saturated, tired soil that conventional farmers use."

Kearney refers to a study at Newcastle University in the UK which found organics to contain more nutrients. Professor Carlo Leifert, coordinator of the project, said: "We have shown there are more of certain nutritionally desirable compounds and less of the baddies in organic foods."

So how do you tell if the products you're buying are organic? If a food is labeled as "made with organic ingredients," it contains at least 70% organic content, while the label "organic" means that 95% or more of the ingredients are organic.

In general, looking for the "USDA Organic" label is the best way to guarantee that the product has been grown without synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), irradiation, antibiotics, or growth hormones. Organic growers avoid contamination during food processing, keep detailed records of their operations, and are likely to use sustainable growing methods.

The Los Alamos Cooperative Market is a member-owned enterprise but the public is welcome to shop. Membership is not required.

The Co-op opened in March of this year. Its mission includes promoting awareness about food, nutrition, health, and cooperative values. Visit losalamos.coop for more information or find the Co-op on Facebook for updates.

Phone: 505-695-1579

Address: 95 Entrada Drive, next to Holiday Inn Express

Website: losalamos.coop

Hours: Monday – Saturday: 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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