

S B

209

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(9)

Date Referred: April 14, 1989

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 4-27-89

The RESOURCES Committee considered:

CSSB 209 (RES) am

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 209 (Resources) am
[SALE OF ORGANIC FOOD]
"An Act relating to the sale of organic foods."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- be replaced with HCS CS SB 209 (Res) the same title
- a new title
- have attached amendment(s)
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):
(Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS:

(Date/Dept)

- fiscal impact _____
- zero fiscal note _____
- zero with analysis _____

- fiscal note(s) _____
- zero fiscal note(s) _____
- zero fn/analysis DEC 3-13-89

DNR 3-13-89

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING:

(Check approv. column)

Do Not Pass No Rec Amend

Ray Davis
George Jankowski
Richard J. Lacey

(Check approv. column)	Do Not Pass	No Rec	Amend
<u>W. L. ...</u>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

Chairman's Signature

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1796
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

March 13, 1989

The Honorable Bettye Fahrenkamp
Chair, Senate Resources Committee
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Fahrenkamp:

Subject: Senate Bill 209, relating to the sale of organic foods.

Position: The Department of Natural Resources supports this bill but will be unable to develop and implement organic food product regulations and verification procedures until funding for staff and travel is provided.

Background: Under AS 03, the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for regulating the sale or use inside the state of plants, seeds, vegetables, shell eggs, fruits, and berries to protect the public interest and prevent product fraud, deception or misrepresentation. Currently, Division of Agriculture staff inspect farm products in storage or in retail stores to determine whether products match labeling statements related to grade, kind, etc. If a product violates our regulations, staff can direct the possessor concerning the appropriate disposition of the product.

This bill would allow (but not require) the department to develop regulations specific to organic foods. It would also allow us to inspect products labeled organic and enforce violations of our quality or labeling requirements. Unless additional funding for staff and travel is provided, however, the department would not be able to develop organic and natural food regulations and would not be able to determine or enforce rule violations.

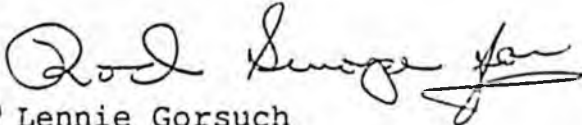
Senator Fahrenkamp .

-2-

March 13, 1989

Recommendation: Authorize a fee schedule (and use of program receipts to fund necessary staff and travel) for inspection and verification work by state inspectors.

Sincerely,



Lennie Gorsuch
Commissioner

cc: Bill Sponsors
Committee Members
Commissioner Dennis Kelso
Department of Environmental Conservation
Bob Evans, Legislative Liaison
Office of the Governor
Denby Lloyd, Special Staff Assistant
Office of the Governor
Frank Mielke, Director
Division of Agriculture

SB 209

The Department supports SB 209. We believe that it is in the best interest of consumers to have some assurance that food labeled natural or organic meets the definitions in this bill. Currently, there are no requirements except for some very broad federal guidelines for meat and poultry products.

The bill sponsor's staff has stated that compliance with the law is expected to be completely voluntary. We believe that the requirement that vendors obtain sworn statements of compliance from producers, makes this a realistic expectation.

The Department has submitted a zero fiscal note, with the understanding that we are not expected to disseminate any information to vendors about the effects of the law and that we will not monitor, test, or inspect to verify compliance.



Douglas Doregan 4/13/89



Alaska State Legislature

SENATE

Official Business

P.O. Box V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

April 12, 1989

TO: HOUSE HESS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

FROM: Senator Jay Kerttula

SUBJECT: Senate Bill 209, relating to organic foods

Senate Bill 209 is a labeling bill that provides Alaska consumers and producers with a common, industry accepted, definition of what is meant if a product is labeled "organic). It does not attempt to deal with health issues, but merely to give consumers and producers a choice.

I have introduced Senate Bill 209 to remedy a specific failing in Alaskan statutes dealing with food products; nowhere in existing law is there any definition or standard which permits one to be certain what is meant when one purchases "organic" food.

What this means is that vegetables and other food products can now be advertised and sold as "organic" without any guarantee as to what fertilizers and pesticides may have been used or not used in their production and processing.

There is a growing body of medical evidence to suggest that, at least in part, we are what we eat. But what are we eating? We tend to think of organic produce as free of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. SB 209 simply makes sure that this is, in fact, the case. It establishes uniform standards for organically produced foods, patterned after those used in Washington and some other states, and supported by local scientific data.

The bill is a simple protective measure that will benefit both consumers and producers who are concerned about the chemicals -- particularly pesticides, hormones and antibiotics -- that we are unknowingly ingesting in our food supply. I believe there are many who are concerned about this contamination, and who would prefer to see that Alaskan consumers have a choice in their purchases. I think this legislation will help that choice become more of a reality by making sure that growers, vendors and customers are speaking

the same language when they deal in organic produce, and that when an Alaskan says "organic", he is representing that a product has never been exposed to chemical applications.

The interest in organic foods and the recognition of their importance to human health is increasing. The recent, much publicized concern about the quantities of pesticides contained in apples and other fruits, and the hazard they may be posing for our children, is only the latest manifestation of a national trend. On the international scene, it is no secret that Japanese and European importers are reluctant to purchase many of our beef and pork products because of the quantities of antibiotics and hormones injected into American cattle.

We are unusually fortunate in that many of the fresh vegetables, potatoes, and carrots that are produced in Alaska can be raised without application of the pesticides that are so heavily relied upon in other climates. It may also be practical to raise beef and some other kinds of livestock for an organic market by utilizing a combination of local grazing lands and unadulterated locally-produced grains. We simply do not have the kind of weed and insect pest problems here that plague farmers in other states, and some of our growers may find that organic production will open a market niche in which they can compete quite successfully with outside growers.

Of course, one of the ultimate beneficiaries of any growth in this sector will be the Alaskan consumer.

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

FOURTH STATE CAPITOL
LEASING ALASKA TRS
707 465 1610

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

March 13, 1989

SUBJECT: Sectional analysis of CSB 209
(Work Order No. 6-0886A)

TO: Senator Jay Kerttula

FROM: Terry Bannister *TB*
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional analysis of the above described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional analysis or summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

Section 1. States the legislative purpose of the bill.

Section 2. Adds a new chapter regulating the sale of organic and natural foods.

Sec. 03.58.010. Prohibits a person from selling or offering for sale food represented as organic if the person knows or has reason to know that the food has been grown, raised, or produced with the use of certain substances.

Sec. 03.58.020(a). Prohibits, except as provided in (b) of the section, a person from selling food represented as organic unless the name and address of the producer of the food are displayed with the food. Requires the person to give a written statement containing the producer's name and address to the purchaser if the food is not displayed at the purchase site, unless the information is on the food package. States that this subsection does not apply to a sale for consumption on the premises.

Senator Jay Kerttuia
Page 2
March 13, 1989

Sec. 03.58.020(b). Requires advertising for the mail order sale of food represented as organic ... to include the name and address of the producer of the food.

Sec. 03.58.030. Prohibits a producer from selling to a vendor food represented as organic - unless before the sale the producer provides the vendor with a sworn statement that the producer has grown, raised, or otherwise produced the food in compliance with sec. 03.58.010. Allows the producer to use a single statement for a calendar year if the producer sells the food to the same vendor more than one time during a calendar year. Defines "vendor" for the section.

Sec. 03.58.040. Requires a person who sells food represented as organic to maintain certain records and to furnish them to the department upon request.

Sec. 03.58.050. Authorizes the department to adopt regulations for the chapter, including a list of substances under AS 03.58.010(a).

Sec. 03.58.060. Directs the department to order a person who is violating the chapter or a regulation adopted under the chapter to stop the violation and to refrain from future violations.

Sec. 03.58.070. Establishes a civil fine and a criminal penalty for a violation of the chapter, a regulation adopted under the chapter, or an order issued under AS 03.58.060.

Sec. 03.58.080. Defines terms for the chapter.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

TLB:lmb
L7/032

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS -- SB 009

This bill does not obligate any agency to perform new or additional services. The fiscal impact to be calculated pursuant to AS 24.08.035 is therefore "0".

The bill does give DEC and DNR discretion to adopt regulations they may believe desirable relating to identity of chemicals prohibited in organic farming; also to require reasonable records to be maintained by sellers of organic products. Because of the infancy of the organic food industry in this state, however, it would be premature to conclude that state regulatory intervention in this area is needed or desirable. It is more likely that once statutory standards are in effect, local industry will for the most part regulate itself, as it does in other states.

It should be noted that should an authorized agency elect to pursue an investigation of any alleged misrepresentation relating to organic food, both DEC and DNR have existing inspection staff who deal regularly with meat and vegetable produce. Some investigatory work could therefore be undertaken without additional appropriation.

Nonetheless, recent experience with similar legislation in the state of Washington-- where there is a large agriculture industry and significant trade in organic produce-- indicates that enforcement effort is rarely required. Thus, even in the event that commercial traffic in organic food increased substantially in Alaska, it is unlikely that there would be any need to fund an increased regulatory presence in the marketplace.

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 3/13/89
 Title: Natural and Organic Food
 Sponsor: Senator Kerttula
 Requestor: Senate Resources

Agency Affected: Natural Resources
 BRU: Agricultural Management
 Components: Marketing Services and Inspection

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Because the bill does not require the department to develop or implement regulations, inspections, verification or enforcement related to natural and organic food sales, no funding is required. However, when development and implementation of regulations is desired, funding for staff and travel will be necessary.

Prepared by: Carol Wilson Phone: 465-2400
 Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 3/13/89

Approved by Commissioner:  Date: 3-13-89
 Agency: Natural Resources

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: An Act relating to the sale of organic and natural foods.
Sponsor: HERTULLA
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: Environmental Conservation
BRU: Environmental Health

Components: Sanitation.

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TC	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	--	--	--	--	--	--
PART-TIME	--	--	--	--	--	--
TEMPORARY	--	--	--	--	--	--

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The bill sponsor has stated that the role of the Department would be to enforce on a complaint only basis. With the understanding that compliance is expected to be 100% voluntary and that the Department will not routinely inspect or monitor, we are submitting a zero fiscal note.

Prepared by: Douglas C. Donegan *DCD*
Division: Environmental Health

Phone: 465-2609
Date: March 13, 1989

Approved by Commissioner: Dennis D. Kelso *ADW/Klf*
Agency: Environmental Conservation

Date: 3/13/89

Distribution (by preparer):

Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

STATE OF ALASKA

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1796
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

April 12, 1989

The Honorable Johnny Ellis
Chair, House HESS Committee
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Ellis:

Subject: Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 209 (Resources) am, relating to the sale of organic foods.

Position: The Department of Natural Resources supports this bill but will be unable to develop and implement organic food product regulations and verification procedures until funding for staff and travel is provided.

Background: Under AS 03, the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for regulating the sale or use inside the state of plants, seeds, vegetables, shell eggs, fruits, and berries, to protect the public interest and prevent product fraud, deception or misrepresentation. Currently, Division of Agriculture staff inspect farm products in storage or in retail stores to determine whether products match labeling statements related to grade, kind, etc.. If a product violates our regulations, staff can direct the possessor concerning the appropriate disposition of the product.

This bill would allow (but not require) the department to develop regulations specific to organic foods. It would also allow us to inspect products labeled organic and enforce violations of our quality or labeling requirements. Unless additional funding for staff and travel is provided, however, the department would not be able to develop organic food regulations and would not be able to determine or enforce rule violations.



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

School of Agriculture and Land Resource Management

Agricultural & Forestry Experiment Station

Palmer Research Center
533 E Fireweed
Palmer, Alaska 99645
(907) 745-3257

MEMORANDUM

AR 17 2089

DATE: March 3, 1989

TO: Senator Jalmar Kerttula

FROM: Allen Mitchell, Associate Director
(Ph. D. Soils and Environmental Sciences) *AM*

SUBJECT: Criteria for Organically Grown Produce

This memorandum is a follow-up to conversations that I have had with Mark Weaver regarding certain criteria for organically grown produce. The criteria discussed were related to the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

Fertilizers

Of the two categories of synthetic chemicals, fertilizers pose the least hazard in terms of human consumption of crops grown on ground to which it has been applied. In fact, of the three primary plant nutrients, nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K), synthetic forms are chemically indistinguishable from organically derived forms in the soil. Also, of these three, only nitrogen poses a potential problem to human health. For example, nitrate- and nitrite-nitrogen might conceivably accumulate in plants to levels that could cause human health problems. This is a rare occurrence. Furthermore, this type of problem could just as easily occur with nitrogen from organic sources. Another concern that some have with synthetic fertilizers is from chemical impurities they may contain. One example often cited is certain phosphorus fertilizers have been found to contain potentially toxic cadmium. However, the source of this contamination is the naturally occurring rock phosphate from which it was manufactured. Organic growers do use rock phosphate as a source of phosphorus fertilizer.

For some of the above mentioned reasons as well as others, enforcement of regulations on fertilizer sources (organic vs synthetic) would be most difficult. Once incorporated in the soil, it is essentially impossible to distinguish source. It would likewise be impossible to determine how long such nutrients have been in the soil.

With this brief description of the problems, I doubt that requiring a long synthetic fertilizer-free period would be either practical or enforceable. Therefore, I would suggest that you consider a requirement that the ground to be used for organically grown produce be free of synthetic fertilizers for a period of one year.

Pesticides

Synthetic pesticides are a completely different situation. While pesticides vary considerably in their toxicity, a great number of them are potentially hazardous. Our information is incomplete, in many cases, with regard to the absolute safety of many of these products. For those individuals who want to pursue a "chemical" free diet, this is where the regulatory emphasis should be placed in my opinion. Unlike fertilizers, pesticide residues in the soil and in produce can be differentiated from natural occurring compounds. Thus enforcement of regulatory policies is possible. Additionally, soil applied pesticides tend to carry over for longer periods in some environments than in others. However, to further complicate the situation, pesticides change chemical form when they enter the soil and are acted on by soil microbes. Fortunately, the new forms are usually less toxic and eventually are reduced to harmless carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen. Again, the time required to render them harmless varies with the pesticide and soil temperatures.

There's no question in my mind that, for regulatory policy, the residence time required in the soil should be greater for pesticides to insure an appropriate degradation time. For example, the herbicide Lorox (linuron) degrades to harmless byproducts in four months in temperate climates while we have been able to measure residue in soils 12 months after application. Linuron is a very safe material from a human health standpoint and concentrations remaining after a year are harmless, but it does illustrate that pesticides can carry over for longer periods depending on environmental conditions at specific locations.

Based on the above arguments, I suggest that the law require that soil used to grow organic produce be free of synthetic pesticide application for a period of two years prior to planting a crop.

If you or Mark have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. The whole question of organically grown produce is a difficult one, but it does have to be addressed. Fortunately for Alaska, we currently use substantially less pesticides than most other producing areas and we have an excellent synthetic chemical-free land base available to those who may want to enter the organic produce market.

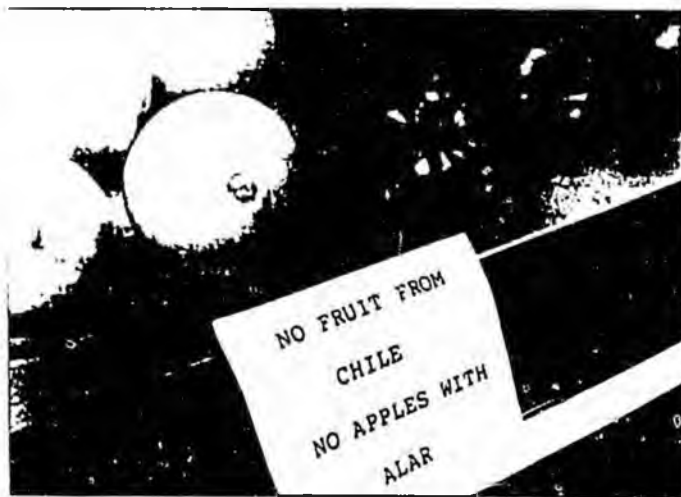
Warning!

Your food, nutritious and delicious, may be hazardous to your health

We take for granted the steady abundance of fruits, meats, fish and vegetables that fill our markets. Or we used to. Fifty years ago, the variety is still there. But is that shiny red apple actually a container of carcinogens? And was that firm, juicy chicken leg seed contaminated with a pesticide banned a decade ago? Or those grapes were those soft ones on the stem dented by a hand-picked stock clerk in a clumsy vineyard facing

For weeks now, fresh food and fresh questions have been answered by the nation's health agencies. The result is a series of government regulations and notices that have questioned the safety of apples, beef, chicken, eggs, fish, milk, pork and poultry. The threats were foreign and domestic, natural and man-made, real and inflated. Alone, each could be evaluated and in some cases dismissed. Together they appeared to be cause for worry about America's abundant food supply.

Last week was the worst. For five anxious days, Chile's vital \$1 billion fruit-export industry, thousands of U.S. distributors and hundreds of millions of grades, apples, peaches, pears, prunes, plums, pectinines and raspberries were held hostage by an anonymous Spanish-speaking caller and two tiny red grapes laced with minute traces of cyanide. At the same time, Americans were reacting to warnings about the domestic connection. In a controversial report, the Natural Resources Defense Council had predicted that some 60,000 American preschoolers might eventually get cancer from ingesting pesticide residues on U.S. prod-



Fresh fruit and fresh questions: Supermarket sign of the times

uce—particularly apples treated with the opening agent Alar. "Apples, cancer and children—it was all people had to see," said Jim Degnim of the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture. Schools from coast to coast removed apples, apple juice, applesauce and other apple products from lunch and breakfast menus. Talk of apples was the buzz of day-care centers; organic food stores were overrun with sudden demand for pesticide-free fruit.

Meanwhile, hospitals and poison-control centers heeded calls about cyanide poisoning; worried consumers besieged grocers with demands for refunds. In Oregon, Catherine Johnson called out the state highway patrol to apprehend a school bus taking her 10th-grade daughter to a state choir festival. Troopers stopped the bus and demanded Sally's ranch, which contained a bunch of grapes. Word that a major U.S. poultry producer in Arkansas had destroyed 200,000 pesticide-contaminated chickens

added to the litany of food fears. "I've had many people call me and say 'What can I eat?'" said Tom Kovacevich, chairman of the New York City Produce Trade Association. "That has never happened before."

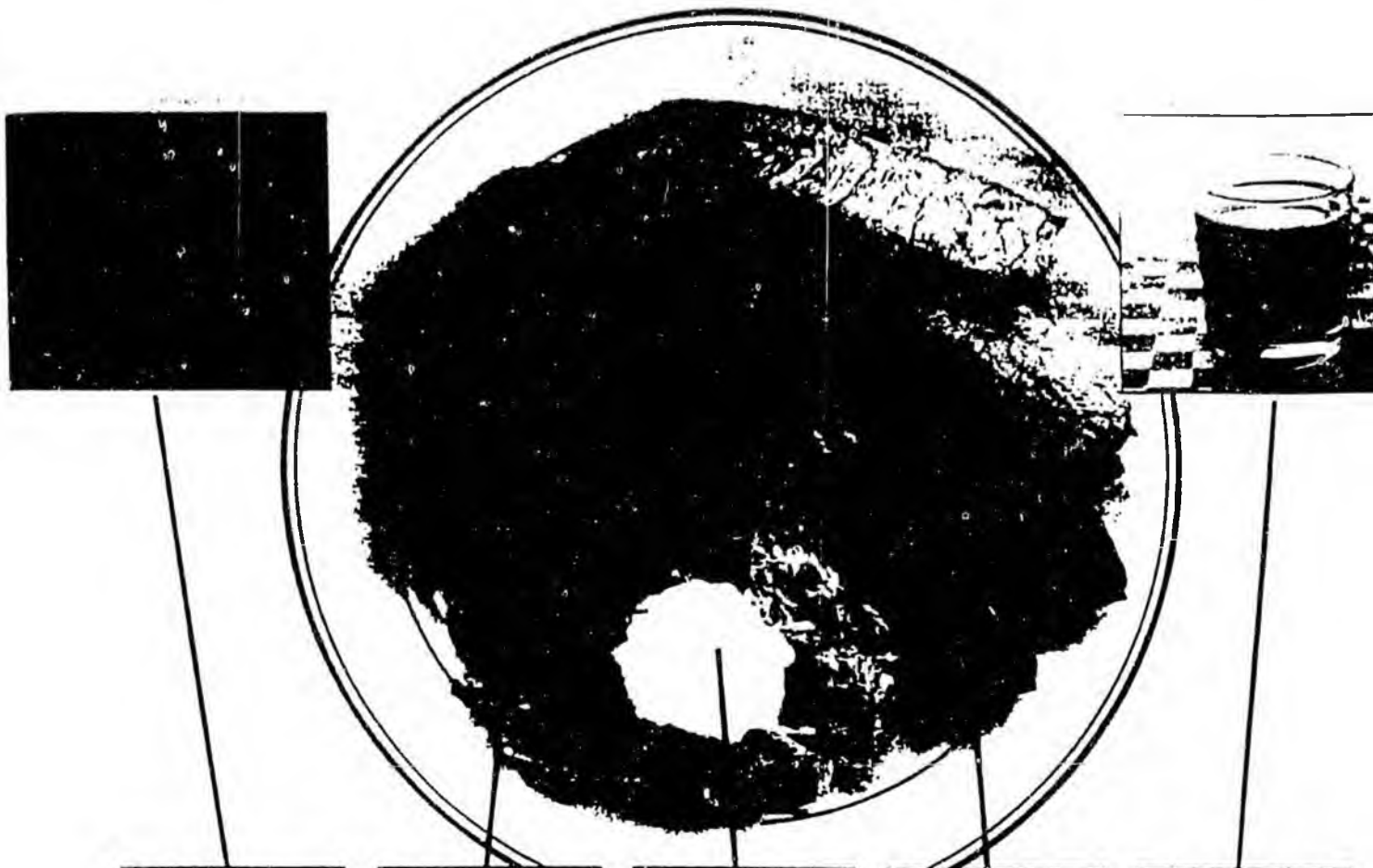
A NEWSWEEK Poll conducted last week found that a majority of Americans still have faith in the U.S. government to ensure that their food is safe (page 22). And there is good reason for their confidence. America's cornucopia of foods remains the envy of the world, both in quantity and quality. Top officials of the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency assured a Senate subcommittee last week that U.S. apples posed no im-

minent health hazard. But even as they did, they expressed their own concerns that cumbersome laws and their chronic lack of resources were hampering their ability to carry out their jobs. "The public perceives its interests are not being looked at because of the process we have to follow," EPA acting deputy administrator Jack Moore told NEWSWEEK. "And my sympathies are with the public."

In truth, it was close to miraculous that FDA inspectors located the two tainted grapes amid the millions of crates arriving from Chile at this time of year. At first, U.S. officials considered the anonymous call to the U.S. Embassy in Santiago on March 21 a prank, but protectively informed the FDA. Only after a second call a few days later insisted that the warning was no hoax did the FDA double its inspections of Chilean produce being unloaded at U.S. ports. At the huge Philadelphia Toga Marine Terminal, teams of inspectors eyed incoming fruit and

What You See Isn't All That You Get

Nothing is as simple as it seems. The food you eat every day is full of hidden dangers. Here are some of the most common ones. The food you eat every day is full of hidden dangers. Here are some of the most common ones. The food you eat every day is full of hidden dangers. Here are some of the most common ones.



Apples

An apple a day used to be the prescription for health, but since 1968 consumers have been eating a side order of Alar and DMP with many of their red apples. Alar, a growth regulator, breaks down into DMP, which may be carcinogenic. The average American has 15 chances in a million of contracting cancer solely because of DMP. The government advises buying several servings of green or yellow apples every day.

Broccoli

Broccoli farmers are allowed to use about 50 different pesticides on their crops. Among them is parathion, a possible human carcinogen. The EPA can only inspect 10 percent of the produce to make sure that residues are within legal limits. Washing and cooking broccoli can help to lower the risk of cancer. The government advises buying several servings of green or yellow apples every day.

Eggs

Raw or undercooked eggs, such as those in homemade mayonnaise, pose a risk of salmonella poisoning. This disease may strike as many as 4 million Americans a year. The government inspects both chicken and eggs for salmonella infection. Outdated grade-A eggs have reached store shelves. Unlike many other risks, salmonella poisoning is easily avoided: Cook eggs until the whites and yolks are no longer runny.

Beef

Cattlemen put hormone implants in steers when the animals reach the feedlot, typically between the ages of 11 and 20 months. The hormones remain in the animals' tissues after slaughter, when they are inspected by the USDA. The levels are roughly equal to those in untreated cattle. Also, some cattle eat feed containing low doses of antibiotics. These can produce resistant bugs that might cause human disease.

Milk

Milk sold in certain paperboard containers may become contaminated with dioxin, one of the most potent animal carcinogens known. Government milk inspections could not necessarily catch this form of contamination. It is not yet clear exactly how much of a risk dioxin in milk poses. While the scientific jury is still out, nervous consumers can ease their fears by buying their milk in glass or plastic containers.

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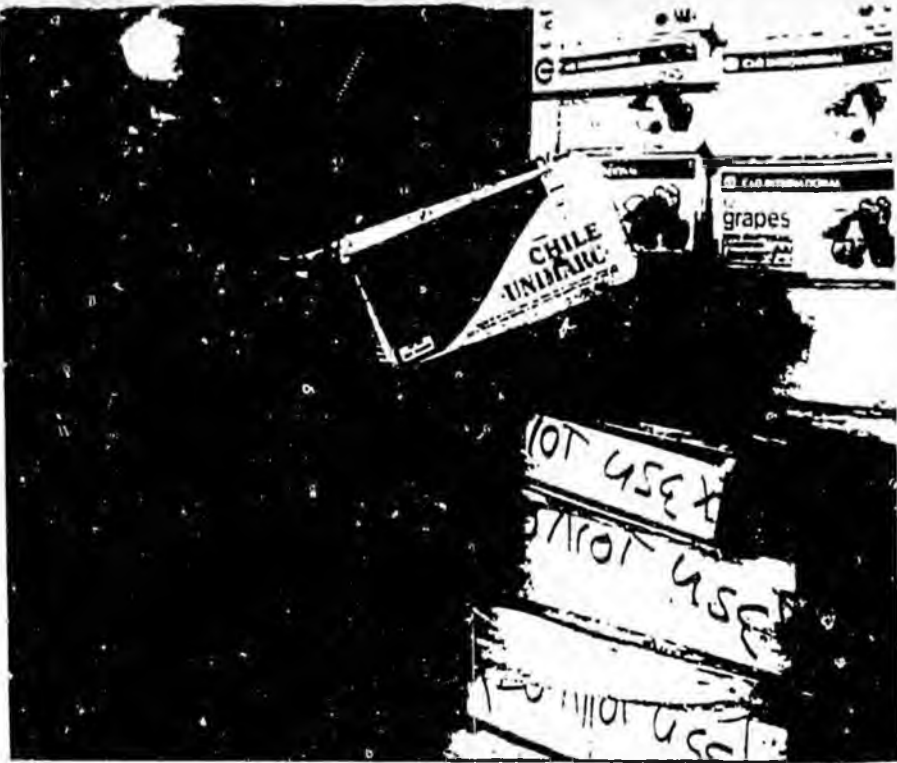
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Grapes held hostage by an anonymous threat in Chile: A bulging warehouse in Chicago

...of apples a day for 70 years...
...Georgia Agriculture Commission...
...Tommy Irvin...
...And that's it there *were*...
...war on apples...
...Appie-industry groups in-...
...st that Alar is currently used on just 5...
...percent of its crop

Part of the confusion over Alar stems from the fact that the EPA itself has long considered the chemical dangerous, though not as dangerous as the NRDC claims. Last month the EPA announced its intention to ban Alar's use, but that process will take at least 18 months. Even after final test data are completed next year, the proposed ban must undergo public hearings and possible appeals challenges. Under current law, anyone can disagree and ask for an administrative hearing, said the EPA's Moore. That takes another two to three years and, during that period, the chemical stays in the market. I think that's crazy.

Grazier still is the fact that the EPA doesn't know precisely what hazards many common pesticides may pose to humans. Some 6,000 pesticide products, in 600 different categories, are in use today. Nearly 400 of those chemicals were on the market long before 1972, when the EPA was first charged with regulating them under FIFRA, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, and many would not be allowed on the market under today's standards. Amendments to FIFRA have directed the EPA to reevaluate the old pesticides under current standards, but it will take years of studies to evaluate the effect of one single pesticide on one single animal. To date, the EPA has developed data on 192 of the older chemicals, but only 16 have been fully reviewed and reregistered only

two of them. Two years ago Congress reauthorized the process completed—by 1997.

The EPA merely sets tolerance levels for pesticide residues. Monitoring and enforcing those limits falls to the FDA, which is equally unmatched to the task. The FDA routinely samples less than 1 percent of national food supply each year, and it tests for only about half of the pesticides currently in use. The General Accounting Office has also criticized the agency for lacking information about pesticides used in foreign countries that turn up on imported foods. But the FDA has only a \$48 million budget and 1,000 inspectors in all, check everything from blood banks and drugs to food safety. Its requests for more funding have been repeatedly slashed. "If you want me to do the job, give me the resources," Young told senators last week. "It is a crock to pass over 20 bills requiring more work and decrease the resources. And American people need to know that."

Federal authorities rely in large part on the states to help enforce pesticide laws at the farm level. But there, too, inspectors are often hapnazard. Massachusetts, for example, has only two food and agricultural inspectors to monitor all orchards in the state. And even when violations are noticed, penalties are minor. In California, state inspectors logged 9,287 violations of pesticide laws last year, but those resulted in only 600 fines. Califor Deputy Attorney General William C. Cunningham calls the task of policing the tens of thousands of farms with only a dozen inspectors "a David-and-Goliath problem as difficult as enforcing the 55-mph speed limit." The task of setting and enforcing safety levels for fish, meanwhile, has been completely left to state and local authorities.



Local option: New York inspector Rudolph Albanese

Monitoring meat and poultry falls to the USDA, as it has since the days of Upton Sinclair. With a budget 10 times that of the FDA's, USDA inspectors physically examine every single piece of meat and poultry at 7,000 slaughterhouses and processing plants. Inspectors also spot-check for chemical and bacterial problems that aren't visible. Of the problems they do encounter, heptachlor, the pesticide found in the Arkansas chickens, is a common one. The EPA banned its use on food products in 1978, but allowed farmers to use up existing stocks on grain not destined for the food chain. Still, some farmers illegally mix it with feed seeds. That was apparently the case in Arkansas; authorities have yet to find the culprit.

In general, food-industry officials and public-health authorities alike worry far more about microbiologic threats to the food supply than chemical residues. Salmonella is a persistent problem—affecting an estimated one in every three broilers. Yet Congress has rejected attempts to mandate safety levels and sampling programs for such natural contaminant—in part due to industry pressure. "Every commodity has its congressman," says Ellen Hass of the Public Voice for Food and Health Policy. "Aflatoxin is another natural, aflatoxin is another natural, aflatoxin is another natural." Burning toxin. State and federal checks have found high levels in corn this year, due to last summer's drought. But experts inside government and out say that is no cause for panic. Afla-

toxin does not affect sweet corn consumed directly by humans. Federal and state checks of cattle theoretically eliminate the danger that it passes through animal feed into meat. Aflatoxin is generally destroyed by heat in making corn products. Cornmeal for other processed foods. The fact that it has turned up in milk, which is then dumped, is "good, not scary," says the FDA's Catherine Carnevale. That means we are testing.

Private industry provides additional checks for contaminants that slip past government regulators. Most consumer product companies say their own safety standards far exceed government limits. For the most part, their practices are commendable. But American consumers have learned to be wary. Even David Letterman

lined in the cynicism last week. Among his "Top 10 New Slogans of the National Fruit Council?" "Would a giant front-oriented cartellie to you?" Indeed, while most major apple-product companies insisted they stopped accepting Alar-treated fruit years ago, California authorities found a curious phenomenon last week: the raw apples they tested were mostly Alar-free, yet every processed apple product they sampled contained traces of the chemical.

Even when private industry safeguards fail, experts say that the real danger of most chemical residues is from long-term exposure. For that, the FDA has one final, overall safety check. Since 1961 the agency

has conducted total dietary surveys, but missing the same 234 food items, based on studies of what Americans eat, in four places in the country. The FDA was never able to take and serves them just as a consumer would and analyzes residue levels. Consistent contaminants fall well below the EPA standards for safety and are less water than those set by the World Health Organization.

Those assurances pale against the prospect of deliberate terrorism. "How easy is it for a terrorist to inject something into a few crates of fruit—in the docks, in the fields, on the boats? Very easy," said one FDA investigator who asked not to be named. In the past, terrorists have targeted Israeli produce facing oranges in France and West Germany with mercury in 1978, and injecting blue dye into grapefruits in Rome last April. In 1984, Japanese extortionists found themselves "The Man With 21 Faces" threatened to place cyanide-laced chocolates on shelves in an attempt to extort money from a candy company. No one was hurt. America's own experience with "cover the counter" terrorism was more tragic. Investigators have never found the madman who randomly murdered several Chicago-area residents in 1982 with cyanide-laced Tylenol capsules, nor his twisted motive. But that incident did spur strict tamper-proof packaging on all over-the-counter medications.

Protecting food products is far more difficult, particularly at the retail level. A average customer may handle 10 steak before purchasing any; a vandal could tamper with one without arousing suspicion. As of last week, FDA officials had re-

quired more packaging around food products. Most experts say it wouldn't be effective anyway. "You could be boomerang something right through the overwrap," says Ada Shinabarger of Michigan State University's agricultural cooperative extension. U.S. authorities do have one new weapon against copycat terrorist threats: an AT&T phone system that permits immediate identification of a caller's location. But no amount of technology can erase the impact of the past several weeks. The weekly trip to the supermarket has become a much more complicated and risky business.

MELINDA BECKER
MARY HAZARD/PHIL MARK/MIAMI
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
THE LATE GEORGE HARRIS
PHOTOGRAPHY/NAIDEN/PHOTO
SUN PUBLISHING CO. OF OREGON/PHOTO

You Can't Just Buy American

The United States is still the food basket for the world, but it's importing meat, fish, fruit and vegetables.

COMMODITY	UNITED STATES VALUE	MAJOR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN
Shrimp	\$2.7	Mexico, Ecuador, Canada
Coffee*	\$2.5	Brazil, Colombia, Mexico
Beer and veal	\$1.7	Australia, New Zealand, Canada
Pork	\$.9	Canada, Denmark
Orange juice	\$.6	Brazil, Mexico
Cheese	\$.4	New Zealand, Italy
Spices	\$.3	Chile
Tomatoes*	\$.2	Mexico, Italy
Eggs**	\$.1	China, Canada, France
Vealons	\$.1	Mexico

*EXCEPT FOR TOMATOES, WHICH ARE GROWN IN CALIFORNIA
**EXCEPT FOR EGGS WHICH ARE GROWN IN CALIFORNIA

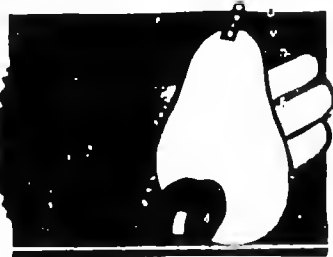
A Guide to the Grocery

Keep eating fruits and vegetables, but be careful—and wash your hands!

BY SHARON BECKETT AND MARY HAYES

If it isn't poisoned U.S. grain, it's tainted Arkansas chickens. Then it's salmonella, or chemical additives. Eating is beginning to seem like a hazardous enterprise, and there are indeed real risks out there. The trip to the grocery has become a cost-benefit game. Here's how to play.

Don't believe all the scare stories. Look for evidence, look for numbers—actual illnesses, quantified cancer risks—and beware of terms like "trivial." What may be a small risk to industry is unacceptable to a mother. Then, *understand* the numbers. The average American has a one-in-four chance of getting cancer. A low prediction of death-excess cancers in today's preschoolers seems like a horrible thought, but it's about the same as an increase in risk from 20 to 25 percent. Support the benefits. Some milk that may have tiny traces of dioxin also provides protein, calcium and vitamin D. The biggest food risk—microbial contamination—kills thousands each year, but can be avoided with better cleanliness. Another high risk is poor diet, such as one high in fat or salt. Here is NEWSWEEK's guide to the grocery.



Fruits and Vegetables

Farmers apply hundreds of chemicals every year to control weeds, fungi or insects on produce. What's deadly to a corn borer may not be exactly healthy for people. The Environmental Protection Agency says pesticide residues pose the third highest threat of environmentally induced cancer, behind cigarettes and radon. Many pesticides were approved in these decades before researchers had good tests of their toxicity, and many still remain on the market.

The recent controversy led forth by the environmental group Natural Resources Defense Council, NEWSWEEK Jan. 10, concludes that some common kids are exposed to neu-

rotic pesticides above what the EPA considers an "acceptable" level. And because children eat relatively more fruits and vegetables than adults, they receive several times the exposure to carcinogenic pesticides than their parents. As a result, says the NRDC, 3,500 to 7,000 preschoolers die each year, eventually because of their food exposure to just eight pesticides. A 1987 study by the National Research Council showed now dangerous food is allowed to be. The NRC examined cancer risk from about 20 out of 60 pesticides known to be carcinogenic. It found that if all produce had the maximum allowable residue of every pesticide approved for use on it—more than 110 on apples, 75 on bell peppers, 100 on tomatoes—Americans would face a cancer risk of three percent over a 70-year lifetime.

The good news is that real risks are not this bad. In 1988 the FDA found the residue at all in 77 percent of 14,492 food samples, less than 1 percent had abnormally high residues. And instead of using every permitted pesticide every year, farmers use only those necessary for

that season's pest—say, 100 on apples, for instance, in the winter 11.

Fruits and vegetables also contain natural poisons, some of which may cause cancer. Biochemist Bruce Ames of the University of California, Berkeley, estimates that people ingest 10,000 times as much natural pesticides as man-made ones. The EPA can't do anything about nature. But it is re-evaluating all 300 agricultural pesticides with an eye toward banning the allowable residues or banning some chemicals entirely.

While that goes on, remember that fruits and vegetables such as broccoli and carrots provide nutrients that have been linked to *reduced* risks of cancer. The National Research Council recommends that Americans eat five or more servings of produce a day, especially citrus fruits and green and yellow vegetables. To lessen your risk from any lingering pesticides, wash all produce with soap and water. If you can't bear the sight of a sad cabbage leaf, look your vegetables, the best will eliminate some residues. For a good primer on residues, try the Sierra Club book "Pesticide Alert."



Apples

To many confused consumers, apples now look like the poisoned fruit of the Snow White tale. Since 1965 some red varieties have been sprayed with the suspect chemical daminozide, made by Uniroyal Chemical Co. under the trade name

and. This growth regulator coats apples from dropping off trees before they ripen. It slows color and firmness and extends shelf life. But the chemical penetrates the pulp and cannot be washed, cooked or peeled off. In 1985, owing to consumer pressure, processors and stores pledged not to accept Alar-treated apples.

Some seem to have reneged. Next week Consumers Union will announce whether most apples bought this year contain traces of Alar, as did 1988 samples. It's already reported apples at some brands of juice bought in 1988 as high as 70 parts per million—high enough to pose a risk of cancer much greater than the one in a million which prompts EPA action. There are wide regional disparities in Alar levels in eating apples. New York officials said last week that as much as 20 percent of their 1988 crop was sprayed with Alar. The EPA's estimate that only 5 percent of the domestic crop is sprayed may be way too low.

The real culprit, however, is not Alar, but its breakdown product called UDMH. This chemical cousin of rocket fuel forms when Alar is heated, as during processing into sauce or juice. Also, traces of it can be found in the Alar itself which is sprayed in the orchard. Uniroyal's latest data on daminozide show that it is probably not carcinogenic. The still preliminary UDMH data are more worrisome: the EPA calculates that UDMH in apple products, consumed in amounts that may underestimate actual eating patterns, poses a cancer risk of 45 in a million over a lifetime. The EPA says it intends to ban Alar within 18 months. For a baby who drinks one ounce of apple juice a day, the risk of getting cancer because of the juice drunk over that waiting period is nine in a million. A toddler drinking

ant ounces a day would
risk of about 2 percent
survival. Inlets that
completed its tests in
the CD MH
DMH of ways of...
there the chemical...
it stick to green...
happy Smith...
treated with salt...
hands that get a clean
results in independent
manufacturer tests



Chicken and Eggs

Here the latest risk comes
from salmonella. Dangerous
bacteria that can cause
nausea, diarrhea and fever.
Symptoms can last one day or
several. There are more than
40,000 cases—and 500 deaths—
of salmonella poisoning reported
in the United States every
year, says the federal Centers
for Disease Control. Many more
poisonings go unreported, and
actual incidence may be higher.
Not all come from eggs or
poultry, but...
DC researchers reported that
salmonella outbreaks in the
Northeast that caused 200
illnesses. Of those that could
be traced to a specific food,
77 percent were apparently
caused by uncracked eggs. The
eggs seemed to have been con-
taminated by salmonella in the
hen. Approximately one
third of the chickens in the na-
tion's supermarkets carry
salmonella.
Salmonella poisoning is easy
to avoid. Wash raw poultry and
everything it touches—like
the cutting board, a utility sink
and raw eggs—with warm
mayonnaise, ketchup,
cream, and no cake batter. In-
cubate eggs at least seven minutes—
seven if soft-boiled, and
eggs for five minutes, and
three minutes aside



Beef, Poultry and Pork

Specifically, hormones, an
issue raised when the Euro-
pean Economic Community re-
cently banned American beef
containing hormones. Cattle
and pigs stealers the natural
hormones—estradiol, tes-
tosterone and progesterone—
to increase implants—to make
more lean muscle
and less fat. They also some-
times use synthetic hor-
mones. DES has been linked to
cancer and was banned in 1979.
When it was detected in
meat and pork. Pork and poul-
try producers do not use hor-
mones. Three ounces of beef

from an untreated animal con-
tains about 10 micrograms of
hormone. Cattle in the
United States naturally estro-
gen treated animal
hormones. The main
source of these hormones
is the urine of estrone
and estradiol. The hormone
in cabbage. Hormone con-
tents do seem harmless.
Antibiotics in livestock feed
pose a different problem. Pork
producers feed their animals
low doses of penicillin, tetracy-
cline and other human antibiot-
ics. Cattlemen use tetracycline.
Poultry producers usually feed
animals only antibiotics that
aren't prescribed for humans.
The concern is that people may
become infected with microbes
that won't respond to antibiot-
ics. This might happen because
the drugs can make the mi-
crobes resistant to antibiot-
ics. If the meat is then contaminated with
resistant bugs, they could infect
people handling it. In February,
the Institute of Medicine, part

of the National Academy
of Sciences reported that 150-
million pounds of data about
antibiotic resistance. It says
the drugs in human disease
but estimated that 100 million
pounds of antibiotics are
used in the United States annually. That's
enough to produce 100 million
pounds of resistant strains
produced by antibiotics in an
hour.
To guard against resistant
microbes after handling raw
meat, wash your hands and in-
struments and surfaces thorough-
ly with hot water and soap.
Milk
Last summer a Canadian go-
vernment scientist shows
that dioxin in cardboard con-
tainers can migrate into the mi-
lk they contain. John Ryan mea-
sured 0.4 parts per trillion (ppb)
of the form of dioxin known
TCDD. It apparently enters p-
per products during a bleach-
ing process that uses chlorine.
The only documented effec-
t of dioxin in people is a skin dis-
ease called chloracne, which
infected victims of an industri-
al accident. But TCDD is, accord-
ing to animal tests, the most
powerful carcinogen ever eval-
uated. The EPA concluded that
even 1 ppt of TCDD poses
"unacceptable" cancer risk.
TCDD has also been link-
ed to birth defects and immu-
nity system disorders in test a-
nimals. The FDA estimates that
children drinking all their
milk from contaminated con-
tainers may be doubling their
daily dioxin intake, and it's
now trying to verify Ryan's
work. If the Canadian sci-
entist is correct, drinking milk
from dioxin-laced cartons may
increase lifetime cancer risk of
1 in 10,000.
The American Paper In-
dustry is studying the poten-
tial problem of dioxin in paper p-
roducts. It may be possible to

Anxiety in the Market

Americans still believe their food is safe, but there are more worries and calls for remedial action.

Fears About Food

- 38% are more worried that the food they eat may be contaminated by pesticides or other toxic chemicals
- 6% less worried
- 53% about the same

Buying Habits

- Consumers who say they're worried or have cut purchases
- 44% Apples
- 41% vegetables
- 23% Eggs and poultry
- 25% Fish
- 9% Milk
- 11% Corn

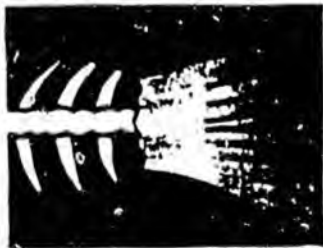
Confidence in the U.S. Government

- 52% Feel the government ensures food produced in the United States is safe
- 44% Feel food imported from foreign countries is safe

Pesticides

- 73% Think we should use fewer pesticides and only make sure safer food, even if it means higher prices
- 45% Oppose pesticides on all food crops
- 47% Oppose pesticides on all food crops

quarters with an average of 100,000 gallons per acre. The average yield of safe fish from the class of fish is:



Fish

Lake fish pose more threat than ocean fish. Some species from the Great Lakes, such as cone and snook salmon, contain PCBs as well as pesticides DDT, dieldrin, and heptachlor epoxide. The EPA found 100 pesticides. Although many chemicals have been banned, they remain in lake sediments and in the food chain, including fish. The compounds have been linked to cancers, neurotoxicity, and other ills. The Great Lakes states issue annual advisories warning consumers not to eat certain species or to eat less of them. At a certain percentage of the fish have contaminant levels above the FDA's 100 parts per million.

Contamination varies from year to year. In 1984, for example, lake trout and salmon for sale in Lake Michigan ranged from 0.05 ppm to 1.5 ppm, the action level is 5 ppm. Dieldrin contamination varied from 0.1 to 1.2 ppm—the action level is 10 ppm. Overall, the risk of cancer from eating 50 meals a year of Lake Michigan fish is one in 1,000 over a lifetime, says J. Milton Clark of the EPA's regional office in Chicago, eating only one meal a year poses a risk of one in 50,000. But according to a new study in the American Journal of Public Health, the danger may be greater. Eating 50 meals a year as a sports fisherman might pose a one in 100 cancer risk from dieldrin and three in 1,000 from DDT. The fish contain the action levels of these poisons. Even the contamination was below the ac-

tion level. The EPA says that the DDT level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 1 ppm. The EPA also says that the dieldrin level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm. The EPA also says that the heptachlor epoxide level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm.

tion level. The EPA says that the DDT level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 1 ppm. The EPA also says that the dieldrin level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm. The EPA also says that the heptachlor epoxide level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm.



Canned food

Lead from soldered can seams gets into the food through leaching or splattering during manufacture. Some 20 to 30 percent of cans are lead-soldered. Acidic foods such as tomato products, fruit juice, and anything packed in citric acid are the worst offenders because neuroscientists have found that lead damages children's brains at even trace levels; they recommend that kids get no avoidable lead from food, says neurochemist Ellen S. Wenger of the Environmental

Health Agency. Lead in food is a major concern because it can cause developmental delays in children and other health problems. The EPA says that the lead level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 1 ppm. The EPA also says that the lead level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm. The EPA also says that the lead level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm.



Corn and Peanuts

The *Aspergillus flavus* mold can infest wheat, corn, millet, other grains and peanuts. It secretes a highly toxic compound called aflatoxin. For years aflatoxin has plagued peanuts in the Southeast; last year's hot, dry summer created an ideal environment for the fungus in Midwestern grain. Animal studies show aflatoxin to be the second most potent carcinogen ever tested, surpassed only by TCDD. It causes liver cancer in rodents, but its impact on people remains unclear. Five epidemiological studies carried out in the Third World showed a clear link between intake of aflatoxin and cancer, says Ronald Shank of the University of California at Irvine. In these countries, however, aflatoxin intake was five to 500 times higher than in the United States. This is a genuine carcinogen, but you're going to have to really pig out on corn or peanuts to face a serious risk, says microbiologist Lloyd Witter of the University of Illinois.

The FDA allows 5 parts per billion (ppb) aflatoxin in milk and 20 ppb in other foods. The 20 ppb was chosen because it can generally be met by the industry, not because it is safe.

The EPA says that the aflatoxin level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 1 ppm. The EPA also says that the aflatoxin level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm. The EPA also says that the aflatoxin level in the fish was 0.1 ppm, which is below the action level of 10 ppm.

corn safety cooks get's flour that's substantially below aflatoxin levels. Cornflakes probably OK, since processors put aflatoxin. Don't substitute peanut butter; even though it has been getting cleaner, the risk is not negligible.

The odd thing is, food should be the least of our worries. Tobacco from the soil poses a cancer risk of 1 in 1,000. Smoking a pack a day increases a woman's chance of dying of lung cancer fourfold. A 100 mg dose of TCDD causes the risk of heart attack and cancer to a level 200 times higher. But risk has its own biology. Smoking is voluntary; food is natural and natural nature doesn't do much good, says Peter Sandman, Rutgers University. "The risk that kill you are not necessarily the risks that anger or frighten you. Risk is the sum hazard and outrage." Sin food is supposed to be safe, it poses any risk at all, people are outraged. If their outrage a year, make consumers snub produce in favor of, say, fancy snacks, attempts to raise public consciousness on safety will have backfired. But the outrage translates in political action—stricter taste controls on dangerous pesticides, for instance—in the panic may have been avoided.

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

REPLY TO:

1031 W 4th AVENUE SUITE 200
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501-1994
PHONE: (907) 276-3550
FAX: (907) 276-3697

1st NATIONAL CENTER
100 CUSHMAN ST. SUITE 400
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701-4679
PHONE: (907) 452-1568
FAX: (907) 456-1317

P.O. BOX K—STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0300
PHONE: (907) 465-3600
FAX: (907) 463-5295

April 14, 1989

The Honorable Curt Menard
Co-Chairman
House Resources Committee
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Subject: Amendment of SB 209 (Sale of organic food)

Dear Representative Menard:

Attached is an amendment to SB 209 which this office recommends be adopted in order to clarify that the enforcement options in SB 209 are in addition to and not instead of enforcement which may be available under Alaska's Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act. If the committee does not wish to amend the bill, we recommend as an alternative that a letter of intent be adopted which basically confirms legislative intent that the enforcement proceedings under SB 209 are in addition to and not instead of those available under AS 45.50.471-45.50.561.

If you have any questions, please call the undersigned at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Gary I. Amendola
Assistant Attorney General

GIA/bt

Attachment

cc: Senator Kerttula
Rob Mintz
Bob Evans

A M E N D M E N T

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

TO: SB 209 (Sale of organic food)

Page 3, Line 12:

Delete "ORDERS."

Insert "ENFORCEMENT. (a)"

Page 3, line 16:

Delete "Sec. 03.58.070. PENALTIES."

Insert "(b)"

Page 3, line 24:

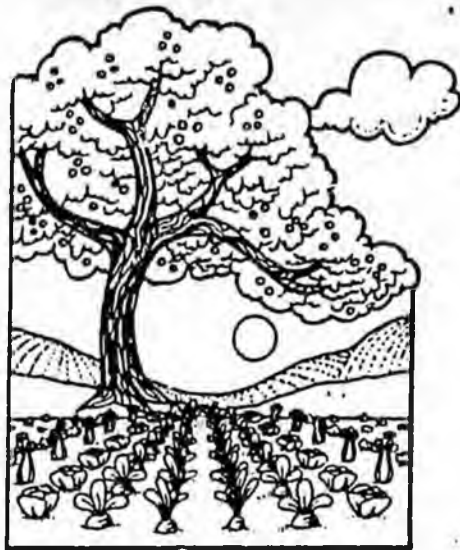
Insert a new subsection to read:

(c) The provisions of this section are in addition to the remedies available under AS 45.50.471-45.50.561.

Page 3, line 24:

Delete "080"

Insert "070"



The Time Is Ripe For Organic Foods

Organic may well become the new standard for the natural foods industry as demand for safe food grows.

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Any natural foods retailer who still questions the market potential for organically grown products would do well to wake up and smell the Cafe Altura brewing. Organic is likely to become the new standard for the natural foods industry, according to a large

number of store owners, distributors and suppliers interviewed by NATURAL FOODS MERCHANDISER. They are recognizing and responding to the growing demand for high-quality, pesticide-free food.

Consumers now encounter organic labeling on packaged commodities—ranging from breakfast cereal to pasta salad mixes to apple-grape juice—as well as on signs in the fresh produce department. As further proof of organic's impact, top industry wholesalers are demonstrating their commitment by offering a growing selection of naturally processed, pesticide-

free products.

For many natural foods industry members, providing food that is produced without synthetic chemicals is more than a response to the market—it is a social responsibility as well. They maintain that organic agriculture offers benefits to our environment and health that exceed mere monetary value.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS: TODAY'S ORGANIC MARKET

Maybe it's economics, maybe it's a social conscience, but statistics indicate that more farmers are making the transition to organic agriculture, and more natural foods retailers are dealing in organically grown products.

In California alone, total acreage under organic production increased from 10,000 acres in 1986 to nearly 26,000 acres in 1988, according to the ▶

Public Demand For Organic Flourishes

The impetus to provide organic food stems, in part, from the fact that an overwhelming 95 percent of consumers surveyed by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) consider pesticide residues on food a hazard to health. According to the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO), this fear is not unwarranted. In an investigation conducted in 1986, GAO determined that 3 percent of all foodstuffs inspected by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) contained illegal pesticide residues, and that the FDA is only checking less than 1 percent of all foodstuffs on the market. On imported foods, the GAO concluded that the residue problem is more than twice that of the domestic market.

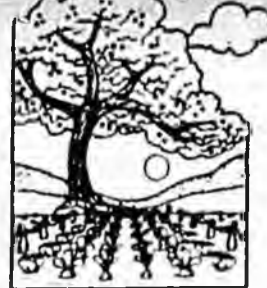
With the Environmental Protection Agency estimating that annual pesticide consumption totals 2.7 billion pounds, it's no wonder that pesticide residues on food has

become a critical issue. "We've gone from using less than 200,000 pounds of pesticides a year in the 1940s to 2.7 billion pounds a year today," says Tom Harding, an organic agriculture consultant and president of Agrisystems International in Wind Gap, Pa. "All of that is going on our food, in our food, around our lawns and down our drains. There's an incredible environmental stress because of the overuse, misuse, and improper understanding of what synthetic chemicals can do.

"Organic agriculture can contribute to reducing this environmental stress and provide us with food we can have confidence in," Harding continues. "We can achieve enormous cleanup and reverse the damages to the environment if we would recognize the problems created in part by conventional agriculture, and start to work together to improve our food system."



At Alfalfa's Market in Boulder and Denver, Colo., organic foods are promoted in the produce department and throughout the store, with signage and displays.



Organic agriculture utilizes crop rotation and biological and mechanical methods to conserve soil fertility and control insect and disease pests. High quality foods are produced free of synthetic chemicals.

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), a certifying and marketing organization based in Santa Cruz. Membership in the organization has increased as well, from 285 growers in 1986 to 370 growers in 1988, according to certification program coordinator Brian Baker.

Baker estimates the retail market value for organically grown foods to be \$30 million to \$70 million in the state of California alone. Accurate nationwide and worldwide statistics are not available. However, estimates gathered from *New Farm* magazine and a number of wholesalers and suppliers range from \$300 million to \$3 billion for the worldwide organic foods market. Robert Shapiro, director of sales and marketing for the Mercantile Food Co., an organic import/export firm in Redding, Conn., places the domestic retail market for organic foods at roughly \$150 million. His estimate is in line with figures presented in NFM's 1987 Market Overview Survey.

"Based on my knowledge of major distributors, sales of organic foods are the same or higher in Europe," says Shapiro.

While market value estimates vary, the numbers at least indicate a strong demand for organic foods. Rainbow Natural Foods Distributors in Denver and Los Angeles reports 15 to 20 percent growth in sales of organic products, according to general manager Kim Thuon. Albert Lusk, president of Albert's Organics, anticipates a boom for two reasons—growing consumer interest and a more efficient, computerized operation. Lusk runs a 13,000-square-foot warehouse and distributing operation in Los Angeles. He has plans to expand his business with a warehouse in the Midwest.

Processors and packagers of organic foods have experienced recent growth, and Marc Schwartz, president of Little Bear Trading Co., a miller and packager of organic grain products in Winona, Minn., reports a 30 percent

sales increase for his company. Schwartz is also the current president of the Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFFANA), the trade association for the organic foods industry.

Retailers offering organic foods are seeing sales increases, as well. "We were hearing lots of requests for organic, but we couldn't do anything until our recent expansion," says Todd Loomis, owner of the 4,100-square-foot Granary Market in Pacific Grove, Calif. "Now we're doing \$6,000 per week in produce and 95 percent of it is organic." Loomis sells his produce from a two-layer, 20-foot wet rack and 40 linear feet of dry rack. "The public reception to our commitment to organic foods has been very good, and by next year we should double our sales," he predicts.

Even in a smaller store, organic produce and packaged goods can help increase a retailer's customer base, says David Sharp, owner of the 1,000-square-foot Lambertville Natural

Foods in Lambertville, N.J.

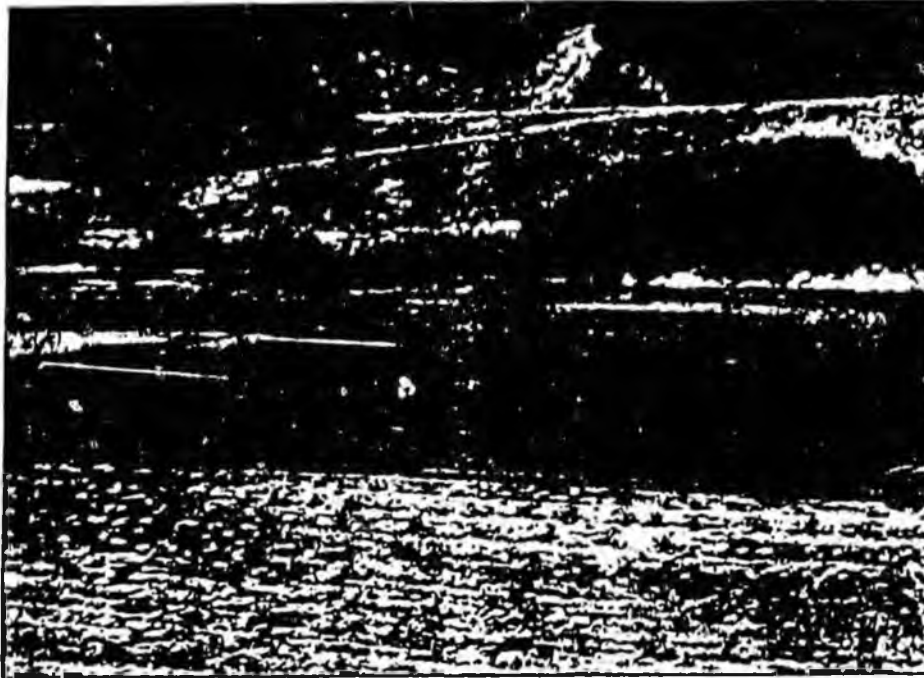
"The store is six years old and we've been carrying produce for three," says Sharp. "Initially, we offered organic produce in season from our own five-acre farm in Bucks County, Pa. This past winter, we went with Organic Farms (a major East Coast distributor of organic foods, based in Beltsville, Md.) to offer strictly organic produce. This has undoubtedly helped to create a broader customer base for us, and there seems to be little resistance to prices. Although the prices of organic foods are more reflective of what it takes to grow food, they are not that far out of line from commercial produce," he comments.

According to Sharp, a small-store retailer should be able to handle a minimum order requirement of \$400 from distributors such as Organic Farms. "Depending on the time of year and what commodity we're dealing with, I don't have any trouble selling two to three cases per week of organic peaches, broccoli and lettuce, and I sell 100 to 200 pounds of carrots a week. A number of things end up in our deli department as well, which minimizes shrink," Sharp adds. "A deli is a perfect match for a fresh produce operation."

STRONG MARKET FOR PACKAGED GOODS

"There is a great potential for organic industry growth," says Shapiro, who indicates that while produce sales are strong, more packaged goods will make their way to market. "As raw materials and availability increase, we'll see tremendous growth in the number of organic retail products reaching the marketplace."

Ron Roller, vice president of Eden Foods in Clinton, Mich., agrees. "We are offering more processed and prepared organic foods, such as pastas



In California alone, total acreage under organic production increased from 10,000 acres in 1986 to nearly 26,000 acres in 1988.

and some of our cooked beans, to address consumers' desire for high quality, ready-to-use products."

One of the largest distributors in the natural foods industry, Tree of Life, in St. Augustine, Fla., is also responding to this consumer demand by focusing on organic ingredients in a new line of consumer products.

"We've been very conscious of a significant change in consumer interest for products that are free of pesticides and synthetic chemicals," notes Greg Leonard, Tree of Life vice president of merchandising.

"The American consumer is also looking for good taste and texture and sound nutrition. That's where we see organic foods fitting in as the basis of good taste and high quality nutri-

tional integrity. Organic foods can represent a real distinguishing point between the natural foods industry and the commercial food industry," Leonard adds.

In addition to an organic pasta sauce, Tree of Life is also introducing a line of pastas made from organically grown amber durum wheat, according to Leonard. Other organic products bearing the Tree of Life logo include apple cider and cookies made from organic whole wheat flour. "Tree of Life as a total company has placed its support behind consumer products made from organic ingredients," says Leonard. "It's something the marketplace is asking for."

INTEGRITY BACKED BY CERTIFICATION

To verify that its ingredients are organically grown, Tree of Life works with the Farm Verified Organic (FVO) certification program, based in Redding, Conn. Along with a growing number of farmers, processors and packagers, Tree of Life contracts the independent certifying agents to make sure that every stage of organic production meets strict criteria. Such scrutiny of the cultivation, processing, packaging, distribution and storage of organic foods, backed by a well-documented audit trail, helps build retailer and consumer confidence. More and more, both retailers and consumers are demanding that organically grown foods be certified to ensure their authenticity.

"We contract grain from farmers linked to the FVO verification system," says Leonard. "The milling plant is also inspected by an independent party. Flour from the miller to the pasta maker is again inspected. We certainly recognize the need to establish a high degree of integrity behind the use of the word 'organic.' If we're putting our resources so strongly behind organic, then it's important to be sure that our products are truly organic."

Bob Donnola, sales and marketing manager for Earth's Best in Middlebury, Vt., feels that his target audience is a very precious commodity. A manufacturer of baby food, Earth's Best products are both certified and laboratory tested for pesticide residues. "Organic foods are very important for infants because they are at greater risk to pesticide exposure—they eat a lot more food in relation to their body weight," says Donnola.

Additionally, babies are less able to cope with pesticide toxins, he notes.

"I would like to see more companies and retailers become involved with certified organic foods," Donnola adds, "because babies are only babies for so long. Kids and adults need safe food, too."

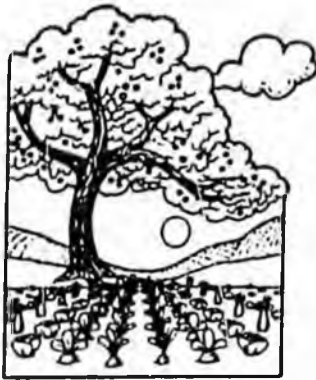
A NATURAL MARKET NICHE

With so much media and consumer attention being paid to pesticide residues on food, major supermarket chains are beginning to take notice of the organic foods market. Raley's and Lucky's, two California chains, currently offer selected organic items. On the East Coast, *Supermarket News* reports that the New Jersey-based Kings Super Markets is considering test marketing organic produce in its 15 stores.

"Organic is no longer exclusive to natural foods retailers," says Todd Loomis of the Granary Market. "However, most of the people buying organic don't really trust commercial markets. The organic industry is new, and I don't think the commercial markets can do a good job. It takes a more personal approach. You have to gain a consumer's trust. People come in here because they trust what we have."

"Smaller retailers do a better job of selling organic than the supermarket chain stores," says Albert Lusk of Albert's Organics. "People who want good tasting organic food are still going to go to natural foods stores to buy it."

That may be the case, but it is still important for retailers to aggressively market organic foods, according to Robert Shapiro of the Mercantile Food Co. "Retailers should strive to offer more organic foods in their product



mix as they become available," he says. "They need to take the initiative to make consumers more aware of organic issues."

To help in this cause, a number of wholesalers and manufacturers offer merchandising and marketing support, from brochures, bag stuffers and signage to grower information and individual retail consultations that can help determine product mix, pricing and marketing strategies.

"What we have to promote is organic agriculture and its positive effect on the environment and health," says Joseph Dunsmoor, president of Organic Farms Inc. "People are very concerned about food and environmental safety, and there's a real tie-in. However, we can play down the pesticides issue. The quality and flavor of organically grown foods are the real selling points and they should be the main focus of our marketing efforts. We need to convert customers one at a time, and there's all kinds of things we can do." ✕

—Steven M. Hoffman

Organic Foods Defined By OFPANA

BELCHERTOWN, Mass.—While the meaning of organically grown food varies state by state, here is a definition proposed by the organic food industry's trade association, the Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFPANA), headquartered in Belchertown, Mass. In proposing such a definition, OFPANA seeks to endorse independent certifying agencies that meet or exceed the criteria outlined in the definition. It is also meant to serve as a guideline for the federal government in the establishment of national standards for organic foods.

▶ Certified organic food is produced without the use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. Moreover, such conventional pesticides and herbicides have not been used on the land and crops for at least three years.

▶ Certified organic food has been grown with the help of composted organic materials, green manures and/or other natural materials as fertilizers.

▶ Crop rotation systems have been applied to minimize disease and insect damage, and to promote soil health.

▶ Insect control has been by ecological and biological means. When necessary, natural, mechanical, botanical or biological controls with minimum impact on health and the environment may be used.

▶ Weed control has been accomplished by mechanical and/or ecological methods.

▶ Certified organic food has been harvested, preserved, processed and stored without the use of fumigants, irradiation, synthetic coloring agents, artificial sweeteners, synthetic chemical preservatives or other similar additives.

▶ Certified organic meat, fish, eggs (or comparable products) are from animals/fish/fowl fed certified organically grown feed. Animals, etc., have been raised under humane conditions and have not been exposed to synthetic growth promoters, hormones,

or other such additives, in feed or water or by injection. Animals which have been treated on an emergency basis with antibiotics or other allopathic drugs cannot be sold as certified organic but may be sold through conventional markets.

▶ Processed certified organic food is made from certified organic agricultural products.

▶ Certified organic food meets all local, state and federal regulations governing the food supply.

For more information on guidelines and definitions regarding organic foods, contact: OFPANA, P.O. Box 31, Belchertown, Mass. 01007. ✕



To help retailers merchandise organic foods, the Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFPANA) prepared a point-of-sale brochure explaining the meaning of organic in easy to understand terms.



Whole Foods Taste Fair Helps Launch Texas Organic Program

DALLAS—Natural foods retailers are increasingly demanding that the foods they buy from growers and processors be certified organic. Now, one state is demanding that retailers be certified to sell organic foods, as well.

Texas agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower recently announced that Whole Foods Market, a five-store chain that reportedly will sell \$8.4 million of Texas agricultural products this year, is the first retailer approved to market "Texas Certified Organic" products.

Hightower made his announcement during "Tejas Tropicales—A Taste of Texas with a Tropical Twist," a consumer taste fair sponsored by the Whole Foods Market in Dallas. This indoor and outdoor event featured more than 25 vendor booths displaying food and beverage products produced in the state of Texas.

"Producers, distributors and retailers all have to be certified by the TDA in order to participate in the Texas organic program."

"Certification establishes consistency and credibility for consumers," says Hightower. "Right now, the word 'organic' is not defined by either federal or Texas law. That means that anybody can legally label any food as organic, no matter how it was produced. Now, with effective state certification, consumers and retailers can have confidence in the product."

According to Hightower, state certification is what makes the Texas Department of Agriculture's (TDA) program unique. Of the 11 states with laws governing organic foods, only two—Texas and Washington—are involved in the actual certification of organically grown products.

Under the Texas program, a farm cannot use synthetic pesticides for at least three years and must not use artificial fertilizers for at least two years before its products can be sold as "Certified Organic." Farms are inspected and certified annually to ensure that organic standards are followed.

For retailers to qualify for the program, they must agree not to commingle, or mix together, Texas-grown organic and non-organic food products. Approved retailers can then use the "Certified Organic" logo only on products that have been certified by the TDA. Grocery stores will also be checked periodically to ensure compliance, according to Hightower.

"Producers, distributors and retailers all have to be certified by the TDA in order to participate in the Texas organic program and use the logo," says Fleur Hedden, vice president of the Austin-based Whole Foods Markets. "The primary requirements for a retailer include an inventory control system that can trace TDA certified products back to the suppliers

and written descriptions and inspections of systems in place to prevent commingling of organic with other produce."

In addition to the Agriculture Department's "Certified Organic" logo, homegrown organic products are tagged with small red paper diamonds that say "organically grown." "We put these tags on every product in the bulk, grocery, produce and cheese sections, and any other area of the store where organic foods are displayed," says Hedden. "The red diamond is also up as a 10-foot sign that

hangs in the bulk foods and produce aisles to alert customers about our participation in the organic program."

According to Hedden, Whole Foods Market—with \$3 million a year in sales of organic products—is the largest retail supplier of organic foods in the United States. X

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) established its own organic certification program in 1988. The label is used to help growers and retailers market Texas certified organic foods.

Texas Department of Agriculture commissioner Jim Hightower (right) shakes hands with David Mathis, manager of the Dallas Whole Foods Market, to inaugurate the new Texas certified organic program at a "Taste of Texas" fair held at the Dallas store. Whole Foods vice president Fleur Hedden looks on (center).





Farm Verified Organic

VOLUME 2 NEWSLETTER SPRING 1996

FVO 7TH ANNUAL FARM TOUR & SUMMER SYMPOSIUM
U.S.A. MIDWEST AND CALIFORNIA WEDDED IN AUGUST 1996

The event in the North West was...
...and the event was held from the 1st to the 3rd of August. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors.

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Farm Verified Organic (FVO) is an internationally recognized farm-to-table product guarantee program that provides third-party certification and materials to market organic foods.


(Related story follows)



OCIA

ORGANIC

The Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) is a farmer-owned certification organization providing the above label to qualified growers.



TO CONSUMER GUIDE

ORGANIC FOODS

...and the event was held from the 1st to the 3rd of August. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors.




SEEDLESS TOMATOES

...and the event was held from the 1st to the 3rd of August. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors.

CALIFORNIA CERTIFIED ORGANICS

RED FLAME

SEEDLESS GRAPES

...and the event was held from the 1st to the 3rd of August. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors. It was a great time to be in the Northwest and to meet with the growers and processors.

.69/lb.

Organic food distributors have merchandising materials available for retailers to help promote organically grown foods, such as the signage shown, supplied by Albert's Organics in Los Angeles.

Organic Labeling Laws At A Glance

State	Status of Law	Contains Enforcement Mandate	Lists Allowable Materials	Time required between last synthetic-chemical treatment and sale of product		
				Non-Meats	Meats	Dairy
California	Enacted '79; pending revision '89	No	Yes	1 yr.	90 Days	30 days
Colorado	Pending	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Iowa	Planned for '89	Yes	Yes	Gradual (3 yrs. as of July '90)	Unspecified	Unspecified
Kansas	Pending	No	Yes	3 yrs.	90 days	30 days
Maine	Enacted '79	No	Yes	3 yrs.	90 days	30 days
Minnesota	Enacted '88	No	Yes	3 yrs.	90 days	30 days
Montana	Enacted '86	No	Yes	2 yrs.	90 days	30 days
Nebraska	Enacted '86	No	Yes	Gradual (3 yrs. as of Mar. '90)	Unspecified	Unspecified
New Hampshire	Enacted '85	Yes	No	Unspecified	90 days	30 days
New Mexico	Pending	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
North Dakota	Enacted '87	No	N/A	3 yrs.	N/A	N/A
Ohio	Pending	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oregon	Enacted '73	No	No	Unspecified	90 days	30 days
Texas	Enacted '88	Yes	N/A	3 yrs. (pesticides) 2 yrs. (synthetic fertilizers)	N/A	N/A
Vermont	Enacted '87	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Washington	Enacted '87	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wisconsin	Enacted '88	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

State legislative information compiled by the Rodale Institute and The New Farm, Emmaus, Pa.
 N/A—Information Not Available

State by state, organic agriculture is being defined in the legislative arena as a protection for farmers and as a guarantee to consumers that products labeled "organic" are truly organically grown. While most states set production guidelines and definitions to determine what produce can bear the "organic" label, two states, Washington and Texas, have entered the certification business. These states set legal standards for production, processing, transportation and storage of organic food, conduct independent farm inspections, and are involved in marketing products grown under state approved organic labels. There are almost as many conflicting definitions for organic foods as there are states that have passed organic legislation. That is why, according to Tom Harding, president of Agrisystems International in Wind Gap, Pa., a consultant and marketer of organically grown foods, uniform, federally mandated guidelines are needed.

"The role of government is to define what organic foods are and to make it clear where the United States, particularly the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Department of

Agriculture (USDA) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), stand relevant to organic food production and marketing," he says. With Europe poised to establish organic criteria that could affect U.S. exports, uniform national standards are as important in overseas marketing as they are for domestic distribution, Harding indicates. "Consumers need to know exactly what certified organic means," he adds.

According to *The New Farm*, the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee, chaired by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), is currently reviewing organic food certification laws from all 11 states that have passed such laws, plus information on the six other states considering similar legislation. There are no plans at this time to sponsor a federal organic certification bill; according to Kathleen Merrigan, a member of the Agriculture Committee staff. However, reports *The New Farm*, the fact that a growing number of states have often conflicting certification laws, while others have no legal standards, is cause for concern at the federal level. "It's an issue with the potential to introduce legislation," says Merrigan.

Organic Foods Resource List

DAVIS, Calif.—There are a number of sources where one can turn for more information concerning the cultivation, certification, distribution, merchandising and marketing of organic foods.

For a comprehensive listing of organic food and farm suppliers in the United States and Canada, consult the California Action Network's (CAN) 1988 Organic Wholesalers Directory & Yearbook. This book, published annually, also contains valuable marketing information and listings for organizations and publications concerned with organic foods. The publication is available from CAN for \$19, plus \$1.75 shipping and handling per copy

MARKETING AND CERTIFICATION

California Action Network (CAN), P.O. Box 464, Davis, Calif. 95617, 916/756-8518

California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), P.O. Box 8136, Santa Cruz, Calif. 95061, 408/423-2263

Demeter Association (Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association), 4214 National Ave., Burbank, Calif. 91505, 818/843-5521

Farm Verified Organic (FVO), P.O. Box 45, Redding, Conn. 06875, 203/544-9896

Natural Organic Farmers Association (NOFA), c/o RFD #2, Barre, Mass. 01005, 617/355-2853

Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA), P.O. Box 819, Kearny, Neb. 68848, 308/234-2645

Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OF-PANA), P.O. Box 31, Belchertown, Mass. 01007, 413/323-4531

RELATED SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Americans for Safe Food (ASF),

Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1501 16th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, 202/332-9110

Institute for Alternative Agriculture (IAA), 9200 Edmonston Rd., Suite 117, Greenbelt, Md. 20770, 301/441-8777

International Alliance for a Sustainable Agriculture, 1701 University Ave., S.E., Rm. 202, Minneapolis, Minn. 55414, 612/331-1099

National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP), 530 7th St., S.E., Washington, D.C.

20003, 202/543-5450

Pesticide Education and Action Project (PEAP), 220 Golden Gate Ave., 9th Fl., San Francisco, Calif. 94102, 415/771-7327

Steering Committee for a Sustainable Agriculture, P.O. Box 1394, Davis, Calif. 95617, 916/753-1054



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For many, the production and marketing of organic food is a social responsibility to preserve our health and the environment. However, as demand for organically grown food increases, premiums paid for organic produce and other economic incentives are now attracting conventional growers and mainstream supermarkets to consider making the transition to organic.



Stalking organic foods

By Ed Randegger

There's a lot of talk about "organic food." But few ask what it is. Looking in the dictionary won't help. The U.S. Department of Agriculture doesn't regulate, or even define, it. A couple of states have set up loose standards, but regulation is hit or miss.

The leading "organic food" retailer in Colorado says:

"By organic, we mean foods that are absolutely clean of such impurities as "chemical residues from artificially derived fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides, artificial growth stimulants, tenderizers and additives."

That sounds good, but does it have any relation to the reality of the "organic food" on that retailer's shelves and in its meat cases? Probably not

according to the conscience of the organic food industry, the Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFFANA).

OFFANA is an international organization of farmers and ranchers, processors and manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, who care about healthy food. Its mission is to promote honesty and accuracy throughout the organic food chain — from farm to consumer.

Founded in 1984, it has made great strides in four short years. It's first major product was a December, 1986, position paper on Laboratory Testing and the Production and Marketing of Certified Organic Foods which explains the problems of depending on chemical testing to determine whether a

food is truly organic (see Food Testing). A year later, OFFANA completed its first set of Guidelines for the Organic Foods Industry.

The guidelines, approved by OFFANA's voting membership, are based on a draft developed by Grace Gershuny, Barnet, VT, and Joseph Smille, Weedon, Quebec, Canada, both principals in Oala Services. William F. Drilton, Jr., Woods End (MA) Laboratory, an agricultural testing facility, reviewed the drafts that incorporated suggestions from OFFANA members and the final product was edited by Judith Ollan, an organic farmer who is secretary to the board and membership club of OFFANA.

The guidelines represent an attempt to "set standards of excellence for the organic foods industry." When they are tested by a couple of volunteers — organizations that certify organic foods — beginning later this year, OFFANA will learn if its high "minimum" standards are attainable.

The standards are based on soil and water stewardship. The premise is that if farming methods are sound and healthy, they will result in wholesome food. Then the standards attained on a well run organic farm must follow certified organic food all the way into the shopper's grocery cart.

The guidelines introduction states:

Ecological farm management relies on building soil humus through crop rotations, recycling organic wastes, and applying balanced mineral amendments. Along with the use of resistant varieties, this minimizes problems associated with pests and disease. As necessary, mechanical, botanical, and/or biological controls with minimum impact on health and environment are implemented.

Organic foods are processed, packaged, transported and stored to retain maximum nutritional value, without the use of artificial preservatives, coloring, or other additives; irradiation; or synthetic pesticides.

It takes nearly 40 pages to flesh out this definition. The primary tool is a three-tier breakdown of farming practices:

1) Permitted substances and practices which "generally qualify as acceptable (but not necessarily optimum) management strategies."

2) Regulated substances and practices which may involve "some controversy, or whose use should be limited or qualified in some way."

3) Prohibited substances/practices.

The guidelines for "agricultural practices" begin with a description of ecological soil management:

The fertility of the soil is based on the harmonious interaction of physical, chemical and biological factors. It is the proper cyclic interplay of these factors that creates a healthy soil.

Of critical significance is the maintenance of active humification, whereby not only nutrients but a broad array of plant growth-promoting substances and pathogen suppressants are supplied. In an ecologically managed system, fertilization consists of fostering this biological activity, with the proper management of organic matter being the key task.

This is accomplished through judicious tillage, crop rotation, and the addition to the soil of manure and other organic wastes. Soil mineral balance, which is also essential for soil health and the production of quality organic food, may require the application of mineral fertilizers.

The dos and don'ts begin with the section on manure management, pointing up one of the major problems in organic food production. The guidelines proclaim that animal manure is "one of the most beneficial inputs in organic food production" and there is a consensus that a farm with livestock can be self-sustaining far more readily than one without. But they go on to say that

raw manure, even when it's produced by animals fed organic grain and clean water, can be a problem.

So the guidelines permit free use only of composted manure, aerated slurry, and raw manure only before a "green manure" crop, later plowed under. They call for regulation of raw manure in all other instances and use of sewage sludge only if laboratory analysis shows it's free of poisons which can range from petrochemicals to heavy metals. Such contaminated organic waste is prohibited whether it comes from "factory farms" or sewage treatment plants.

Gardeners should be aware that the "organic manure" now available in most stores probably comes from factory farms, or sewage, and is likely to be laced with poisons. Try to find an organic farmer with clean composted manure.

The guidelines allow only limited use of nitrogen additives permitting only green manures, nitrogen fixing crops, composted materials and nitrogen fixing organisms. Regulated are such widely used "organic" supplements as vegetable meals; blood, leather or other animal byproduct meals; fish emulsion; tested sewage sludge; and under limited conditions Chilean nitrate. Prohibited are potassium and calcium nitrates; urea; anhydrous ammonia; ammonium nitrate; ammonium phosphate; and other synthetics.

Balance is stressed throughout the conservative guidelines. For example, they bar "excessive doses of any micronutrient," even unfertilized seaweed extract, kelp meal and rock powders.

The guidelines make it clear that seeds and seedlings pose special problems for organic farmers. The first

obvious is "organically produced seeds and seedlings." Regulated are seeds and seedlings fertilized nonorganically. Prohibited are "synthetic fungicide-treated seeds" or pesticide treated plant materials, unless otherwise unobtainable and an exception is granted by the certifying organization."

The section on weed control, also applicable for organic gardeners, contains one of the few errors I could spot in the guidelines. It calls for regulation of "mulching with recycled newspaper containing colored inks" while prohibiting "petroleum distillate herbicides." Although it's possible your newspaper now uses one of the safer soy inks for color, at this point almost all black ink is derived from toxic petrochemicals. So beware of all inked mulches if you want your garden to be pure. The guidelines also call for regulation of plastic mulches. We assume use of one of the new biodegradable corn plastics would be unregulated, though they're probably not made with organic corn.

Pest control is another area where organic farmers and gardeners face similar problems. The guidelines say:

Prevention is the first line of defense in pest infestations. When planning production schedules and the location/size of plantings, and choosing crop/varieties and soil management practices, pest prevention should be high on the list of grower concerns. When preventive measures prove inadequate, those methods of control having lowest ecological profile should be a grower's first choice.



The photo on the preceding page shows a Nicaraguan farmer spraying deadly pesticides on his crops without taking proper protective measures. CARI, the international relief and development organization, says it's trying to instruct farmers in Guatemala, Ecuador and Nicaragua on application safeguards as well as nontoxic strategies of pest control. But Organic Foods, published by the Organic Food Production Association of North America, reports that the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua considers nontoxic farming "outdated and irrelevant." Fortunately, as reported in *The Wary Canary* No. 2, not all communist governments feel that way. Cuba is now retraining its extension agents to convert to organic agriculture. Polconculture is not a political issue. Right-wing Chile is promoting organic farming as are Peru, Guatemala, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic. And you may be able to find certified organic Mexican produce in markets soon.



All biocidal materials, no matter how innocuous-seeming, should be handled with caution. Many "natural" insecticides, such as pyrethrum, rotenone, azadirachtin, and nicotine, are broad-spectrum and highly toxic. Although widely accepted because of their natural origin and swift decomposition, they are often overused and pose a danger to soil organisms and wildlife, as well as to the humans using them. Pest-specific bacterial and viral diseases have been reported to have adverse effects on soil organisms and humans, and there is concern that overuse will create resistant populations.

Petroleum distillates that function as carriers or synergists, such as xylene, are commonly used in conjunction with natural botanical and biological insecticides. Although these additives are not desirable in an ecological system, they may reduce the amounts of restricted materials needed for effective control. Traps containing prohibited pesticides may be authorized by certification organizations, provided that their contents do not contaminate the environment. However, their use further supports the manufacture and distribution of these materials, posing threats to the environment and health of production workers.

Permitted pest control measures include: natural predators and parasites; sprays and dusts such as insecticidal soaps, rock powders and diatomaceous earth; herbal preparations; dormant oil sprays in orchards; solutions of insects or plants for repellants; diseases such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* if not delivered in a petroleum-based carrier, and pheromones used as traps and to disrupt mating. Regulated are "natural" insecticides such as pyrethrum, quassia and ryania. Banned are all synthetic "icides" and "natural poisons" such as

arsenic and lead salts.

Organic livestock management poses special problems, especially in the area of organic feed. The guidelines stipulate that though the "ideal" is organic feed, "a percentage of conventionally produced feeds may be permitted, depending on type of livestock, availability of organic feeds and the regional context of the farm."

Banned are antibiotics, synthetic hormones, urea, animal manures, plastic pellets, and forced malnutrition to produce "white veal."

The guidelines mandate that livestock have a right to: access to pasture during fair weather; housing with maximum fresh air, daylight and proper bedding; proper sanitation to control parasites and diseases; and room to get up, lie down, groom normally, turn around and stretch.

Prohibited are all synthetic pesticides and routine administration of medication. Regulated are emergency treatment, vaccination and use of botanical pesticides such as rotenone.

At least one area of "permitted substances and practices" raises questions involving scientific credibility that probably should have been avoided and perhaps will be eliminated when the guidelines are redrafted. They include:

"holistic veterinary medicines" which should be defined; homeopathy, whose premises have never been proven in double-blind studies of humans; rail-oules, which you won't find in your dictionary but apparently involves electromagnetic fields; herbal preparations which again should be more narrowly defined since some may be toxic; and acupuncture. I suspect no one would ever be decertified for using acupuncture to treat a hog, but its effects might be hard to assess. This apparently unneeded section, and perhaps others I'm not qualified to pick up, gives ammunition to those who want to treat organic agriculture as a cult and not a science.

Perhaps the most important contribution the guidelines will make is in the handling of organic foods. All possible steps must be taken to avoid contamination during shipping including "residues from previous cargos. Bags or other containers used to ship commodities must not have been used for any substance that could compromise the organic quality of the product."

And in a plastic age, the guidelines mandate:

"Plastic or other materials subject to depolymerization should not be in contact with organically grown food-stuffs."

The Lead Diet

Grapefruit and fresh grapefruit juice from Florida that arrives in September and October probably has been poisoned.

The National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) revealed May 24 that lead arsenate is used by some growers to get the jump on their competition with early ripening. NCAMP said the only manufacturer of the heavy metal ripener, Micro-Flo Co., Lakeland, FL, surrendered its license rather than conduct tests ordered by EPA.

But NCAMP said EPA permitted Micro-Flo to sell off its inventories giving Florida growers enough for two more seasons. NCAMP said growers had used up to 100,000 pounds of lead arsenate each year to earn an extra \$10 million with the early fruit.

Lead can damage the brain and kidneys and also may contribute to high blood pressure, according to EPA. So wait for November grapefruit unless it's certified by a reputable organic food organization.



Verification will be the key to how the OFPANA guidelines work in practice. Despite their base in "traditional" farming, organic farmers must rely on computers to insure that their input and output is tagged at every stage of the farming process from preparing a field to the consumer's shopping cart. This will be the only way to trace the inevitable problems back to their source.

One gaping and disturbing hole exists in the OFPANA guidelines: at this point it doesn't deal with ethics, especially in the labor area. OFPANA has created an Ad Hoc Committee on Ethics because:

"Exploitative labor practices, for example, can not be tolerated in a system designed to produce the highest quality foods."

But organic farmers, like all farmers (and maybe more so since they don't depend on government handouts), are individualists. Some are more interested in their crops and livestock — and of course their bank accounts — than in making sure that their relationships with their workers are legal, let alone ethical. I suspect that in the long run the unethical will be driven out of organic farming by other violations since the tendency to cut corners in some areas has a way of carrying over into others. But OFPANA should draft strong ethical guidelines with teeth — automatic decertification — as soon as possible.

Looking back at the Colorado retailer's definition of "organic" foods, you'll note that it falls far short of the OFPANA guidelines. For example, organic fertilizers and pesticides can be as toxic as the synthetic. There is no mention at all of distribution and packaging. Plastic is used nearly as much by natural food purveyors as by regular supermarkets. Under the present system, verification usually is a dream, not a reality.

And any claim that food is "absolutely clean" is ridiculous in today's world (see Food Testing). So until OFPANA's guidelines are implemented, you'll have to use your own best judgment. A tip:

Certification by organizations such

RESOURCES

1988 Organic Wholesalers Directory & Yearbook: Organic Food & Farm Supplies was excellent when it was first put together in 1983 and it gets better every year. Editor Edith M. Stanley should take a deep bow. This 1988 edition has 154 pages including the new and much appreciated index. More food wholesalers are listing their certifying organizations rather than the meaningless, unattributed "certified." If you are truly interested in eating organic food, get the guide. Then you can track down retailers through their wholesalers. The regional directory covers the U.S. and Canada. There also are regional listings of farm suppliers which are extremely helpful to the organic gardener looking for seeds and predators. The yearbook section includes an article on testing. The directory is available for \$20.75 a copy to non-Californians and \$21.89 to Californians who must pay the state tax. Order from: California Action Network, P.O. Box 464, Davis, CA 95617.

Americans for Safe Food is part of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, one of the groups spawned by Ralph Nader. It publishes a 4-page list of organic food that's available by mail. Unfortunately even this limited listing appears to be out of date. But the price is right. It's free if you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Center for Americans for Safe Food, 1501 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Institute for Alternative Agriculture Inc. publishes a monthly newsletter, *Alternative Agriculture News*, and a quarterly, *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*. Both focus on farm problems and solutions. The newsletter is \$12 a year and the journal is \$20 from: Institute for Alternative Agriculture, 9200 Palmonston Road, Suite 117, Greenbelt, MD 20770.

Organic Food Production Association of North America is a trade association founded "to establish and maintain standards of excellence for organic food businesses." To keep current, sign on as a consumer (nonvoting) member for \$25 a year. Write: OFPANA, P.O. Box 31, Belchertown, MA 01007.

AgriSystems International sells biocontrols, seed, seeds and advice to organic farmers. It also sells Natur-Oro products to consumers. For a free 1988 catalog, write: AgriSystems International, 125 West 7th St., Wind Gap, PA 18091.

as California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF); Tillth; Natural Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) with chapters in six New England states, or the Organic Crop Improvement Association, Inc. (OCIA), which has members in the U.S., Canada and Latin America, is certainly a good starting point.

If growers or retailers claim their products are certified, find out which organization did the certifying. Then check out that organization to determine how high its standards are and how they are verified.

Then look forward to a future with minimum standards set by OFPANA and administered by regional and local certifying units, private or government. When that happens, we'll all be a lot healthier. When we learn which of the

local and regional certifying groups volunteer to check the OFPANA guidelines, Environ will let you know. At that point, certifications by those groups will become more meaningful.

After the guidelines have been tested, OFPANA plans to lend its endorsement to products certified by local and regional organizations. These products would bear an "endorsed by OFPANA" label signifying safety that could be relied on...and the "organic charlatans" will have to shape up or give up their claims.



FOOD TESTING

There probably is no food in North America and possibly the world that isn't tainted by toxic chemicals. Since the 1940s when DDT (and DDT), that chlorinated hydrocarbon and its derivatives including the organophosphates, derivatives of DDTs and others have been contaminating soil, water, plants, and the animals living on them. Nothing seems to have escaped being touched by these poisons.

Tom Marling, the first president of Organic Foods Production Association of North America (OFPANA), commissioned expensive parts per million (ppm) testing of organic foods. Chemists could find no food that was absolutely free of pesticides and their breakdown products.

So when you read the ads that claim a food is "pesticide clean," take them with a generous sprinkle of salt. What that means is that any tests that were run on the "clean food" weren't measured in parts per trillion.

That doesn't mean tests aren't worthwhile. OFPANA said in its December, 1986, position paper Laboratory Testing and the Production and Marketing of Certified Organic Foods:

"Technically responsible and affordable analytical work, utilized in an appropriate context, may make valuable contributions to the successful development of the organic foods industry."

But drafters devoted much of their 30-page position paper to burling caveats on testing. For example:

Within the context of our present food system, there is no absolutely "clean" food and there are no absolute guarantees of food safety or quality. Consumers should never be led to believe that such levels of purity can be guaranteed through organic production, the certification of growing methods, laboratory testing, or by some other means.

But that's exactly what may be happening. NutriClean, based in Oakland, CA, is a private third-party testing and certification system subscribed to by growers "for the purpose of making public marketing claims." It puts a "laboratory tested" OK on produce sold by a growing group of retailers across the nation. They include: Raley's supermarkets in northern California; Irvine Ranch Farmers Market and Ralph's in southern California; Fred Meyer, in the Pacific Northwest including Alaska; Farm Fresh in Virginia and North Carolina; and Head & Circus in Boston.

Certification by NutriClean indicates that chemists could find "no detectable residue" on produce at the levels tested for—that means parts per million (ppm) and in some cases parts per billion (ppb), but never in the parts per trillion range.

NutriClean's standards are more stringent than the Environmental Protection Agency's but those standards were

developed when technicians were capable of testing DDTs only at ppm. And as the waler package in Davison No. 6 explained, parts per trillion (ppt) of poison can be toxic for many, if not all, people. Even EPA is starting to think in terms of ppt, ordering any firm producing a new drug or hormone for animals to also submit evidence that a test is available that can detect it in ppt.

So what NutriClean offers is a level of protection over and above untested commercial produce. But this private certification program may be profiting a false sense of security for those who misinterpret the "clean" in NutriClean claims. It does not certify that food is "organic" or that a chemical-free, pesticide-free organic growing protocol was used. And although the common aim of NutriClean and participating retailers is ultimately an abundance of no-chemical residue produce, current certification is for freedom (in ppm levels) from chemicals the EPA and/or NAS (National Academy of Sciences) has determined hazardous (potentially carcinogenic or mutagenic) at certain levels. It may also foster the impression that a little poison is not a dangerous thing.

As NutriClean's founder, Stanley Rhodes told a Western Growers Association meeting in 1987: "We don't think that you can grow food without pesticides."

The Oct. 17, 1987, *The Produce News* also quoted Rhodes as saying: "You can't sustain 30 years of agricultural development in this country by throwing out our pesticides."

Those are the words of an organic chemist who in 1969 received his Ph.D. from Purdue University as a student of agribusiness. Rhodes and the publicity he's promoted have publicized the fact that most of the nation's food is not tested at all at any level. That's a worthwhile message that needs broader exposure.

But the OFPANA position paper concluded:

Although there seem to be valuable specific uses for laboratory testing, it is felt that there are many serious constraints on its extensive general use (either in-house or in the marketplace). Among others, these include the technical complexities in accurately performing laboratory analyses (particularly in the area of toxic residue tests where false negatives present serious problems) as well as the economic burden its frequent use would place on small scale growers. There is also a distinct danger that the "market" could grab this new application of laboratory testing technology and take it further than ethically or scientifically justified.

How reliable is lab testing? We trust the technicians who conduct NutriClean's testing are better than those involved in medical testing. Tests of medical testers indicate they are wrong up to 40% of the time. Still, some level of testing is better than no testing at all. And it indicates that both the growers and retailers who subscribe to NutriClean's service recognize that safer foods are good for business.

According to Frank McMillin, Raley's VP of Advertising, his stores have contracted with NutriClean to begin taking

loading dock samples of six kinds of regular produce most likely to have been treated with chemicals EPA allowed prior to 1978, but for which more stringent controls have been set following NAS review of studies of their effects on lab animals. The tests ordered are for the more common and abundantly used produce — lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, peaches and grapes, for example. Although a variety like bitter melon is commonly treated with some of these "older" chemicals, it is not eaten in such quantities as to warrant loading dock testing.

The dock testing program is separate from NutriClean certification testing done in the fields, which is backed up by production disclosure forms on which growers state the date, type, rate and method of chemical applications, and variables such as drift from known applications nearby. Post-harvest and distribution disclosure forms are also part of certification when applicable. Filled out by distributors or sales agents, they ask for grades, storage times and methods including temperature and humidity, and "treatment" (e.g., wax, fungicide).

Where's the beef?

Environ hopes NutriClean soon will begin testing meat for retailers. Mark Barnhill, who covers the sick meat beat for the Los Angeles Daily News, went to the 11th annual National Food Policy Conference in Washington, D.C., in March. He said the food supply continues to be "threatened by new strains of resistant bacteria, an outmoded regulatory system and public health officials slow to react to the problem of food-borne disease which kills thousands and probably sickens millions in the U.S. each year.

At the top of the problem list are pork, beef and poultry. Still the U.S. Department of Agriculture shirks off its 2-decade-old Congressional mandate to stop the sale of unwholesome food by refusing to test for bacteria such as salmonella, campylobacter and listeria, all common in animal feces.

Barnhill said Douglas L. Archer, director of microbiology for the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, not only thought microbiological testing would be too expensive but also favored a head-in-the-sand approach to the sick meat problem. Archer told the conference:

"The public simply doesn't want to hear or deal with the fact that if you contract a salmonella infection, you have a 1-in-1,000 chance of dying (or a) 1-in-50 chance of contracting arthritis. A pregnant woman does not want to hear she has a chance of losing her child if she contracts listeriosis."

In other words, ignorance is bliss. Congress is considering legislation forcing USDA to start microbiological testing. But past experience indicates USDA in the hands of toxic agribusiness — is not capable of handling such a program.

So it's time for NutriClean to get into the act.

Nutritional Values

NutriClean already is running nutrient tests for its retail clients to determine if produce meets U.S. Department of Agriculture standards for certain vitamins and minerals. Nutritional testing and marketing: boosting nutrition-based acceptability has its own "strings of safety." For several reasons: 1) Nutritional standards are subject to inflation, e.g., crude protein measured doesn't correlate with usable protein; 2) European research underscores balance rather than quantity for assessing nutrient quality; 3) When a limited number of nutrients are tested, high scores of those tested could be interpreted to mean untested nutrients are correspondingly high; and 4) nutrient values can change dramatically between the farm where testing is done and the consumer, depending on handling, refrigeration, the time elapsed since harvest, so that only testing at the retail level on shelf produce that's undergone normal turnaround time is valid.

On nutritional tests, OFPANA concludes:

While there are studies indicating that some nutritional benefits may derive from treatment of plants growing methods (versus conventional methods), adequate research has not yet been done to prove this, and such market claims are ill-advised at this time. Furthermore, the use in the marketplace of individual nutrient test results (even if no generalized claims are made regarding growing method superiority) is problematic and of questionable validity. Therefore, nutrient testing is seen as best relegated to the realm of research for the present.

Drafters of the OFPANA report included chemists, agronomists and nutritionists as well as organic farmers which adds to its credibility.

Locating "clean" food

So if you're interested in cleaner food, look first to food certified by such organizations as California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA), and TUFU. But certainly a good second choice would be produce — and perhaps in the near future, meat — certified by NutriClean's chemists.

And let's hope Rhodes will get together with OFPANA experts to discuss peer review of NutriClean's program. This may be difficult since NutriClean tests and rates foods from commercial as well as organic growers. But the situation's still such a review. Private, like USDA, certification raises serious problems of believability. Evaluation by outsiders might help.

— Zia and Ed Rahnegger

TELECOPY COVER SHEET

TO: House Resources Committee PHONE: _____

FROM: LID Matosa PHONE: _____

INSTRUCTIONS: teletcopy for (cancelled) 4-26
committee meeting on SB 209

RECEIVED DATE: _____ TIME: _____

SENT DATE: 4-26-89 TIME: _____

BY: (YOUR OFFICE AND PHONE NO.)

DISPOSAL OF ORIGINAL: 1 page THROW AWAY _____ HOLD FOR PICKUP _____
Crew

FRESH PRODUCE

Health Consciousness and Buyer Beware Marketing

With the advent of our deteriorating environment and the fear that chemical pollution is entering our food chain, mothers, in concern for the health and welfare of their children, are questioning the produce on the market shelves.

Fresh organically healthy produce is recognized as essential for the immune growth of our children and ourselves. To meet this fast growing demand natural health food stores and organic growers are proliferating the food arena. The term "organic" has become a household word, with very few agreeing on the meaning of the term. To help answer this question of terminology SB 209 is working its way through the legislative process. Altho this bill is well intended, it may become discriminatorily restrictive and do more harm than good to the fledgling organic growing business.

To alleviate this concern a companion bill is being proposed. This bill would be known as the "Fresh Produce buyers beware bill". This bill would require, under the penalty of perjury, that the marketer, ^{not} furnish ^{enough information so the consumer can make} a full disclosure in plain view by all produce, of all pertinent factors pertaining to the health and welfare of the consumer. This would include but ^{not} be limited to, the name and location of the grower and processor if applicable, date of harvest, fertilizer and pesticides used, treatments and their composition used in treating after harvest up till the time of sale to the consumer. The seller would also have to list recommendations for care prior to consumption. ie: Peel before eating, wash with 3% peroxide solution before eating, etc. Any produce not carrying this information would be required to display a visible sign reading "this produce may be detrimental to your health"

Proponents of this measure:

Name	Address	Phone
Fred Panfili	HC 30 Box 12016V WASILLA, 99687	367-7476

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: March 21, 1989

FURTHER REFERRALS: RESOURCES

Date of Committee Action: 4/13/89

The HESS Committee considered:
[SALE OF ORGANIC FOOD]
CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 209 (Resources) am
"An Act relating to the sale of organic foods."

CSSB 209(Res)am

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- [] be replaced with _____ [] the same title
[] have attached amendment(s) [] a new title
[] do pass
[] do not pass
[X] no recommendation
[] individual recommendations
[] additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Date/Dept)

- [] fiscal impact _____ [] fiscal note(s) _____
[] zero fiscal note _____ [X] zero fiscal note(s) _____
[] zero with analysis _____ 2 [X] zero fn/analysis DEC, DNR 3-15-89

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING:
(Check approp. column)

Do Not Pass No Rec Amend

	Do Not Pass	No Rec	Amend
<i>Max Kuenen</i>			←
<i>Cheri Davis</i>		✓	
<i>Ann Boyon</i>		✓	
<i>J. Ellis</i>		✓	

J. Ellis
Chairman's Signature

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ELLIS

NAME: SANDRA BALLARD

TITLE:

ADDRESS: 7310 WOBURN CIRCLE #D

CITY: ANCHORAGE

ZIP: 99502

PHONE: 243-8753

BILL NO:

SUBJECT: DAY CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

MESSAGE: THIS PROGRAM IS ESSENTIAL TO SINGLE PARENTS WHO ARE WORKING HARD TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES AND HAVING TO PAY \$400.00 PER MONTH CHILD CARE, RENT AND CHILD CARE CAN EASILY CONSUME THE ENTIRE PAYCHECK. PLEASE HELP THOSE WHO ARE TRYING TO HELP THEMSELVES AND SAVE THIS PROGRAM.

POHID: 03142031

DATE: 04/13/89

TIME: 14:20:31

LIONAME: ANCHORAGE LIO

COPIES: REPRESENTATIVES REPRESENTATIVES SENATORS

BARNES	BOUCHER	ADAMS
BOYER	BROWN	BINKLEY
CATO	COLLINS	COGHILL
COTTEN	DAVIDSON	DUNCAN
DAVIS, C.	DAVIS, M.	ELIASON
DONLEY	FINKELSTEIN	FAHRENKAMP
FOSTER	FURNACE	FAIKS
GOLL	GRUENBERG	FISCHER
GRUSSENDORF	HANLEY	FRANK
HOFFMAN	HUDSON	HALFORD
JACKO	KOPONEN	JONES
LARSON	LEMAN	KELLY
MACLEAN	MARTIN	KERTTULA
MENARD	MILLER	PEARCE
NAVARRÉ	PETTYJOHN	POURCHOT
PHILLIPS	RIEGER	RODEY
SHARP	SHULTZ	STURGULEWSKI
SHACKHAMMER	TAYLOR	SZYMANSKI
ULMER	WALLIS	UEHLING
ZAWACKI		ZHAROFF

PUBLIC OPINION MESSAGE

DEAR: REPRESENTATIVE ELLIS

NAME: DAHA OLSON

TITLE:

ADDRESS: HC30 BOX 5438

CITY: WASILLA

ZIP: 99687

PHONE: 373-4612

BILL NO: SB 209

SUBJECT: SALE OF ORGANIC FOOD

MESSAGE: WOULD YOU PLEASE HAVE YOUR COMMITTEE AIDE PASS ON TO THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE ALL THE INFORMATION I SENT TO YOU ON THIS BILL? I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE INFORMATION THAT WAS FAXED DIRECTLY TO YOUR OFFICE FROM TOM HARDING OF THE ORGANIC CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSN ON CERTIFICATION OF ORGANIC FOODS. THANK YOU AND YOUR STAFF FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS MATTER.

POHID: 14142214

DATE: 04/13/89

TIME: 14:22:14

LIONAME: MAT-SU LIO

JAN -

Please make sure this is in the referral file.

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1798
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

April 12, 1989

The Honorable Johnny Ellis
Chair, House HESS Committee
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Ellis:

Subject: Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 209 (Resources) am,
relating to the sale of organic foods.

Position: The Department of Natural Resources supports this bill but will be unable to develop and implement organic food product regulations and verification procedures until funding for staff and travel is provided.

Background: Under AS 03, the Department of Natural Resources is responsible for regulating the sale or use inside the state of plants, seeds, vegetables, shell eggs, fruits, and berries, to protect the public interest and prevent product fraud, deception or misrepresentation. Currently, Division of Agriculture staff inspect farm products in storage or in retail stores to determine whether products match labeling statements related to grade, kind, etc.. If a product violates our regulations, staff can direct the possessor concerning the appropriate disposition of the product.

This bill would allow (but not require) the department to develop regulations specific to organic foods. It would also allow us to inspect products labeled organic and enforce violations of our quality or labeling requirements. Unless additional funding for staff and travel is provided, however, the department would not be able to develop organic food regulations and would not be able to determine or enforce rule violations.

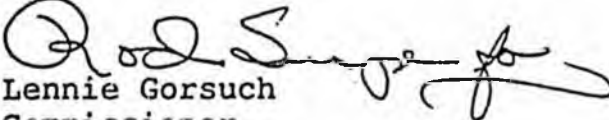
Representative Ellis

-2-

April 12, 1989

Recommendation: Authorize a fee schedule (and use of program receipts to fund necessary staff and travel) for inspection and verification work by state inspectors.

Sincerely,


Lennie Gorsuch
Commissioner

cc:Bill Sponsors
Committee Members
Dennis Kelso, Commissioner
Department of Environmental Conservation
.. Bob Evans, Legislative Liaison
Office of the Governor
... Frank Mielke, Director
Division of Agriculture

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 4/12/89
Title: Organic Food
Sponsor: Senator Kerttula
Requestor: House HESS

Agency Affected: Natural Resources
BRU: Agricultural Management
Components: Marketing Services and Inspection

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIM						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
----------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Because this bill does not require the department to develop or implement regulations, inspections, verification or enforcement related to organic food sales, no funding is required. However, when development and implementation of regulations is desired, funding for staff and travel will be necessary

Prepared by: Carol Wilson Phone: 465-2400
Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 4/12/89

Approved by Commissioner: [Signature] Date: 4/12/89
Agency: Natural Resources

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS -- SB 209

This bill does not obligate any agency to perform new or additional services. The fiscal impact to be calculated pursuant to AS 24.08.035 is therefore "0".

The bill does give DEC and DNR discretion to adopt regulations they may believe desirable relating to identity of chemicals prohibited in organic farming; also to require reasonable records to be maintained by sellers of organic products. Because of the infancy of the organic food industry in this state, however, it would be premature to conclude that state regulatory intervention in this area is needed or desirable. It is more likely that once statutory standards are in effect, local industry will for the most part regulate itself, as it does in other states.

It should be noted that should an authorized agency elect to pursue an investigation of any alleged misrepresentation relating to organic food, both DEC and DNR have existing inspection staff who deal regularly with meat and vegetable produce. Some investigatory work could therefore be undertaken without additional appropriation.

Nonetheless, recent experience with similar legislation in the state of Washington-- where there is a large agriculture industry and significant trade in organic produce-- indicates that enforcement effort is rarely required. Thus, even in the event that commercial traffic in organic food increased substantially in Alaska, it is unlikely that there would be any need to fund an increased regulatory presence in the marketplace.

A Guide to the Grocery

Keep eating fruits and vegetables, but be careful—and wash your hands!

BY SHARON BEGLEY AND MARY HAGER

It isn't poisoned Chilean grapes or tainted Arkansas chickens, then it's dioxin in milk or chemicals on apples. Eating is beginning to seem like a hazardous enterprise, and there are indeed real risks out there. The trip to the pantry has become a cost-benefit game. Here's how to play.

Don't believe all the scare stories. Look for evidence, look for numbers—actual illnesses, quantified cancer risks—and beware of terms like "trivial" what may be a small risk to industry is unacceptable to a mother. Then, *understand* the numbers. The average American has a one in four chance of getting cancer. A new prediction of 6,000 excess cancers in today's preschoolers seems like a horrible toll, but for each kid, it's equivalent to an increase in risk from 25 to 25.925 percent. Consider the benefits: Skim milk that may have tiny traces of dioxin also provides protein, calcium and vitamin D. The biggest food risk—microbial contamination—kills thousands each year but can be avoided with better cleanliness. Another high risk is poor diet, such as one high in fat or salt. Here is NEWSWEEK's guide to the grocery



Fruits and Vegetables

Farmers apply hundreds of chemicals every year to control weeds, fungi or insects on produce. What's deadly to a corn borer may not be exactly healthy for people. The Environmental Protection Agency says pesticide residues pose the third highest threat of environmentally induced cancer, behind cigarettes and radon. Many pesticides were approved for use decades before researchers had good tests of their toxicity, and many still remain on the market.

The recent controversial report by the environmental group Natural Resources Defense Council, NEWSWEEK Jan. 30, concludes that some 3 million kids are exposed to neu-

rototoxic pesticides above what the EPA considers an "acceptable" level. And because children eat relatively more fruits and vegetables than adults, they receive several times the exposure to carcinogenic pesticides than their parents. As a result, says the NRDC, 5,500 to 6,200 of today's preschoolers may get cancer eventually because of childhood exposure to just eight pesticides. A 1987 study by the National Research Council showed how dangerous food is allowed to be. The NRC examined cancer risk from about 20 out of 60 pesticides known to be carcinogenic. It found that if all produce had the maximum allowable residue of every pesticide approved for use on it—more than 110 on apples, 70 on bell peppers, 100 on tomatoes—Americans would face a cancer risk of three in 1,000 over a 70-year lifetime.

The good news is that real life is not this bad. In 1988 the FDA found no residue at all in 77 percent of 14,492 food samples; less than 1 percent had illegally high residues. And instead of using every permitted pesticide every year, farmers use only those necessary for

that season's pests—six to 20 on apples, for instance, not the whole 110.

Fruits and vegetables also contain *natural* poisons, some of which may cause cancer. Biochemist Bruce Ames of the University of California, Berkeley, estimates that people ingest 10,000 times as much "natural pesticides" as man-made ones. The EPA can't do anything about nature. But it is re-evaluating all 300 agricultural pesticides with an eye toward lowering the allowable residues or banning some chemicals entirely.

While that goes on, remember that fruits and vegetables such as broccoli and carrots provide nutrients that have been linked to *reduced* risks of cancer. The National Research Council recommends that Americans eat five or more servings of produce a day, especially citrus fruits and green and yellow vegetables. To lessen your risk from any lingering pesticides, wash all produce with soap and water. If you can't bear the sight of a stinky cabbage leaf, cook your vegetables: the heat will eliminate some residues. For a good primer on residues try the Sierra Club book "Pesticide Alert."



Apples

To many confused consumers, apples now look like the poisoned fruit of the Snow White tale. Since 1965 some red varieties have been sprayed with the suspect chemical daminozide, made by Uniroyal Chemical Co. under the trade name

Alar. This growth regulator keeps apples from dropping off trees before they ripen, improves color and firmness and extends shelf life. But the chemical penetrates the pulp and cannot be washed, cooked or peeled off. In 1986, bowing to consumer pressure, processors and stores pledged not to accept Alar-treated apples.

Some seem to have reneged. Next week Consumers Union will announce whether most traces bought this year contain traces of Alar, as did 1988 samples. CU already reported levels in some brands of juice bought in 1988 as high as 53 parts per million—high enough to pose a risk of cancer much greater than the one in a million which prompts EPA action. There are wide regional disparities in Alar levels in eating apples. New York officials said last week that as much as 20 percent of their 1988 crop was sprayed with Alar. The EPA's estimate that only 5 percent of the domestic crop is sprayed may be way too low.

The real culprit, however, is not Alar, but its breakdown product, called UDMH. This chemical cousin of rocket fuel forms when Alar is heated, as during processing into sauce or juice. Also, traces of it can be found in the Alar itself which is sprayed in the orchard. Uniroyal's latest data on daminozide show that it is probably not carcinogenic. The still preliminary UDMH data are more worrisome: the EPA calculates that UDMH in apple products, consumed in amounts that may underestimate actual eating patterns, poses a cancer risk of 45 in a million over a lifetime. The EPA says it intends to ban Alar within 18 months. For a baby who drinks one ounce of apple juice a day, the risk of getting cancer because of the juice drunk over that waiting period is nine in a million. A toddler drinking

eight ounces a day would have a risk of about 20 in a million. Unroyal insists that, when completed, its tests will exonerate UDMH.

To avoid the risks of Alar and UDMH, grow your own apples. Or eat those from California, where the chemical isn't used. Or stick to green varieties like Granny Smith, that aren't treated with Alar. Drink juice brands that get a clean bill of health in independent (not manufacturer) tests.



Chicken and Eggs

Here the latest risk comes from salmonella, ubiquitous bacteria that can cause nausea, diarrhea and fever. Symptoms can last one day or several. There are more than 40,000 cases—and 500 deaths—of salmonella poisoning reported in the United States every year, says the federal Centers for Disease Control. Many more poisonings go unreported; the actual incidence may be 4 million. Not all come from eggs or poultry. But last April, CDC researchers reported on 65 salmonella outbreaks in the Northeast that caused 2,119 illnesses. Of those that could be traced to a specific food, 77 percent were apparently caused by uncracked eggs. The eggs seemed to have been contaminated by salmonella in the hen. Approximately one third of the chickens in the nation's supermarkets contain salmonella.

Salmonella poisoning is easy to avoid. Wash raw poultry and everything it touches—utensils, cutting board, counter top. Cook the bird thoroughly. Don't eat raw eggs—no homemade mayonnaise, eggnog or ice cream, and no cake batter. Boil eggs at least seven minutes—swear off soft-boiled. Poach eggs for five minutes or fry for three minutes a side.



Beef, Poultry and Pork

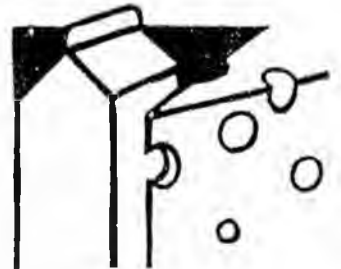
One concern is hormones, an issue raised when the European Economic Community recently banned American beef containing hormones. Cattlemen give steers the natural sex hormones estradiol, testosterone and progesterone—through ear implants—to make the animal put on lean muscle with less feed; they also sometimes use two synthetics. (A third, DES, has been linked to cancer and was banned in 1979; illegal use was detected in 1980 and 1983.) Pork and poultry producers do not use hormones. Three ounces of beef

from an untreated animal contain about 1.3 nanograms (billionths of a gram) of the animal's own natural estrogen; meat from a treated animal has 1.9 nanograms. By comparison, an average man produces 380,000 nanograms of estrogen a day; a serving of cole slaw has 2,500 nanograms (the hormone is in cabbage). Hormone residues do seem harmless.

Antibiotics in livestock feed pose a different problem. Pork producers feed their animals low doses of penicillin, tetracycline and other human antibiotics; cattlemen use tetracycline. (Poultry producers usually feed animals only antibiotics that aren't prescribed for humans.) The concern is that people may become infected with microbes that won't respond to antibiotics. This might happen because the drugs can make the animals' resident microbes resistant to antibiotics. If the meat is then contaminated with resistant bugs, they could infect people handling it. In February, the Institute of Medicine, part

of the National Academy of Sciences, reported that it was "unable to find data directly implicating" low doses of the drugs in human disease. But it estimated that 10 of the 500 salmonella deaths in the United States annually might be traced to resistant strains produced by antibiotics in animal feed.

To guard against resistant microbes, after handling raw meat wash your hands and all utensils and surfaces thoroughly with hot water and soap.



Milk

Last summer a Canadian government scientist showed that dioxin in cardboard cartons can migrate into the milk they contain. John Ryan measured .04 parts per trillion (ppt) of the form of dioxin known as TCDD. It apparently enters paper products during a bleaching process that uses chlorine.

The only documented effect of dioxin in people is a skin disease called chloracne, which afflicted victims of an industrial accident. But TCDD is, according to animal tests, the most powerful carcinogen ever evaluated. The EPA concluded that even 1 ppt of TCDD poses an "unacceptable" cancer risk; TCDD has also been linked to birth defects and immune-system disorders in test animals. The FDA estimates that children drinking all their milk from contaminated cartons may be doubling their daily dioxin intake, and it is now trying to verify Ryan's work. If the Canadian scientist is correct, drinking milk in dioxin-laced cartons may pose a lifetime cancer risk of one in 10,000.

The American Paper Institute is studying the potential problem of dioxin in paper products; it may be possible to line

Anxiety in the Market

Americans still believe their food is safe, but there are more worries and calls for remedial action.

Fears About Food

- 38% Are more worried that the food they eat may be contaminated by pesticides or other toxic chemicals
- 6% Less worried
- 53% About the same

Buying Habits

- Consumers who say they're worried or have cut purchases:
- 44% Apples
 - 41% Vegetables
 - 23% Eggs and poultry
 - 25% Fish
 - 9% Milk
 - 11% Corn

Confidence in the U.S. Government

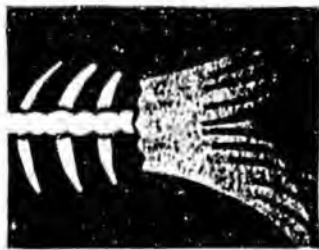
- 52% Feel the government ensures food produced in the United States is safe
- 44% Feel food imported from foreign countries is safe

Pesticides

- 73% Think we should use fewer pesticides and chemicals to ensure safer food even if it means higher prices
- 45% Often or occasionally buy organic foods
- 47% Never or hardly ever buy organic foods

For this Newsweek Poll, The Gallup Organization interviewed a national sample of 750 adults by telephone March 16-17. The margin of error is plus or minus 1.6 percentage points. Some "Don't know" and other responses omitted. The Newsweek Poll, © 1989 by Newsweek Inc.

the cartons with foil to prevent dioxin from leaching into the beverage. In the meantime, to play it safe, buy fresh milk only in glass or plastic.



Fish

Lake fish pose more of a threat than ocean fish. Some species from the Great Lakes, such as coho salmon, chinook salmon, contain PCBs as well as the pesticides DDT, chlordane, aldrin, dieldrin, toxaphene and more than 100 other compounds found in industrial wastes. Although many chemicals have been banned, they remain in lake sediments and in the food chain, including fish. The compounds have been linked to cancers, neurotoxicity and other ills. The Great Lakes states issue annual advisories warning consumers not to eat certain species, or to eat at less of them, if a certain percentage of the fish have contamination levels above the FDA's "action level."

Contamination varies widely, both from year to year and from lake to lake. In 1986 DDT levels for salmon and lake trout in Lake Michigan ranged from

1 ppm to 1.5 ppm (the action level is 5 ppm). Dieldrin contamination varied from .01 to 0.2 ppm (the action level is 0.3 ppm). Overall, the risk of cancer from eating 50 meals a year of Lake Michigan fish is one in 1,000 over a lifetime, says J. Milton Clark of the EPA's regional office in Chicago; eating only one meal a year poses a risk of one in 50,000. But according to a new study in the American Journal of Public Health the danger may be greater: eating 150 meals a year, as a sports fisherman might, poses a one in 100 cancer risk from dieldrin and three in 1,000 from DDT if the fish contain the action levels of these poisons. Even contamination well below the ac-

tion levels can raise cancer risk by six in 10,000 for DDT and four in 1,000 for dieldrin, say the researchers.

Exotic chemicals are not the only threat in fish. Fish from both fresh water and from the sea can contain microbes, including those from sewage, and on average they pose a tenfold higher risk of bacterial and viral infection than beef and seven times higher than chicken.

Inspection, like contamination, varies. Individual states—not the federal government—monitor local markets. Some states do a good job, some don't. Short of running your trout through a gas chromatograph, all you can do is sharply limit consumption of freshwater fish, especially fatty varieties like lake trout that concentrate the contaminants the most. Lean ocean fish, like red snapper and flounder, are a safer bet. The best precaution is a question: where did this fish come from? Avoid those from polluted waters like some Great Lakes and the New York coast. Cook it thoroughly to kill microbes. Nothing gets rid of the toxics. Sushi is riskier than cooked fish, but no one knows how much riskier. Decide for yourself whether you can live without a yellowtail hand roll.



Canned food

Lead from soldered can seams gets into the food through leaching or splattering during manufacture. Some 20 to 30 percent of cans are lead-soldered. Acidic foods such as tomato products, fruit juice and anything packed in citric acid are the worst offenders. Because neuroscientists have found that lead damages children's brains at even trace levels, they recommend that kids get no avoidable lead from food. Says neurochemist Ellen Siihergeld of the Environmental

Defense Fund, "Lead and lead exposure is the most serious environmental health problem, far outweighing carcinogens." Recent surveys indicate that 60 percent of young children have blood lead levels that may impair their neurological development.

To minimize your child's risk, buy products in seamless or welded cans. A welded can has a black-striped, flat seam. Lead-soldered cans have crimped seams, and an irregular line of silver-gray metal along the joint.



Corn and Peanuts

The *Aspergillus flavus* mold can infest wheat, corn, millet, other grains and peanuts; it secretes a highly toxic compound called aflatoxin. For years aflatoxin has plagued peanuts in the Southeast; last year's hot, dry summer created an ideal environment for the fungus in Midwestern grain. Animal studies show aflatoxin to be the second most potent carcinogen ever tested (surpassed only by TCDD). It causes liver cancer in rodents, but its impact on people remains unclear. Five epidemiological studies carried out in the Third World showed a clear link between intake of aflatoxin and cancer, says Ronald Shank of the University of California at Irvine. In these countries, however, aflatoxin intake was five to 500 times higher than in the United States. "This is a genuine carcinogen, but you're going to have to really pig out on corn or peanuts to face a serious risk," says microbiologist Lloyd Witter of the University of Illinois.

The FDA allows 0.5 parts per billion (ppb) aflatoxin in milk and 20 ppb in other foods. The 20 ppb was chosen because it can generally be met by industry, not because it is "safe."

charge some consumer groups. Actual levels in peanut butter vary from year to year, but lately have been holding below 1 ppb. Berkeley's Bruce Ames estimates that if the average aflatoxin level in peanut butter is 2 ppb, a sandwich is 100 times more carcinogenic than all the DDT in our diet. Sweet corn, which is eaten canned, fresh or frozen, shows no aflatoxin. Field corn, fed to livestock or processed into such foods as breakfast cereal and flour, has some aflatoxin. FDA tests of chips, popcorn, tortillas and cereal found every sample to be under the 20 ppb limit—but again, that figure may not be meaningful for health. Corn flour and meal exceeded that level in 2 percent of the cases, and was not allowed to be sold.

For safety, cook grits, flour or meal to substantially reduce aflatoxin levels. Cornflakes are probably OK, since processing cuts aflatoxin. Don't subsist on peanut butter; even though the crop has been getting cleaner, the risk is not negligible.

The odd thing is, food should be the least of our worries: radon from the soil poses a cancer risk of 1 in 1,000, smoking a pack a day increases a woman's chance of dying of lung cancer fourteenfold. A blood cholesterol level of 300 increases the risk of heart attack fourfold compared to a level of 200. But risk has its own psychology. Smoking is voluntary; radon is natural and ranting at nature doesn't do much good. Says Peter Sandman of Rutgers University, "The risks that kill you are not necessarily the risks that anger and frighten you. Risk is the sum of hazard and outrage." Since food is supposed to be safe, if it poses any risk at all, people are outraged. If their outrage and fear make consumers shun produce in favor of, say, fatty, salty snacks, attempts to raise public consciousness on food safety will have backfired. But if the outrage translates into political action—stricter and faster controls on dangerous pesticides, for instance—then the panic may have been worth it.



Page 12, The Frontiersman - Friday, April 7, 1989

Lawmakers try to define what makes food 'organic'

The Associated Press
TACOMA, Wash. — With consumers becoming increasingly concerned about chemicals used in growing most of America's fruits and vegetables, more people are turning to organically grown produce.

However, there are few assurances that produce advertised as "organic" really is organic.

Alaska is now considering legislation proposed by state Sen. Jay Keruula, D-Palmer, which would set standards for what is "organic" produce in Alaska.

Only a handful of states have any legislation concerning organic farming, and Washington is one of them, said Wendy Wendlandt, executive director of the Washington Public Interest Research Group.

Even then, only the producer is regulated.

"Now, we just inspect the farms (of participating organic growers," said Tom Sweeney, research analyst for Democrats in the Washington state House of Representatives. "But we don't know what the wholesaler does ... There should be some sort of

certification for wholesalers."

There are about 300 organic farmers in Washington state. Also, food processors have expressed an interest in participating, said Sweeney.

"We're better than most states. (But) from the consumers' point of view, there's a need for standardization," Ms. Wendlandt said. "Less than two-tenths of 1 percent of produce that come in our borders are tested."

State laws passed in 1984 and 1987 set standards for organic produce and allowed farmers to be certified as organic producers after meeting certain requirements.

Under the state's Organic Labeling Act of 1984, produce can be called organic only if it has been farmed with non-synthetic fertilizers and no chemical pesticides or herbicides.

Farmers are required to keep records of their growing procedures to support their claim that their crops are "organic."

Optional certification was implemented in 1987 as part of the Agriculture Omnibus Bill in which organic farmers apply for

certification as organic producers.

Their farms are visited and tested twice by a Department of Agriculture inspector to determine that they haven't used synthetics in their farms for at least two years.

But the certification program is drawing fire from some officials.

Verne Hedlund, chief of the food inspection section of the state Department of Agriculture, said the problem is that the certification program does not have adequate financial support.

The program is supported solely by fees paid by participating organic growers, Hedlund said.

Rep. Ken Jacobson this year sponsored a bill allowing additional funding sources for the program other than just participation fees to improve its effectiveness, Sweeney said.

The bill, HB1554, is awaiting hearing before the Washington state Senate Agriculture Committee and needs \$150,000 from the general fund to support the certification program, Sweeney said.

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Mail Order Foods

Who sells organic apples?

BY ANN NUGENT



IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE finding organically grown apples, cheese, bread, chicken, jam, or orange juice, or if getting to the markets that sell organic food is too inconvenient for you, try ordering organic food by mail.

Over a dozen mail-order food companies offer organically grown food. (You can write Americans For Safe Foods for a complete list: 1501 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; 202/332-9110.)

These mail-order companies vary widely, however. A few are distributors and sell only wholesale. Some carry nearly a complete line of organic food, while others specialize only in one item — like dried herbs. Only two carry meat and poultry, and only one carries a large variety of fresh produce. A few carry breads, muffins, cakes and pies. And some are more expensive than others. One company just began to stock organic cheese, yogurt, and jam with organic fruit sweeteners. Several carry food that's "certified organic," and they're especially careful in defining "organic," while other companies don't bother to define the term at all.

The following selected, mail-order, natural-food companies are the ones that feature organic food. They all carry such stock items as beans and grains, and all accept small orders (though groups of people often buy in bulk to take advantage of the cheaper rates). Some outlets have large inventories; the smaller ones often feature specialty items. The ones that carry only "certified organic" foods are listed first.

USEFUL TERMS

Certified organic

Standards vary in different states. In some cases the state legislature has determined the standards; in other cases, private organizations have drawn them up. Generally the term means that crops are grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers on soil that has been free of chemical pollutants for one to three years. Moreover, only certain natural materials may be applied to the soil, like composted or well-rotted manure (raw manure is forbidden).

Organic

A doubtful term. Some states,



like Washington, forbid anyone using this term unless the food or farm is certified.

Ask, though; it may mean any of the terms used below.

Chemical-free, or grown without pesticides, herbicides, or chemical fertilizers

These terms most likely mean that the farm grows its crops in soil that hasn't been free of chemical residues long enough to be certified organic. Farms that grow crops under these conditions are usually in the transition stage before they can qualify as certified organic.

Pesticide-free

Crops grown without the use

of pesticides, though other chemicals may be used.

Spray-free

An ambiguous term. It might mean the farmer isn't using pesticide sprays on the produce, but may use pesticides in the fields, say, during the winter.

IPM (Integrated Pest Management)

Foods marked with this label indicate that the farmer works within the biological environment; rather than indiscriminately eradicating pests, he monitors them, curbing them only if they get out of hand. He encourages natural predators and rotates his crops as a way of keeping pests

under control. He applies pesticides sparingly and only when and where they will do the least damage.

AS ONE distributor put it: foods bought under these labels are usually all right as long as the labels are clearly defined and mean what they say. Any of these methods of raising crops is better than foods raised without any pesticide restrictions whatsoever. Farmers who are in the transition stage as they switch over to organic farming — a process that takes years — should be encouraged. —Ann Nugent



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the HOUSE N.E.S.S
committee name

committee on _____, dated 4-13-89
bill/subject

SB 209 is modeled after the State of Washington Bill. See Comments About Certification Program Washington has. We need a Voluntary Certification Program in Alaska.

Signed: _____
Testifier

Representing (Optional)

Address

Phone No.