



# Greenwoods Newsletter

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## Start an organic diet, save the world

In recent years, organic food is starting to be available in various supermarkets and markets. But what exactly is organic food? It is actually beneficial to our health and even to our planet.

There should be no chemical fertilizers, pesticides, plant growth regulators and genetic modifying techniques involved in producing organic vegetables from seeding and yielding. In an act of harmony with the nature, organic vegetables are grown, with careful examination of vegetable samples, done by laboratories to ensure that the vegetables are not contaminated and with the farm's facilities fitting the regulations, organic vegetables can truly bear its name. As to organic livestock, from the moment that they are born, raised, processed, to they are handed over to customers, they have not been involved with harmful substances that are harmful to the environment.



Organic food is truly good for our health. Preventive methods are involved in controlling other organisms that may affect the growth of the yield when growing organic vegetables, rather than using pesticides. Excess chemical fertilizers and pesticides would accumulate in the soil, when the contaminated vegetables are consumed, it may cause severe discomfort, such as languidness, vomiting, diarrhea and many more. This problem is missing from consuming organic vegetables, and because organic farms avoid using genetically modified seeds, making the yield safer to be eaten. Furthermore, organic food contains more iron, magnesium, calcium and vitamin C, and with less heavy metal and carcinogenic nitrate. Moreover, antibiotic is misused by many farms, leading to the spread of drug-resistant bacteria along the food chain, meat containing antibiotic is thought to be weakening people's immune systems. Because of the lack of fertilizers and other chemical compo-

nents, organic food is safe. Besides, organic cattle is usually free range livestock, compare to those which are kept in barns, organic ones are obviously better, because animals are allowed to roam freely, so that their immune systems can be boosted up, therefore lowering the chance of spreading diseases, there is also a smaller chance for human to be infected by virus when consuming the livestock. As organic food is beneficial to our health, it would be a good idea to start eating more of it.

The environment that we are living in can be improved by growing organic food. In fact, in order to maximize company's profit, harmful chemicals are used on the field, damaging the planet, making the air, the earth and the water packed with toxic substances, choking animals either on land or in waters to death. Chemicals also speed up the greenhouse effect, leading to the endless rise in temperature around the world; people would have no choice but to use air-conditioners and

fans in order to lower indoor temperatures, but that increases the use of electricity, so that more resources are wasted, organic food is here to prevent those problems from happening. Another requirement that has to be satisfied by organic food would be to practice crop rotation that is to grow a series of dissimilar types of crops which absorb different types of nutrients in the same area. So that there is time for the replenishment of soil nutrients, by crop rotation farmers can keep their fields under continuous production, if not there would not be enough nutrients to grow other crops, and would speed up the international food crisis. In addition, normal farming involves chemical fertilizers, which may cause soil erosion. As organic fertilizers are used when growing organic vegetables and with the aid of crop rotation, nutrients can be kept in abundance in the soil, so that yield can be continuously produced by the field. To improve the environment, having organic food would be a good way to start.

Having more organic vegetables would defiantly help us to gain a healthy life-style. We are here to present you with a few tips to help you stay healthy:

#### How to preserve vegetables?

Store it in a cool, dry place. Avoid direct sunlight

#### How to prepare it?

1. Wash it before serving
2. Do not wash it for too long, clearing the dirt on it would be enough
3. Cut it right before you are going to cook it

#### How to cook it?

1. Minimize the heating time
2. If long heating time is a must, like making a stock, it is best if the lid is on
3. When frying or boil the vegetables, add a bit of vinegar, salt or

food additive can be added at the very end

4. Eat it raw if possible

The last but not least, how do I know if I have bought any organic food? The Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Limited(ORC-Cert), lead by the Hong Kong Baptist University, is responsible for reviewing and approving the organic standards, with the 'ORC-Cert Organic Seals' applied on products, customers would know that the products they are buying is truly organic. There are three types of organic seals, 'Organic', 'Organic (on Conversion)' and 'Made with Organic'. With the tag, you can easily spot the products that have been approved organic food in Hong Kong. Details regarding the operational information have to be handed in to the Centre by the approved farms; the farms also have to undergone field inspections done by

the ORC-Cert staff, in order to prove the farms are up to standard. Clear standards are formulated, referring to the International Federal of Organic Movement, by the ORC-Cert regarding the production process of organic products, materials and facilities involves such as, the soil, fertilizers, pollution control and methods involves in controlling pest. With more details, visit the web site [http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~orc\\_cert/](http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~orc_cert/)

#### Special Thanks

Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Limited  
Ming Pao  
Hong Kong Organic Farming Company Ltd.

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## Getting close to nature & play with cows!

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2009

Site: Happy Farm

If you are interested in our activity, please contact us!

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You may even try to milk the cows yourself!

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