

PROCURING FOOD SUSTAINABLY: ORGANIC PRODUCE



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Global organic food sales are showing a steady upward trend, grounded in the increased desire for a healthier and more sustainable lifestyle.¹ Based on the growing consumer demand, hotels and the food service industry also see strong sales potential in organic menus.²

WHAT IS ORGANIC FOOD?

Organic food is produced through sustainable farming practices that:

- ☞ Avoid artificial chemicals or chemical-synthetic herbicides and pesticides;
- ☞ Do not use genetically modified crops;
- ☞ Severely restrict use of antibiotics;
- ☞ Do not use growth hormones; and
- ☞ Have a strong emphasis on animal welfare, such as adequate outdoor space.³

BENEFITS OF ORGANIC FOOD

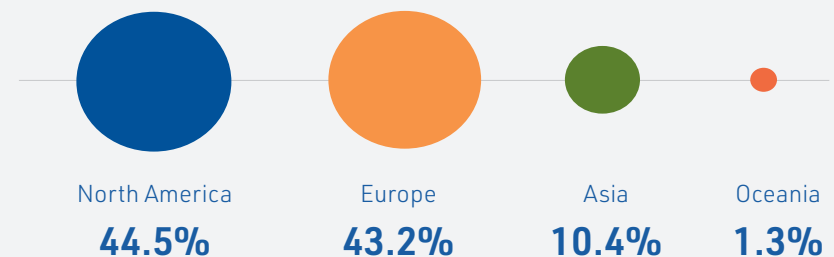
- ☞ Often healthier than non-organic alternatives, in terms of nutritional value and lower levels of pesticides.⁴
- ☞ Farm workers are not exposed to toxins which might cause serious diseases.⁵
- ☞ Organic production supports biodiversity and cleaner air, water and soil.⁶



THE RAPID RISE OF THE GLOBAL ORGANIC FOOD SALES (ORGANIC FOOD MARKET)⁷



GLOBAL MARKET FOR ORGANIC FOOD – RETAIL SALES BY REGION 2020⁸



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ORGANIC FOOD – WHAT CAN FOOD SERVICE BUSINESSES DO?



Look for organic labels

with information about how the food was grown or processed.



Start looking at price differences

and begin swapping ingredients where the price gap is lower between non-organic and organic products, such as potatoes or flour.



Buy directly from the producer

as it is often cheaper and provides support to small-scale local producers.



Promote your organic products!

Studies show that consumers value organic food and are willing to pay more for it. If you offer organic products, make them stand out from the crowd.

HOW DO I FIND TRUSTWORTHY ORGANIC FOOD LABELS?

There are multiple labels that certify organic food and agricultural products. Requirements for organic certification vary from country to country and generally involve a set of wide-ranging standards and criteria for growing, processing and packaging the product.⁹

The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) has developed the IFOAM Basic Standards (IBS), which form the basis for specific organic standards and labels created by national governments, NGOs and private businesses. Many

countries have developed comprehensive organic regulations, including the United States of America, the European Union, Canada and Japan, and the term *organic* is legally restricted to being used only by certified producers.

The International Directory on Organic Food Wholesale and Supply Companies¹⁰ provides a good overview of international organic labels. You can find out more at www.organic-bio.com/en/labels/



1 Lu, L. and Gursoy, D. (2017), 'Does offering an organic food menu help restaurants excel in competition? An examination of diners' decision-making', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, volume 63, pp. 72–81, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.03.004>.
2 Stensson (2006), 'New Survey Reveals What's Hot on Restaurant Menus' [25-07-2023].
3 Oelsner, N. (2021), 'What makes organic food "organic"?' , euronews.green, published 25 March 2021.
4 Crinnion, W. J. (2010), 'Organic foods contain higher levels of certain nutrients, lower levels of pesticides, and may provide health benefits for the consumer', *Altern Med Rev.*, 15(1), pp. 4–12, PMID: 20359265.
5 Foodwise (n.d.), 'Sustainable Food Is Better for People' [11-10-2023].

6 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (n.d.), 'Organic Agriculture', *FAQ FAO*, Rome [11-10-2023].
7 Willer, H.; Trávníček, J.; Meier, C. and Schlatter, B. (eds.) (2022), *The World of Organic Agriculture 2022 – Statistics and Emerging Trends*, FIBL, IFOAM – Organics International, Bonn.
8 Ibid.
9 Danker, C. (2003), *Environmental and social standards, certification and labelling for cash crops*, FAO, Rome.
10 Iporex Ltd. (25-07-2023), *Labels*.