

From Healthy Soil to Healthy Food: An Analysis of the Quality of Food Produced under Contrasting Agricultural Systems¹

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Abstract

Studies under controlled experimental conditions show a clear advantage for staple food grown under biological/ecological farming conditions as compared to those from conventional farming methods. This is especially true for the vegetative parts of plant products, where lower undesirable (e.g. nitrates) and higher desirable (e.g. vit.C, trace elements) components are present. A better storage quality of plant products (e.g. cabbage, carrots) is also frequently the consequence of biological/ecological farming practices. An overall significantly lower level of residues of agrochemicals has been demonstrated in such products. It is increasingly noticeable, that especially in Central Western Europe, consumers are not exclusively interested in “healthier” food for themselves but also in an healthy environment. This is one of the important reasons, why they are interested in buying food from biological/ecological farming systems and why they are prepared to pay higher prices for such products.