

# Our Atlantic Communities

## The importance of farm families

Many farmers are concerned about the environment and are close to the land and their animals. Farm families have important functions in rural communities.

## They often:

- pass on valuable knowledge
- volunteer in the community
- provide jobs
- maintain rural infrastructure, services and businesses

Certified organic farmers make a public commitment to follow a set of standards which are beneficial to communities.

Farmers in turn depend on commitment from consumers and are providing an opportunity for Atlantic Canadians to put their dollars into the local economy, a better environment, and meaningful rural employment.

Without this commitment, more Atlantic Canadian farms will disappear.

Once we lose our ability to produce food, we become dependent on surpluses produced elsewhere. There will be more shipments of food into our communities which

leads to fewer jobs and more traffic. We will lose our ability to choose healthier alternatives.

Certified organic farming is a growing sector of agriculture. It represents an important opportunity for rural communities, and for healthy eating.



# Organic in Atlantic Canada

You can enjoy the taste of organic food in Atlantic Canada.

Ask your favourite restaurants, health food stores, and grocery stores to provide certified organic alternatives. You will be doing yourself and the earth a favour.

Food with the following labels are grown in Atlantic Canada and certified organic:



**ACORN**  
Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network

The Voice of Organics in the Atlantic!

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What on Earth is  
**organic?**



# What does Certified Organic mean?

Farmers can only label their products certified organic if they:

- produce food according to a set of standards;
- pass a yearly inspection by a trained independent inspector; and,
- maintain an audit trail of their crop inputs.

## Standards:

The standards for certified organic include such items as:

- no irradiation or use of sewage sludge
- no genetically modified organisms (GMO) or genetically engineered (GE) seed or stock
- strict regulations on the use of manure and compost

## Inspection:

An independent inspector visits farms applying for certification to verify if the farmer understands and is following the standards. Inspectors can request soil, water, or plant tissue tests.

## Audit trail:

A certified organic product must have an audit trail and producer number to ensure a product can be traced to the producer who grew it, and to the field records of how it was grown.

# Organic Choice



In an ideal world, we would get our food directly from local farmers we know and trust. In some cases, this is still possible.

Given that most of us buy our food in stores, how do we know where and by what method the food is grown?

Many of us would like to buy food that is great tasting, healthy, nourishing, and grown in an ecological manner.

Food grown (and processed) without the use of synthetic pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, hormones, irradiation, or genetic engineering is in demand.

The only way to know we are getting this kind of food, without talking to the producer directly, is to choose certified organic food.



# Food Value



## Money spent wisely

The price of most food includes long distance transport, preservatives, inputs like synthetic pesticides, or expensive advertising campaigns. The intrinsic value of the food itself is often questionable.

Money spent on locally-produced organic food reflects more accurately the food's value. Also it supports our local economy, helps farmers take care of the land, prevents environmental damage, and reduces health care costs.

Healthy food comes from healthy soil. A healthy soil is rich in biological activity and organic matter. The organic farmer's first job is to generate this wonderful rich soil, which in turn produces the high quality crops. This requires time and commitment.

## It includes practices such as:

- crop rotation
- preventing soil erosion
- encouraging biodiversity
- adding organic matter to the soil
- recycling nutrients

Sometimes certified organic food in stores is more expensive than other foods because of the extra attention and care required to produce it.

**It's up to us... Choose Local, Certified Organic Food:  
Good for You. Good for your Community. Good for the Earth.**

