

“To be, or not to be; ORGANIC, that is the question:

Whether it is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them?

Could we do this, could we consumers have such an impact on the outrageous fortunes of the multi-nationals. Imagine if for one week we stopped shopping at the supermarkets and bought organic instead...; or if we bought only what we really ‘needed’ not what we wanted.... I used to say to my kids; ‘is it a need or a want?’ We don’t need most of what is sold in supermarkets today, if we bought only food, real food, not packets of processed chemicals we really could bypass the supermarket and shop at our very own whole foods organic shop, buying real food directly from our much undervalued farmers. We could even grow some ourselves. We might have to!

We are in a very deep sea of troubles – we have created holes in the ozone, caused the extinction of thousands of species of wildlife, lost bio-diversity, polluted our rivers, lost, stolen, diverted our precious water; we lose billions of tones of top soil every year, cut down forests at an alarming rate and we are becoming sicker by the day. And yes the big corporations are largely responsible but we can not totally shift the blame. We buy their “stuff”. We too are responsible. The decisions and choices we make every day contribute to this. We could start opposing this madness: we could think before we purchase; choose to live chemical free; reduce first, then re-use, and finally recycle. As the Dalami Lama has said “ultimately the human being is at the mercy of nature.” Harm nature and we harm ourselves.

A lively debate on Insight the other night –why organic? didn’t really resolve anything and possibly left some more confused.

Why do I buy organic? There are many reasons; certainly for their chemical free status, but also organic food does not contain other additives such as artificial colourings, preservatives and flavourings, aspartame, hydrogenated fat, MSG etc; organic food is nutrient dense which means we eat less, buy less; animal welfare is a big one - organic animals are raised outdoors not confined in cramp overcrowded conditions necessitating the use of antibiotics and they are not allowed GM feed or growth promoting drugs; it’s seasonal, fresh and tastes so much better (homegrown excluded); and importantly, to support the farmer and not support the multi-nationals.

But the biggest reason to buy organics? It’s actually how food is meant to be. A tomato should taste like a tomato and it should contain the vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants it is meant to contain. Organic food isn’t a luxury.

It's a misconception that non-organic food is cheaper when it harms the environment and harms our bodies. There are more than 150 studies linking pesticides, with neurological damage, reproductive, immune and endocrine disruption. The sickness industry is booming, health care costs are ballooning, and loved ones are dying prematurely. We have all heard the stories and seen the programmes showing the terrible effects on the environment, biodiversity shrinking, bee populations declining. The price tag on non-organic food does not include these costs. Cheap food comes at a price!

It is also a misconception that non-organic food is cheaper when much of it gets thrown out, fruit and vegetables cold-stored for months only to go off within days of purchasing or the opposite, sterile packages of white powders that even weevils won't touch, or burgers that look as 'good' six months after purchasing!

Another misconception, it is not cheaper when one see how much non-organic 'food' people buy! Eating organic means eating less as the food is more nutrient dense. Our soaring rate of obesity is directly related to the over consumption of supermarket food. We didn't get fat on "meat and three (or five or seven) vege."

It's a matter of choice, good, healthy food or the latest big screen tele....

Healthy farms, healthy food, healthy families - a grateful earth.