



FACTS, NOT FEARS:

REASSURING CONSUMERS ABOUT THE SAFETY OF ALL PRODUCE

The Alliance for Food and Farming conducted a research project to find science-based information and facts that would reassure consumers about produce safety and help remove fear as a barrier to consumption. The AFF went to the source – consumers – and asked them what information they would find helpful when they are purchasing fruits and vegetables.¹ When the following facts and information regarding nutrition and produce safety were presented to consumers, confidence increased **significantly** with 87% of consumers stating they had a favorable opinion of organic produce and 80% stating they had a favorable opinion of conventionally grown. These results showed that the information presented to consumers made a positive difference in their perception of the safety of all produce and helped alleviate fear as a potential barrier to consumption.

Here are the science-based facts and information that reassured consumers:

Nutrition: *“Decades of nutritional research shows that increasing consumption of conventional and organic produce can improve health and prevent diseases. Not only are conventionally and organically grown fruits and vegetables safe and nutritious, Americans should be consuming more of both to reduce their risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes and obesity.”*

Washing Information: *“According to the federal Food and Drug Administration, washing fresh produce before eating is a healthful habit. You can reduce and often eliminate pesticide residues if they are present on fresh produce by washing them with cold or warm running tap water.”*

Simple Safety Statements: *“Health experts and scientists say produce, grown either conventionally or organically, is safe to eat for you and your children.”*

Toxicology Facts:

The United States Department of Agriculture conducts a program that analyzes pesticide residues on foods. Almost half of the foods tested by USDA had no detectable levels of pesticide residues. When USDA did find the presence of pesticide residues on food products, 99.8% of those residues were below the levels considered safe by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Analyses by toxicologists found that a child could eat hundreds to thousands of servings of a fruit or vegetable in a day and still not have any effects from pesticide residues.

If present at all, pesticide residues on fruits and vegetables are significantly below levels considered safe by health and regulatory agencies.

Information on Organic Production:

All fruits and vegetables sold in the U.S. are subject to the most stringent regulations in the world to ensure safety. Organic fruits and vegetables are subject to additional laws and organic farmers must submit to an independent audit of their farming operations to ensure established growing practices are being followed.

In order to control pests and diseases, certified organic farmers may use fertilizers and pesticides, but they are mostly derived from natural sources and must be approved by the USDA Organic Program.

Definition of Organic:

Organic produce refers to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) certified organic produce. Produce can be called organic if it's certified to have been grown without using materials prohibited by the USDA organic program. These materials include most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

¹Alliance for Food and Farming: Identification of Facts and Information that Reassure Consumers About Produce Safety. Nationwide Online Survey. September 2016. Margin of Error +/- 3.5.