



Organic Agriculture and Energy Conservation

How Organic Farming Benefits the Health of Our Land and Our Natural Resources

Growers of certified organic food must use methods to ensure that pollution from the soil, air, and water is minimized. Where crops like fruit, vegetables, and grains are concerned, farmers must grow produce without applying any pesticides or artificial fertilizers for as long as three years before their harvest can be certified organic. The impact that this approach has on the environment is extremely beneficial: to the soil, to the surrounding countryside, to the animals and to farmers themselves.

Unlike conventional farming methods, the organic process ensures soil can yield food without eventually being exhausted. There are different ways of facilitating this, but primarily crops are rotated, which ensures that the soil is continually having the nutrients replaced that have been used to grow them. Rather than allowing fields to lie fallow, crops such as red clover or mustard can be grown for farm animals to graze on, both feeding the livestock and replenishing the soil at the same time.

Because fields are not often left bare, soil erosion is less of a problem on organic farms. There is always either stubble remaining from the previous year's crop or a different 'cover' crop to keep the soil in place by preventing soil erosion. This in turn prevents water pollution as erosion run-off is eliminated. In addition, pesticides and artificial fertilizers are not soaked up by the soil, so the only things that crops and animals absorb are valuable nutrients - not harmful chemicals.

Countryside

Organic farming works in harmony with its surrounding natural habitats, not against them. Local conservation is fostered and encouraged with the maintenance of hedgerows enabling biodiversity to flourish and not harming wildlife with chemicals.

Animals

Animal welfare is of prime importance on organic farms. Whether raised for their milk, meat or labour, animals have access to the outdoors and are not confined in excessively cramped, unhygienic living conditions. Organic livestock do not dine on the same animal protein feeds of their factory-farmed cousins. Because of better quality feed and living conditions, there is less need for widespread use of antibiotics. Wherever possible homeopathic medicines and techniques are used to treat livestock. As a result organic animals are generally healthier and better able to combat disease naturally, so the problem of antibiotics contaminating our ecosystems - particularly our water courses - is not amplified.

Farmers

Farm workers are not exposed to potentially dangerous contaminants that could harm their health.