

'Organic' food no longer flavour of the month

Last Updated Monday, 21 September 2009

The word 'organic' has graced many a menu but diners may now be cynical, following reports that there is no evidence that organically produced foods are nutritionally superior to other foods.

The Food Standards Agency commissioned researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to compare the nutrient content of organically and conventionally produced foods. For 10 out of the 13 nutrient categories analysed, there were no significant differences in nutrient content between production methods.

Researcher Alan Dangour said:

'A small number of differences in nutrient content were found to exist between organically and conventionally produced foodstuffs, but these are unlikely to be of any public health relevance. Our review indicates that there is currently no evidence to support the selection of organically over conventionally produced foods on the basis of nutritional superiority.'

This is good news for those farmers who rear their animals to high organic and ethical standards but find the paperwork prohibitive. One local farmer told AWOL:

'The time and effort involved in applying for Soil Association certification means adding a bigger price tag without adding any quality to the meat – what's the point of that? Our customers trust us to supply good quality local meat at good value prices – and that's just what we do. We're completely honest about it.'

He also stopped selling 'organic' vegetables in the farm shop because some of the vegetables were coming from further away, and not in great shape when they arrived.