



Have you  
**EVER WONDERED...**



**What are GMOs? Should I buy organic?**

**Where does the food I feed my family come from?**

Get the answers to common food-related questions,  
courtesy of







**When it comes to food and farming,** there's a lot of conflicting information out there. So it's only natural that you might have questions. Fortunately, we have answers.



## How do I know my food is safe?

Several U.S. government agencies, including the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), monitor the food production chain through regulations and inspections from the farm to your table. Most cases of food-borne illness can be prevented with proper processing, handling and cooking to destroy bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

Source: USDA



## Should I buy conventional or free-range chicken and eggs?

It's your choice! However, you can expect cleaner, safer eggs with lower levels of shell bacteria from conventional modern cages versus free-range egg-production systems. Egg farmers who are part of the United Egg Producers Certified Program (which accounts for more than 90 percent of eggs produced in the U.S.) abide by a code of conduct after completing training in animal care, are audited annually by independent auditors, and adhere to scientifically-supported standards for allotment of space for hens in various housing environments. Laying hens have access to feed, clean water, and fresh air at all times. Chickens and eggs from modern production systems are also less expensive than free-range chickens and eggs.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Chickens – both broilers and layers – consume a diet high in protein-rich soybean meal.

Source: United Egg Producers







## What are Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)?

Farmers have been creating plant hybrids as long as they've been growing plants. GMOs are plant hybrids created using more technologically advanced hybridization methods called biotechnology. Scientists test GMO seed and plants, and they are reviewed by the FDA, EPA and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) before they are marketed. These plants are stringently tested before entering the food and animal feed supply, and the World Health Organization (WHO) reports current foods containing biotech ingredients have passed human health risk assessments. In addition, no effects on human health have been shown as a result of the consumption of biotech foods.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Plants are modified to resist insects and disease, which lessens the amount of chemicals farmers use.

Source: USDA, WHO



## What should I make of rising food prices?

In the United States, we're fortunate to only have to spend about 10 percent of our income on food, versus 18-25 percent around the world. Food in our country remains relatively inexpensive, and we have a wide variety of safe food choices.

It's also important to note that the farmer's share of the retail food dollar does not increase with food prices. In fact, it has been declining for more than 60 years. In 1950, farmers received more than 40 cents for every food dollar that consumers spent in the grocery store. Today, they receive only about 8 cents out of every dollar, after accounting for input costs..

### DID YOU KNOW?

Farmers shop at the grocery store just like you do.

Source: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,  
American Farm Bureau Federation









## Are local foods more sustainable?

Buying local helps to support area farmers, but does not indicate that your purchase supports sustainability. Less than 20 percent of U.S. farmland is located near metropolitan areas, which makes buying local difficult for many consumers. As our population grows and competes for land, energy and water, U.S. farmers will need to be even more efficient and productive. The global population is expected to increase by 2.2 BILLION people by 2050, which means that the world's farmers will have to grow about 70 percent more food than what is now produced.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Food that you buy in the grocery store is safe and nutritious, and it also supports U.S. farm families.

Source: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University,  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



## Are non-organic foods safe and nutritious?

All foods – whether organic or conventional – must meet federal and state regulations before being sold to consumers. Several U.S. government agencies, including the FDA and the EPA, monitor the food-production chain from farm to fork.

In addition, studies have shown there is no difference in nutritional value between organic and conventional food.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Both conventional and organic farmers use pesticides on their crops.



## Should I be worried about antibiotics in my meat?

The FDA does not allow meat to be sold with traces of antibiotics above strict safety limits. The U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service performs scheduled, but random testing of meat nationwide. Any antibiotics used to keep animals healthy are carefully selected and administered in accordance with industry training and principles. Antibiotics have required withdrawal times – a specific number of days that must pass between an animal's last antibiotic treatment and the date the meat enters the food supply – to ensure the antibiotics have sufficiently exited an animal's system.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Antibiotics used in meat animals are generally NOT the same ones used to treat humans.

Source: Iowa State University and University of Minnesota researchers, FDA



## Should I be worried about added hormones in my meat?

Farmers sometimes use added hormones to produce leaner beef. According to WHO and FDA, you don't need to worry about consuming hormones in your food. Any added hormones are broken down during digestion. Residue levels of added hormones in food have been demonstrated to be safe and well below any level that would have a known effect in humans.

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
All poultry and pork raised in the U.S. is  
free of added hormones.

Source: Center for Veterinary Medicine, WHO, U.N. FAO, FDA











## Can I trust the people who grow my food to share my values?

Ninety-eight percent of U.S. farms are family farms or individually owned. These people live and raise families on their farmland. That land serves as their livelihood and their legacy. So they take great pride in providing affordable, healthy and safe food for their families and yours while caring for the land and their animals.



Source: USDA



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