

A vibrant watercolor illustration of various fresh vegetables. The composition includes a large pinkish-red tomato at the top left, a green cucumber with a yellow flower at the top center, a whole green onion at the top right, a red chili pepper on the right side, a sliced green onion in the center, a whole yellow tomato on the right, a purple onion on the left, a sliced purple onion at the bottom left, a red chili pepper at the bottom left, a sliced cucumber at the bottom center, a whole purple onion at the bottom center, a sliced green onion at the bottom right, and a whole yellow tomato at the bottom right. The background is white, and the vegetables are rendered with soft, painterly textures.

Organic  
*it makes a difference*



Are you unsure about how to choose good quality food?

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How to make sure that your children are eating food that is **both healthy and delicious**?

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Do you wonder if you can always **trust the organic label**?  
Or do you worry that tastier, **healthier food will cost you more**?

**The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament** has fought for better and clearer rules for organic farming and food with these questions in mind.

We have strong roots in the organic movement, which has always challenged conventional and industrial farming practices.

With organic food, you can **have healthy, good quality food at a reasonable price**, so why persist with the harmful alternatives?

The benefits far outweigh the costs. It's a no-brainer.





# organic

*new rules help you understand  
what's behind the label*

**The Greens/EFA group** has been instrumental in bringing about major changes to the rules governing organic food. These will help give you more confidence that when you see organic on the outside, you know exactly what getting on the inside. So what do these new rules mean for organic food?





## Seed diversity

Thanks to the new rules on organic products, important factors such as maintaining genetic diversity and increasing resistance to disease will be taken into account when defining criteria for organic seeds.

This will allow traditional seeds and farmers' own varieties, which are more adapted to organic farming requirements, to be placed on the market. It will also stimulate breeders to select new organic varieties to meet challenges like climate change and increased disease pressure.

Due to the lack of availability of such seeds on the legal market, farmers have had no choice but to use non-organic and genetically poor varieties for their production. These changes will help the organic sector develop in a way that meets the needs of organic growers, now and in the future.



## High standards for imports

Thanks to the new rules, imports from countries outside the EU will have to comply with EU standards. Until now, non-EU countries only had to comply with similar standards.

Over the next few years, the old rules will be phased out, meaning that imports of products not fully compliant with EU standards will be possible only under exceptional circumstances, (e.g. due to specific climate conditions) and for a renewable period of two years.





## Food grown in *healthy soil*

Good taste comes from healthy, living soil. The new rules mean that organic production must be “soil bound”, meaning that the soil must be nurtured so it can cultivate healthy plants.

Some countries with highly intensive greenhouse production had pushed to allow food grown in pesticide-free artificial substitutes rather than soil to be classified as organic.

Out-of-soil production will still be possible in a few countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark) for products already certified as organic, but this practice will be phased out in the coming 10 years.





## Pesticide and GM-free food

Organic food is more eco-friendly than conventional food, thanks to stronger environmental standards and a ban on the use of chemical pesticides. Organic farmers are only allowed to use a certain number of natural pesticides. As such, organic practices are a strong defence against toxic substances and the sort of GM agriculture that makes farmers even more dependent on chemical pesticides.

But despite these precautions, residues of chemical pesticides can still be found in organic food. There can be a number of reasons for this, ranging from fraud to accidental contamination from non-organic farms located in the vicinity. At the moment, different countries have different rules for managing this problem. Some take a zero tolerance approach to such residues, while others apply thresholds or argue that organic farmers cannot be held responsible for toxic pesticides coming from conventional farming.

The new rules will help generate more data so that by 2025 we can establish precisely where the contamination is coming from, how we can better guard against it, who is responsible and how losses resulting from it can be compensated.

We hope that in the end the polluter pays principle will prevail. This is the only efficient incentive to keep toxic pesticides away from our fields and off our plates.



# Organic won't cost you more and benefits everyone



## Organic does not have to be *more expensive*

Many alternative retailers offer a fair price for organic food and do not apply huge margins to line their pockets.

Initiatives such as organic baskets or community programmes also offer local and seasonal products straight from the farm for more affordable prices. This can also help farmers to find new markets for their goods and ensure they receive a regular income.

Conventional and highly processed food might look cheaper on the supermarket shelves but this masks the true cost. When you take into account all the public money spent on fixing the damage to our health and environment, ultimately it costs us a lot more.



## The *wider benefits* organic food benefits outweigh the initial costs

Organic food is produced in a way that maximises benefits for all of us. Reduced water pollution means potentially huge savings on water bills. Improved soil health cuts erosion and the risks of floods and droughts and provides greater long-term food security.

Organics are good for wildlife conservation for declining farmland species, which is good news for species like bees.

Less pesticides in our food reduces risks to our health and to farmers. Fewer greenhouse gas emissions and more carbon sequestration, fewer food additives, higher animal welfare standards ... the list goes on.



# How can you support organic food?

## **The organic sector is booming. This is great!**

But it's not without risk. We want to make sure that the organic market retains the benefits that made it so great in the first place. The last thing we want to see is for the organic sector to become a vehicle for greedy profiteering, or for businesses with little respect for the environment and workers' rights to dominate the industry.

Organic has never been just about turning a quick profit.

Organic food has got soul! **It's about good food, sustainability and your well-being.**  
We have to preserve these values.

The best way to make sure we have a strong, independent organic sector is to **support the many local and seasonal organic food producers in your area.** Many towns now have farmers markets where you can buy organic food direct from the producers. You could also get involved in an organic basket scheme, and receive regular packages of healthy organic food. Alternatively, support your nearest zero-waste organic food shop, and cut down on wasteful plastic packaging at the same time.



**The Greens | EFA**  
in the European Parliament

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