

# ORGANIC AND REGULAR MILK

## What's the Difference?

Demand for organic products, including milk, is growing and consumers cite health, taste and concern for the environment as the top factors driving their purchasing decisions. When it comes to milk and milk products, organic and regular milk provide the same nutritional value and content of nine essential nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D and potassium. Organic milk is an option some people are choosing, but because it costs roughly twice as much as regular milk, it may not be the best choice for everyone.

### WHAT MAKES MILK "ORGANIC"?

Proper animal care and environmental practices are priorities for all dairy farmers, whether they produce organic or regular milk. Organic farm management practices are regulated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's organic standards. While all dairy farmers work to meet many of the following standards, milk and milk products can be labeled "USDA organic" only if all of the following criteria are met: cows have been exclusively given organically grown feed, are allowed access to pasture and direct sunlight, are not treated with hormones, and are not given antibiotics or other prohibited medications.

### CONVENTIONAL MILK EQUALS ORGANIC MILK

Organic and regular milk are equally healthy, nutritious and safe. This is supported by leading health and food safety organizations such as the American Dietetic Association and U.S. Department of Agriculture. There is no scientific evidence that organic dairy products are safer or healthier than conventional dairy products.



### INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH

Safety, health and proper care of animals are top priorities for all farmers whether they produce organic or regular milk. Strict government standards ensure that all milk, whether regular or organic, is pure, safe and nutritious. All milk is tested for antibiotics to ensure it meets the government's stringent quality and safety standards. Any milk that tests positive for antibiotics is discarded, never reaching the public. Hormones are naturally present in many foods, including milk, and carton to carton, bottle to bottle, organic milk and regular milk are the same. For all milk, a range of controls applied by farmers and processors helps ensure that milk remains free from pesticide residues.

### MILK IS ESSENTIAL TO A HEALTHY DIET

The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recognizes that people who consume more dairy foods have better overall diets, consume more nutrients and see improved bone health. Regardless of whether one is looking for low-fat, fat-free, lactose-free or flavored milk or foods that are certified "organic," it's easy to meet the federal government's dietary recommendation for three servings of dairy a day.

For additional information on the health benefits of dairy foods, visit the National Dairy Council Web site at [nationaldairycouncil.org](http://nationaldairycouncil.org).

For additional information on animal and farm practices on dairy farms, visit the Dairy Farming Today Web site at [dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org).