



# KANSAS CITY FOOD CIRCLE

*The KCFC Update: Fall 2010*

## Choosing Local or Organic

By Cheri LeBlond  
KCFC Co-Coordinator

You stand in your local produce section with a sticky choice.

You want a granny smith apple that is both local and organic. But the only choices are apples conventionally grown with pesticides or organic apples, California grown and transported long, gas-guzzling distances.

Which is the better choice for your health, the environment and your community?

The *Green American Newsletter* takes on this “conundrum” in its September/October 2010 issue.

The article called, “[Organic or Local? Which is Best for People and Planet?](#)” breaks down both choices with the latest research.

### Organic “Food Miles”

A 2007 University of Alberta [study](#) warned of nonlocal, organic produce’s carbon burden, according to the *Green American* article. It said the long distance organic produce trucked across the country negated any environmental savings it netted over local, conventional farming.

But that was before a 2008 Rodale Institute [report](#) revealed that organically farmed soil sequesters nearly 30 percent more carbon than chemically farmed soil.

“In addition, farming chemicals must be transported by air, truck or train from factory to farm, which may be a long distance – further adding to the climate impact of conventional farms,” the *Green American* article reported.

So, though some organic food travels far, it still may have a smaller footprint than local, conventional farming.

### The Healthier Choice

Last year, a June 2009 [study](#) from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine claimed that organic food was no healthier than conventional.

But, according to *Green American*, the [Environmental Working Group](#) and experts at the [Organic Center](#) found fault with those findings.

They claimed that the London study downplayed organic food’s dominance in three nutrient categories, while glossing over the harm that chemical residues can cause the human body.

Organic “contained more beneficial phosphorus and titratable acids,” the *Green American* reported. “And conventional foods contained more nitrogen, which may be linked to cancer.”

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## KCFC Annual Membership Meeting Explores Egg Recall

Join us for this year’s annual membership meeting Sunday, Dec. 5, 2 to 4:30 p.m. in Meeting Room A of the KCMO - South Library, 201 E. 75<sup>th</sup> St. in Waldo - the same location as last year’s annual meeting.

Craig Volland will present on America’s concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) and how they are inherently unsanitary and cruel.

He will discuss why the recent large-scale egg recall that sickened thousands was inevitable and will likely happen again. His presentation will examine the labeling of meat, egg and dairy products and explain why “free-range” is better than “organic” in some contexts.

In addition to being a long-time member of the KCFC, Craig is also chair of the Agriculture and CAFO committees of the Kansas Chapter of the Sierra Club.

There will be plenty of time to network and chat so please join us. All members and friends are welcome to attend. Admission is free. The room will be open at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call Cheri LeBlond, KCFC Co-Coordinator, at 913-558-9496 or e-mail her at [cheri@kcfoodcircle.org](mailto:cheri@kcfoodcircle.org).



## **Choosing Local or Organic** *continued from page 1*

This increased cancer risk also worried the President's Cancer Panel. In their 2008-2009 annual [report](#), the panel announced that 41 percent of all Americans will get cancer at some point in their lives and about 21 percent will die from cancer.

It closely linked environmental factors with increased risk, and urged the public to avoid food grown with chemical pesticides and herbicides to reduce cancer risk.

### **The Power of Local**

Buying local (conventional or organic) is still a powerful way to support area economies, communities and family farms. It allows you to ask questions about where and how your food is grown.

This is important since not all food lacking organic certification is grown with chemicals. Many local farmers, including all Kansas City Food Circle farmer members, use organic methods but can't afford the cost and paperwork of USDA organic certification.

Also, some certified organic food is grown on big factory farms with the same problems that industrial farming has – lack of biodiversity and crowded conditions for animals.

### **What to Buy**

No choice is perfect, but according to *Green American*, organic has the edge. Because of conventional farming's toxic chemicals and its climate footprint, organic farming is far healthier for your body, the environment and the community. But the Kansas City Food Circle hopes one day you won't have to choose.

Like you, we want a food system that does it all - reduces cancer risk, supports the local economy, strengthens family farms and enriches the environment.

It's the KCFC mission that someday the only choice you have to make is which local, organic Granny Smith will taste best in your pie.

*Tell us about the food choices you make every day and how we can make them easier by taking a quick, online, anonymous, ten-question [survey](#).*

*If you've already taken this KCFC eater member survey via an e-mail sent out a few weeks ago, thank you. The survey's results will appear in the Winter 2011 newsletter.*

## **KC Organics Winter Market**

Celebrate food that “nourishes and satiates” at the Kansas City Organics traditional holiday farmers market. *The Best of the Market* will be held on Dec. 11, 2010 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The indoor event will be at Notre Dame de Sion High School, 10631 Wornall Road in South KC, just a quarter mile south of I-435. The event will be held regardless of the weather.

*The Best of the Market* event brings in the holiday season by offering several gift-giving items, including gift baskets, wreaths, hand-made eco-cards, fair-trade coffees, healthy chocolates and much more.

This year, the market also offers an expanded local and organic line-up of baked goods, seasonal produce, canned items, meats, unique body-care products and bee items such as honey, wax, candles, etc.

For more information, check the Kansas City Organics [website](#) or contact Peter Stauffacher at 816-444-FOOD (3663).

## **BADSEED Winter Market**

The BADSEED Market provides the “conscious consumer with nutritious and delicious foods grown sustainably (and with love) in the immediate community.”

Located at 1909 McGee Street near the Crossroads Entertainment District in Kansas City, Mo., its winter farmers market season will be held every Friday night, 4 to 8 p.m., starting Nov.26 and continuing through Feb. 25.

There will be two special pre-holiday markets: the “super-wicked” Pre-Thanksgiving Market on Nov.19 and the “super-festive” Holiday Market on Dec. 17.

BADSEED's farmers market offers a “plethora of seasonally available, local-organic delights including colorful fruits and veggies, baked goods, gourmet mushrooms, goat cheese, eggs and free-range meats.”

For more market information, go to the BADSEED Farm's [website](#) and click on *The Farmer's Market* link.



## Eating Local, Thinking Global

By Dr. J. David Beaulieu  
Guest Contributor

By now, I hope we all know that eating locally grown food is good for the planet. It reduces shipping and our dependency on foreign oil and on foods flown in and shipped in from foreign countries. These foods, grown to be shipped long distances, are harvested before peak nutritional value. When we buy them we pay more and get less in the way of critical micronutrients.

Local food, picked ripe, contains greater amounts of the essential critical nutrients, and if the local crop is organically grown, it contains a significantly greater amount of these essentials.

Additionally, it has only been since the advent of rail, air travel and refrigeration that foods not indigenous to an area have been available. The human race adapted to eating locally for ten thousand-plus years up until the age of refrigeration, and in the opinion of many experts, we have not had time to adapt to eating outside of nature's plan.

For example, years ago there were severe fires across Canada's northwest combined with drought. The caribou herds that the locals depended on were sick and dying as a heavy winter took hold. Texas ranchers came to the rescue, so they thought, when they airlifted tons of hay up to the Canadians and their caribou herds.

The herds fed and froze to death. No one realized that nature, in its wisdom, puts more essential fatty acids in northern grasses to allow them to withstand the colder climate. These fatty acids, when consumed by the local caribou, also allowed the caribou to withstand the cold. Texas hay doesn't need additional fatty acids to keep from freezing as it doesn't get that cold in Texas. The caribou, standing knee deep in snow, froze to death.

This may be an extreme example of why it's wise to eat local foods, but it certainly demonstrates that it doesn't pay to break nature's plan.

In another example, we have been educated to eat lots of fruit each day. Usually, breakfast has become a time for fruit and carbohydrates, which is quite different from when I was a boy. In the summer, we had fruit often, but during the winter it wasn't available, so we ate a breakfast high in protein and healthy fat. We hardly ever got colds. Eating non-local breakfast items and processed high sugar items leads to multiple infection in winters, and we all know that

winter illness is much more frequent and severe than it used to be.

Do you think it could be because microbes metabolize sugars for their energy, and when you provide an abundance of food the microbes will come? Gosh, how did we miss that? Put a healthy piece of whole wheat bread out for a day or two and watch the mold form. If we feed them they will come.

So, how do we go about eating a more healthy local diet? We stress eating the foods that are indigenous to the area in which we live, in the seasons when they are available.

The Kansas City Food Circle sponsors some 77 area farmers who grow and promote healthy, local, naturally raised, organic foods. KCFC provides information about where to get organically grown veggies and free-range, grass-fed beef. They list local, organic farmers markets and local restaurants that feature "locally grown" on their menus. In early spring each year, the KC Food Circle sponsors an *Eat Local! Exhibition of Farmers* where you can meet some of their farmer members.

I have learned that by buying direct I seldom pay more because I've eliminated the middle man, and I get enhanced nutritional value for my dollar and that results in improved health and lower medical bills.

*Dr. J. David Beaulieu is an allergy specialist and clinical nutritionist with an office in Mission, Kan. Visit his [website](#) for more information about his practice.*

### New 2011 *Eat Local!* Expo Dates

The *Eat Local! Exhibition of Farmers* dates are set. Please note that the locations are the same, just reversed in order.

The Independence expo comes first in 2011 on Saturday, March 26, at the Roger T. Sermon Community Center from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

The second expo will be a week later in Shawnee, Kan., Saturday, April 2, in the Shawnee Civic Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Please mark your calendar and look for more information after the first of the year, including the theme and presenters of the expo workshops.



# What's in a Label?

By Cheri LeBlond  
KCFC Co-Coordinator

The last local harvests are coming in, the farmers markets are ending and those of us not clever with a canning jar will be supplementing organic produce from the grocery store this winter.

So how will you navigate all the “organic” and “natural” labels in the grocery aisles?

In an effort to protect consumers, the federal government regulates who can use the word “organic” on their products based on the [Organic Food Protection Act of 1990](#). The USDA requires the following [standards](#) before a product can claim it is “organic” or “natural.”

## “USDA Organic”

Raw, fresh products or processed products with the USDA Organic seal must be certified by the USDA’s National Organic Program or its agents to be at least 95 percent organic. Food that is 100 percent organic also may carry the seal. Because the seal is optional, not all producers display it even if they meet the standard.

## “100% Organic”

Labels containing these words must contain 100 percent organically produced ingredients, not counting added water and salt.

## “Organic”

These products must contain at least 95 percent organic ingredients, not counting added water and salt. They cannot contain added sulfites, but may contain “5 percent of non-organically produced agricultural ingredients which are not commercially available in organic form.”

## “Made with Organic (specific ingredient inserted here)”

At least 70 percent of the specific ingredient listed in the claim, not counting water and salt, must be organic. The product cannot contain added sulfites, but may contain “5 percent of non-organically produced agricultural ingredients which are not commercially available in organic form.”

## “Some Organic Ingredients”

These products may contain less than 70 percent organic ingredients, not counting added water and salt, and may

contain “5 percent of non-organically produced agricultural ingredients which are not commercially available in organic form.”

## “Natural”

When it comes to meat and poultry, a product can call itself “natural” if it contains “no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed (a process which does not fundamentally alter the raw product).” According to a [USDA fact sheet](#), the label must “explain the use of the term natural (such as - no added colorings or artificial ingredients; minimally processed.)”

## “Certified Naturally Grown”

Not everyone agrees with the USDA’s standards, cost or inspection practices, so other non-governmental, certification bodies have sprung up, including [Certified Naturally Grown](#) (CNG). A New York State nonprofit, CNG holds the same standards as the USDA or higher. Other area farmers inspect and test for chemicals and non-organic practices at CNG farms.

## KCFC Farmer’s Pledge

Like CNG farmers, Kansas City Food Circle’s farmer members also are dedicated to organic practices that, with rare exceptions, meet the USDA’s organic standards.

By signing the [KCFC pledge](#), farmer members promise to bring you some of the best local, organic and free-range products in the area. Some KCFC producers are certified organic by the USDA, but many can’t afford the costs of certification or the maintenance and paperwork required, even though they meet the USDA standards.

The Kansas City Food Circle is developing ways to help you better find KCFC farmer members in the community. Look for the KCFC logo displayed at market stalls next season, or before you buy, ask farmers if they are KCFC members.

The KCFC membership assures you that producer has your health, community and environment in mind. Read the [KCFC pledge](#) online or the updated [directory](#) of KCFC producers for more details.

This *KCFC Update* is a Kansas City Food Circle original publication. Past issues are archived at [kcfoodcircle.org](#). For more information, write to: KC Food Circle, P.O. Box 45195, KCMO, 64171.