



Educated Eater's Guide

March 2010

What to Do:

- **Be an Educated Consumer - Read labels!**
 - Buy organic or sustainable food with little or no pesticides
 - Avoid Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)
 - Be suspicious of anything w/corn, soy or cottonseed unless "100% organic"
 - Determine where your food came from (country or state of origin)
- **Vote with your wallet**
 - Support local farms; visit your local farmers' markets
 - Support restaurants and vendors that buy locally produced foods
 - Ask your favorite restaurants and vendors to offer local, sustainable foods
 - Consider what you put "on" your body too (hair and skin care products)
- **Bring it Home**
 - Eat seasonally. Foods in season have more nutritional content and taste better!
 - Cook at home and enjoy dinners as a family
 - Visit local farms, grow a garden and teach children how to garden
- **Spread the Word**
 - Request places serving food to children stop providing junk food, sodas and sports drinks
 - Encourage classroom/office/other party planners to provide sustainable foods in/on reusable dishware
 - Tell Congress that food safety is important to you

Making Sense of Labeling Terms:

- "100% organic": all ingredients organic & minimally processed; no pesticides, artificial fertilizers, human waste/sewage sludge, radiation, GMO or food additives; no growth hormones or routine use of antibiotics
- USDA seal w/o the words "100% organic": > 95% of content by wt (excluding water and salt) is organic; 5% includes products not available in organic form; no sludge or radiation
- "made w/organic ingredients" (no USDA seal): >70% organic ingredients; no restrictions on other ingredients
- organic ingredients listed on label: contains < 70% organic ingredients

Deciphering Produce Codes:

In addition to often telling you the country of origin, the first digits of those little produce stickers tell you how the food item was grown:

- Conventional Produce - 4 digit prefix:
 - 3 = hybrid (nectarines are a hybrid, hybrids aren't necessarily bad)
 - 4 = conventional inputs (synthetic fertilizers, herbicides & pesticides)
- Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)
 - begins with 8 (not often used per request of industry)
- Organic – five digits beginning with 9
- Example: bananas
 - Conventionally grown: 4011
 - Conventionally grown hybrid: 3011
 - GMO: 84011
 - Organic: 94011



Suggested Reading:

- Michael Pollan: "Omnivore's Dilemma", "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto"
- Eric Schlosser: "Fast Food Nation"
- Marion Nestle: "Food Politics", "What to Eat"
- Barbara Kingsolver: "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle"
- Vandana Shiva: "Stolen Harvest"
- Norman Wirzba, ed: "The Essential Agrarian Reader"
- Wendell Berry: "The Unsettling of America: Culture & Agriculture"
- Upton Sinclair: "The Jungle"
- Frances Moore Lappe & Anna Lappe: "Hope's Edge: The Next Diet for a Small Planet"
- Jo Robinson: "Pasture Perfect The Far-Reaching Benefits of Choosing Meat, Eggs and Dairy Products from Grass-fed Animals"
- Jackie Newgent: "Big Green Cookbook: Hundreds of Planet-pleasing Recipes and Tips for a Luscious, Low-carbon Lifestyle"
- Kate Heyhoe: "Cooking Green: Reducing Your Carbon Footprint in the Kitchen"
- Julie Gabriel: "The Green Beauty Guide" (see Appendix B: personal care products to avoid)

Suggested Viewing:

- "King Corn" www.kingcorn.net/
- "Food, Inc." www.foodincmovie.com
- "Fresh" www.freshthemovie.com/
- "The Future of Food" www.thefutureoffood.com/
- "Fast Food Nation"

Some CSA's convenient to Milton:

- Brookwood Community Farm - produce www.BrookwoodCommunityFarm.org
- Stillman's Farm – produce and meat www.stillmansfarm.com/

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), and Fishing (CSFs):

- www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/index.htm - complete list of MA CSA's – Note: though some may be a distance away, they may have drop-offs nearby; lots of Consumer Resources & Buy Local info
- www.nofamass.org/programs MA Chapter of Northeast Organic Farmer's Assoc
- www.namanet.org "Think Globally, Fish Locally"

Sustainable/Local Food Options:

- www.sustainabletable.org – type in your zip code and find out where to buy (and eat out) fresh, local, sustainably harvested food; key questions to ask farmers and store managers
- www.eatwild.com "Grass-fed Food and Facts"
- www.localharvest.org "Real Food, Real Farmers, Real Community"
- www.ediblecommunities.com "A Network of Local Food Publications"
- www.buylocalfood.com "Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture"

Food Safety:

- www.foodandwaterwatch.org
- www.centerforfoodsafety.org
- www.organicconsumers.org
- www.ewg.org/ourfood

Plastic Container Guidance:

- www.pbs.org/strangedays/pdf/StrangeDaysSmartPlasticsGuide.pdf

Seed Supply Concerns:

- <http://percyschmeiser.com>