

The human race is dependent on food for nourishment, energy and survival. Sustainable agriculture, like organic farming, is gaining great popularity. It is currently the fastest growing sector of food production in the world. The move towards organic agriculture is in response to the risks now understood by scientists, farmers and consumers alike about the detrimental effects of traditional agricultural methods. Organic farming promotes sustainability, food safety and food nutrition. There is much science in organic agriculture.

According to the USDA National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) organic agriculture is defined as: "ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles and soil biological activity. Organic agriculture is rooted in the principles of minimal use of off-farm inputs and concentrates on management practices that strive to restore, maintain, or enhance ecological harmony.

There are little to no benefits for organic farmers. Some large chain grocery stores start purchasing from local small organic farms for their organic food line, however, shortly break contract and go with larger farms from the United States.

There are lots of benefits to farmers who make the switch to organic for their practices themselves. For example, many organic potato farmers have little to no disturbance from the vicious potato beetle that plagues non-organic potato farms. Further, the farmers experience seasons of rich, thriving soils that require less remediation and attention. However, larger corporations favour lots of nice looking food fast, and primarily deal with only large farms, not family farms. Local, small and big farm farmers have started unions with elected representatives to start lobbying for their rights and voicing their opinions. But, the government is offering no benefit to farmers who go organic. There is also no structure to properly certify organic produce/products.

The government places higher taxes on small farms; would it not seem more right to give benefits to farms practicing sustainable agriculture since they are doing less harm to not only the earth but to human health? The government is acting highly ignorant to the pressing issues surrounding agriculture. Food miles increase greenhouse gas emissions, export profits to other countries and laden our food with artificial chemical ripeners and preservatives. Why are we so slow at realizing that there are benefits to farming practices like organic which tread lightly on the earth? People do not eat foods according to the crop seasons because large grocery stores import food from all over the world, adding food miles and greenhouse gasses to our fragile atmosphere.

How come we are not outraged? We, the public have every right to question how our food is produced, where it comes from and what chemicals are involved, yet we do so little to ensure our own health, or the health of our land that needs to produce food for thousands of years to come presumably. Why have we not questioned our responsibilities to future generations? Why have we not weighed

out the short-term versus the long-term benefits? And, ultimately, do we not have a stewardship of the land to fulfill as temporary residents of this earth?

What you can do is speak out for local, organic farm support. Shop at local markets and make an effort to purchase foods that are in season to decrease food miles. The groceries will not change unless we say something. The small changes we make today will lead to greater changes for tomorrow.