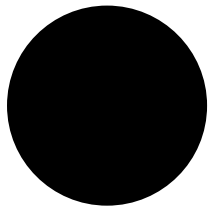


ORGANIC FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT

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When we hear or see something related to “ecological”, it is inevitable to think of something good, and good in any aspect: healthy, natural, maximum quality, respect for animals, better flavor... and sustainable. Everything organic suggests sustainability and environmental responsibility. The Royal Spanish Academy defines “ecological” as *Made or obtained without using chemical compounds that harm the environment or Said of a product or an activity: that it is not harmful to the environment. In short, organic farming is based on the use of techniques and processes that protect biodiversity and respect the ecosystem. However, there are a series of hidden aspects that do not allow us to see reality with total transparency.*

Organic agriculture must contribute to the protection of the environment and climate, conserving biodiversity. But what about food that, even if it is certified organic, comes from other countries or continents? These products are transported via trucks, planes and even ships, all modes of transport with a high level of contamination. It seems that the enormous environmental impact of transport is not taken into account when certifying a food as organic. And as if this were not enough, what about the innumerable plastic containers used to "protect" fruits, vegetables...? Is that plastic not polluting? Or is it not taken into account either?

In relation to the transport of products, another of the principles that organic certification must comply with is, as stated in Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council, "Promote short circuits of distribution and local productions in the territories of the European Union". It is evident that there are many products (with the organic seal) that are regularly imported from distant countries, from other continents. A clear example is that of organic ginger; In recent months, demand for this product from China, known for its nutritional properties, has grown considerably in Spain.

Another of the basic principles of the production process of these foods is respect for natural cycles. Today, we have typical products from a single season available throughout the year. The main reason is production in greenhouses or ripening chambers, in which the natural growth time is not respected; or artificial imitations, as in the case of the cultivation of tomatoes in Spain. The natural period of tomato growth is summer, to be consumed at the end of the season; however, it is available in greengrocers and supermarkets throughout the year. This tomato is obtained from an artificial selection over the traditional tomato; Although the difference between the two types is not perceptible to the naked eye, the truth comes when trying them, since the artificial tomato is characterized by being tasteless and quite mediocre.

Organic farming should also contribute to achieving a non-toxic environment. That is why it avoids the use of all kinds of pesticides, fertilizers, hormones, etc. But this is not entirely true, since organic production only prohibits the use of chemically synthesized pesticides; It allows, among other things, the use of a material as polluting as copper, which has the function of fertilizer and treatment to control fungi and slugs.

Regarding organic production, it has a low productivity rate compared to conventional production; for the same cultivated area, organic farming produces 20% less food. *New Scientist* published an

article stating that, having the same yield, the emission of greenhouse gases was greater in organic production, as a result of the consumption of water and oil required.

In conclusion, it is more than proven that the biggest problems arise when putting the principles of organic farming into practice. Taking into account the innumerable advantages of this type of food and improving the aforementioned aspects, organic farming would be, by far, the best alternative when it comes to daily eating.

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