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Research Question – Essay 2

Eating Organically for a Healthier Lifestyle

To utilize the idiom, *100 percent organic*, items must be either consummately organic or composed of all organic ingredients. Items must also be at least 95 percent organic to utilize the term, *organic* (staff, Mayo Clinic par. 5). Consumers that are shopping in a supermarket believe that a natural food means the same thing as an organic food. Consumers need to educate themselves and be aware that natural food and organic food do not mean the same thing. In reality, there is a vast difference. The word natural does not have a true meaning in the food industry, because it is not regulated by anyone. Manufacturers in the food industry do not have to list all ingredients on the food package labels. Therefore, it could just mean that they left some of the harmful ingredients off the label, and then they claim that it is all natural. The FDA does not have a definition for use of the term natural or its derivatives. However, the agency has not objected to the use of the term if the food does not contain added color, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances (FDA par. 1). Because there is not a real definition or any regulations for using the word natural, it means that a food product labeled as natural can still contain other things such as pesticides, herbicides, and other unnatural items. Hence, *all natural* on food product labels can be very deceiving for the consumer. The best thing to do is read the entire list of ingredients. On the other hand, using the word organic on products is somewhat regulated. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has established an organic certification program

that requires all organic foods to meet strict government standards. These standards regulate how such foods are grown, handled and processed (staff, Mayo Clinic par. 5). Organic food products do not contain preservatives, herbicides, antibiotics, or growth hormones. Eating organic food that is free of toxins and herbicides, brimming with more nutrition, better taste, and environmental preservation is definitely a step in the right direction to maintain a healthier lifestyle and provide more longevity.

Organic foods are healthier and safer than conventionally grown foods. This is because farmers use harmful chemicals and herbicides on crops to keep insects and other pests away and also to preserve the food for longer periods of time. Unfortunately, this leaves the same substances behind for the consumer. Many people believe that the chemical substances that are left behind on food products contribute to a host of health problems like cancer, various skin conditions, intestinal problems, pre-mature aging, infertility, eye problems, asthma, and other health issues. Although the EPA does limit the amount of pesticides and herbicides used by farmers, the risk is still there for potential health hazards from these chemicals. According to Associate Professor of Horticulture at the University of Minnesota, Jeff, Gillman, PhD, “although pesticide tolerances are assumed to be safe, these chemicals are by their very nature toxic, and haven’t been studied directly in people” (qtd. in Hoffman par. 8). In addition to this, the FDA does not test every product that chemicals have been used on. The National Academy of Sciences reports that 90% of the chemicals applied to foods have not been tested for long-term health effects before being deemed "safe." Furthermore, the FDA tests only 1% of foods for pesticide residue. The most dangerous and toxic pesticides require special testing methods, which are rarely if ever employed by the FDA (Loux par. 3). Hormones and antibiotics are also another concern. These contaminants are pumped into animals to grow them faster and bigger.

Antibiotics are also used for various purposes on animals, even though they are not always needed. Antibiotics, drugs, and growth hormones are also directly passed into meat and dairy products. Tens of millions of pounds of antibiotics are used in animal feed every year. The union of concerned scientists estimates that roughly 70% of antibiotics produced in the United States are fed to animals for nontherapeutic purposes (Loux par. 9). No one wants to knowingly put even a small amount of toxic chemicals, hormones, or antibiotics in his or her body.

Organic foods are more nutritious and have a better taste. Most experts in this field believe that organic food contains more vitamins and minerals than commercially grown food. On average, organically grown foods provide: 21.1% more iron (than their conventional counterparts); 27% more vitamin C; 29.3% more magnesium; 13.6% more phosphorus (Loux par. 6). Organic food naturally tastes better because of the way it is grown. It is grown specifically for taste, not for show on a produce stand in the local market.

Furthermore, organic food also provides a safer environment. Pesticides and herbicides are absorbed into the ground, and they also pollute the water supply in which everyone drinks from. The poisons and pollution in the ground and water also trickles down to the animals and insects that play a vital role in sustaining the eco-system. This in turn will be harmful to humans. If our environment is not maintained, it will prove to be detrimental to future generations.

Consuming organic food over conventionally grown food should be something everyone considers. There are many choices in life, but this can be one of the easiest choices to make in regards to one's personal health. Healthy living is the key to happiness, as well as longevity. Regardless of one's current lifestyle, eating organic food can provide a multitude of health benefits, provide better tasting food with more nutrients, ensure a safer environment, and

possibly provide a longer life. Furthermore, it can be extremely beneficial for all future generations.

Works Cited

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