



# An Educational Tour of Kimberton Whole Foods

## What's Special about KWF?

**Our Mission:** We care for the earth by promoting organic & biodynamic farming methods. We conduct our business in a respectful & ethical manner while building strong cooperative ties within our larger community. In a more personal way, we support each individual's quest to learn more about healthy choices in diet & lifestyle. Finally, we are committed to honoring each customer with outstanding service.

### What is green?

When we live "green," we work to reduce our negative impact on the planet. It means treating all resources as precious; living with nature instead of trying to subdue it. It means being energy efficient, lessening our use of petroleum and chemical products, and conserving water. Most of all, it is a mindful way of existing, trying to make every choice a better, more responsible one.

### What is organic?

Simply stated, organic produce and other ingredients are grown without the use of pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, genetically modified organisms, or ionizing radiation. Animals that produce organic meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products do not take antibiotics or growth hormones.

From the USDA National Organic Program: "Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations."

### Why does organic food cost more?

The truth of the matter is that organic food doesn't always cost more. Some items, such as coffee, cereal, bread, and even meat, may cost the same or even less than their conventional counterparts. And, as the demand for organics continues to grow, the cost will continue to come down. When the cost is higher, consider these facts: Organic farmers don't receive federal subsidies like conventional farmers do. Therefore, the price of organic food reflects the true cost of growing. The price of conventional food does not reflect the cost of environmental cleanups which are paid for with our tax dollars. Organic farming is more labor and management intensive to produce a higher quality product. Organic farms are usually smaller than conventional farms and so do not benefit from the economies of scale that larger growers get.

### Is organic food more nutritious than conventional food?

Some recently published studies have shown that organic foods have higher nutritional value. For example, researchers at the University of California, Davis, recently found that organic tomatoes had higher levels of phytochemicals (naturally occurring, cancer-fighting, immune boosting plant compounds) and vitamin C than conventional tomatoes. Some say that the organic plants develop more of the phytochemicals in order to protect themselves naturally against pests and disease.

### Does organic food taste better?

Hundreds of gourmet chefs across the nation are choosing organic ingredients because they want their prepared dishes to have superior taste and quality. An increasing number of consumers agree that organic food just tastes better. Some say that it is fresher and more authentic. Because organic food is grown in well-balanced soil, it makes sense that these healthy plants have a great taste.

## **What is Natural?**

Natural foods are foods that are minimally processed. Natural foods do not include ingredients such as refined sugars, refined flours, milled grains, hydrogenated oils, sweeteners, food colors, or flavorings. Natural foods are not necessarily organic.

## **What is Biodynamic Agriculture?**

"Biodynamic" is a step above "organic." Essentially, biodynamic farming and gardening looks upon the soil and the farm as living organisms. It regards maintenance and furtherance of soil life as a basic necessity if the soil is to be preserved for generations, and it regards the farm as being true to its essential nature if it can be conceived of as a kind of individual entity in itself — a self-contained individuality. In the early 1920's a group of practicing farmers, concerned with the decline of the soil, sought the advice of Dr. Rudolf Steiner, founder of anthroposophy, who had spent all his life researching and investigating the forces regulating life and growth. From a series of lectures and conversations held at Koberwitz, Germany, in June 1924, there emerged the fundamental principles of biodynamic farming and gardening. Generally, it's a unified approach to agriculture that relates the ecology of the earth-organism to that of the entire cosmos.

## **What are GMOs?**

GMOs (or "genetically modified organisms") are organisms which have been created through the gene-splicing techniques of biotechnology (also called genetic engineering, or GE). This relatively new science allows DNA from one species to be injected into another species in a laboratory. This process creates combinations of plant, animal, bacteria, and viral genes that do not occur in nature or through traditional crossbreeding methods.

## **Are GMOs safe?**

In 30 other countries around the world, including Australia, Japan, and all of the countries in the European Union, there are significant restrictions or outright bans on the production of GMOs, because they are not considered proven safe. In the U.S. on the other hand, the FDA approved commercial production of GMOs based on studies conducted by the companies who created them and profit from their sale. Many health-conscious shoppers find the lack of rigorous, independent, scientific examination on the impact of consuming GM foods to be cause for concern.

## **What is sustainability?**

Something that is sustainable is able to be maintained over the long term without harming the environment. The traditional definition of sustainability calls for policies and strategies meeting society's present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainability is the ability to provide for the needs of the world's current population without damaging the ability of future generations to provide for themselves. When a product, process, or lifestyle is sustainable it exists within this criteria without negative environmental effects or impossibly high costs to anyone involved.

## **What is IPM?**

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach relying on a combination of common sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and their interaction with the environment. This info, in combination with available pest control methods, is used to manage pest damage by the most economical means, while minimizing any danger to humans, property, or the environment. The orchards routinely check the trees for pests, then use a single spectrum spray to deal with only the specific pest that is present, while causing no harm to others. The sprays only account for about 15% of Integrated Pest Management methods.

## What does it mean to “Buy Local”?

There is peace of mind in knowing where our food comes from. One of the major benefits to buying food locally is having the opportunity to develop a relationship with a local farmer. Some farmers are thrilled to share their knowledge and experience.

Another significant reason to buy local is to keep food miles to a minimum. “Food miles” refer to the distance a food item travels from the farm to your home. The food miles for items in the grocery store are, on average, 27 times higher than the food miles for goods bought from local sources.

In the U.S., the average grocery store’s produce travels nearly 1,500 miles between the farm where it was grown and your refrigerator. About 40% of our fruit is produced overseas and, even though broccoli is grown all over the country, the broccoli we buy at the supermarket travels an average of 1,800 miles to get there. Notably, nine percent of our red meat comes from foreign countries, some as far away as Australia and New Zealand.

A tremendous amount of fossil fuel is burned to transport foods such long distances, releasing carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and other pollutants that contribute to global climate change, acid rain, smog and air and sea pollution. The refrigeration required to keep our fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meats from spoiling during their long journeys burn up even more fossil fuel. In contrast, local and regional food systems produce 17 times less carbon dioxide.

## The Economics of Local . . .

Farmers are earning less producing crops today than they did in 1969, despite the fact that American farmers have almost doubled productivity over the past four decades. Farmers aren’t just earning less, current crop prices do not even cover the cost of production. To make ends meet, and often to get health insurance, more than half of American farmers work a second off-farm job.

## What can I do?

Start small and don’t expect to change all your eating habits overnight. Commit to purchasing one thing locally and organically each week. Once you see how easy it is and you enjoy the great taste, you’ll surely go back for more!

Join a CSA, visit a farmer’s market, or shop at Kimberton Whole Foods! We support our local farmers, so we make it easy for you to do the same. The best way to know where your food comes from is to grow it yourself. . . plant a small garden or a container garden if you are in an urban area. Every little bit helps.

## Keep in mind the 12 most contaminated items:

Buy these items organically whenever possible:

Peaches, Apples, Sweet Bell Peppers, Celery, Nectarines, Strawberries, Cherries, Pears, Grapes (Imported), Spinach, Lettuce, Potatoes

## Special thanks to/for more information:

[biodynamics.com](http://biodynamics.com), [garden.org](http://garden.org), [sustainabletable.org](http://sustainabletable.org), [nongmoproject.org](http://nongmoproject.org), [ewg.org](http://ewg.org),  
[greenable.net](http://greenable.net), [organic.org](http://organic.org), [ota.com](http://ota.com), [epa.gov](http://epa.gov)

**THANK YOU FOR HELPING US SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY.**



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