

# An Overview: Food Safety

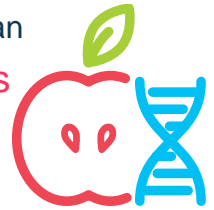


The food supply has never been safer or more nutritious thanks to sustainable agriculture, which provides consumers with a range of affordable choices to suit nearly every preference.

## The Basics

- // **What:** Thanks to sustainable farming and food safety monitoring practices, the food supply has never been more safe, nutritious or affordable.
- // **Why:** Farmers choose innovative tools and processes that are carefully studied to make sure food is safe to eat and protected from the harmful effects of weeds, pests and diseases.
- // **How:** Consumers today have access to a wide variety of safe and healthy foods all year long, thanks to efficient production, storage and transportation capabilities worldwide.

A review of more than  
**1,000 studies**  
 over the past  
**30 years**



found no conclusive evidence of cause-and-effect relationships between genetically engineered (GE) crops and environmental problems, nor increased health risks associated with eating GE foods.<sup>1</sup>

## The Background

Microbiological food safety is vigilantly monitored throughout the farmer-to-consumer chain. From the use of clean agricultural water by growers, to processing plant sanitation within the value chain, to handwashing at home, foodborne risks are addressed at every step of the food system. Sophisticated monitoring and reporting tools have made grower and distributor safety protocols increasingly effective.

Food production also undergoes rigorous testing, reviews and approvals, both internally and by regulatory agencies. Every input in the food system, from pesticides to packaging, is closely supervised. These practices and oversights, along with innovation in production, allow many consumers to access an abundance of diverse foods year-round.

Consumers have every right to expect that the food they eat is not only safe but is also produced sustainably in a way that is considerate of human health, wildlife and the environment. In addition to supporting availability and access to nutritious food, agriculture is also focused on how to continuously reduce inputs like land and fertilizer and introduce new practices that can contribute to better landscape biodiversity, protect water quantity and quality, and adapt/mitigate climate change.

The fact is the food supply has never been more safe, nutritious or affordable. Innovative practices have enabled fewer farmers to produce enough food on less land than ever before, while preserving precious natural resources needed for our future.

## The Highlights

### The foods supply has never been safer or more nutritious.

- // Today's food is safer and more nutritious than ever before because of continued innovations in foods produced both conventionally and organically.
- // According to the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment, around one million people contract foodborne infections caused by fungi, bacteria, viruses or parasites.<sup>2</sup> Sustainable technologies and practices help reduce these types of food contamination and spoilage, which can lead to serious illnesses for millions of people annually, if not properly addressed.<sup>3</sup>

#### References

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3. Oerke et al., 1995 / Yudelman et al., 1998



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## The Highlights

### Today's food is healthy and increasingly affordable.

- // Crop protection products and improved seed varieties have helped farmers increase yields. These efficiencies enable greater production on less land, which conserves biodiversity and protects soil health and ultimately lowers the price of food delivered to the consumer.

### Rigorous safety testing and monitoring ensures a safe food supply.

- // Crop protection tools are among the most highly-regulated and thoroughly-tested products anywhere in the world. The average new product requires 11 years of testing before it ever reaches the market.<sup>4</sup>
- // Annual monitoring surveys show that 97 to 99 percent<sup>5</sup> of all sampled foods contain only trace amounts of pesticide residues, well below the limits established by regulatory authorities.

### Affordable foods allow healthier options for consumers.

- // Innovation in plant breeding, crop protection, storage, processing and transportation are providing consumers with greater access to diverse diets. Not surprisingly, improved health care, coupled with safe and affordable foods, has contributed to a rise in life expectancy worldwide.<sup>6</sup>

### The food supply is safe – so enjoy it!

- // Both organic and conventional foods are equally nutritious, safe and contribute to a healthy diet. Experts at Stanford University reviewed 237 studies<sup>7</sup> on multiple crops over four decades and found no evidence of health or nutritional benefits from eating organic foods, when compared to conventional foods.

## Key Things to Remember

- // Sustainable agriculture not only provides enough food to meet the world's needs, but also offers a variety of foods to satisfy changing consumer preferences.
- // Because sustainable agriculture is economical and protects crops from harmful weeds, insects and diseases, food has never been safer, more nutritious, or more affordable.
- // Today's seeds and crop protection tools are extensively tested and monitored to ensure food is not only safe for consumption, but also for wildlife and the environment.

#### References

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5. The 2014 European Union Report on Pesticide Residues in Food - European Food Safety Authority (ENDORSED: 21 October 2016). doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2016.4611; USDA Annual Pesticide Data Program. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/press-releases/us-da-releases-2015-annual-pesticide-data-program-summary>
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7. Stanford Medicine (2012). <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2012/09/little-evidence-of-health-benefits-from-organic-foods-study-finds.html>