



## Organic myths busted in new report

*UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 13th AUGUST 2001, 00.01 Hours*

A new report which aims to counter the myths spread by the opponents of organic food and farming is published today by the Soil Association, the leading organic campaigning and certification body and Sustain, the alliance for better food and farming. The report is endorsed by 36 public interest groups ranging from the National Federation of Women's Institutes to WWF-UK.

Produced as a resource for journalists, decision-makers commentators and campaigners Organic food and farming: myth and reality takes up the challenge of answering critics of the organic movement with factual, robust and well referenced information.

In particular it examines and refutes the claims that:

- Organic foods are no healthier than non-organic foods;
- Organic farming increases the risk of food poisoning;
- Organic farming uses pesticides that damage the environment;
- Consumers are paying too much for organic food;
- Organic food cannot feed a hungry world;
- Organic farming is unkind to animals.

The report also takes a look at the origins of a number of the organic myths and the organisations and individuals that peddle them.

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Adrian Long, Soil Association Head of Communications says,

*'Myth and Reality exposes the misleading and erroneous statements made against organic food and provides the facts that prove our critics wrong. These myths are not conjured out of thin air, nor do they arrive at the media's doorstep by chance. Many of our critics have a vested interest in trying to destroy the trust that the public rightly have in organic food. We hope that our report will help journalists and others to find their way through the myth and reality of organic food and farming.'*

Catherine Fookes, report author from the Organic Targets Campaign at Sustain says,

*'People are increasingly confused by the claims and counter-claims made about organic food and farming. We wanted to clear up this confusion by looking at the evidence and coming up with the facts on organics. For instance, our research found that organic farming practices can reduce the risk of bacteria such as E.coli in food. Those critics who slam organic food for being high risk and more likely to cause food poisoning are wrong.'*

*'With UK farming in crisis many groups in Sustain's membership also wanted to ensure that the great opportunity that organic farming represents for UK farmers to diversify is not destroyed by unsubstantiated myths.'*

**ENDS**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

- Copies of the report priced £10, are available from the Soil Association (Tel. 0117 914 2446) or Sustain (Tel 020 7837 1228).
- Sales of organic food are estimated to reach £1 billion this year rising from £605 million in 1999/2000. Figures from The Organic Food and Farming Report 2000, published by the Soil Association.
- See also Organic Farming, food quality and human health, (£12) which examines the scientific evidence demonstrating the benefits of organic food. Published by the Soil Association on 6 August 2001. Call 0117 914 2446 or see: [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)
- Sustain is the secretariat for the Organic Targets Campaign which aims to have 30% of UK land organic by 2010 and an action plan for organic farming. The Soil Association and over 100 other groups support the campaign. For more information see [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)