



The Peak Body for the Australian Organic Sector

www.ofa.org.au

From the desk of:

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Experts State that UK Organic Report Flawed

'International scientists have found that the UK FSA report is deeply flawed' Andre Leu, Chairman of the Organic Federation of Australia stated. *'The scientist found that it ignored 15 recent studies, included obsolete studies and made a conclusion that contradicts its own data.'*

The scientists from the University of Texas at Austin, Washington State University and the Organic Center stated: *'Since February 2008, the cut-off date of the London study, some 15 new studies have been published, most of which use superior design and analytical methods based on criticisms of older studies.'*

'The FSA review included studies over a 50-year period: January 1958 through February 2008.'

'Most studies published before 1980 were found flawed for purposes of comparing the nutrient content of today's conventional and organic crops.'

'Most of the older studies used plant varieties no longer in use, and did not measure or report total phenolics or antioxidant capacity (since these nutrients were just being discovered). The older studies used analytical methods that are now considered inferior, compared to modern methods.'

Lead scientist Charles Benbrook stated *'...the London team downplayed positive findings in favor of organic food. In several instances, their analysis showed that organic foods tend to be more nutrient dense than conventional foods. Plus, their study omitted measures of some important nutrients, including total antioxidant capacity.'*

'The London team reported finding statistically significant differences between organically and conventionally grown crops in three of thirteen categories of nutrients.'

'Despite the fact that these three categories of nutrients favored organic foods, and none favored conventionally grown foods, the London-based team concluded that there are no nutritional differences between organically and conventionally grown crops.' Charles Benbrook, Ph.D stated

Peter Melchett, Policy Director at the UK Soil Association came to a similar conclusion as the American scientists: *'The review rejected almost all of the existing studies of comparisons between organic and non-organic nutritional differences.'*

'Although the researchers say that the differences between organic and non-organic food are not 'important', due to the relatively few studies, they report in their analysis that there are higher levels of beneficial nutrients in organic compared to non-organic foods. For example, the mean positive difference between the following nutrients, when comparing organic to non-organic food, was found in the FSA study to be:

- Protein 12.7%
- Beta-carotene 53.6%
- Flavonoids 38.4%
- Copper 8.3%
- Magnesium 7.1%
- Phosphorous 6%
- Potassium 2.5%

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- Sodium 8.7%
- Sulphur 10.5%
- Zinc 11.3%
- Phenolic compounds 13.2%

'The researchers also found higher levels of beneficial polyunsaturated fatty acids in organic meat and dairy products (between 2.1% - 27.8% higher) compared to non-organic meat and dairy.' Melchert stated

The full statements can be found at www.organic-center.org and www.soilassociation.org

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The Organic Federation of Australia is the peak body and the largest representative organic organisation in Australia. For further information please visit www.ofa.org.au

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