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*"Bringing Debate to the Bluegrass!"*

BDC Arguments Sample (v. 2.0)  
Topic: Increasing Organic Agriculture  
<https://bluegrassdebate.org/> [Pg.3]

## **BDC ARGUMENT SAMPLES (PRO & CON)**

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

#### **PRO (Simple):**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ ,

My partner and I believe that increasing organic agriculture would be desirable.

In this speech, I will present each of my team's arguments... [next page]

#### **CON (Simple):**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ ,

My partner and I believe that increasing organic agriculture would be undesirable.

In this speech, I will present each of my team's arguments... [next page]

#### **PRO (Advanced):**

Hook: [A short but strong piece of evidence from a prestigious source]

This is why my partner and I believe that increasing organic agriculture would be desirable.

In this speech, I will present each of my team's arguments... [next page]

#### **CON (Advanced):**

Hook: [A short but strong piece of evidence from a prestigious source]

This is why my partner and I believe that increasing organic agriculture would be undesirable.

In this speech, I will present each of my team's arguments... [next page]



## PRO ARGUMENTS

*Our first argument is...*

### PRO-01: Protecting the Environment (ex. Biodiversity)

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... protect the environment*

Elaboration: *because...* the synthetic chemicals used in conventional farming threaten to kill so many insects that they can go extinct. However, organic farming prevents farmers from using such chemicals.

Evidence: *for example...*

#### **First... Conventional Farming Threatens Biodiversity (bc... synthetic chemicals and pollution)**

S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/22/organic-food-better-environment/>

Q: It states...

Conventional farming has been heavily criticized for causing biodiversity loss, soil erosion, and increased water pollution due to the rampant usage of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. However, despite these glaring cons, scientists are concerned that organic farming has far lower yields as compared to conventional farming, and so requires more land to meet demand.

This means... we need to increase organic farming, which does not allow the use of synthetic chemicals, which will protect millions of organisms, which are currently being threatened.

#### **Also... Protecting Biodiversity (ex. Insect facing extinction from harmful chemicals)**

S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

Q: It states...

Protection of insects: Also, our insects suffer quite a lot due to the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. These substances often contain elements which are quite harmful to insects and insect population vastly decrease in these areas. In order to sustain our insect population, it is crucial to reduce the use of chemical substances in agriculture and to use natural fertilizers and pesticides instead. By doing so, we can not only protect many insect species from extinction, but we can also increase our crop yields since insects are a major factor for the pollination of crops.

This means... if we increase the use of organic farming, we can prevent the extinction of many species!

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

1. Loss of biodiversity threatens all of nature – there is no coming back from the extinction of a species!
2. Without bees and other insects that help pollinate the fields, we risk losing plant life as well.
3. People depend on the environment, making the planet unlivable threatens our own existence!

Transition: Therefore... increasing organic agriculture will protect the environment.

*Our next argument is...*



## PRO-02: Improving People's Health

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will...* improve people's health

Elaboration: *because...* the chemicals from conventional farming can harm people, however organic products are the safest products available.

Evidence: *for example...*

### **First... Conventional Farming Increases Health Risks**

S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/22/organic-food-better-environment/>

Q: It states...

The gradual shift towards organic farming has been mainly because we as consumers have become increasingly concerned about the health impacts of accidentally consuming pesticides and chemical fertilizers. During the 1990s, the USDA first standardized the meaning of the term "organic" — basically, farmers do not use any form of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides to grow their produce.

This means... increasing organic farming, makes millions of people healthier because their food has fewer toxins in it.

### **Also... Safest Products for Human Consumption**

S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022

<https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/pros-and-cons-organic-farming.php>

Q: It states...

Improved human health: Organic produce offers the safest products for human consumption compared to any other available food products. Organic products are high in nutrition content, they contain lower levels of chemicals, and they do not have modified ingredients. Besides, organic standards have set strict regulations to ensure all products that are labeled organic are truly organic in production and processing which ensures that they are free from synthetic chemicals components and genetically modified production technologies. Accordingly, organic products can improve human health by ensuring that the risks of diseases like infertility, cancer, and immunodeficiency are minimized.

This means... millions of people will be healthier because their food is more nutritious and less likely to cause diseases.

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

1. Millions of people will be safer from no longer accidentally eating poisonous foods!
2. Hundreds of millions of people will be healthier from eating more nutrient-rich foods.
3. Long term, fewer people will get fewer diseases such as cancer!

Transition: *Therefore...* increasing organic agriculture will improve people's health.

So, for all these reasons, please vote ***in favor*** of increasing organic farming.



## PRO-03: Increased Food Security

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... increase food security*

Elaboration: *because...* the current farming methods are unsustainable and are a threat to future food production, yet organic methods help to replenish the nutrients in the soil without using synthetic poisons.

Evidence: *for example...*

### **First... Billions Threatened by Food Insecurity**

S: According to... *Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/pros-and-cons-organic-farming.php>

Q: It states...

Food security: The demand against the supply of food has always been disproportionate due to the effects of climate change and poor farming practices that cause poor crop produce. Various people around the globe are facing starvation and lack enough food supply as there is a general shortage of safe and nutritious food to satisfy food preferences and dietary needs for a healthy and active life.

This means... we need to change the way we make our food so that there is more nutrition and less poison, which is exactly what organic farming is designed to do – we protect millions of people by giving them food that won't make them sick.

### **Also... Conventional Farming Experiencing 20% Loss**

S: According to... *Economics Help, December 3, 2019*

<https://www.economicshelp.org/blog/153913/economics/organic-farming-pros-and-cons/>

Q: It states...

The JRC noted that decreasing productivity can be observed on 20% of the world's cropland, 16% of forest land, 19% of grassland, and 27% of rangeland. "Industrial agriculture is good at feeding populations, but it is not sustainable. It's like an extractive industry," said Louise Baker, external relations head of the UN body. --Guardian Sep 2017

This means... as conventional farming continues to poison water and soil, our food production is at risk of starving billions of people around the world.

### **Finally... Organic Farming Boosts Yields**

S: According to... *Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019*

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/22/organic-food-better-environment/>

Q: It states...

McDermid said that in some areas of the developing world, organic farming can actually boost yields over conventional farming because it doesn't rely on so much water and chemical inputs. These practices also build soil fertility and lead to less pollution.

This means... increasing organic farming will prevent further losses and guarantee enough food for everyone.

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

1. Billions of people are threatened by unsustainable farming practices being used today.
2. Organic farming can feed billions of people in a much more reliable way.
3. Billions of lives are at risk when synthetic fertilizers and pesticides poison our food, soil, and water!

Transition: *Therefore...* increasing organic agriculture will increase food security.

So, for all these reasons, please vote **in favor** of increasing organic farming.



## PRO-04: Protecting Animals

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... protect animals*

Elaboration: *because...* millions of animals are not protected under the law and are being abused on a daily basis, however following organic rules puts an end to these barbaric practices.

Evidence: *for example...*

### **First... Farm Cruelty to Animals is Legal (ex. Investigative Journalism)**

S: According to... Vox News, March 9, 2022

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2022/3/9/22967328/animal-cruelty-laws-state-federal-exemptions-pennsylvania-martin-farms-dairy-calves-dehorning>

Q: It states...

During her stint, Wing captured a variety of horrors on film. Some were inhumane but legal and not uncommon in the dairy industry, like removing calves' horns — which is done to prevent the horns from injuring workers — without pain mitigation like anesthesia or anti-inflammatory drugs. But she also documented acts of cruelty that seemed wholly gratuitous, like employees beating, stomping on, and kicking cows, and many others I'll omit for the sake of readers' peace of mind.

### **Furthermore... Nine Billion Animals are Exposed to Abuse**

S: Again from... Vox News, March 9, 2022

<https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2022/3/9/22967328/animal-cruelty-laws-state-federal-exemptions-pennsylvania-martin-farms-dairy-calves-dehorning>

And with 9 billion animals churning through the meat, dairy, and egg industries each year and just a handful of undercover investigators documenting how they're treated, consumers and policymakers are left in the dark. This system persists because farmed animals are largely invisible in the law.

This means... if we increase organic farming, then there will be less overcrowding of animals and specific rules to prevent the harm of animals – it might be "legal" to harm them, but this would not be allowed under organic rules.

### **Also... Clear Benefits to Animals**

S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/02/author-robert-paarlberg-argues-against-buying-organic/>

Q: He states...

The rules for organic farming do deliver some clear benefit in the livestock sector. Producers of organic meat, milk, and eggs are required to provide their animals with more space to move around, an important plus for animal welfare. Also, animal products cannot be labeled organic if the animals were fed or treated with antibiotics, which is good for slowing the emergence of resistant bacterial strains dangerous to human health. Yet even for livestock the organic rule malfunctions, since the animals can only be given feeds grown organically, and organic corn and soy have lower yields per acre, so more land must be planted and plowed.

This means... increasing organic farming will protect farm animals, which are not currently protected under ANY animal welfare laws – the food industry manipulated such laws to exclude farm animals, which is why it is not illegal to abuse them.

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

4. Millions of animals will no longer have their bodies mutilated!
5. Millions of animals will no longer be stepped on, hit/kicked, or run over with vehicles.
6. These animals can finally live in a way that allows them to move around (not stuck in a tight-fitting cage).

Transition: *Therefore...* increasing organic agriculture will protect millions of animals.

So, for all these reasons, please vote **in favor** of increasing organic farming.



*Our next argument is...* [A different argument we built together during the workshops]

## **PRO-??: Reducing Health Risks**

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will...* reduce health risks

Elaboration: *because...* there will be better nutrition and less pollution from our foods.

Evidence: *For example...*

### ***First... Better nutrition values (b/c... Organic foods have more time to develop its nutrition)***

*S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

*Q: It states...*

Better nutrition values on average: Since organic fruits and vegetables often grow slower, they have more time to develop high levels of nutrients and other elements that are beneficial to human health. Thus, compared to vegetables and fruits that come from conventional farming, organic crops often contain a higher concentration of healthy substances.

*This means...* using organic products will make us healthier because of the increased amounts of nutrition.

### ***Also... Reducing water pollution (b/c... Organic farmers avoid using harmful substances)***

*S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

*Q: It states...*

Less groundwater pollution: Since the chemicals from pesticides, herbicides and fungicides will contaminate the soil, they will also eventually end up in our groundwater. This could lead to significant problems since millions of people rely on groundwater in order to get water for their daily life. Water will become an even scarcer resource in the future due to global warming. Therefore, it is crucial that we refrain from the use of chemical substances in agriculture and switch to organic elements instead in order to protect our groundwater and to ensure the livelihood of millions or even billions of people on our planet.

*This means...* tens of millions of people will be healthier by having access to cleaner water!

Impacts: *There are several impacts...* billions of people around the world will be healthier because of more nutritious food to eat and less water contamination making them sick.

Transition: *Therefore...* increasing organic agriculture will reduce health risks.

*Our next argument is...*





## CON ARGUMENTS

*Our first argument is...*

### CON-01: Lacking Effectiveness

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... not be effective*

Elaboration: *because...* there is a serious lack of regulation and as more and more industrial companies take over the organic industry, the presumed benefits of organic products are almost entirely lost. 😞

Evidence: *for example...*

#### **First... Lack of Proper Regulation**

S: *According to...* Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/22/organic-food-better-environment/>

Q: It states...

Making matters more complicated, some experts worry that the term "organic food" is not always properly regulated. As more large corporations get involved in organic markets, researchers claim that this shift to the mainstream has "led to the weakening of ecologically beneficial standards". It may also limit organic farming's ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

This means... increasing organic agriculture will not result in better health or a better environment, but rather the opposite will happen. Standards will get weaker as large industrial companies manipulate the organic marketplace.

#### **Also... Organic Policies are Insufficient and Misguided**

S: *According to...* Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/02/author-robert-paarlberg-argues-against-buying-organic/>

Q: He states...

It doesn't usually pay to challenge popular beliefs, even with scientific evidence, but some have felt compelled to do so in the case of organic agriculture. Louise O. Fresco, trained as an agronomist, is the president of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, the world's leading agricultural university. In her 2016 book "Hamburgers in Paradise," she drew a harsh conclusion: "Organic farming as a whole is a mish-mash of valuable goals and ideals that have either been insufficiently tested or are completely misguided."

This means... increasing organic agriculture will not be effective because the guidelines are so unreliable -- it may look good in theory, however, in reality, it does not work as promised.

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

1. We will not get the promised health benefits because industrial companies care more about profit.
2. The food we eat is not really organic, because many companies barely follow the rules (some may even cheat!).
3. Millions of people suffer when food prices go up, yet the quality does not – making food less affordable.

Transition: Therefore... increasing organic agriculture will **not** be effective.

*Our next argument is...*



## CON-02: Worsening Global Hunger

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... worsen global hunger*

Elaboration: *because... organic agriculture cannot produce enough to meet the global demand and for each conventional farm that is replaced by an organic farm, this will reduce the overall global food supply.*

Evidence: *for example...*

### **First... 98% Increased Demand for Food**

S: *According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019*

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/22/organic-food-better-environment/>

Q: It states...

It is estimated that by 2050, the demand for food is going to increase by 59 to 98 percent due to the ever-increasing global population. A major challenge for the agriculture business is not only trying to figure out how to feed a growing population, but also doing so while adapting to climate change and coming up with adequate mitigation measures.

This means... Without more production, organic farming will leave billions of people vulnerable to food insecurity and hunger.

### **Also... Productivity Loss Threatens Global Survival**

S: *According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/pros-and-cons-organic-farming.php>

Q: It states...

Diminished productivity in the long-term: The contemporary world agricultural production goal is superior productivity. While organic farming promises improved and healthier produce, it is only beneficial in the short term as the massive inputs such as machinery and chemicals are out of the picture. By contrast, over the long-term, the productivity advantages diminish. As the soil health and fertility declines over time in organic farming, so does the yields and this happens when the soil reaches the point where it can no longer convert the existing humus into soil fertility. As a result, productivity starts to diminish and farmers resort to boost it by adding chemical inputs. It takes time for the soil to regenerate and restore after a growing season in organic farming. Hence, when the soil is utilized over the longer time frame then it cannot produce enough produce that can support the survival needs of the world's population.

This means... billions of lives will be threatened when long-term consequences of organic agriculture result in crop failures and food shortages.

Impacts: *There are some severely important impacts...*

1. Billions of people will suffer from malnutrition because the U.S. will have less and less food to donate.
2. Millions of people here at home will suffer from food shortages that cause food prices to increase.
3. People in the US who live at or near poverty will suffer from malnourishment and hunger.

Transition: *Therefore... increasing organic agriculture will cause global hunger.*

So, for all these reasons, please vote **against** increasing organic agriculture.



### CON-03: Harming People in Poverty

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will...* harm people in poverty

Elaboration: *because...* organic products are much more expensive than that which is produced by conventional farms and as a result, many families will not be able to afford the overall increase in food prices.

Evidence: *for example...*

#### **First... Organic Products are 40% More Expensive**

S: According to... *Conserve Energy Future*, Last Accessed: April 2022

<https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/pros-and-cons-organic-farming.php>

Q: It states...

Organic products are extremely expensive: Organic foods are the most expensive agricultural products on the market. Perhaps this is one of the main reasons that organic farming is not fully supported as not so many people realize its great benefits. In supermarkets, for instance, organic vegetables and fruits cost as much as 20 to 40 percent more than their non-organic equivalent. The consumers pay the price, and this is said to be one of the major disadvantages of organically produced food products. The exorbitant prices of organic products are linked with the notion that organic farmers do not yield as much out of their farms as conventional farmers do.

This means... increasing organic farming would increase food prices by 40% causing consumers to suffer as businesses like restaurants experience higher food costs, such as the organic ingredients, those costs will be passed on to us.

#### **Also... Produce Becomes Unaffordable for Many Families**

S: According to... *Environmental Conscience*, Last Accessed: April 2022

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

Q: It states...

[Organic] Products may be too expensive for poor people: Organic fruits and vegetables are often much more expensive compared to conventional ones. Thus, especially for people with a low wage, these food items may not be affordable. Therefore, especially in regions where people are quite poor, organic farming may not be the way to go since the majority of the local population may not be able to afford organic food and may suffer from hunger due to that.

This means... tens of millions of people who are living at or below poverty will suffer tremendously as more organic foods are produced and the overall price of food goes up.

Impacts: *There are some severely important impacts...*

1. Millions of people will suffer from higher food prices as the U.S. food supply goes down.
2. Hundreds of millions of people suffer when these higher crop and meat prices affect other businesses.
3. Millions of impoverished families will suffer from not having as much affordable food to eat.

Transition: *Therefore...* increasing organic agriculture will harm people experiencing poverty.

So, for all these reasons, please vote **against** increasing organic agriculture.



## CON-04: Harming Local Farms

Statement: *Increasing organic agriculture will... harm (the smaller) local farms*

Elaboration: *because... the rules for organic farming are too expensive for most farmers to afford and the ones that consider making the switch will be at serious risk of going bankrupt.*

Evidence: *for example...*

### **First... Organic is Too Costly for Most Farmers**

S: *According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

Q: It states...

Significant costs at the beginning: Even though organic farming has many important advantages, there are also some problems related to it. One disadvantage of organic farming is that it can be quite costly to get all the necessary equipment and to fulfill the regulatory standards in order to declare and sell your products as organic. Thus, many small farmers may not be able to afford these kinds of investments and certifications and may stay trapped in conventional farming due to that.

This means... switching to organic farming will not be effective because many farmers cannot afford to switch and for those who try they are facing bankruptcy from all the costs.

### **Also... Organic Farming Causes Bankruptcy**

S: *Again from... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://environmental-conscience.com/organic-farming-pros-cons/>

Q: It states...

Small farmers may go out of business: Due to these high regulatory standards and the costs of organic certifications, some small farmers may even go out of business since they might not be able to meet those high standards. Additionally, if there are big organic food companies in those regions, small farmers [also may] not be able to stay competitive and may lose their livelihood due to that.

This means... millions of small farms will suffer from attempting to switch and going bankrupt during the process. If they go bankrupt, then their farm will likely be sold to one of the industrial companies that doesn't really care about organic farming.

Impacts: *there are several important impacts...*

1. Millions of farmers will suffer from lost profits attempting to switch to organic farming.
2. Thousands of farmers could face bankruptcy by trying to make the switch to organic.
3. Industrial agriculture companies will buy up the failed farms and not follow organic farming rules.

Transition: Therefore... increasing organic agriculture will harm local farms.

So, for all these reasons, please vote **against** increasing organic agriculture.