



BDC REBUTTAL SAMPLES (PRO)..... 4

INTRODUCTIONS (PRO)..... 4

PRO REBUTTALS (vs CON) 5

AT: Lacking Effectiveness [CON]..... 5

1. USDA & Certifiers Cooperate on Enforcement..... 5
S: According to... The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Last Accessed: April 2022 5

2. Failure to Correct Results in Suspension/Removal 5
S: According to... The NOP Handbook, US Dept. of Agriculture, Last Accessed: April 2022 5

3. NOP Enforcement is Essential to Fairness..... 5
S: According to... US Dept. of Agriculture, February 21, 2017 5

4. NOP Enforcement Getting Stronger 5
S: According to... US Dept. of Agriculture, February 21, 2017 5

AT: Global Hunger / Food Security [CON] 6

1. Organic Farming Can Feed the World..... 6
S: According to... Rodale Institute, May 14, 2019..... 6

2. Organic Farming Increases Food Sustainability..... 6
S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022..... 6

3. Conventional Methods Threaten Food Security 6
S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 6

4. GMOs Threaten Food Security 6
S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022..... 6

AT: Harming People in Poverty [CON]..... 7

1. Conventional Methods Threaten Food Security (Prevents Global Food Shortages!) 7
S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 7

2. Conventional Farming Increases Health Risks (Saves Money on Medical Bills!) 7
S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019..... 7

3. Higher Concentration of Nutritional Value (More time for development)..... 7
S: According to... Environmental Conscience, Last Accessed: April 2022..... 7

4. [case] Organics are Safest Products for Human Consumption 7
S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 7

AT: Harming Local Farmers [CON]..... 8

1. Excellent Economic Growth Potential for Organic Products..... 8
S: According to... Economics Help, December 3, 2019..... 8

2. Organic Farming Creates Tremendous Savings 8
S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 8

3. Higher Potential for Organic Farming Profits 8
S: According to... Economics Help, December 3, 2019..... 8

4. Organic Durability Increases Security for Farmers 8
S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 8



BDC REBUTTAL SAMPLES (CON) 9

INTRODUCTIONS (CON)..... 9

CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO) 10

AT: Protecting the Environment [PRO]..... 10

 1. Lack of Proper Regulation Weakens Ecological 'Standards' 10
 S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019 10

 2. Organic Sulfates Polluting Water Systems 10
 S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 10

 3. "Smart" Spraying Reduces Use of Conventional Pesticides 10
 S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 10

 4. Hundreds of Pounds of Plastic Waste Annually (ex. "Mulch" Carpets Cover Thousands of Acres!) 10
 S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 10

AT: Improving People’s Health [PRO]..... 11

 1. No Scientific Evidence Supporting Improved Health (Assumptions – Not Science!) 11
 S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 11

 2. Cancer Risks Exaggerated by Media (ex. Ignoring Scientists)..... 11
 S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 11

 3. Using Harmful Non-Synthetic Organic Chemicals (ex. Copper/Sulphur = health Risks) 11
 S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019 11

 4. Steroids and Hormones are Safe and Thoroughly Tested 11
 S: According to... U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 13, 2022 11

AT: Organic Food is Healthier [PRO] 12

 1. Organic food not proven heathier 12
 S: According to... Harvard University, February 2021 12

 2. What you eat is more important (than how it was produced) 12
 S: According to... Kurtzgesaght, January 2019 12

 3. No Evidence of Health Benefits: microbiological contamination and toxins (from nature) 12
 S: According to... The Seattle Times, Date: ??? 12

 4. Organic Labeling = No Guarantee of Extra Nutrition 12
 S: According to... The University of Colorado, ??? 12

AT: Increasing Food Security [PRO] 13

 1. [case] Productivity Loss Threatens Global Survival 13
 S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 13

 2. 20% Reduction in Crop Yields 13
 S: According to... Economics Help, December 3, 2019 13

 3. Organic Products are Extremely Expensive 13
 S: According to... Conserve Energy Future, Last Accessed: April 2022 13

 4. Increased Risk of Conflict Over Food 13
 S: According to... Columbia Climate School, Columbia University, October 22, 2019 13



"Bringing Debate to the Bluegrass!"

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

CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO): Continued... 10

AT: Protecting Farm Animals [PRO] 14

1. Farmers Don't Abuse Animals – The Industry is Misunderstood... 14
S: According to... The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016 14

2. Increasing Number of Regulations to Prevent Mistreatment (Don't Need Organic Rules) 14
S: According to... The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016 14

3. Consumer Demands Creating Changes in Farming Practices 14
S: According to... The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016 14

4. Organic Rules are Being Manipulated (ex. Overcrowding Still Happens!) 14
S: According to... Prof. Robert Paarlberg, Harvard University, Harvard Gazette, February 2, 2021 14



BDC REBUTTAL SAMPLES (PRO)

INTRODUCTIONS (PRO)

PRO (Simple):

Hello, my name is _____ ,

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

In this speech, I will refute each of my opponent'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 still believe that increasing organic agriculture is desirable.

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

4-Step Refutation (Please Memorize = They said, We say, Because, Therefore):

They Said... A short summary of what the opposing team said.

ex. They said... increasing organic farming will help the environment.

We say... A one-sentence contradiction. Try using the word 'not' if possible.

ex. We say... increasing organic farming will not help the environment.

Because... Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence and/or reasoning to back up your side (1-2 pieces is okay).

ex. Because...

first... organic farmers using too much pesticide (wears off too quickly = sprays more often). [explain!]

also... Tilling with manure causes erosion & runoff (too much nitrate kills soil and harms water) [explain!]

finally... provide one more idea...[explain!]

Therefore... A short summary of what the opposing team said.

ex. Therefore... increasing organic farming will not help the environment.



PRO REBUTTALS (vs CON)

AT: Lacking Effectiveness [CON]

1. USDA & Certifiers Cooperate on Enforcement

S: According to... *The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>

Q: It states...

NOP is a federal regulatory program that develops and enforces consistent national standards for organically produced agricultural products sold in the United States. NOP also accredits third-party organizations to certify that farms and businesses meet the national organic standards. These certifiers and USDA work together to enforce the standards, ensuring a level playing field for producers and protecting consumer confidence in the integrity of the USDA Organic Seal.

This means... the USDA works with certifiers to monitor and investigate farms to make sure they are following the rules.

2. Failure to Correct Results in Suspension/Removal

S: According to... *The NOP Handbook, US Dept. of Agriculture, Last Accessed: April 2022*

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/4002.pdf>

Q: It states...

Violations that warrant a NONC are more significant than minor issues. They are serious or complex enough to require an approved corrective action plan and the certifier is to verify the implementation of the approved plan. Failure to correct (or successfully rebut) these violations in a prescribed time period indicates that an operation is unable or unwilling to comply with the USDA organic regulations. Failure to correct (or successfully rebut) violations cited in a NONC may result in a Notice of Proposed Suspension or, if the NONC was issued as part of an application review, a denial of certification. Also, unlike a minor issue, if a NONC is issued as part of the application process for certification, the operation must resolve the noncompliance before certification is granted.

This means... most companies won't risk breaking the rules, because if they did, they would lose their organic license.

3. NOP Enforcement is Essential to Fairness

S: According to... *US Dept. of Agriculture, February 21, 2017*

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/04/19/protecting-organic-integrity-through-enforcement>

Q: It states...

We take our enforcement role seriously, because we know it is essential to creating a level playing field for all organic stakeholders and maintaining consumer confidence in organic products. The NOP works hard to efficiently process and close all complaints. In the last three fiscal years, the NOP has processed and closed 260, 285, and 390 complaints, respectively. In addition, the NOP has increasingly prevailed in enforcement actions that go through USDA administrative court proceedings. In FY 2015, enforcement activities resulted in 13 settlement agreements and civil penalties in excess of \$1.8 million. For the first quarter of FY16, enforcement activities have already resulted in five settlement agreements and civil penalties of nearly \$930,000. You can read more about the NOP Compliance & Enforcement activities on the NOP Organic Enforcement web page.

This means... Large agriculture companies are not likely to get away with breaking the rules – the government stops them.

4. NOP Enforcement Getting Stronger

S: According to... *US Dept. of Agriculture, February 21, 2017*

<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2016/04/19/protecting-organic-integrity-through-enforcement>

Q: It states...

Compliance and enforcement activities are key to maintaining organic integrity, and the NOP continues to strengthen enforcement efforts to ensure a fair market for all organic products. To support our efforts, the Organic INTEGRITY Database now allows certifying agents to regularly update the list of organic operations they certify. And by publicizing fraudulent organic certificates, the NOP increases awareness within the organic trade community when we uncover violators. Through all of these efforts, we remain committed to protecting the integrity of the organic seal for consumers and businesses.

This means... as organic enforcement gets stronger, the likelihood that companies will get away with cheating is low.



PRO REBUTTALS (vs CON): *Continued...*

AT: Global Hunger / Food Security [CON]

1. Organic Farming Can Feed the World

S: According to... Rodale Institute, May 14, 2019

<https://rodaleinstitute.org/blog/can-organic-feed-the-world/>

The truth is that yes, organic can feed the world! Organic can compete with conventional yields and outperform conventional in adverse weather. Small farmers using organic methods have huge potential to expand global food production. And only organic methods actively regenerate resources and protect the environment from pollution and toxic waste. For a healthy future, we can't afford anything less.

This means... it is incorrect to say that organic farming will reduce the food supply – this is simply untrue.

2. Organic Farming Increases Food Sustainability

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

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

Q: It states...

More sustainable: Organic gardening can also be considered to be more sustainable compared to traditional farming practices. Since less or even no pesticides are used at all, the soil will be protected and will be suitable for farming purposes much longer. Therefore, soil that is used for organic farming will be suitable for hundreds or even thousands of years, while soil that is used for conventional agriculture will soon become too contaminated and will lose its fertility in the long run.

This means... organic farming is more reliable than conventional and guarantees the long-term ability to produce food.

3. Conventional Methods Threaten Food Security

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... without increased organic farming, we risk poisoning the soil and the food insecurity threatens billions of lives!

4. GMOs Threaten Food Security

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

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

Q: It states...

No use of GMOs (genetically modified organisms): Another problem with conventional agriculture is that genetically modified plants are used quite frequently. However, these GMOs are considered to be dangerous for human health in the long run by many scientists. The use of GMOs might also pose a danger to our agricultural system since pests might be able to spread easier and the yield may significantly decrease in the long run. Hence, by using organic agriculture instead, we could avoid the GMO issue and the implied adverse effects.

This means... increasing organic agriculture reduces GMOs and protect food security for billions of people!



PRO REBUTTALS (vs CON): Continued...

AT: Harming People in Poverty [CON]

[Note: *We are proving that organic food is worth the cost because it prevents health problems and gives health benefits*]

1. Conventional Methods Threaten Food Security (Prevents Global Food Shortages!)

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... by increasing organic farming, we make food production healthier and more sustainable helping all families!

2. Conventional Farming Increases Health Risks (Saves Money on Medical Bills!)

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... organic farming makes millions of people healthier reducing their medical costs from eating toxic food.

3. Higher Concentration of Nutritional Value (More time for development)

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... organic food is worth the cost because it is healthier, more nutritious, and won't cause diseases like cancer.

4. [case] Organics are 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 who suffer from poverty will face even tougher financial challenges if their medical bills were to go up from the toxins and/or cancers caused by nonorganic foods. Organic products can prevent this!



PRO REBUTTALS (vs CON): Continued...

AT: Harming Local Farmers [CON]

1. Excellent Economic Growth Potential for Organic Products

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

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

Q: It states...

Organic food is a big growth area for consumer demand. Once thought to be the preserve of the wealthy or eco-eccentrics, organic food is going mainstream with many people from across the spectrum wishing to purchase organic food. [and] Despite the demand for organic food growing strongly, in the US only 0.7% of farms are organic (2012 census). It means that for organic food, the US (and UK) are reliant on food imports. (Source: Agrivi.com) This increase in demand [being] greater than supply is helping organic food to be more profitable.

This means... The growth potential means this is a great time for regular farmers to become organic and earn more profit.

2. Organic Farming Creates Tremendous Savings

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...

Lower input costs: Organic farming does not involve the use of expensive agrochemicals as they are highly forbidden. Organic crops also have better resistance to pest and diseases. When these components are combined together, they considerably save farmers on the costs of using expensive fungicides, pesticides, and insecticides. Fertilizers are created by green manuring or composting, and yields are increased by the use of crop rotation, cover cropping and soil rotation. These practices typically lower the costs of crop and animal production unlike the case in conventional agricultural production techniques.

This means... when farmers save money, they earn more profit, and this helps their farm business become even stronger.

3. Higher Potential for Organic Farming Profits

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

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

Q: It states...

Potential profits: Currently, the demand for organic food is growing faster than supply. Countries like the UK and US have to import organic food from abroad. (Often developing economies) Some organic methods are more costly (labor-intensive weeding) but also some costs are saved (cost of chemicals). "Overall, organic farms tend to have better soil quality and reduce soil erosion compared to their conventional counterparts. Organic agriculture generally creates less soil and water pollution and lower greenhouse gas emissions and is more energy efficient. Organic agriculture is also associated with greater biodiversity of plants, animals, insects, and microbes, as well as genetic diversity." --Professor Reganold.

This means... organic farming is a very profitable business to be in and it is not likely to cause financial problems for farmers.

4. Organic Durability Increases Security for Farmers

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...

This means that many people risk suffering the consequences of food insecurity. In the pillars of food security, a recent study in Science-Digest stressed that promotion of organic farming can intensify yield production particularly in poor countries where inputs for conventional agriculture are highly expensive, thus contributing to increased food security. This is attributed to the fact that organically grown plants are more durable, have higher resistance to pest and diseases, and are equally drought tolerant.

This means... by having greater food security, organic farmers businesses are more sustainable and better able to deal with natural threats that might otherwise bankrupt them. Organic farming is more durable and more likely to last.



BDC REBUTTAL SAMPLES (CON)

INTRODUCTIONS (CON)

CON (Simple):

Hello, my name is _____ ,

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

In this speech, I will refute each of my opponent'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 still believe that increasing organic agriculture is undesirable.

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

4-Step Refutation (Please Memorize = They said, We say, Because, Therefore):

They Said... A short summary of what the opposing team said.

ex. They said... increasing organic farming will help the environment.

We say... A one-sentence contradiction. Try using the word 'not' if possible.

ex. We say... increasing organic farming will not help the environment.

Because... Provide 2-3 pieces of evidence and/or reasoning to back up your side (1-2 pieces is okay).

ex. Because...

first... organic farmers using too much pesticide (wears off too quickly = sprays more often). [explain!]

also... Tilling with manure causes erosion & runoff (too much nitrate kills soil and harms water) [explain!]

finally... provide one more idea...[explain!]

Therefore... A short summary of what the opposing team said.

ex. Therefore... increasing organic farming will not help the environment.



CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO)

AT: Protecting the Environment [PRO]

1. **Lack of Proper Regulation Weakens Ecological 'Standards'**

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... due to poor regulations and influence from large companies, environmental protections have gone down.

2. **Organic Sulfates Polluting Water Systems**

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...

By focusing on natural versus synthetic, the organic rule loses sight of actual risks. Copper sulfate is permitted as a fungicide because it isn't synthetic, but careless use of this chemical can leave dangerous residues on food and pollute our streams. Animal manure is natural, and an excellent fertilizer when composted, but dangerous bacteria will be introduced into fields and also into groundwater systems if a farmer fails to get the heat in the compost pile up to at least 140 degrees. A close friend with a field of organic blueberries on her hilltop farm in Maine developed serious stomach problems when she located her compost pile too close to the well.

This means... increasing organic agriculture has serious risks to both public health and water systems. Industrial organic companies will not hesitate to use whatever organic products are strongest and cheapest to make them the most profit.

3. **"Smart" Spraying Reduces Use of Conventional Pesticides**

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...

Pesticide risks have also been diminished thanks to integrated pest management (IPM), a technique that advises spraying only when monitored pest pressures threaten a commercial loss, and only after nonchemical control options (for example, using good bugs to kill bad bugs) are no longer working. In this system, a judicious use of chemicals is permitted, something the organic rule does not allow. New varieties of crops with better genetic defenses of their own against insects and crop disease have also reduced insecticide use in America, and "smart" sprayers now apply chemicals at optimal rates and with far greater precision. Thanks to all these things in combination, farmers in the United States have reduced pesticide use significantly since the 1970s. The total pounds of herbicide and insecticide ingredients applied to crops declined by 18 percent between 1980 and 2008, even as total crop production increased 46 percent. For insecticides specifically, total use peaked in 1972 and has now fallen more than 80 percent below that peak. All these gains were achieved without any significant switch to organic farming methods.

This means... it is incorrect to say that conventional farming is overly using pesticides because that is not the most efficient and profitable way. (Note: Organic farming sprays more because their pesticides are weaker!).

4. **Hundreds of Pounds of Plastic Waste Annually (ex. "Mulch" Carpets Cover Thousands of Acres!)**

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...

Assuming the rules do not change, a continued expansion of the organic sector will most likely come from investments by big corporate players who stay just barely within the rules by devising technical workarounds. They control against pests by growing indoors hydroponically; they control weeds with gas-powered flamethrowers instead of chemicals, or with "mulch" carpets made of black plastic. Some organic farms in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Florida are spreading plastic over thousands of acres, even though each acre farmed this way generates more than 100 pounds of nonbiodegradable plastic waste that must be loaded into dumpsters, then taken to a landfill. Conventional farmers also use plastic mulch, but not as much, and the plastic they use is biodegradable, so it does not go to a landfill. The National Organic Program does not allow organic farmers to use most biodegradable plastic mulches because they contain petroleum-based materials. Purity comes with a price, once again.

This means... 100's of pounds of non-biodegradable waste is generated each year - filling landfills and causing soil pollution.



CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO): Continued...

AT: Improving People's Health [PRO]

1. No Scientific Evidence Supporting Improved Health (Assumptions – Not Science!)

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...

Consumers tend to favor organic food because they believe the advocates who claim it is safer and more nutritious to eat, but there is little or no scientific evidence to support these claims. Others buy organic food because they assume it comes from farms that are smaller, more traditional, and more diverse, but this is not a safe assumption either. Most organic food on the market today comes from highly specialized, industrial-scale farms, not so different from those that produce conventional food.

This means... people who are claiming health benefits are using assumptions and not scientific proof to back their claims!

2. Cancer Risks Exaggerated by Media (ex. Ignoring Scientists)

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...

"60 Minutes" had mostly ignored the views of toxicologists. Four years earlier an EPA report had shown that consuming the Alar residues found on food over a lifetime would bring an added risk of only 1 more cancer death per 10,000 people. The director of the National Cancer Institute's cancer etiology division went further, characterizing the cancer risks from eating Alar-treated apples as nonexistent. EPA never did ban the chemical, but when growers voluntarily stopped using it due to consumer fears, this was taken as evidence that the threat must be real. Concerns over pesticide residues on food persist to the present day despite that in the United States since the 1970s increased regulation plus reduced spraying have brought risks under control. Although dubious on its merits, the Alar scare created what Newsweek magazine called a "panic for organic." In 1990, Congress passed the Organic Foods Production Act to create a uniform understanding of the practices that would disqualify a farm from organic certification. The strongest push for this new law came from large-scale commercial organic growers, especially in California, as well as consumer groups, some environmental organizations, and animal welfare advocates.

This means... Many cancer claims are exaggerations that have been repeated causing a panic - yet any additional risk from certain synthetic toxins is only minimal.

3. Using Harmful Non-Synthetic Organic Chemicals (ex. Copper/Sulphur = 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...

"An apt example would be the case of a farm involved in the production of organic berries in Central Valley, California. While they are not using additional land area or chemical inputs like in conventional farming, they are using other really strong inputs like sulfur," explained McDermid. "This can be harmful to farmworkers as they need to wear proper suits and protective gear even though it is not chemically synthetic. Despite that, it is just as powerful in some cases." McDermid is also concerned that some agribusinesses can farm uniformly without any biodiversity and still call themselves organic. Whereas in developing or emerging economies — for example in India — farmers tend to follow a far more traditional definition of organic farming.

This means... organic chemical can also get onto our food and into our water supply causing serious health problems.

4. Steroids and Hormones are Safe and Thoroughly Tested

S: According to... U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 13, 2022

<https://www.fda.gov/animal-veterinary/product-safety-information/steroid-hormone-implants-used-growth-food-producing-animals>

Q: It states...

The FDA approves these drugs only after information and/or studies have shown that the food from the treated animals is safe for people to eat, and that the drugs do not harm the treated animal or the environment. The drugs also have to be effective, meaning that they work as intended. The labeling for each product provides all instructions for safe and effective use and is approved by FDA. For each approved product, the FDA also makes available to the public via its website a Freedom of Information Summary that summarizes the information that FDA used to determine that the drug is safe for the treated animals, the animal products (edible tissues such as meat) are safe for humans to eat, and that the product is effective.

This means... organic labels aren't needed to keep our meat safe – the FDA and the USDA are working to protect consumers from unsafe or unhealthy methods used to prepare our meat products.



CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO): Continued...

AT: Organic Food is Healthier [PRO]

The following are some CON rebuttals from one of the workshops...

1. Organic food not proven healthier

S: According to... Harvard University, February 2021

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

2. What you eat is more important (than how it was produced)

S: According to... Kurtzgesagt, January 2019

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8PmM6SUn7Es>

3. No Evidence of Health Benefits: microbiological contamination and toxins (from nature)

S: According to... The Seattle Times, Date: ???

Link: ???

no evidence that organic food is healthier than conventional foods and there is a risk that organic foods can cause microbiological contamination and toxins from nature. [Seattle Times]

4. Organic Labeling = No Guarantee of Extra Nutrition

S: According to... The University of Colorado, ???

Link: ???

Organic labeling can be misleading because it doesn't prove that the food is more nutritious [Univ. of Colorado]



CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO): Continued...

AT: Increasing Food Security [PRO]

1. [case] 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 [food] that can support the survival needs of the world's population.

This means... organic farming cannot promise to prevent environmental problems, yet it will cause potential food shortages.

2. 20% Reduction in Crop Yields

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

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

Q: It states...

Decline in crop yields. Crop yields can be up to 20% less than nonorganic farms. There is a concern that if all farmland was converted to organic it would reduce food supply and increase prices.

This means... increasing organic agriculture will lead to a significant reduction in food production and could cause serious food shortages threatening millions (locally) of even billions of lives (globally)!

3. Organic Products are Extremely 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 produces in 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 the 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... lower organic farming yields lead to higher prices making food unaffordable for many families.

4. Increased Risk of Conflict Over Food

(ex. NASA scientist says making expensive food for the wealthy increases risk of conflict)

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...

"For organic farming to be successful, agribusinesses would have to find the balance between the costs involved and also, its carbon footprint, while taking into consideration the overall need to meet the high demands for food," said Alexander Ruane, a research physical scientist at NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and an adjunct associate research scientist at the Columbia University Center for Climate Systems Research. "That's tough because the goal of organic farming in developed countries currently is about meeting the needs of those who can afford the luxury to buy the highest quality food. If the needs of this luxury interfere with the need to feed the entire population, then you have the potential for conflicts."

This means... when you make more food products that are mostly only affordable by wealthier families, those less fortunate families see this as more privilege for certain groups at the expense of others leading to potentially violent conflict. 😞



CON REBUTTALS (vs PRO): Continued...

AT: Protecting Farm Animals [PRO]

1. *Farmers Don't Abuse Animals – The Industry is Misunderstood*

S: According to... *The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016*

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/11/29/farmers-push-back-against-animal-welfare-laws>

Q: It states...

Farmers acknowledge that some people who do not spend much time on farms may object to some of their practices. But they say that they do not abuse animals and that their practices are the most efficient and safest way to keep up with demand for food. And, they say, complying with restrictions on raising poultry and livestock like those approved in Massachusetts are costly for them and for consumers.

This means... the risk to animals is being misunderstood or exaggerated by ignorant people who don't understand farming.

2. *Increasing Number of Regulations to Prevent Mistreatment (Don't Need Organic Rules)*

S: According to... *The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016*

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/11/29/farmers-push-back-against-animal-welfare-laws>

Q: It states...

Laws like this one, which strictly regulate how farm animals are confined, are becoming more common across the U.S., as large-scale farming replaces family farms and consumers learn more about what happens behind barn doors. Massachusetts is the 12th state to ban the use of some livestock- and poultry-raising cages or crates, such as gestation crates for sows, veal crates for calves or battery cages for chickens, which critics say abusively restrict the animals' movement.

This means... organic rules are not needed for farm animals – the legal system is already working to increase protections.

3. *Consumer Demands Creating Changes in Farming Practices*

S: According to... *The Pew Research Center, November 29, 2016*

<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/11/29/farmers-push-back-against-animal-welfare-laws>

Q: It states...

But consumer expectations already are forcing producers to change how they operate, said Josh Balk, vice president of farm animal protection at the Humane Society of the U.S. Demand for free-range eggs and grass-fed beef is growing, pushing large companies to change their standards. Wal-Mart and McDonald's recently committed to using only suppliers that raise cage-free hens by 2025. Market demands will force producers to change their practices or be left behind, Balk said. The U.S. Department of Agriculture projects that to meet demand, the industry will have to convert over half its egg production to cage-free systems by 2025, up from the current rate of 10 percent.

This means... organic rules are unnecessary – demand for better animal treatment is already forcing the industry to change.

4. *Organic Rules are Being Manipulated (ex. Overcrowding Still Happens!)*

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...

Most organic egg production today looks like nonorganic egg production. I sometimes take students to a Pete and Gerry's organic egg farm in New Hampshire, so they can see what the mainstream organic sector looks like. This is a well-managed operation, but it consists of a single long structure housing 20,000 tightly packed birds. The building has open bays that provide access to a fenced area outside, so it can be certified organic. And there are other, even bigger, egg operations.

This means... organic rules can be exploited so animals are still overcrowded because the company manipulates the rules.