

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION HAS BENEFITS REGARDLESS OF THE PRODUCTION METHOD

- ▶ There are several production methods, and not only one. These depend on many factors, such as climate, soil, presence of diseases and pests, efforts to improve yield, quality, etc. Over the past decade, European agriculture has undergone major changes, in particular with the limit on the number of **plant protection treatments*** (dose/frequency) that can be used to protect crops, and the use of alternative techniques. In practice, therefore, an entire range of production methods is used in conventional agriculture, along with a forward-looking approach to new crop protection methods.
- ▶ These treatments, whether natural or synthetic, are designed to protect plants from various aggressions and ensure quantity, quality and safety while avoiding waste (therefore saving 30 to 40% of the world's harvests).
- ▶ Most international scientific studies show that consumption of at least 400 g/d of fruit and vegetables (F&V), regardless of the production method, is beneficial to health and can reduce the incidence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, etc¹⁻³. Up to 1.7 million lives could be saved each year with adequate fruit and vegetable consumption⁴.

Varieties and genotypes are the leading factors influencing the sensory and nutritional qualities of fruit and vegetables.

There are large variations in the characteristics of fruit and vegetables: **the factors with a predominant influence on the sensory and nutritional qualities of F&V are first and foremost the variety and genotype**, then the climate, agricultural conditions and the stage of ripeness at the time of picking⁵.

The production method is one of the factors that has the least impact on these criteria. The differences in sensory, nutritional and health qualities between organically and conventionally grown plants are shown in Figure 1.

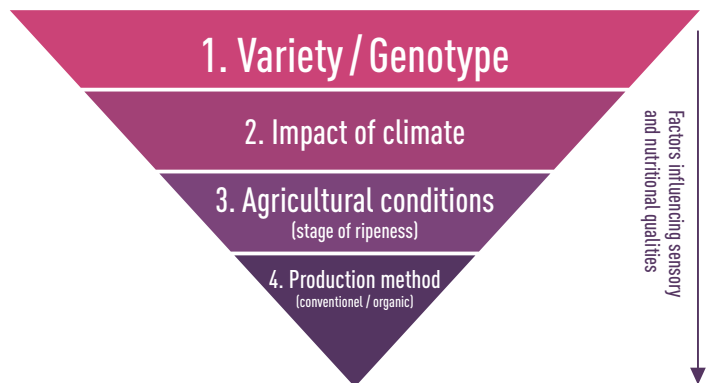
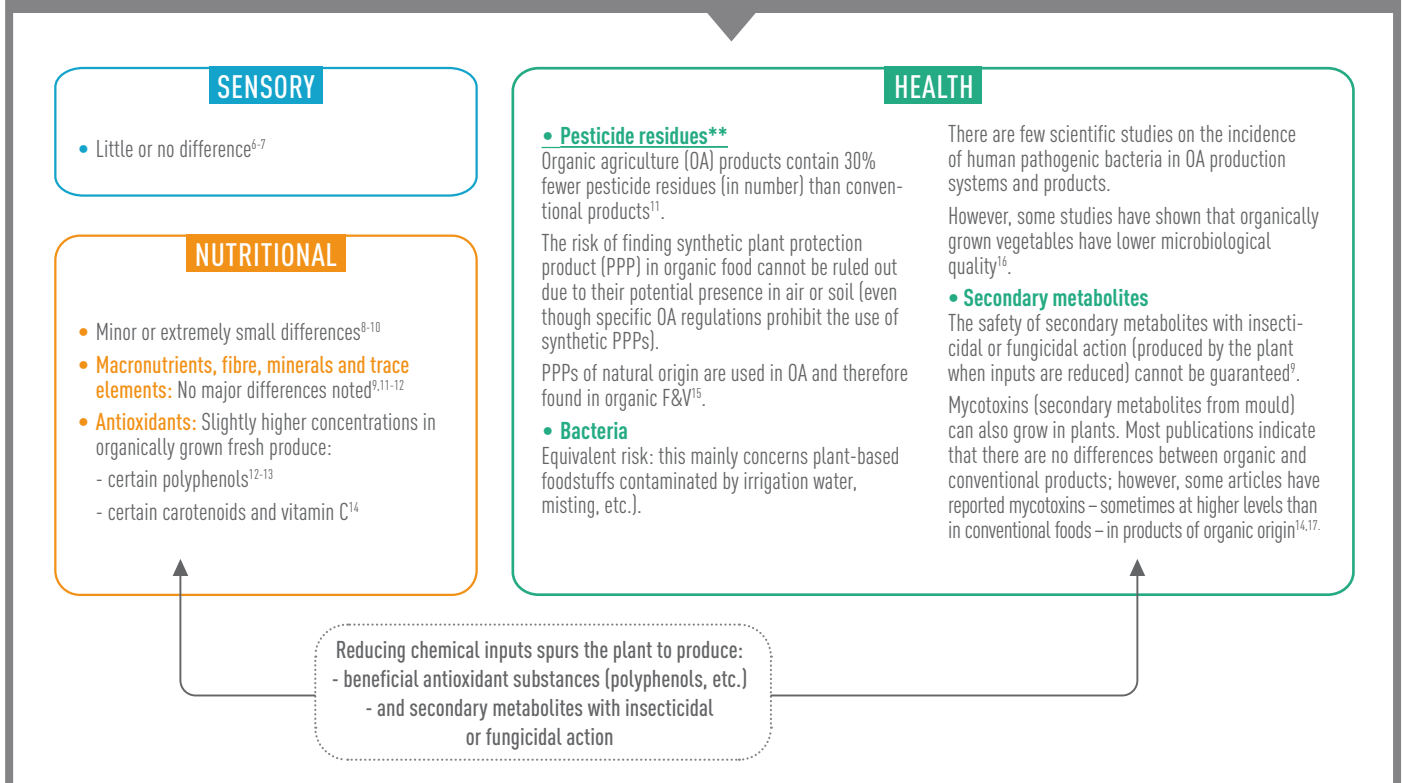


FIGURE 1 : SENSORY, NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH QUALITIES OF PLANTS OF ORGANIC AND CONVENTIONAL ORIGIN



BOX 1: DOES THE PRESENCE OF PESTICIDE RESIDUES CALL INTO QUESTION THE NEED TO EAT FRUIT AND VEGETABLES?**

- Over the past few years, a scientific consensus has emerged in favour of the health benefits of daily consumption of F&V: most international scientific studies show that **consumption of at least 400 g/d of F&V, regardless of the production method, is beneficial to health** and can reduce the incidence of chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancer, etc¹⁻³.
- **An increase in F&V consumption to 600 g per day does not exceed the Acceptable Daily Intake***^{14,18-20}.**
- **A Canadian assessment showed that the benefits of consuming F&V in terms of health and reduced cancer risk far outweigh the low risk of chronic disease associated with pesticide residues²¹.**

BOX 2: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR PATIENTS – REASSURANCE

Encouraging the consumption of fruit and vegetables therefore remains a public health priority. The WHO cites low F&V consumption as one of the ten main risk factors for global mortality. Worldwide, it is estimated that inadequate intake of fruit and vegetables is responsible for nearly 19% of gastrointestinal cancers, 31% of ischaemic heart disease and 11% of strokes⁴.

- The main advice is above all to have or adopt good eating habits in order to follow international nutrition recommendations: **consume more plant-based products (regardless of the production method) as they can protect against the risk of chronic noncommunicable diseases.**
- **Concerns about pesticide risks should not discourage people from consuming conventional F&V**, especially people with low socio-economic status, for whom organic produce is less affordable.
- **F&V are nutritionally valuable regardless of the form in which they are consumed (fresh, canned, frozen...)²².**
- **Residue levels can be further reduced before consumption:** washing, blanching and cooking reduce them by a quarter, and peeling by more than half (Keikothaile BM, et al., 2010).
- **The risks to consumers are different from those to operators,** such as F&V producers applying plant protection treatments (dose levels, different routes of contamination: inhalation vs. ingestion).

*Plant protection treatments: definition in sheet 13b

**Pesticide residue: definition in sheet 13b

***Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI): definition in sheet 13b



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