



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Majority (53%) of British Columbians buy organic food, new poll shows.

Vancouver, BC. A new opinion survey by Synovate Research shows that just over half (53%) of BC's grocery shoppers have purchased organic food in the past year. Of those, nearly one-third say that 25% or more of their grocery purchases regularly include organic food. Nearly half of current organic food purchasers predict they will be buying even more organic foods in the future. Organic food accounts for an average of 11 per cent of all BC food purchases, the poll shows.

Health and taste are the main reasons given for purchasing organic food: 84% of current and prospective organic food purchasers in BC believe that organic food is healthier than non-organic. "It's fair to say that more and more people are turning to certified organic food for what it *doesn't* contain – pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, antibiotics or growth hormones," said Patrick Mallet, President of the Certified Organic Associations of BC. The poll shows that 51% also believe organic food tastes better than non-organic.

The results of the survey were welcome, but not surprising, to industry leaders, who have watched what was once a niche market become increasingly mainstream. "The organic food sector is growing anywhere from 10 to 25 per cent a year, depending on the product category," said Gunta Vitins of Pro Organics, a BC based national distributor of organic foods.

Other key findings of the survey:

- 70% of organic purchasers say they care where their organic food is grown. They prefer food from BC (39%), "local" (16%), or at least from Canada (13%).
- Most current organic food purchasers buy their organic groceries at mainstream supermarkets such as Save-On-Foods, Overwaita, Thrifty Foods, as well as farmer's markets, and other local stores such as Capers, IGA, Choices, and other local produce stores.
- The most popular types of organic foods are fruits and vegetables, dairy/eggs, followed by grains/cereal products.

The survey was conducted by telephone between August 19th to the 29th, 2003. It is based on a randomly selected sample of 852 adult grocery shoppers across British Columbia, and is accurate to within plus or minus 3% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error increases for smaller sub-groups (e.g. it is +/-4% for current and prospective organic purchasers).

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