

# ORGANIC FOODS

## A CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

MAY 2007

### About the Survey

The Nielsen Global Omnibus surveys more than 26,000 Internet users around the world every six months - representing a global online population of close to one billion consumers. The survey gathers opinions over 47 countries across 15 time zones.

### Canadian Attitudes towards Organic Foods

A study commissioned by the Organic Agricultural Centre of Canada estimated that \$1 billion worth of certified organic food products were sold through Canadian retail outlets in 2006. Nielsen MarketTrack reports that \$412 million worth of certified organic products were sold in Canadian supermarkets in 2006, a growth of 28% from 2005. Clearly this is a booming industry in Canada and elsewhere. Most recent Nielsen global online survey looked at Canadian attitudes toward organic foods.

Both Canada and the United States lag behind global consumption of every category of organic food. Canadian consumption patterns closely mirror those of Americans, with the exception of organic eggs, which Canadians are much more likely to buy regularly than Americans.

### How often do you take the organic options for the following products: (% responding regularly)

	Global	Canada	United States
Fruit	35	23	20
Vegetables	38	23	20
Eggs	34	24	14
Meats	25	13	12
Poultry	22	17	12
Packaged Foods	13	8	8
Milk	30	14	14
Fruit Juices	22	13	12
Carbonated Beverages	8	4	6
Tea	21	10	10

North Americans are very similar to their global counterparts in the main reason given for purchasing organic products. The belief that Organic items are healthier for themselves and for their children was the most commonly cited motivating factor in the purchase decision for Canadian, American and global consumers.



### What is your main reason for purchasing organic products?

	Global	Canada	United States
Healthier for me	58	56	58
Healthier for my children	16	18	15
Better for the environment	14	12	14
Kinder to animals	3	3	4
Other reasons	9	12	10

Almost half of Canadian, American and Global consumers responding cited the expense of organic products as their main reason for not purchasing these items. A quarter of Canadians responding did not buy organic products because they didn't believe they were healthier. This was a far more common response in Canada than in the United States or Globally.

### What is your main reason for not purchasing organic products?

	Global	Canada	United States
Not sold where I shop	8	3	8
Too expensive	47	50	50
I don't believe food labelled organic is really produced the way it is said to be	11	13	8
I don't believe it is healthier	13	22	12
I don't believe organic production is better for the environment	4	6	3
I don't believe organic products are kinder to animals	1	1	2
I don't like the taste	5	3	7
Poor quality	1	1	1
Other reasons	10	2	10

These results show that Canadian consumers are interested in organic products. However there is clearly an opportunity for further development of these products in the North American market. Aside from price point, a key Canadian consumer attitude which will need to be addressed is a lack of confidence that organic produce is actually healthier. Since the enhanced health benefit is the main reason Canadians buy organic items, anything that can be done to convince more Canadians of the legitimacy of the health benefits organic products offer will help to develop this market in Canada to match those in other countries.