

Listen to two work colleagues discuss the pros and cons of choosing organic food.

Optional listening activity:

Decide which speaker, Sam or Brian, has the following opinions.

| Opinion | Sam or Brian |
|--|--------------|
| He thinks organic food is healthier | |
| He wonders whether it tastes better | |
| He doesn't believe pesticides are dangerous | |
| He is worried about the remains of pesticides on food | |
| He talks about how much organic food there is in the shops | |
| He thinks organic food costs too much | |

Brian: What's that you're eating, Sam, not a piece of steak, is it? I thought you were vegetarian!

Sam: It is steak. But it's organic. I was never vegetarian. I just like eating natural food

Brian: How can meat be organic?

Sam: It means the animal isn't full of strange hormones, or ate cereal that's been genetically modified or sprayed with pesticides. That sort of thing

Brian: And I suppose it's had a good time walking around the fields, not shut inside all its life.

Sam: That's right.

Brian: But can you taste the difference?

Sam: I think so. And anyway, I'm not filling myself with all sorts of chemicals that might give me cancer.

Brian: Yes, but there's no proof that pesticides give you cancer. The government would ban them. Look what happened with DDT

Sam: So why do the scientists who monitor these things prefer to eat organic food too?

Brian: But if the public found out that some company was poisoning them, it'd be a national scandal!

Sam: Yeah, but that's just the point. Pesticides are only tested on animals. It's not like new drugs, where companies have to spend millions on trials with human volunteers. Small quantities of chemicals do get into your food.

Brian: *Some food.* Look, if the newspapers found a company was deliberately selling an unsafe product, their share price would crash and they'd be out of business in no time.

Sam: They may go out of business soon if they don't start selling organic food themselves. Have you seen what's in the supermarkets these days? They say sales of organic food have risen by 25%.

Brian: It's still more expensive. You've got to compare the price, which is at least double, with the risk you're running, which is absolutely minimal if you ask me. And how many people farm organically in this country, anyway? It's not even 1%

Sam: Well, it's more like 20% in other parts of Europe. And the more people buy it, the more the price will come down. It's better for the environment, anyway. We can't keep playing around with our food without consequences, you know. Look at all the animal diseases we've had recently.

Brian: True, there are always stories in the papers of salmonella in eggs, sheep suffering from foot and mouth disease, cows with BSE ...

Sam: Well, this is prime organic beef from the Scottish Highlands, and very good it is too. So if you don't mind, I'd like to finish my lunch!

Listening activity answer key:

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| He thinks organic food is healthier | Sam |
| He wonders whether it tastes better | Brian |
| He doesn't believe pesticides are dangerous | Brian |
| He is worried about the remains of pesticides on food | Sam |
| He talks about how much organic food there is in the shops | Sam |
| He thinks organic food costs too much | Brian |