

Get ready for organic food:

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It's more than a trend



Raymond M. Lane/Journal

Discussing the "O" word: Ed Cohen and Charlie Coiner appear before the organic food conference in Washington to share their experiences in growing organic food in Virginia and shipping it to food stores and restaurants throughout the area.

What is organic food?

There is no legal definition for organic food in the United States, and probably won't be because organic food is food produced through a process, the process itself being the most important element.

The following definition — however vague — was agreed upon last year by representatives of both organic and conventional agriculture in a meeting sponsored by the Alexandria, Va.-based United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, the trade group representing many growers and marketers of fresh fruit and produce.

■ Organic food production systems are based on farm management practices that replenish and maintain soil fertility by providing optimal conditions for soil biological activity.

■ Organic food is food that has been determined by an independent third-party certification program to be produced in accordance with a national approved

list of materials and practices.

■ Organic food is documented and verifiable by an accurate and comprehensive record of the production and handling system.

■ Organic food has been grown, harvested, preserved, processed, stored, transported and marketed in accordance with a nationally approved list of materials and practices.

■ Only nationally approved materials have been used on the land and crops for at least three years before the harvest.

■ Organic food meets all state and federal regulations governing the safety and quality of the food supply.

For a more thorough description of processes describing the production of organic foods, write the Organic Foods Production Association of North America, P.O. Box 31, Belchertown, Mass. 071007, or call (413) 323-6821.

— RAYMOND M. LANE