

Business Communication Editing Presentations

Working in groups, revise the following message based on concepts learned in chapter 13. Be prepared to share your results with the class.

BUY ORGANIC

Pizza is the nation's second most popular food choice (hamburgers are number one). You can rationalize the calories—you'll cut back on the cookies next week. You can even reduce the fat. But have you considered the chemicals you might be consuming?

The cheese on your pizza might have come from a cow whose milk production was stimulated by genetically engineered Bovine Growth Hormone (or BGH)—called “crack for cows” by some. But in addition to stimulating growth, BGH increases a cow's susceptibility to infections. According to the Foundation on Economic Trends, “The Food and Drug Administration admits that the use of BGH in cows may lead to increased amounts of pus and bacteria in milk”—and increased amounts of antibiotics in your cheese. But cheese isn't the only source of chemicals in your pizza.

The tomatoes in your sauce may have been genetically bioengineered with fish DNA to improve their shipping qualities. The pork sausage and pepperoni may have come from pigs bioengineered with human DNA to improve their weight gain. And the herbs may have been irradiated to kill insects—whatever insects weren't killed in the fields by one of the 20,000 pesticides approved for use in the United States.

Yes, pesticides are still being used to grow your pizza ingredients. The Environmental Protection Agency has released information indicating that 90 percent of the fungicides, 60 percent of the herbicides, and 30 percent of the insecticides now in common use are proven carcinogens. “We have to weigh the benefits against the risks,” says the EPA's Al Heir. He goes on to explain that “many of the fungicides, for example, are on the market because of their benefits to agriculture. We know they pose risks. Almost every one is carcinogenic. But their benefits to our food supply outweigh their risks.”

Additional undesirable chemicals are showing up in your Friday pizza in the form of food additives. The average food molecule now travels about 1,300 miles to market, according to the Rocky Mountain Institute. This Colorado-based environmental think tank has published reports proving not only that nutrients are lost during this journey but also that farmers who choose to grow the same crops, year after year, season after season, on the same soils fertilized only by synthetic petrochemical fertilizers are depleting soils and destroying nutrient potential, causing food processors down the line to have to inject synthetic vitamins, flavor enhancers, and artificial preservatives into the foods they package, which you and I then buy at the supermarket, take home, cook, and eat—with little nutritional benefit to show for all this effort. If you'd like to learn more about the work of the Rocky Mountain Institute or RMI, you can log on to the nonprofit

For more information go to www.newmaneducation.com

organization's website at www.rmi.org.

Losing your appetite? Please don't despair. You've probably heard of "organic farming." The new term is *sustainable agriculture*. Agricultural researchers, government officials, and ordinary people like you and I are working to provide good food without all these harmful chemicals. Congress spent \$6.7 million in the early 1990s to research sustainable agriculture. Last year it passed legislation creating the first uniform national standards for labeling organic products.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently published statistics indicating that between 1997 and 2001, the number of agricultural acres certified as organic increased by 74 percent. This increase makes sustainable agriculture the fastest growing segment in the industry. Moreover, with today's technology, even large-scale food producers are finding economic incentives for converting to organic methods. In many supermarkets today, you can find organic bananas with the famous Dole label on them. Why? Because organic techniques solved production problems the food giant was having on its banana plantations. The conversion to organic methods isn't complete, but it's under way at Dole and countless other major farm operations.

Using chemical-free techniques, organic farmers are preserving healthy soil, clean water, and pure air while improving the nutritional value of the crops they grow. Not only can sustainable agriculture benefit our health and the planet's health, but it can even improve the taste of the food we eat. Many consumers confirm that vitamin-rich, organic produce tastes better than chemically grown produce. In fact, several wineries have already switched to organic techniques because the resulting grapes have a better flavor.

According to the Organic Farming Research Foundation, consumer demand pushed California's organic exports from \$200,000 a year to \$10 million a year—which shows that you and I have consumer muscle. We can use our buying power to influence food production methods. Many new organic products are available—from pretzels and wine to bananas and lettuce. If you don't find organic choices in your supermarket, flex your consumer muscles and ask for them.

You should buy organically grown produce even if it costs more. How much is it worth to keep carcinogenic pesticides out of your pizza? How much to avoid the BGH, the antibiotics, the fish and human DNA, and the food additives? Aren't good taste and good health worth a few cents more? Support the people who are giving you a choice, and buy organic.