

Organic: from nice to mainstream

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SEATTLE — Sixty percent of consumers buying fresh produce say they’ve bought organics in that category in the past three months, 55% have bought organics in plant-based meat alternatives and 49% in plant-based dairy alternatives.

Those are among the findings of a new report from The Hartman Group, *Organic 2022: Then, Now, Next*, which explores the transformation of organic from a niche category based in a social movement to a mainstream marker of quality across food and beverage categories.

“What’s next for organic may be two-fold: mainstream consumers crave greater accessibility in organic—demonstrating strong growth ahead for the segment—while highly-engaged consumers and producers look to additional certifications and health attributes to extend the original promise of organic beyond current USDA standards,” according to Hartman.

Organic 2022: Then, Now, Next finds that after a surge in the beginning of the pandemic, the organic market continues its decades-long growth trajectory via expansion into the mainstream, making organic foods and beverages across categories more accessible than ever before in terms of both availability and price.

Other highlights of the report include:

- Confronted with greater choice and a heightened degree of anxiety around health, many consumers turn to organic for healthier options, though detailed knowledge of USDA Organic certification criteria has not necessarily increased.
- Organic has become much more accessible in recent years, both in terms of broad availability across all channels and in terms of declining price premiums (noted by long-term organic consumers), though price is still a barrier for many.
- As organic has expanded, the category adoption pathway has remained largely consistent, with produce, dairy, and meat as the key entry points to organic along with other special categories (e.g., baby food, plant-based alternatives).

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