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Organic produce pricing shows some positive headway

By

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Consumers' desire for healthy eating may be responsible for much of the increased purchasing patterns of fresh fruit and vegetables over the past 30 years. Now, organic can be included as a driver of fresh fruit and vegetable sales.

Ever since the mass hysteria over the Alar apple scare in 1989, organically grown produce sales have increased each year. It has been one of the fastest-growing categories in the supermarkets from the start.



There have been some stop-and-go intervals that hounded organic produce activity over the years, but those are the growing pains of any new program as it works its way into the system. The sales of organics have managed to build in spite of all those bumpy roads. The category is now blooming well as more consumers continue to come aboard and have pushed the sales growth even further.

Organic produce sales reached \$9.5 billion in 2024, showing some very positive growth. Sales increased 5.7 percent accompanied by volume up 6.1 percent. The organic produce category is now 12 percent of overall produce sales and reaching toward that 13 percent mark.

It's no secret that retail pricing is a major factor with consumers when shopping in a food store, and it has become obvious that organic produce is premium priced over the conventional line.

We checked prices in the produce departments of four different major grocery store banners in April

2025 and compared them against 2022. Price check surveys were taken of the top 16 basic organic and conventional produce items. We calculated the total dollar amount of all items in each store and compared organic prices against the conventional prices. The results were quite interesting.

For the purpose of this survey, hypothetical food chain banners were used to avoid mentioning the names of any stores. The four grocery banners will be identified as stores A, B, C and D.

Back in March 2022, organic produce of the four major grocery banners was 47.2 percent higher than conventional produce.

In April 2025, the same four-store price comparison between organics and conventional revealed a wide range result. The price difference was from 22.5 percent to 64.4 percent higher on organics versus conventional.

We compared the 2025 price check against the check in 2022 at the four identical stores and the same 16 produce items. Some of the items were strawberries, bananas, lettuce, tomatoes, apples and other high-volume leaders.

Here are the results of the 2025 price comparison:

- Store A was the lowest priced on the organic line at 22.5 percent above conventional.
- Store B was second at 46 percent above conventional.
- Store C was third at 49 percent above conventional.
- Store D was the highest priced on organics at 64.4 percent above conventional produce.

In 2022 organic prices of the same grocery stores and identical items were 50 percent higher than conventional. The 2025 overall total of 16 major organic priced items was 41.5 percent higher than the conventional priced items. We compared this price check with the same item price check back in 2022 and found that organic prices were lower in 2025 by 17 percent.

So, what does this all mean for the produce department? It reveals that perhaps the organic pricing levels are slowly reaching more favorable retails for consumers. It also has more drawing power toward the non-organic shopper in convincing them to step over the line toward purchasing organics.

This also means that consumers are embracing organic fruits and vegetables more than ever for their healthy diets.

Regardless of these impressive statistics, a number of supermarkets still do a very weak job of merchandising organic produce.

There are usually 20 to 30 items positioned in a small section of the produce department with a small sign hung at the top.

Many supermarkets have committed to an organic program by displaying it like they mean it. These merchants carry up to 100 organic items and even promote two or three every week in their store ad

flyer.

Eating habits have changed as we swiftly move into a more conscientious food diet world. Shortsighted companies that do not recognize this rapid change will simply lose out to the companies that support the organic category the most.

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