Beyond Organic 2024

Expanding Distinctions in Food & Beverage

A Hartman Group Syndicated Research Study

Fielded April – May 2024
Market Coverage: U.S. Market

CONSUMER/ SHOPPER INSIGHTS

TRENDS AND INNOVATION

STRATEGIC CONSULTING

Beyond Organic 2024: Expanding Distinctions in Food & Beverage examines perceptions around the organic halo today and where engaged consumers seek standards beyond organic, such as regenerative agriculture. This report uncovers shifting attitudes in sourcing dynamics, certifications and labeling, plus key attributes within 22 categories in the organic food and beverage industry.

With the industry and its certifications at a crossroads, *Beyond Organic 2024* helps companies succeed in this new era of food quality and gain traction with today's consumers.

Published June 2024 | Report length: 129 pages | U.S. market coverage

Grounded in primary quantitative and qualitative research, the report offers a comprehensive consumer-based perspective for brands, retailers and manufacturers to identify which trends will maintain relevancy and where to spot opportunities for long-term growth.

What's included?

- Executive summary
- General report (PowerPoint and PDF)
- Demographic data tables (Excel)

Key Topics Covered:

- Where organic participation remains strong but varied amidst challenging economic conditions
- Hartman Group's proprietary World of Organic segmentation, which underscores how attitudes and behaviors among the most engaged groups influence other segments and point to future mainstream demands
- How to identify opportunities for product development and positioning
- The evolution of organic in parallel with consumer doubts regarding the strength and rigor of the organic certification
- Where your brand or company can make the greatest impact

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Methodology

- **Quantitative:** Online national survey April 22, 2024– May 2, 2024**,** n=3,042 U.S. primary shoppers aged 18-78. (MOE) ±1.8 pts at 95% confidence level.

  Respondents recruited based on age-based quotas and balanced to match the 2024 Census Bureau Current Population Survey by gender, region, income, household structure and ethnicity.

- **Qualitative**: Digital ethnographies: n=16 participants. Week-long immersive engagement via asynchronous virtual platform.

  Follow-up in-depth interviews, n=8 participants. Hour-long interview delving into responses from digital ethnography.

Executive Summary

- The report highlights how organic's mainstream appeal was born from a desire for safer, healthier products.
- While the USDA Organic certification is most closely associated with safety-related, "free from" attributes, consumers also associate it with qualities connected to premium and purity — qualities not yet well-defined or currently part of the organic certification.
- Additionally, soil health and animal welfare have the weakest associations to organic certification, creating a desire for standards that improve upon or go beyond the USDA Organic certification.
- Greater participation in organic by large companies, as well as organic's expansion into more processed categories has undermined trust in the certification.
- Amidst a sea of quality cues, consumers prioritize responsible production in farm-related categories: over half of consumers say better farming practices are extremely or very important to them.

Chapter 1: The World of Organic

Attitudes and behaviors around organic — and beyond it — vary depending on a consumer's place within Hartman Group's World of Organic segmentation.

- Uncovering why organic usage remains strong despite concerns over inflation (analysis, data)
- Drivers behind the emergence of new quality distinctions that go beyond organic (analysis)
- Identifying the values and pragmatic necessities that drive food and beverage decisions, despite those aspirations not always matching reality (analysis)
- Motivations behind reevaluating food choices and entry into organic (analysis)
- Engagement in Hartman Group's World of Organic predicts a consumer's approach to (and understanding of) organic and related distinctions (analysis)
- Exploration into how consumer priorities vary based on their orientation in the Word of Organic (analysis)
- The industrialization of organic in some categories has prompted more engaged consumers to seek options beyond organic (chart, analysis)
- World of Organic segmentation consumer profiles: Core, Inner Mid-level, Outer Mid-level and Periphery (analysis, data)

Chapter 2: Sustained strength of the organic halo

USDA Organic certification retains a strong halo of safe, wholesome, and responsibly produced food.

- Why natural food is idealized in contrast to the perception of industrialized food production (analysis, chart, trended)
- What's behind the growing importance of purity and freshness to today's consumer (analysis, chart, trended)
- What concepts are associated with the term organic as the breadth of its meaning has expanded (analysis, chart, trended)
- Why the organic claim continues to resonate (analysis)
- How organic has expanded its meaning beyond the certification's specific requirements (analysis)
- Why engaged consumers view organic products as more nutritious than those grown with conventional agriculture (analysis, data)
- Organic, freshness and the perception of heightened taste (analysis)
- What are the main reasons for purchasing organic (analysis, chart, trended)
- What does the expansion of organic mean for its halo and rigor (analysis)

Chapter 3: Sourcing dynamics

Driving engagement through accessibility and trust with natural and organic foods at restaurants and retail.

- Changes in better-for-you purchasing versus a year ago (analysis, data)
- Organic as share of grocery purchase (analysis, data)
- The strength of private label within the organic space (analysis, data)
- Organic reach within retail channels (analysis, chart, trended)
- Reach of organic online in the past three months (analysis, data)
- Prioritization of organic when eating out (analysis)
- Importance of better-for-you selection criteria at restaurants (analysis, chart)
- Importance of certifications when dining out (analysis)
- Importance of local when dining out (analysis)

Chapter 4: When the organic halo isn’t enough

Despite organic’s positive halo, many are concerned that there is a weakening of the requirements within the USDA certification.

- Consumer concern over the rigor of the USDA organic certification (analysis, data)
- Opportunity for increased transparency in the USDA organic certification (analysis)
- Barriers to buying more organic (analysis, chart, trended)
- Barriers to buying any organic (analysis, chart)
- Identifying the most compelling ways to address the limitations of organic (analysis)

Chapter 5: Beyond organic

A quality tier beyond organic has emerged, encompassing more than the absence of pesticides and artificial inputs.

- What is motivating consumers to search beyond the organic certification (analysis)
- Alternative farming practices that address animal welfare and holistic ecology (analysis)
- Preferred methods of farming (analysis, chart)
- The importance of animal welfare and its extension beyond humane treatment of animals (analysis)
- Why the effect of agriculture on communities is coming into greater focus (analysis)
- The role of soil health and its link to nutrition and ecology (analysis)
- Familiarity with and interest in innovative food approaches (analysis, chart)
- How regenerative agriculture resonates compared to sustainable food ideals (analysis)
- Consumer perspectives on benefits of regenerative agriculture (analysis)
- Awareness of regenerative agriculture (analysis)
- Appropriation of the term regenerative (analysis)
- Consideration given to regenerative farming when shopping specific categories (analysis, chart, trended)
- Opportunities and challenges with hydroponic growing (analysis)
- Opportunities and challenges with upcycled, Certified Transitional Organic and biodynamic (analysis)
- GMOs as harmful or helpful in our food system (analysis, data)
- Acceptance of GMOs and the role of GMOs in shopping (analysis, data)
- The potential benefits of tech weighed against ideals that reference holistic ecology (analysis)

Chapter 6: Navigating certifications and labeling

Certification is essential when tied to personal safety, but also on all aspects of sourcing.

- Consumer perceptions around transparency (analysis)
- Trusted information sources about organic (analysis, chart)
- Best-known certifications among consumers (data, analysis)
- Trust and knowledge regarding the Non-GMO Project certification (analysis, chart, trended)
- Importance of certification versus manufacturer's label (analysis)
- Which claims and certifications inspire consumers to pay a little extra (analysis, chart)
- Trust across different certifications (analysis, chart)
- How brand integrity and trust can influence the believability of claims (analysis)

Chapter 7: Category priorities

***The closer food is to its farm origins, the greater the emphasis on natural production, whether organic or beyond*.**

- Weighing the pragmatics of taste, price and accessibility with aspirations for better-for-you options (analysis)
- Organic adoption pathway (analysis)
- Which quality tiers consumers seek based on their levels of engagement within the organic segmentation (analysis)
- The reach of organic within different food categories (analysis, chart, trended)
- The reach of organic within different beverage categories (analysis, chart, trended)
- Communicating attributes in categories closest to the farm (analysis)
- Attribute tradeoffs in specific categories (analysis, data)
- Field & Farm category focus:
  - Fresh fruit or vegetables (data, analysis)
  - Fresh meat: chicken, turkey, pork, beef (data, analysis)
  - Plant-based meat alternatives (data, analysis)
  - Eggs (data, analysis)
  - Dairy yogurt (data, analysis)
  - Dairy milk (data, analysis)
  - Juice (data, analysis)
  - Milk alternatives (data, analysis)
  - Baby food (data, analysis)
- Importance of cueing simple ingredients and processing (analysis)
- When health cues are less meaningful (analysis)
- Attribute tradeoffs in specific categories (analysis, data)
- Everyday Packaged category focus:
  - Packaged meats (data, analysis)
  - Pasta and noodles (data, analysis)
  - Hot or cold cereal (data, analysis)
  - Prepared/ready-to-eat meals (data, analysis)
  - Canned/jarred/pouched fruits and vegetables (data, analysis)
  - Frozen fruits or vegetables (data, analysis)
  - Bars: energy, nutrition, protein, granola, cereal (data, analysis)
  - Seasonings/herbs (data, analysis)
  - Coffee (data, analysis)
  - Ready-to-drink tea (data, analysis)
  - Salty snacks (data, analysis)
  - Frozen meals or snacks (data, analysis)
  - Spreads: nut butters, honey, jams/preserves (data, analysis)

Chapter 8: Implications and Recommendations

Glossary of Terms

Analysis: Skilled interpretation and translation of consumer culture.

Chart: Visual representation of quantitative survey responses, such as a bar chart.

Data: Specific data point(s) from quantitative survey used to highlight a compelling insight.

Trended data: Data that is collected at two or more periods of time and analyzed to identify changes and patterns across those periods of time.

Model: Hartman Group's proprietary model provides a framework for explaining how and why consumers make purchase/consumption decisions, thus helping brands navigate the consumer journey and ensuring relevancy within the marketplace.

Available to purchase now: ***Beyond Organic 2024: Expanding Distinctions in Food & Beverage***

Report Price: $15,000

To purchase, fill out the form below and return by email to: **Melissa@hartman-group.com**

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