

PA has the second highest organic food sales of any state, according to gov. issued report

 thedp.com/article/2018/03/penn-upenn-philadelphia-organic-food-pennsylvania-ranking

By [Ethan Randazzo](#) 03/28/18 7:26pm



Credit: [Adam Jones](#)

Pennsylvania has the second-highest sales of organic products, only surpassed by California, according to a [report](#) published last year by the United States Department of Agriculture.

The report goes on to show that, statewide consumption of organic foods in Pennsylvania has increased by about ten times over the past decade, and has doubled from 2015 to 2016 alone.

This increase in Pennsylvania follows a nationwide trend of organic food sales, reported by a [USA Today](#) analysis of data from the Organic Trade Association. Last year, sales of organic food reached a record \$43 billion, demonstrating an increase of 8.4 percent from the previous year, while the overall food sales growth rate was merely 0.6 percent.

Cheryl Cook, deputy secretary for market development at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, told [The Inquirer](#) that the ever-expanding variety of organic snack foods has most likely contributed to this sudden increase.

“The demand has increased so much. We could quadruple and quintuple the production and

still not fill the demand,” Cook said. “For years, organic foods were seen as healthier. Now, people are seeing that, no, junk food can be organic, too.”

Organic grocery stores, like the recently opened Mom’s Organic Market in Center City, told [The Inquirer](#) that they have found tremendous success selling all kinds of organic products, from vegetables and chips to insects like crickets and mealworms.

The store’s assistant manager Jacquelyn Fluker said that since the store has opened, sales and customers have increased every week.

“I think people are learning more about what organic is, and that makes them more empowered to make healthy choices,” she said. “And, sure, just because something’s organic doesn’t make it healthy, but some of these items could be a window for someone to explore other things.”

Legislative action in Congress follows this growing organic food industry.

Working to support the expanding organic market, Pennsylvania Senator Bob Casey introduced a bill last Winter that made it easier for organic farmers to receive funding or other support from the government.

“There’s no reason food companies should look overseas when the best farmers in the world are right here in Pennsylvania,” Senator Casey said in a post on [his website](#). “As demand for organic products grows, we must do all we can to help American farmers and ranchers meet this demand.”

Shelley Balanko, senior vice president of Hartman Group, a food and beverage research firm, told [USA Today](#) that larger food companies have played a role in the expansion of the organic food market by diversifying their product lines to include organic foods.

Sign up for our newsletter

Get our newsletter, *Dear Penn*, delivered to your inbox every weekday morning.

"Finally, the conventional food and beverage industry has woken up and said, 'Why, this isn't niche anymore. It's eating into my share,'" she said.

Nielsen, a consumer neuroscience firm, told [Progressive Grocer](#) that despite the increase in organic sales in recent years, price perception remains the greatest barrier to organic purchases, even though prices are in general decline.

“Understanding and setting pricing strategies between conventional and organic varieties is critical for success,” Matt Lally, Nielsen’s associate director, said. “People will pay a premium for organic, but at some point, they will trade to conventional or out of the category altogether.”

More Articles
