

Decreasing Nutritional Content in Food: The Impact on Food as Medicine

If you are anything like me, when you bring home produce from the grocery store and bite into it, it often leaves your taste buds feeling a little bit disappointed. Apples are not as sweet, tomatoes, although deceptively red, often have the texture and taste of cardboard. Peaches are notoriously hard and dry. It left me and I am sure many others wondering what on earth has happened?

I know for sure that many foods do not have the taste, texture, and aroma that is entrenched in my mind from my childhood, and through my research into this matter I have determined that my memory is quite sound. A lot of changes have happened in the farming world that involves the mass production of produce...many not for the better.

For example, I recently did a taste test with a group of visitors from Malaysia. We blindly sampled a simple pumpkin mash. One was made from a conventional pumpkin. The other mash was made from a regeneratively grown pumpkin. The winner was hands-down the mash made with the regenerative pumpkin as the main ingredient. Our testers found it sweeter, and the chef who composed the dishes commented that the regenerative pumpkin had a fuller body and was excellent to work with.

As we continue through this overview, I want to talk to you about the sad state of affairs of our current mainstay produce production facilities as well as the benefits of using regeneratively grown produce, like the seasonal selection that can be purchased from Naturallyau.com

A STEADY DECLINE

Multiple studies of fruits and vegetables have shown a steady decline in their nutritional value over time, but that is not our biggest concern. Scientists, such as Geoff Johnson of the Agenda 2020 are gravely worried that no one seems to even notice or care about this vast decline in nutrients in our fresh produce.

Why is this happening? you may wonder. This problem is actually multi-faceted and has to do with several main issues:

- Soil issues.
- Changes to the actual produce type
 - Some modern higher-yielding varieties are less nutritious than their ancestors.
- Changes in farming methods
 - No-till planting.
 - Extensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
 - Changes to food processing and preparation methods.

A 2004 study by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) showed that in 43 common garden crops grown between 1950 and 1999 there was a statistically significant decline in six nutrients. These key nutrients were protein, calcium, potassium, iron, and vitamins B2 and C. However, seven other nutrients showed no significant decline. The research further suggested that “any real declines are generally most easily explained by changes in cultivated varieties.” This means there are quite possibly trade-offs between yield and nutritional content. In 2009, the author of the aforementioned 2004 study, Donald R. Davis reasserted his position that the nutrient decline in produce was hard to dismiss and further study was needed in regards to the correlation between yield and nutritional value.

A FARMER'S PERSPECTIVE

Farmers are not complacent or ignorant to the data shown in nutrition studies. One farmer stated when discussing peach harvesting, “As soon as there is a little bit of colour, they take them off the tree. They put them in dark rooms. They ripen slowly. This peach almost forgot it’s been a peach.” Other farmers report the harvesting of tomatoes that appear ripe but aren’t actually mature and the early picking of bananas that are then gassed until they turn yellow...all tricks of the trade to fool consumers.

Sadly, it doesn’t stop there. A new harvesting innovation, SmartFresh has come into play. With this technology, produce, such as apples are allowed to remain on the tree until closer to ripeness. They are then picked and quickly thrown into cold storage where they are gassed with the SmartFresh chemical. This gas blocks the ripening process of the fruit by stopping ethylene production. Major apple producer, Montagues, speaks to the importance of using this process correctly, which sadly many don’t. They state, “SmartFresh is an evil thing if you pick your fruit and it is not ready to be picked.” (The Australian, 2012).

In addition to harvesting practices, grown varieties of produce have been modified from historical varieties to increase yield, make them more consumer-friendly, and/or to be sweeter. All these seem to have caused nutrient values to take a major hit.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Other studies have continued to be facilitated and have rendered notable, yet concerning results.

- The Kushi Institute found vitamin A levels in produce had decreased by 57%, calcium by 30%, and iron levels by 37%.
- The Toronto Globe 2002, undertook a similar study and found potatoes had lost 100% of their Vitamin A and 57% of Vitamin C. They even concluded that the current generation would have to eat 8 oranges to get the same vitamins and minerals as their grandparents would have had in one orange.

NATURALLY NURTURED

It is my passion as founder of Naturally Nurtured to provide regenerative produce that is free of harmful chemicals and pesticides and full of wholesome nutrients. Although vitamins and minerals are not typically measured in grocery store produce, all produce sold through Naturally Nurtured Australia is regularly tested. Furthermore, this data is passed on to our consumers by the quick scanning of a QR code, giving complete transparency to you.

Naturally Nurtured Australia sources fruits and vegetables from farmers who utilize regenerative farming practices because quite simply, they are better. Regenerative is beyond Organic, as it concentrates on the regeneration of soils. This includes using farming techniques that restore soil health, enhance carbon capture, and protect the environment by not using dangerous chemicals, pesticides, and heavy metals.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Food is the fuel for our bodies, and don’t you want to be giving your body the highest quality foods that you can to promote optimum mental and physical health? Studies show that a diet full of fruits and

vegetables is necessary for a healthy body and mind, and with a seeming decrease in the nutritional value of produce, we now need to eat these foods in greater quantities than ever before.

To get the most out of the produce we eat, shop with Naturally Nurtured, as we sell only the ripest and most nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables grown with sustainable and regenerative farming practice to ensure unparalleled quality.

Choosing our produce is choosing to invest in the health of your family. Studies have clearly demonstrated that children with issues such as ADHD, ODD, non-subscribed behavioural issues, and anxiety have lower levels of Zinc, Magnesium, and Vitamin B in their urine. All of these low levels can be restored with a diet rich in produce.

KEEP IN TOUCH

At Naturally Nurtured, we will continue to champion research that informs better farming practices and nutritional information to direct wise dietary practices. We know food is not just fuel, but medicinal in how it supports a balanced body and mind. For more information about our products, cited studies, and to read our informative blogs, visit us at www.naturallyau.com