

DAVID
RUSSELL ON ...



Do You Want Pesticides With That?

As operators we tend to be a cynical bunch, and for many organic is still a dirty word, but if you want your Five a Day to come without a portion of pesticides, read on to find out which fruits and vegetables are the least – and the most – loaded with chemicals. The good news is that recent research has resulted in a league table of pesticide usage, based on the findings from nearly 43,000 pesticide tests on conventionally grown produce, to help you sort out your shopping priorities. The Environmental Working Group, a non-profit organisation working to promote policies that protect global and individual health, has produced a Shoppers' Guide to Pesticides in Produce. Here are the top twelve foods which showed the lowest pesticide load out of the 43 different categories of fruit and vegetables in the guide:

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|--------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Broccoli | 5. Kiwi | 9. Pineapple |
| 2. Aubergine | 6. Asparagus | 10. Sweet corn (frozen) |
| 3. Cabbage | 7. Peas (frozen) | 11. Avocado |
| 4. Banana | 8. Mango | 12. Onion |

So, if you are trying to cut back on your food bills at the moment, these items can be safely consumed with no need to splash out on – or to feel guilty about not splashing out on – premium-priced organic produce. But what about the most contaminated foods? Here are the top 12 fruits and vegetables that showed the highest pesticide load. So if you are concerned about your chemical exposure and want to protect your health or that of your customers or family, these items should be your organic imperatives: But be VERY careful as the list above is for fruits and vegetables. Non-organic meats have far higher concentrations of pesticides than all of the fruits and vegetables. And the highest concentration of pesticides is actually in non-organic butter. So if you can only buy one organic food item it should be butter.

Next priority would be meats and once those are addressed, you will want to focus on the fruit and vegetable list above. This pesticide league table effectively gives us the information to enable us to spend our money where it counts. Even if you don't choose to buy organic versions of the highest pesticide scorers above, knowing that they contain the most pesticide residues might just make you buy them a little less often. The other alternative is to wash conventionally grown produce with a 'veggie wash' that removes such residues – look out for these in health food stores.

WEB PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Name Adrian Lowe

University Aston

Job title Catering Operations Manager

Length of time in position Six Years

Q. Give us a potted history of your career - previous positions held etc

A. Mainly a cheffing background, I kicked off in a restaurant after leaving college back in 1988 as a chef; after a year I assisted my boss who was then set up his own Italian restaurant a few miles down the road. Two years later (after getting sick and tired of working 80 hours per week) I moved to Aston in as Second Chef I then progressed to Head chef, Executive Chef, Assistant Ops Manager and then Ops Manager where I am today.

Q. What is the best thing about your job?

A. I love being in the thick of it, being really busy and well challenged, achieving targets and hearing the tills ringing out! Standing back at new projects and concepts that we have introduced and seeing them do well, it fills me with a sense of pride and achievement.

Q. And the worst?

A. When projects don't run to plan – Oh and of course telling people off – but then nobody likes that!

Q. If you could offer one piece of advice to other Ops Managers – what would it be?

A. People can make or break your business; give them a sense of ownership over what they do and a piece of the decision making process; that way you keep them on side and motivated to achieve your goals.

Q. What is the best piece of business advice you have ever been given?

A. People buy people – no matter what you offer in terms of product; if people like you they will come to see you – hopefully they will also like your offer too though!