

By Alistair Kyte

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



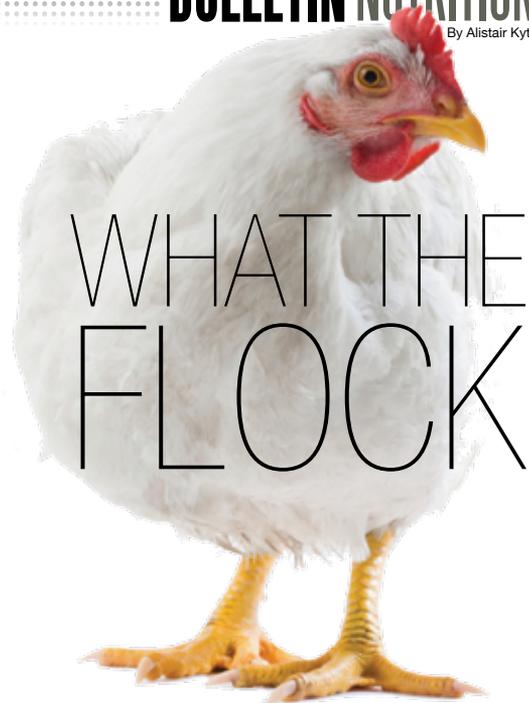
» If you've ever cruised the veggie aisle at your local market and have been tempted to pay twice the price for organic broccoli, only to scrap the idea at the last minute, you're not alone. Some call it 'green guilt', the uncomfortable feeling you get from your not-so-carbon-neutral habits (like the \$112 you spent filling up your gas-guzzling truck, which you preceded to use exclusively to drive back and forth from the gym that's a five minute walk from your house). But while organically grown food is certainly better for the environment, new research published in the *Journal of Clinical Nutrition* is claiming that organics have no nutritional or health benefits over ordinary foods.

When more than 162 scientific papers published

over the past 50 years were reviewed by researchers in England, they found there was no significant difference between organic and regular food products. "A small number of differences in nutrient content were found to exist between organically and conventionally produced foodstuffs, but these are unlikely to be of any public health relevance," said the report. "Our review indicates there's no evidence to support the selection of organically over conventionally produced foods on the basis of nutritional superiority."

Sales of organic food has even started dropping off in some markets, especially considering the fact that many believe purchasing locally grown food, and not organic, is the best way to support your local economy and help the environment at the same time.

?? 100% ORGANIC ??



» Nutritionists have been telling us for years that when it comes to lean and healthy protein, chicken is a good choice. Maybe not as healthy as fish, it's certainly more heart-friendly than beef or pork. As long as you remove the skin and cook it in a healthy fashion (grilled is best), chicken is good for your body and perfectly suitable for a healthy meal.

But new research out of London, England, is claiming that chicken is often actually fatter than red meat. Recent tests have revealed that the chicken sold there today has much less Omega-3s (or good fats) than it did 30 years earlier. In a study by London Metropolitan University, scientists blamed today's fatter chickens on bad rearing methods and factory farming – which is still common in Canada. Too many chickens cooped-up in a confined space with no room to move actually leads to increased fat content in their meat.

The next time you're at the meat counter, if you still want to buy chicken, but want the healthiest option available, spend a little extra money and go for free-range birds.

PUT A CAP ON IT

» Winter is here and the last thing most Canadians think about when they approach the counter at their local coffeehouse is ordering an iced coffee. Sure, some committed iced-cap drinkers still do, but they're the same folks who bring five-alarm chili to the backyard barbecue when it's 37°C outside, and pair it with a big jug of Gato Negro that's been sitting in the trunk of their car for the past two weeks. As seasonal dysfunctionals, they can't help themselves. For the rest of us, staying off the iced coffee – throughout the entire year – might be a good thing, because experts believe the iced varieties of coffee such as mochaccinos are packed with so many calories they increase the risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

New data compiled by the World Cancer Research Fund is stating that people who regularly drink iced coffees will greatly increase their chances of gaining weight, which is the number 2 cause of cancer. (Smoking is number 1.) In the research, it was noted that the dark berry mocha frappuccino (venti size) at Starbucks contains a whopping 457 calories, almost a fifth of the total 2,500 recommended calories a day a man should consume to keep fit. And if you're the hardcore type to suck back two cigarettes while enjoying that iced coffee (and what doesn't titillate the senses more than fresh tobacco smoke clinging to thick and creamy shake residue on the inside of your throat), you're doubling-down on the damage to your health.

