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**Study hails organic food benefits
Organic food has a higher nutritional value than ordinary
produce, a study by Newcastle University has found.**

A team grew fruit, vegetables and reared cattle on adjacent organic and non-organic sites across Europe.

They found up to 40% more antioxidants could be found in organic fruit and vegetables than in non-organic.

The team said the findings call into question the current stance of the Food Standards Agency (FSA), which is neither for nor against organic food.

The four-year "Quality Low Input Food" project, funded by a £12m European Union grant, found a general trend, showing that organic food contained "less of the baddies" than conventional produce.

'Desirable compounds'

Part of the research was carried out on a 725-acre farm in the Tyne valley, which is attached to Newcastle University, where the team systematically investigated produce from the two farming techniques.

Project co-ordinator Prof Carlo Leifert, said: "We have shown there are more of certain nutritionally desirable compounds and less of the baddies in organic foods, or improved amounts of the fatty acids you want and less of those you don't want.

"Our research is trying to find out where the difference between organic and conventional food comes from."

Results of the project are due to be published over the next 12 months.

The FSA is due to publish its own review of the nutrient content of organic food by the end of march 2008.