lower mortality (risk of dying from any cause) than either of the other two groups. These results are similar to those seen in California Seventh-day Adventists and in elderly Japanese. Eating a more plant-based diet appears to lead to a longer life.

Barnia C, Trichopoulos D, Ferrari P, et al. 2007. Dietary patterns and survival of older Europeans: the EPIC-Elderly Study (European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition). *Public Health Nutr* 10:590-98.

Harvesting Vegetables and Grains May Result in Fewer Animal Deaths Than Many Previously Thought

Both academic research and media reports have popularized the idea that harvesting crops like wheat, soybeans, and corn kills large numbers of mice, voles, and other field animals. Because these crops are the basis of many vegetarians' diets, some have used these findings to question the ethical basis of vegetarian and vegan diets. A new report examining the issue, however, concludes there is little evidence to support this view. Andy Lamey, a doctoral student at the University of Western Australia, has re-examined an earlier analysis by Steven Davis, an animal scientist at Oregon State University, which concluded that a relatively small number of animals were killed to produce grass-fed beef. Lamey raises key questions about the number of animal deaths caused by farm machinery compared to those due to animal predators and about the statistics that Davis used. In addition, Lamey points out that animal agriculture poses many more risks to humans (such as slaughterhouse accidents) than does vegetable production. Based on his analysis, Lamey concludes that vegetarians and vegans should not change their diets due to a concern about field animal deaths.

Lamey A. 2007. Food fight! Davis versus Regan on the ethics of eating beef. *J Soc Philosph* 38:331-48.

Diet and Skin Cancer

Skin cancers, including melanoma, basal cell cancer, and squamous cell cancer, are the most common of all cancers. New research suggests that diet may play a role in the development of at least one kind of skin cancer, squamous cell cancer. Each year, between 200,000 and 300,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with this cancer, and the incidence rate is rising. Researchers in Australia studied more than 1,000 adults over an 11-year period to see which factors were associated with skin cancer. Even when factors like sun exposure and skin color were taken into account, people who ate a lot of red or processed meat and high-fat dairy products had a greater risk of developing squamous cell cancer. This was especially true for people who had already had skin cancer. Those eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and having a lower fat diet had a 54 percent lower risk of developing squamous cell cancer. Of course, the most important way to reduce risk of skin cancer is to avoid excess sun exposure and to use sunscreen. Eating generous amounts of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can also reduce your risk.

Ibiebele TI, van der Pols JC, Hughes MC, et al. 2007. Dietary pattern in association with squamous cell carcinoma of the skin: a prospective study. *Am J Clin Nutr* 85:1401-1408.

More Reasons to Eat Organic

Most people would agree that organically produced foods are better for the environment because synthetic fertilizers and pesticides are not used. Several recent studies also suggest that organically grown foods have a higher level of some key nutrients than do conventionally grown foods. A study[1] of organically grown kiwis found that they had higher levels of vitamin C, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and phosphorus. Organically grown kiwis also had a darker green color and a thicker skin and tended to ripen faster than conventionally grown kiwis.

Organically grown wheat was shown to be comparable to conventionally grown wheat in terms of the quality of baked products made from each kind of wheat and the nutritional value.[2] Despite not being treated with fungicides, organically grown wheat was no more likely to be contaminated with fungus than conventionally grown wheat.

[1] Amodio ML, Colelli G, Hasey JK, et al. 2007. A comparative study of composition and postharvest performance of organically and conventionally grown kiwifruits. *J Sci Food Agric* 87:1228-36.

[2] Mader P, Hahn D, Dubois D, et al. 2007. Wheat quality in organic and conventional farming: results of a 21 year field experiment. *J Sci Food Agric* (in press).