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Image Source (<http://www.haccpeuropa.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/brown-rice-syrup.jpg>)

By: Vanessa Rogers, Staff Member

You may want to think twice the next time you walk down the grocery store in search of organic products. Recent studies have discovered that high concentrations of Arsenics have been found in organic products.

[1] Arsenic is a chemical that has been linked to cancer, chronic diseases, and developmental effects.

[2] Many organic products substitute organic brown rice syrup as a healthier alternative to high fructose corn

syrup.[3] This substitution may however, prove to be not so “healthy.” Organic brown rice syrup has high levels of arsenic.

Many organic products use brown rice syrup as a main ingredient; such products include baby milk formulas, cereal bars, and high energy performance products.[4] One study found that two out of 17 tested baby formulas contained a level of inorganic arsenic that was at or above the current United States drinking water standard.[5] The formulas were more than 20 times the inorganic arsenic concentrations in infant formulas that did not contain organic brown rice syrup.[6] In addition one cereal bar contained 12 times the legal limit for drinking water of 10 parts per billion, and energy performance foods tested at eight to 17 times the limit.[7] Although it is true that numerous products have trace amounts of arsenic, many are concerned about the effect that such high levels can have on infants during their development stage.[8]

So what does this mean for rice plants and the agriculture industry? For now it has no effect. There are currently no United States regulations applicable to arsenic in food despite the fact that studies show arsenic may introduce significant concentrations of inorganic arsenic to an individual’s diet.[9] If however, the government begins to implement regulatory limits, the agriculture industry may be affected. The industry will be forced to find a substitute for brown rice syrup or find a way to remove the arsenic qualities that are deeply rooted in the soil from past pesticides. Until that time comes, as you make your purchases remember that organic does not always mean better.

[1] Brian P. Jackson, Vivian F. Taylor, Margaret R. Karagas, Tracy Punshon & Kathryn L. Cottingham, *Arsenic, Organic Foods, and Brown Rice Syrup*. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES, [\(http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint\(AOP\)\)](http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint(AOP)) (February 16, 2012).

[2] Linda Carroll, *High Arsenic Levels Found in Organic Foods, Baby Formula*, MSNBC.COM, http://todayhealth.today.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/02/16/10425025-high-arsenic-levels-found-in-organic-foods-baby-formula (February 16, 2012).

[3] Brian P. Jackson, Vivian F. Taylor, Margaret R. Karagas, Tracy Punshon & Kathryn L. Cottingham, *Arsenic, Organic Foods, and Brown Rice Syrup*. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES, [\(http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint\(AOP\)\)](http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint(AOP)) (February 16, 2012).

[4] *Id.*

[5] *Id.* at 8-9.

[6] *Id.* at 8.

[7] Linda Carroll, *High Arsenic Levels Found in Organic Foods, Baby Formula*, MSNBC.COM, http://todayhealth.today.msnbc.msn.com/_news/2012/02/16/10425025-high-arsenic-levels-found-in-organic-foods-baby-formula (February 16, 2012).

[8] *Id.*

[9] Brian P. Jackson, Vivian F. Taylor, Margaret R. Karagas, Tracy Punshon & Kathryn L. Cottingham, *Arsenic, Organic Foods, and Brown Rice Syrup*. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PERSPECTIVES, [\(http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint\(AOP\)\)](http://ehp03.niehs.nih.gov/article/action/articleURI=info%3Adoi%2F10.1289%2Fehp.1104619#AheadofPrint(AOP)) (February 16, 2012).

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