



Smithsonian

# Organic Farming



Dona Herweck Rice

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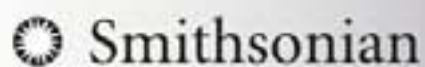
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# Food, Glorious Food!

There are few things in life that everyone thinks about every day. Food is one of them. Throughout the day, a person often thinks: *What is there to eat? I wonder what we're having for dinner. My stomach is growling. Oh, that smells good! I'm hungry!*

Food is necessary for life, but it can also be one of life's pleasures. People like food that tastes good! More than anything, though, healthy bodies need **nutritious** food. Unfortunately, a lot of foods that people eat are not nutritious. They may taste good and provide fuel for the body, but they are not nourishing. Sometimes, they are downright unhealthy.

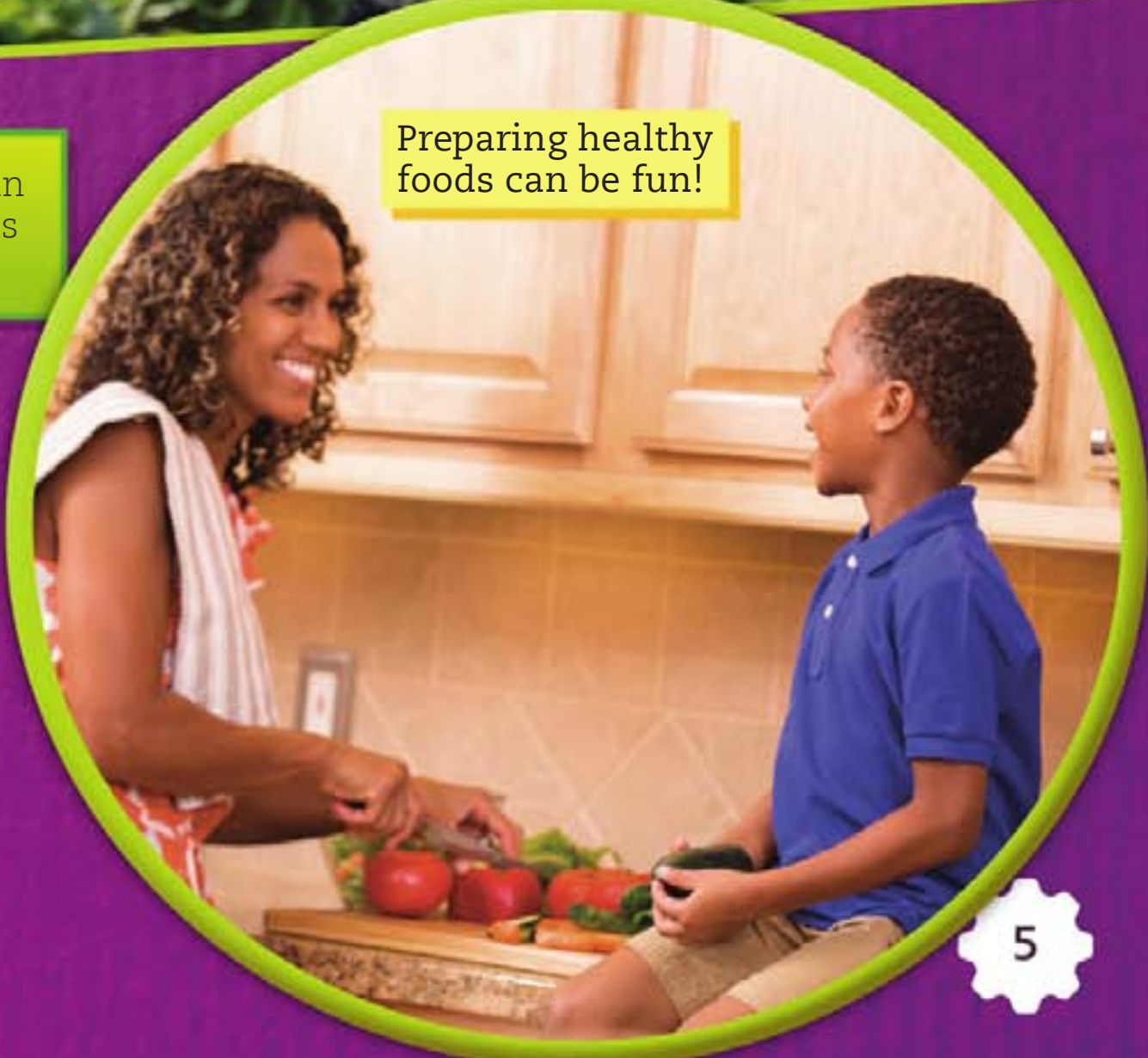
Over time, a growing number of people have chosen more healthy food choices. They want food to be delicious *and* nutritious.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue jacket and blue gloves, is crouching in a greenhouse. She is surrounded by rows of lettuce plants. The greenhouse has a white plastic covering and metal supports. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting natural light coming through the plastic.

A woman works with lettuce in a garden.

About 1 in 10 workers in the United States works in the food industry.

A woman with curly hair, wearing a white and red patterned top, is smiling and looking at a young boy. The boy is wearing a blue polo shirt and is holding a green pepper. They are in a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a tiled backsplash. On the counter, there are several red tomatoes and other vegetables on a wooden cutting board.

Preparing healthy foods can be fun!

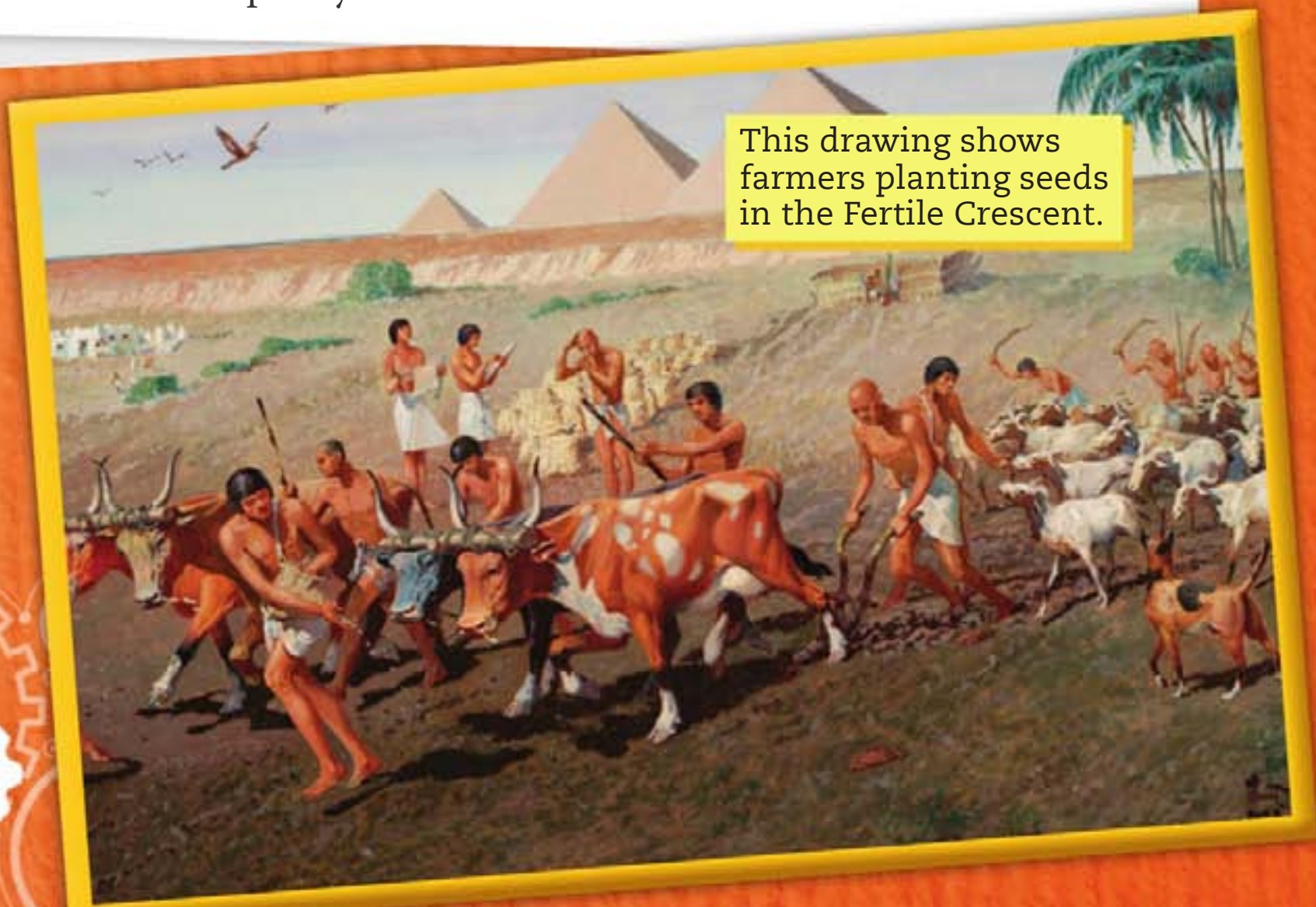
# Back to the Roots

Foods we think are healthy may be made or grown in unhealthy ways. More and more people are worried about this fact. So, researchers studied how people farm today. They compared current methods to how people used to farm. Today's **organic** farmers are going back to the roots of farming.

## History of Farming

Farming is one of the biggest industries in the world. But people have not always farmed. In ancient times, people found food by **foraging**. These people were called hunter-gatherers. Then, thousands of years ago, people began to farm.

Farming did not start in just one place with one group of people. Several groups began to farm around the same time. The first farmers lived throughout the so-called **Fertile Crescent**. It is a large area of land in the Middle East. It has rich soil and plenty of water.



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