Recession-racked shoppers still spend on organics

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RALEIGH, N.C. — For the past three years, American consumers have been on a shopping diet. They do not necessary forgo their shopping lists but they've cut back on their spending. They've made do. They've bought more in bulk. And they've cut back on the number of items on their list.

And yet, they've continued to spend on fresh vegetables and organic products.

Many shoppers say that fresh and organic items spoil their diet. They've continued to buy these items because they've been convinced that their health is important. The environment, American agriculture and others alike.

The dedication that has made organic a bright spot in many retailers and is allowing some to expand, including Trader Joe's, the California-based grocery giant for its many fruits without pesticides, and in addition to other environmentally-driven and Whole Foods.

The commitment to organic has surprised some who predicted at the onset of the recession that the preening consumer would avoid such high-priced foods.

I think have had a lot of organic growth. We beat a higher than average rate. We've lost an impact by the recession, as organic growers' group, said Stan Todd, president of the Food Institute, a New Jersey, group that studies food prices. But they are the ongoing premium as some success suggests, the results are still.

Last year, for example, consumers spent $9 billion on organic products and $1.5 billion on fresh foods.

Some of the best-known brands in the industry were up 10 to 15 percent, according to The Food Product.