

CAPTURING THE ORGANICS MARKET

TOP U.S. CHAINS

Wal-Mart and other grocers have been moving into the organics space, but the major chains are still going strong. Here's a look at the U.S. leaders by 2005 sales:

Rank/company	Headquarters	Stores	Sales
1. Whole Foods Market	Austin	184	\$4.70 billion
2. Wild Oats Markets	Boulder, Colo.	113	\$1.12 billion
3. Earth Fare	Asheville, N.C.	13	\$100 million

NOTES: Smaller organics chains typically do not disclose sales. They include New Seasons Market, Portland, Ore. (7 stores), Mother's Market & Kitchen, Costa Mesa, Calif. (4); MOM/My Organic Market, Rockville, Md. (3); and Jimbo's, San Diego (3). Among specialty chains that carry some organics are Trader Joe's, Monrovia, Calif. (243 stores), which said about 20 percent of sales are organics, and Sprouts Farmers Market, Scottsdale, Ariz. (13), which said about 15 percent of sales are organics.

SUPERMARKET STRATEGIES

Some major supermarkets have offered organic products for years, and others are stepping up their investment in the category:

■ Cincinnati-based Kroger, a pioneer among the conventional chains, has carried organic produce since 1987 and created a dedicated area, Nature's Market, in stores in 1993. It also has its own Naturally Preferred private label.

■ Minneapolis-based Supervalu opened its first

Sunflower Market natural and organic store in Indianapolis in January and plans to open 50 stores in the next five years.

■ Lakeland, Fla.-based Publix Super Markets is taking its private-label GreenWise brand and turning it into a new store concept.

■ Last year, Pleasanton, Calif.-based Safeway introduced its O Organics private-label line of more than 150 products in stores including Tom Thumb in Dallas.

SOURCES: *Dallas Morning News* research; *Progressive Grocer* magazine