



## Minnesota Food Association



14220-B Ostlund Trail North  
Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047  
Tel: 651-433-3676 Fax: 651-433-5050

[www.mnfoodassociation.org](http://www.mnfoodassociation.org)

# ***Why is Buying Local Food Important?***

Local foods systems provide several advantages over conventional and global markets. Buying locally strengthens regional economies, supports family farms, provides delicious, "fresh-from-the-field" foods for consumers, preserves the local landscape, and fosters a sense of community.

### **Buying local food *strengthens your regional economy ...***

- Purchasing food that was grown and harvested locally keeps your money circulating within your community, keeping wealth in your region
- Buying local food supports family farmers in your community, some of whom have farmed the land for generations.
- Supporting local farms can help to create jobs for your region throughout the value chain.
- A strong local economy insulates your region from national and global recessions.

### **Buying local food provides *high-quality, fresh foods ...***

- Locally-produced food is often fresher than conventional products grown far away and shipped in trucks for several days.
- You can give local farmers feedback on the quality and freshness of their produce.
- Fresh produce – harvested when it is ripe on the vine – has more nutrition than produce harvested early and allowed to ripen off the vine.
- Fresh produce just plain tastes better; it has more flavor.

### **Buying local food *fosters community growth ...***

- Family farms are part of the American tradition of self-sufficiency and serve as the basis of local communities.
- Local farmers markets and CSA farms provide places for community members to meet, socialize, and discuss issues.
- Local farmers markets and farms bring together individuals who share concerns about the future, promoting organization and cooperation toward common goals
- By helping family farms financially, you sustain your family and community and get delicious, healthy local foods!

## **Buying local lets you connect with your food producer concerning *the safety and nutrition of your foods...***

- Locally-grown foods are higher in nutrients, and higher Food Safety value, harvested with care within 24 hours of reaching you, while produce shipped from out of state may be 2 - 3 weeks old suffering severe nutrient loss and exposed to increased contamination.
- Organic produce is proven to have higher nutrient content and less water content (which allows for higher storage-ability as well).
- When you buy locally, you can ask whether the farmers use safe farming practices, what or if they spray on their crops, and what they feed to their animals.
- As friends and community members, meet your local farmers and develop a direct relationship with them.

## **Buying local *preserves the natural environment ...***

- By supporting local agriculture, you protect your region's farmland from urban sprawl and development.
- Protection of local farmland means protection of open spaces, natural ecosystems, and biodiversity.
- Buying local food helps to reduce dependence on imported oil needed to ship food thousands of miles, thus cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions.

Adapted from FoodRoutes at <http://www.foodroutes.org/>

## **Buy Local References**

- Local Harvest. Extensive resource on local foods, with link to find local food sources in your area. [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)
- Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association's (OEFFA) [12 Reasons to Eat Local and Organic](#)
- Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture has information on local food, where to buy, and other issues related to sustainability [http://www.misa.umn.edu/Local\\_Food.html](http://www.misa.umn.edu/Local_Food.html)
- <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/minnesotagrown/> Minnesota Grown, a division of the MN Department of Agriculture, has a free directory with a very extensive list of local agriculture products, farms and vendors throughout MN.
- "Why Local Farmers and the Food they Produce are Important," published by [CAFF](#) in *California Farm Fresh Guide*. Will Stockwin.
- [10 Ways to Buy Local](#) from The Soil Association.
- <http://www.foodroutes.org/> FoodRoutes has extensive information, publications and links regarding local foods
- Minnesota Food Association. Growing new farmers and distributing local food through Big River Farms. [www.mnfoodassociation.org](http://www.mnfoodassociation.org)