

10 REASONS TO BUY LOCAL

Consumers, whether as individuals or institutions, who value fresh, flavorful, healthful food and a working, rural landscape, can support local farmers by buying their products. Following are some reasons why.

- 1. Eat fresher, better tasting, healthier foods.** Food shipped across the country must be picked prior to ripening, held for extended periods of time, and treated with chemicals to either hasten or postpone ripening. Local food has less distance to travel and will arrive at its destination crisp, flavorful, and filled with nutrients.
- 2. Enjoy seasonal produce and regional varieties.** Local farmers plant according to seasonal changes providing a variety of choices throughout the year. Family farmers are known for their heirloom crop varieties giving customers unique heritage products. Local farmers are free to try small, specialty crops of various fruits and vegetables that would probably never make it in the “mass” market.
- 3. Support your farming neighbors.** Fewer and fewer family owned farms are able to stay in business. Many farming families are finding it hard to make a profit. Supporting your local farmer will keep your purchasing dollar in your community and will support your neighbors.
- 4. Sustain rural heritage and lifestyles.** The wholesale prices that farmers get for their products are low, often near the cost of production. Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail prices for their food which helps farm families stay on their land.
- 5. Locally grown is good for you.** The shorter the time between the farm and your table, the less likely it is that nutrients will be lost from fresh food.
- 6. There is a benefit for the environment and wildlife.** Well-managed farms conserve fertile soil and clean water in our communities. Most produce sold in supermarkets has traveled an average of 1,500 miles from farm to shelf, which greatly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. The farm environment is a patchwork of fields, meadows, ponds, and buildings that provide habitat for wildlife.
- 7. Local food builds community.** When you buy direct from a farmer, you are engaging in a time-honored connection between eater and grower. Knowing farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the land, and your food. In many cases, it gives you access to a place where your children and grandchildren can go to learn about nature and agriculture.
- 8. Preserve local space.** When farmers get paid more for their products by marketing locally, they are less likely to sell farmland for development. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive to preserve our agricultural landscape.
- 9. Insure the future.** By supporting local farmers today, you can help make sure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow and future generations will have access to nourishing, flavorful, and abundant food.
- 10. Food Safety and protection from bioterrorism.** Food with less distance to travel from farm to plate is less susceptible to chemical, physical and biological hazards.