

What is a Community Food System?

A community food system is one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social & nutritional health of a particular place.

One way to foster local, community-based food systems is to choose foods that are grown on nearby farms, processed in your area, and marketed through local food stores, restaurants, and farmers markets.

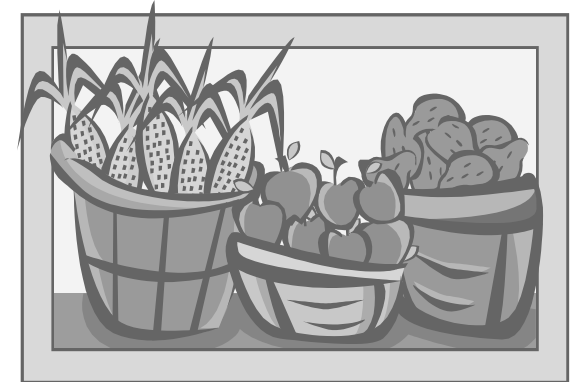
Food choices based on the region's food and agriculture system will naturally vary by season according to availability of agricultural commodities, and vary by the form in which foods are consumed - fresh, stored, canned, frozen, or dried.



Food grown in your community was picked in the last day or two



Buy Locally Grown Food and Help Sustain Local Farms!



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Reasons to support your local small acreage farmers

Reasons to Buy Local Food and Support Local Farms

The average “fresh” produce in a grocery store is 7—14 days old, has been selected for ease of picking & shelf-life, and has traveled approximately 1,500

expensive miles, losing nutrition and taste along the way. Have you ever wondered why that head of lettuce you bought at the grocery store only lasted three days in your refrigerator before it became inedible?



Local food builds Community

Locally grown food tastes better.

Food grown in your community was probably picked within the past day or two. It’s crisp, sweet and loaded with flavor. Produce flown or trucked in from California, Florida, or south of the border is quite understandably, much older and doesn’t taste as good.

Local produce is better for you.

Locally grown food, purchased soon after harvest, retains its nutrients. Food that is frozen or canned soon after harvest is actually more nutritious than some “fresh” produce that has been on the truck or supermarket shelf for a week.

Local food supports local farm families. Farmers and farms are vanishing. In the past 20 years, millions of acres of farmland were overrun by development—nearly 50 acres are lost every hour of every day. Farmers are a vanishing breed. And no wonder — the cost of production often exceeds the price the farmer gets for their crop. It is not uncommon that the middleman gets paid more the farmer who grew the food! Local farmers who sell direct to consumers cut out the middleman and get full retail price for their food—which means farm families can afford to stay on the farm, doing the work they love.



Local food builds community.

When you buy direct from the farmer, you are re-establishing a time-honored connection between the eater and the grower. Knowing the farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the weather, and the miracle of raising food. In many cases, it gives you access to a farm where your children and grandchildren can go to learn about nature and agriculture. Knowing where and by whom your food is grown will make you feel better about the food you eat.



Local farms preserve open space

Local food preserves open space.

The open space and countryside around our community will survive only as long as farms are financially viable. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agricultural landscape.

Local food preserves genetic diversity.

In the modern industrial agricultural system, varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment; for a tough skin that can survive packing and shipping; and for an ability to have a long shelf life in the store. There is little genetic diversity in the plants grown. Local farms, in contrast, grow a huge number of varieties to provide a long season of harvest, an array of eye-catching colors, and the best flavors. Many varieties are heirlooms, passed down from generation to generation because they taste good. These old varieties contain genetic material from hundreds of years of human selection; they may someday provide the genes needed to create varieties that will thrive in our changing climate.



Food, like air, water, and shelter, is essential to life. Support your local small acreage farmers!