



Buying Locally Grown Food

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Over a year ago I made one of the best decisions I have made in some time – I joined a CSA, which means I joined into the movement called Community Supported Agriculture.

What this means for me is that each week a local farmer delivers a bag of fresh vegetables and fruits, bread and a sweet to my office. I pay for six months at a time upfront and have chosen my favorites from a list of possibilities based on my personal likes and cooking preferences.

Over this span of time, I seriously believe that my eating habits have improved since the healthy food is grown, delivered and all I have to do is prepare it.

What is Community Supported Agriculture?

It consists of one or more farmers and many individuals or families from the community who pledge financial support to a farm operation. The farmer and the consumer provide mutual support and share the risk and benefits of the food production. Typically, members from the community pledge in advance to cover some of the cost of the farm operation. In return, the members receive a portion of the harvest throughout the growing seasons.

Did you know that one-fifth of all petroleum used in the United States is used in agriculture? Some statistics show that the average distance food travels in distribution is 1,500 miles. By enjoying eating foods that are locally available and in season, families can do their part to save energy.

Our reasons that support buying local whenever possible include:

1. Local produce tastes better and it is better for you. Studies show that fresh produce loses nutrients quickly during transportation. During the trip from harvest to the dinner table, sugars turn to starch, plant cells shrink and produce loses its vitality. I think this is evident when you consider corn on the cob. Fresh corn tastes like sugar; older ears of corn have a flatter, starchy taste.
2. Local food supports local farm families. Fewer than one million Americans now claim farming as their primary occupation. Farming is a vanishing lifestyle. Local farmers are able to cut out some of the middle people and can pass some of the savings on to you, the consumer.
3. Local food preserves open space and supports a diverse environment. If we can keep the small farmer in business, selling the limited amount of farmland that exists in Wakulla County for development becomes less likely. When you buy locally grown food, you are doing something proactive about preserving the agriculture and wildlife habitat in Wakulla County.
4. Local food is about the future of Wakulla County. By supporting local farmers, you can help ensure that there will be farms and similar green spaces in our county tomorrow. This adds to the space for wildlife and insures that our Wakulla grown youth will have access to locally grown food as well.