

what does buy **LOCAL** mean?



Recent studies have found that food from the conventional system travels between 1,500 and 2,500 miles from “field to fork”, compared to an average of 50 to 60 miles for locally produced food. “Food miles” refer to the distance a food item travels from the farm to your home. The food miles for items you buy in the grocery store tend to be 27 times higher than the food miles for goods bought from local sources. A tremendous amount of fossil fuel is used to transport foods such long distances. Combustion of these fuels releases carbon dioxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter and other pollutants into the atmosphere, contributing to global climate change, acid rain, smog and air pollution. Even the refrigeration required to keep fruits, vegetables, dairy products and meats from spoiling burns up energy.

There is no fixed definition of “local” or “regional” food. One commonly used definition: the distance one can travel in “a day’s leisurely drive.” In the Northeast, we tend to use the words ‘local’ and ‘regional’ interchangeably. This is because within a ‘leisurely day’s drive’ or 150-200 miles, you can easily travel throughout most of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Delaware. The range of climates encompassed within this area provides an extended growing season, which makes the use of fresh, seasonal food much more feasible. Learning to adapt your menu to what is available seasonally - and being flexible when the weather unexpectedly affects supply - is important to the success of using regional foods.

DOES IT COST MORE TO USE LOCAL FOOD?

There is no simple answer to the question as to whether local food costs more, since it also raises the question of price versus value. If a local apple is fresher and tastier than its conventional counterpart, is their value the same? If greens from a nearby farm last longer and you can use a higher percentage of the product than your typical case of greens, should you expect the price to be the same?

HOW TO ADD LOCAL FOOD ON A TIGHT BUDGET

Buy with the seasons - Staples like onions, carrots or fruit that are abundant will likely be available at prices that are competitive.

Be creative with your menu - Higher quality local products may cost more than conventional products, but you may use less product. Particularity with local meats,

it’s important to use less well known cuts. Cooking “nose to tail” allows you to help support the farmer while introducing new dishes at lower prices.

Keep an eye on waste - It is important to track the amount of food you purchase and the amount that is wasted in determining the actual cost of using regional food.

DID YOU KNOW...

A typical carrot has to travel 1,838 miles to reach your dinner table.

A typical tomato from the store travels 1,569 miles before reaching its destination.

Conventional source broccoli traveled more than 90 times further than locally sourced broccoli, while carrots, sweet corn, garlic, onions, and spinach all traveled at least 50 times further than their locally grown counterparts.

Even though most Americans live about 60 miles from an apple orchard, the apples you typically buy at the grocery store travel 1,726 miles between the orchard and your house. That’s further than driving from Portland, Maine to Miami, Florida!

Pirog, Rich, and Andrew Benjamin. “Checking the Food Odometer: Comparing Food Miles for Local Versus Conventional Produce Sales in Iowa Institutions.” Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, July 2003

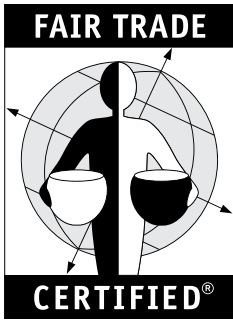


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*Understanding the Labels
on other side*

Understanding the Labels



THE FAIR TRADE CERTIFIED™ LABEL GUARANTEES:

A FAIR PRICE - The Fair Trade Certified label guarantees that farmers and workers received a fair price for their product. The Fair Trade price means that farmers can feed their families and that their children can go to school instead of working in the fields.

QUALITY PRODUCTS - By receiving a fair price, Fair Trade producers can avoid cost-cutting prac-

tices that sacrifice quality. The Fair Trade producers' traditional artisanal farming methods result in exceptional products.

CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT - Most Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea and chocolate in the US is certified organic and shade grown. This means that the products you buy maintain biodiversity, provide shelter for migratory birds and help reduce global warming.



The Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) and the National Organic Program (NOP) assure consumers that the organic agricultural products they purchase are produced, processed, and certified to consistent national organic standards. The labeling requirements of the NOP apply to raw, fresh products and processed products that contain organic agricultural ingredients. Agricultural products that are sold, labeled, or represented as organic must be produced and processed in accordance with the NOP standards.

Labeling requirements are based on the percentage of organic ingredients in a product.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS LABELED "100% ORGANIC" AND "ORGANIC"

Products labeled as "100 percent organic" must contain (excluding water and salt) only organically produced ingredients and processing aids. Products labeled "organic" must consist of at least 95 percent organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Any remaining product ingredients must consist of nonagricultural substances approved on the National List including specific non-organically produced agricultural products that are not commercially available in organic form. Products meeting the requirements for "100 percent organic" and "organic" may display these terms and the percentage of organic content on their principal display panel. Agricultural products labeled "100 percent organic" and "organic" cannot be produced using excluded methods, sewage sludge, or ionizing radiation.

PROCESSED PRODUCTS LABELED "MADE WITH ORGANIC INGREDIENTS"

Processed products that contain at least 70% organic ingredients can use the phrase "made with organic ingredients" and list up to three of the organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel. For example, soup made with at least 70% organic ingredients and only organic vegetables may be labeled either "soup made with organic peas, potatoes, and carrots," or "soup made with organic vegetables." Processed products labeled "made with organic ingredients" cannot be produced using excluded methods, sewage sludge, or ionizing radiation. The percentage of organic content and the certifying agent seal or mark may be used on the principal display panel. However, the USDA seal cannot be used anywhere on the package.

PROCESSED PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN LESS THAN 70% ORGANIC INGREDIENTS

These products cannot use the term organic anywhere on the principal display panel. However, they may identify the specific ingredients that are organically produced on the ingredients statement on the information panel.

OTHER LABELING PROVISIONS

Any product labeled as organic must identify each organically produced ingredient in the ingredient statement on the information panel. The name of the certifying agent of the final product must be displayed

on the information panel. The address of the certifying agent of the final product may be displayed on the information panel. There are no restrictions on use of other truthful labeling claims such as "no drugs or growth hormones used," "free range," or "sustainably harvested."

OTHER DEFINITIONS

FREE RANGE - Producers must demonstrate to the USDA that the poultry has been allowed access to the outside.

GRASS FED - The American Grassfed Association defines grassfed products from ruminants, including cattle, bison, goats and sheep, as those food products from animals that have eaten nothing but their mother's milk and fresh grass or grass-type hay from birth to harvest - all their lives. There is no standardization of this practice at this time.

NATURAL - A product containing no artificial ingredient or added color and is only minimally processed (a process which does not fundamentally alter the raw product) may be labeled natural. The label must explain the use of the term natural (such as - no added colorings or artificial ingredients; minimally processed.)

SUSTAINABLE - An integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term: Satisfy human food and fiber needs. Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends. Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls. Sustain the economic viability of farm operations. Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Examples of sustainable farming include crop rotations that mitigate weeds, disease, insect and other pest problems; provide alternative sources of soil nitrogen; reduce soil erosion; and reduce risk of water contamination by agricultural chemicals. Pest control strategies that are not harmful to natural systems, farmers, their neighbors, or consumers. More soil and water conservation practices; and strategic use of animal and green manures. Use of natural or synthetic inputs in a way that poses no significant hazard to man, animals, or the environment.

Information from Fair Trade Federation, National Organic Program, American Grassfed Association & USDA

What does buy local mean? on other side