

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

As you plan events and parties, remember that that your food choices will impact on our environment.

Can I really make a difference? Yes. By making a choice to serve locally grown products, you are keeping the control of your food system in local hands. Agricultural land in our state is disappearing at a rate of seven acres a day. Without your support, the scenic working landscapes and wildlife habitats that make our state special will be gone forever.

Our local farms and farmers are struggling. The average net farm sales for farms that market directly was just \$16,170 a year. With the average age of farmers now at 55 years old, there is a great temptation for them to sell the farm for development. However if an additional 5 percent of MA residents would spend \$9.00 a week on local food during the summer months, net farm sales could increase by 50 percent. This would be a huge boost to the local agricultural community.

“Buying local” food for the convention will help protect local farmland.

Contact Information

General Info on Agriculture in Massachusetts

☐ www.Mass.gov/AGR

Facts and Statistics

☐ <http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/facts/index.htm>

Purchasing Local Products

☐ Essex County Buy Local Program
www.buyfresh.org

Planning Menus With Seasonal Foods

☐ <http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/massgrown/buyguide.pdf>

Information on Farm visits

☐ http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/massgrown/agritourism_farms.htm

Specialty Products - both retail and wholesale

☐ <http://www.state.ma.us/dfa/massgrown/specprod.pdf>

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Guide to Using Local Food

for the

Democratic National Convention

Boston 2004

WHY BUY LOCAL FOOD

“Buying local” supports family farmers who provide the open space, working landscapes and wildlife habitats that make our state a special place to live. Because over 90 percent of Massachusetts farms are classified as small farms, they tend to grow food using ecologically sustainable practices that enhance the soil while reducing the use of biological agents. Food purchased from local farmers is harvested within hours of consumption tending to make it fresher and better tasting.

When access to local food disappears, consumers become increasingly dependent on a global food system that grows uniform produce that can be easily harvested and marketed internationally. This reduces the regional self-sufficiency and biodiversity.

Since most major cities only have a two-day supply of food, supporting a local food available can cushion the blow from a disruption in access to food supplies.

For more information on how to find local food contact: Christine Rasmussen, Essex County Buy Local Coordinator at (978) 281-0309, chrisras@gis.net or visit www.buyfresh.org. For more information on CERC visit www.cerc04.org.

IT'S GOOD FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Today food travels an average of 1500 to 2000 miles from the farm to the dinner plate. Since nearly 93 percent of the fresh produce transported between cities in the United State is moved by truck, the transportation cost of eating is increasing U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

A study conducted by Leopold Center determined that our conventional system of food distribution used 4 to 17 times more fuel than the lowa-based regional and local systems, (depending on the system and truck type used) and in the six state area, it released from 5 to 17 more CO₂ than the regional and local system. The study concluded that a reduction of just 273 miles in the average one-way distance that produce travels would translate into savings of 8.8 million gallons of diesel fuel per year and the CO₂ emissions would decrease by 194.8 million pounds a year. (<http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubinfo/papersspeeches/ppp/foodmiles.html>).

Delicious local products are available in institutional packages, ready for your guests to enjoy!

RAISING AWARENESS

- ▣ Provide education about the importance of supporting environmentally friendly practices, including buying local food.
- ▣ Buy local products whenever possible and develop menus that feature locally grown and produced products. During the convention, flowers, miniature roses, beans, lettuce, zucchini, sweet corn, as well as ice cream, sauces, condiments, and other products will be available from local farms.
- ▣ In retail establishments offer gift packages of MA produced products including condiments, maple syrup and maple products, vinegars, and locally produced cheeses.
- ▣ Provide guests information on farms that welcome tourists.

