

12 Reasons to Eat Local and Organic

- 1. Freshness.** Locally grown organic fruits and vegetables harvested within 24 hours of being purchased by the consumer. Produce from California can't be that fresh.
- 2. Taste.** Produce picked and eaten at the height of freshness tastes better.
- 3. Nutrition.** Nutritional value declines, often dramatically, as time passes after harvest. Because locally grown produce is freshest, it is more nutritionally complete.
- 4. Purity.** Eighty percent of American adults say they are concerned about the safety of the food they eat. They worry about residues of pesticides and fungicides. These materials are not permitted in an organic production system either before or after harvest.
- 5. Regional Economic Health.** Buying locally grown food keeps money within the community. This contributes to the health of all sectors of the local economy, increasing the local quality of life.
- 6. Variety.** Organic farmers selling locally are not limited to the few varieties that are bred for long distance shipping, high yields, and shelf life. Often they raise and sell wonderful unusual varieties you will never find on supermarket shelves.
- 7. Soil Stewardship.** Soil health is essential for the survival of our species. Conventional farming practices are rapidly depleting topsoil fertility. Creating and sustaining soil fertility is the major objective for organic growers.
- 8. Energy Conservation.** Buying locally grown organic foods decreases dependence on petroleum, a non-renewable energy source. One fifth of all petroleum now used in the United States is used in Agriculture. Organic production systems do not rely upon the input of petroleum derived fertilizers and pesticides and thus save energy at the farm. Buying from local producers conserves additional energy at the distribution level.
- 9. Environmental Protection.** Soil erosion; pesticide contamination of soil, air, and water; nitrate loading of waterways and wells; and elimination of planetary biodiversity are some of the problems associated with today's predominant farming methods. Organic growers use practices that protect soil, air, and water resources; and that promote biodiversity.
- 10. Cost.** Conventional food processes don't reflect the hidden costs of the environmental, health and social consequences of predominant production practices—of, for instance, correcting a water supply polluted by agricultural runoff, or obtaining medical treatment for pesticide induced illness suffered by farmers or consumers. When these and other hidden costs are taken into account, as they should be, locally grown organic foods are seen clearly for the value they are, even if they cost a few pennies more.
- 11. A Step Toward Regional Food Self-Reliance.** Dependency on far-away food sources leaves a region vulnerable to supply disruptions, and removes any real accountability of producer to consumer. It also tends to promote larger, less diversified farms that hurt both the environment and local economies/communities. Regional food production systems, on the other hand, keep the food supply in the hands of many, providing interesting job and self-employment opportunities, and enabling people to influence how their food is grown.
- 12. Passing on the Stewardship Ethic.** When you buy locally produced organic food you cannot help but raise the consciousness of your friends and family about how food buying decisions can make a difference in your life and the life of your community; and about how this basic act is connected to planetary issues.