



Grow Virginia's Economy!

Take the \$10 a week challenge to Eat Local, Buy Local.

Why eat Virginia-grown food?

Health and Flavor: There is ample evidence that eating lots of fruits and vegetables protects us against chronic diseases like heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, etc. Your family will eat more if they are delicious. Local fruits and vegetables, as well as livestock and fish, are bursting with flavor because they arrive freshly harvested, usually from no more than 100 miles away, come in more delicious varieties, and have been allowed to mature and ripen naturally, to full flavor as well as absorb maximum nutrients!

Non-local produce does not reach its full flavor or nutrient content because it is harvested before it is mature and may be shipped 1000's of miles and be 1-2 weeks old before hitting the shelves.

Economy: The money you spend on local food helps create and protect local jobs. *If each household in Virginia spent at least \$10 a week on locally grown agricultural products, it could bring \$1.65 billion back into the Virginia economy each year!*

Your **non**-local food purchases support businesses and farmers out of state (*Garrett & Feenstra, 1999*).

Improve current issues in Virginia's food system.

- Support access to fresh food for all income levels.
- Encourage small to mid-size farmers.
- Encourage new food processors, packers and distributors.

Environment: Use the power of your food \$ to support farmers who use ecologically responsible agricultural practices:

Nutrient Management – by minimizing run-off into nearby water bodies through conservative fertilizer application, use of buffer strips along field edges and waterways and sustainable grazing practices (pasture-raised, free-range).

Soil Conservation – by minimizing soil erosion and nutrient depletion through minimal or no-till agriculture, use of cover crops, crop rotation, minimal use of chemicals, and livestock fencing.

Minimize Pollution – by minimal or no use of herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, antibiotics and hormones.

Pollinator Conservation – Responsible pesticide application when pollinators are not present and/or providing foraging and nesting habitat for our busy bees and butterflies.

Protect Farmers and Farmland: Buying local preserves the economic viability of farming and preserves agricultural land. It helps current farmers succeed and inspires new farmers.

Low Income Resources: Some farmers markets have Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Machines and/or accept Senior's Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) vouchers. Just ask!

The Virginia Food System Council invites you and your family to EXPLORE ways to incorporate more local food into your diet.

Visit VirginiaFood.Org for more tips on eating local and supporting the Virginia agricultural system.