

Five Reasons to Buy Local

- 1** *Taste & freshness.* Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually raised for taste and quality, rather than transportability and durability. A diverse diet of fresh produce also provides a natural source of vitamins and nutrients.
- 2** *Food safety.* When you buy locally grown foods through Farmer's Markets and Community Supported Agriculture, often you can meet the growers. From them you can learn about their farming and animal husbandry practices—including their use of pesticides—and influence their farming practices.
- 3** *Environmental protection.* Modern farming practices, and the transportation system for distributing foods, is energy-intensive. By buying local, you help conserve energy, as well as reduce the pollutants that result from industrial agriculture. Organic foods and those foods grown with few pesticides also help protect our groundwater. In addition, fresh foods are packaged by Mother Nature, reducing the solid waste sent to landfills.
- 4** *Economic health.* When you buy locally grown food, you get the satisfaction of helping support your community's local farms and economy. Even in states such as Iowa where the soils are some of the richest in the world, more than 80 percent of the food is currently imported—much of it traveling more than 1,000 miles. That means the food dollar is imported as well.
- 5** *Connection.* When you buy locally, you may develop connections with growers as well as the land. You become increasingly aware of the seasons and weather, and which foods are available during various times of the growing season.

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