

eat  local caledon

Growing Our Local Food and Farming System

January 27, 2009

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Inspiration for the Day

A Fresh Approach to Food: Local Food Systems Planning in Waterloo Region

Increased Yield. According to Statistics Canada, local production of total vegetables (excluding greenhouse vegetables) increased by 129.1 % in Waterloo Region between 2001 and 2006 while the provincial and national data indicated decreases for these crops during the same time period: - 8.6 % in Ontario and - 6.5 % in Canada.

Back Story

- **Strengthening the Local Economy.** ROWPH's work to create **Foodlink** has proven invaluable in terms of building capacity to bolster the local economy. For example, Foodlink helped develop the Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative (EPAC), a group operated by members of the local farming community that sells locally-grown produce three times a week by means of an auction. It is likely that EPAC has been an impetus for farmers to grow more vegetables.

Agri-Food Facts in Ontario

- The agri-food industry contributes more than \$33 billion to the Ontario economy and employs about 700,000 people.

Local Food Facts

Research from Farmers' Markets Ontario (FMO) in 2005

- 125 farmers' markets represented by FMO had estimated sales of \$645 million and an estimated economic impact of \$1.9 billion
- Average spending by a shopper at FMO market was \$30.00 per visit.
- Sales at farmers' markets are growing by 5% per year.

Local Food Facts

Research from Ontario Farm Fresh

In 2005, on-farm marketing provides seasonal employment for 10,000 Ontario residents, of which 4,500 are students.

- Represents \$116 million in annual gross receipts.

Economics of Local Food

- Eat Fresh and Grow Jobs Study, Michigan, Sept 2006 – economic model to show Michigan can improve economy by creating linkages between farmers and consumers
- If farmers could increase by 2x or 3x the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables they sell, the shift could increase farm income by \$164 million or nearly 16% and this income when spent would generate 1,889 new jobs and \$187 million in personal income from these jobs.

Economics of Local Food

- From Leopold Centre in Iowa, local produce = local profits
- Iowa's 170 farmers markets generate at least \$20 million in sales and 325 jobs
- Local food sales in CSA's and institutional sales (restaurants, hospitals and other food services) all add to the economy
- If Iowans ate 5 fruits & vegetables per day and bought them all locally in season (3 months), an additional \$300 million and 4,000 jobs would be added to the economy.

National Good Food Network

- Chicago – November 2008 – Brian Snyder Presentation from Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture
- New evidence that small farms are now breaking into higher income brackets and building a new local food and farm economy with serious growth potential
- Building alliances and networks to supply bigger orders
- A number of Pennsylvania farms are grossing more than \$500,000 with the CSA model – most still are in the under \$50,000 bracket
- Hooking up farms with their local markets is a proven path to increased farm profitability

National Good Food Network

- Sysco – big distributor – recognizes that all through the food chain consumers are looking for “romance, memory and trust” that local family-scale farms have.
- “There is a groundswell in the market of people wanting to buy local and keep money in their marketplace.”

Environmental Issues in Caledon

June 2008

- Importance of buying locally grown foods and products – 2004 at 82% and 2008 at 91% total important
- Having a strong vibrant agricultural community – 2004 at 85% and 2008 at 93%
- Preserving agricultural lands – 2004 and 2008 at 90%

Why do People Want to Buy Local?

- Fresh food and it tastes better
- Farm/Farmer Connection
- To support farmers
- Support local economy
- Preserve farmland
- Environment – stewardship – land/water
- Environment - climate change and global warming

Local Food Story

- The bottom line is that the local food story is a compelling one and it is a market advantage.
- Local food buyers and sellers need to work on the infrastructure, distribution channels and other obstacles to build or grow the local food and farming system.

Local Food and Farming System Participants

- Who are the participants?
- Sellers – farmers and producers – vegetables, fruits, meats, bakery, honey, maple syrup, cheese, wine, mushrooms, sweets, jams/jellies/pickles, etc.
- Buyers – consumers through on-farm markets or at farm gate, restaurants, shops (all sizes), farmers' markets and institutions/schools.

Other Participants

- Local and Regional Governments
- Eat Local Caledon and Caledon Countryside Alliance
- Hills of Headwaters – Culinary Tourism
- Food Distributors
- Media
- Other participants to join in the future

How Can You Fit In to this System

– Farmers, Growers, Producers

- Grow more, sell more, buy more and eat more locally grown and produced food.
- Connect to other growers
- Be excited about the opportunity
- Participate – farm gate, farmers' market, restaurants, shops, special Eat Local events.

How Can You Fit In to this System – Buyers

- Start or expand your local buying program
- Develop a Buy Local purchasing policy
- Find new producers
- Sign up for Eat Local Caledon Events
- Host your own events

Strengthening the System

- Farmers, Growers and Producers – find new buyers, grow new products, remain competitive and help build the system by working with Eat Local Caledon
- Buyers – find new suppliers, do product sampling, be innovative with local food and help build the system by working with Eat Local Caledon

Benefit From

Producers and Buyers

- Use the advantage selling to the local market as part of your competitive strategy
- Take advantage of the latest marketing trend that is here to stay.
- Increased media attention
- Higher value product
- Community economic strength