

Communicating the Value of Locally Produced Farm Products

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Sometimes locally sourced produce and meat cost slightly more than items available at a chain grocery store. There are ways to effectively present the benefits of “buying local” so that consumers in your area understand that those slightly higher prices are justified. For one thing, local food is good for both the environment and health. Local food vendors benefit the local economy and help build a resilient food system. Many consumers do like having the opportunity to know where and how their food is grown, as well.

Farmers can communicate the true value of local farm products through

1. Conversations. A study in SE Missouri found that consumers DO want to know their local farmers and talk about the process of raising food. Farmers can engage customers in conversations about farming techniques and the freshness aspect of local foods during direct sales opportunities.
2. In-store signage. Sometimes farmers cannot engage customers directly, but they can promote their produce and meats through signs located in farmers’ markets and larger stores. Often supermarkets are willing to offer locally-grown foods, but this will vary with location.
3. Samples. People respond well to samples that are offered and can help inspire them to use locally grown foods in new ways. Samples allow customers to see, taste, and smell the local food difference.
4. Menus. Diners are less sensitive to higher priced meals when they know their meal choices support local agriculture.
5. Newsletters. A newsletter allows farmers to communicate the value of buying local products in depth. Farmers who don’t have direct contact with consumers can use a digital newsletter to keep in touch.
6. Blogs and Vlogs. A blog is an online “window” into the life of a farmers and can give consumers an idea of where and how their food is grown. These are especially useful for farmers who don’t like to write or don’t have a lot of time.
7. Agritourism. Agritourism is becoming a popular way for some farmers to increase their income. It also allows the farmer to promote locally grown farm products, especially if there is a market or shop on the property. How to and DIY clinics add to the tourism experience.