

6 Reasons to Buy Local

For our health, communities and the environment



The Landworkers' Alliance's 'Vocal for Local' report celebrates local food systems across the UK, highlighting their important contribution to creating a resilient, just and connected food system for all. Here, we've outlined six key reasons why buying locally produced food is better for our health, our communities and our ecological systems...

1. Supporting local economies

Did you know that the local food economy in England supports 61,000 jobs?¹

The money spent in independent local food outlets supports three times the number of jobs than in national supermarkets, and every £10 spent in a local food outlet is worth approximately £25 to the local economy.²



2. Strengthening local resilience and food security

8.4 million people in the UK are living in food poverty.

Panic buying at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic led to many supermarkets encountering shortages of basic food items.

This shortage accounted for around 40% of food insecurity experiences since the beginning of lockdown in March 2020.³ Supporting local producers offers a resilient alternative.

Strengthening localised food systems means they are more capable of producing enough calories in the local area to withstand the systemic disruptions and external shocks which impact supermarket supply chains.



3. Food provenance

Local food connects us as consumers with our food and where it comes from. Understanding food cultures and the local provenance of food strengthens the cultural identity of a place and its people as food begins to hold a value beyond its financial worth.⁴ This encourages local distinctiveness, seasonality and diversity in our food systems.

4. Better quality food

There is a strong link between local food systems and organic production. This is because farmers are able to keep a greater share of sale prices which they can then use to cover the increased costs of organic production. Local produce also tends to be fresher than supermarket fruit and vegetables, as the distance travelled between field and consumer is minimal.



5. Taking care of our environment

Organic growing increases biodiversity and soil health, both of which are vitally important to the resilience and adaptability of our food system in the face of climate change and environmental degradation.⁵

Greenhouse gas emissions from the UK food system represent 20% of total UK consumption emissions. **A shift away from imports to domestic production of vegetables in the UK would reduce GHG emissions by 7%!⁶**

6. Happier health and wellbeing

Switching to organic foods provides additional antioxidants that are equivalent to eating between 1-2 extra portions of fruit and vegetables a day!⁷ Local food models have also been proven to address mental health issues by creating more access to green spaces and providing opportunities for social connection between consumers, volunteers and growers.

Research has also found that for every £1 invested in local food, between £6 and £8 is returned to society in the form of economic and social benefits, including training & skills and health & wellbeing.⁸



You can find the full 'Vocal for Local' report on our site: <https://landworkersalliance.org.uk/vocal-for-local/>

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2.NEF and The Countryside Agency. (2002). The Money Trail: measuring your impact on the local economy using LM3

3.Loopstra, R. (2020). Vulnerability to food insecurity since the COVID-19 lockdown. Report for the Food Foundation

4.Desmarais, A., Wiebe, N. and Wittman, H. (2011). The Origins & Potential of Food Sovereignty.

5.Lampkin, N. (2020). Potential contribution of organic farming and growing to ELM. English Organic Forum

6.Wheeler, A. and Goudie, S. (2020). SHEFS Policy Brief 2: Pathways to Five a Day

7.Baranski, M. et al. (2014). Higher antioxidant concentrations and less cadmium and pesticide residues in organically-grown crops: a systematic literature review and meta-analyses. British Journal of Nutrition

8.Courtney, P. (2013). A social return on investment approach: final report.

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