Welcome to our 2017 Local Food Guide!

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Your Guide for Nebraska’s Locally Grown Foods!

Buy Fresh Buy Local® Nebraska strives to:

• Increase appreciation of local small and mid-scale family farmers growing food with integrity.
• Improve wellness and quality of life by promoting healthy, in season eating of locally raised food.
• Strengthen bonds between Nebraska’s agricultural neighbors and consumers in urban and rural communities.
• Cultivate a future for Nebraska’s small and mid-scale family farmers by supporting the development of new direct marketing opportunities and services.
• Retain local food dollars in Nebraska’s communities creating entrepreneurial opportunities that in turn develop vital communities.

Join BFBLN in celebrating local food by purchasing, preparing, and supporting the locally owned restaurants, grocers, and bakeries etc. that promote, sell and serve food grown by Nebraskans that are listed in the guide.

This Local Food Guide is a product of Buy Fresh Buy Local® Nebraska. BFBLN is part of the University of Nebraska—Lincoln, Nebraska Cooperative Development Center, which provides consulting and educational programs to clients, including agricultural and food-related co-op businesses, across Nebraska. Together with our national partner the FoodRoutes Network, a national nonprofit organization we are working to strengthen regional markets for locally grown foods. Visit foodroutes.org to learn how FoodRoutes is reintroducing Americans to their food.
Welcome to our 2017 Local Food Guide!

We are happy to be building a strong community of local food producers and consumers throughout the state. Your commitment to purchasing local, and building relationships with producers, business owners and markets is essential for strong local food systems and food culture. Thank you.

Buy Fresh Buy Local® Nebraska (BFBLN) is a member-based marketing, promotion, and education program that works to promote family farmers & ranchers, farmers’ markets, and locally owned grocers, co-ops, restaurants, breweries, wineries and other retail members that support our farmers and ranchers. We also partner with sponsors, institutions and individuals who want to invest in strong, healthy local food systems.

I’m excited to be part of this tradition and move the good work of the past 11+ years forward. Nebraska is one of a kind. I’m originally from Idaho, studied economics at Seattle University, and have worked and studied in Italy and China. Prior to joining BFBLN, I promoted local foods and conducted studies for farmers’ markets in Boise and Seattle and worked in the Rural Public Policy Program at the Center for Rural Affairs. I’m honored to work with all of you, here and now, for the good of our communities and local food systems.

When you buy local produce and products, you are keeping money in your local community, and voting with your dollars for the jobs and systems that you want to sustain. You are supporting local family farms, building the local economy and making communities across Nebraska more enjoyable places to live.

There are many ways to Buy Fresh and Buy Local. What are your favorites? You can shop at a farmers’ market, join a CSA or farm share, eat locally-grown at work and school, and visit local bakeries and wineries. You can patronize restaurants and bakeries that use locally-produced ingredients and highlight the producers they source from, look for local produce and products at the grocery store, or visit an on-farm stand or market. You can enjoy eating locally on a budget too–buy in bulk and preserve the bounty, cook with whole foods, grow your own, join a farm share or work trade, use vouchers, or shop at farmers’ markets and grocery stores that accept SNAP benefits and match those funds.

Local food should be and is for everyone. It should be an important component of our economic and community development planning. Communities across Nebraska are seeing the benefits, economically and socially, of having a vibrant local food system. In a way, this is a movement back to our roots–whether it’s through root vegetables, grass fed beef, or deep connections with the people growing or raising our food.

As you use this guide, I hope you look for ways of trying new things from producers in your area and across the state. The food guide is a resource to help you make informed decisions as a consumer and member of your community. We aim to provide you with information about the practices local producers employ, the philosophies and commitments of local businesses, and the availability of local products at farmers’ markets. Do you know a producer, business, market or institution that isn’t listed in the guide but is already committed or is interested in knowing more about locally grown food? Send them our way!

Looking forward,
Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch
Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska Coordinator

Supporting the Local Economy, One Tomato at a Time!

SUPPORTING THE LOCAL ECONOMY, ONE TOMATO AT A TIME!

BLAIR SUPERFOODS 208 N. 19th St. Blair, NE 402-426-2200 Apowell19@yahoo.com blairsuperfoods.net Grocery Store Sun–Sat, Open 7 days a week 7:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.

GRAND CENTRAL FOODS 311 N. Lincoln Ave. York, NE 402-362-5526 grande_food@hotmail.com grandcentralfoods.com Sun–Sat, 6:00 a.m.–Mid.

GOLDENROD PASTRIES 3947 S. 48th St. Lincoln, NE 402-886-4103 hello@goldenrodpastries.com goldenrodpastries.com Bakery/Confections Tue–Fri, 10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Sat, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

GROW NEBRASKA Kearney & Grand Island, NE 308-238-2925 info@grownebraska.org buynebraska.com Mon–Fri, 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

HIGHLAND NUTS ’N MORE 205 W. 2nd P.O. Box 439 Valparaiso, NE 402-277-3543 Food Cooperative Mon–Fri, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. Sat–Call 402-377-0543

HUB CAFÉ 250 N. 21st #3 Lincoln, NE 402-474-BIKE hubcafelincn@gmail.com hubcafelincn.com Restaurant, Caterer, Retail Store, Coffee House Coffee Service Wed–Sat, 7:30 a.m.–9:30 p.m. Sun 8:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. Kitchen Wed–Sun, 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Wed–Sat, 5:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m.

KIMMEL ORCHARD & VINEYARD 5995 D Rd. Nebraska City, NE 402-873-5293 bryan@kimmelorchard.org kimmelorchard.org Restaurant, Retail Store, Local Food Processor (incorporate locally grown ingredients), Winery, U-Pick: Apples, grapes, peaches, strawberries, cherries, more Seasonal: April–December Mon–Sat, 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Sun, 11:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

LEON’S GOURMET GROCER 2200 Winthrop Rd. Lincoln, NE 402-488-2307 chad@leonsgourmetgrocer.com leonsgourmetgrocer.com Grocery Store Mon–Fri, 8:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Sun, 9:00 a.m.–8:30 p.m.

NEBRASKA FOOD COOPERATIVE Business Office: 503 3rd St. Julian, NE 800-993-2379 info@nebraskafood.org nebraskafood.org Food Cooperative Sun–Sat We are available 24/7, as we are an online farmers’ market.

OPEN HARVEST CO-OP GROCERY 1616 South St. Lincoln, NE 402-475-9069 amy@openharvest.coop openharvest.coop Grocery Store Sun–Sat, 8:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. every day!

PRAIRIE PLATE RESTAURANT 10405 Branched Oak Rd. Waverly, NE 402-788-2339 info@prairieplatorestaurant.com PrairiePlateRestaurant.com Restaurant, Caterer Wed–Sat, April 5, 2017–New Year’s Eve Wed–Fri 5:00–9:00 p.m.

PRODUCE FROM THE HEART 6600 Dobson’s Ct. Lincoln, NE 402-304-5710 producefromtheheart@gmail.com Sun–Sat 9:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m. April 1–November 30 Over winter by appt.

SCRATCHTOWN BREWING COMPANY 141 S. 16th St. Grand Island, NE 308-788-5050 caleb@scratchtownbeer.com scratchtownbeer Brewery Valley Co. Local Food Processor Wed–Fri, 4:00–10:00 p.m. Sat, 10:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m.

“BFBL gave us the opportunity to connect with a large group of people who were interested in the products we offer. They organized our farm tour which allowed our customers and community to see the quality and care we put into our products.”

Ash Gordon Nebraska Mushroom LLC

Food is our Passion!
FARMERS’ MARKETS

FALLBROOK FARMERS’ MARKET
Fallbrook Town Center, 570 Fallbrook Blvd. Lincoln, NE
Thursdays June 22–August 10 5:00–7:00 p.m. 402-202-2018
fallbrookfarmersmanager@gmail.com
fallbrookfarmersmarket.com Family-friendly farmers’ market. Over a dozen local producers, crafters and food vendors. Enjoy dinner, activities, and fresh, local produce, meats, eggs, honey, and more.

FLORENCE MILL FARMERS’ MARKET
9121 N 30th St. Omaha, NE
Sundays June 4–September 24 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. 402-551-1233
theflorencemill@gmail.com facebook.com/theflorencemill Historic/agricultural setting like a Country Fair with weekly live music and educational presenters (often animals & their people.) Checks, cash, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) 100 plus vendors each week selling fresh farm produce meats poultry and eggs. Wonderful assortment of baked goods and ready to eat items. Bedding plants, and assorted hand made craft items. Checks, Cash, Nebraska Farmers’ Market Senior Coupons, Baked Goods, Artisan/Craft (Handmade by seller), Concession Food (Ready to Eat Food), Produce, Herbs, Eggs, Specialty foods (value added by grower, example: (salsa, honey, jams/jellies, pet treats, dehydrated food), Transplants (annuals), Transplants (perennial).

HAYMARKET FARMERS’ MARKET
7th & P St. Lincoln, NE
Saturdays May 6–October 14 8:00 a.m.–Neon 402-435-7489
haymarketofl.com Windstream.net 100 plus vendors each week selling fresh farm produce meats poultry and eggs. Wonderful assortment of baked goods and ready to eat items. Bedding plants, and assorted hand made craft items. Checks, Cash, Nebraska Farmers’ Market Senior Coupons, Baked Goods, Artisan/Craft (Handmade by seller), Concession Food (Ready to Eat Food), Produce, Herbs, Eggs, Specialty foods (value added by grower, example: (salsa, honey, jams/jellies, pet treats, dehydrated food), Transplants (annuals), Transplants (perennial), Fresh Cut Flowers.

OLD CHENEY ROAD FARMERS’ MARKET
Located at the Old Cheney Center at 55th and Old Cheney Road, behind the Lincoln Racquet Club. Lincoln, NE
Sundays April 23–October 29 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. 402-937-1830
ocfmanager@gmail.com oldcheynroadfarmersmarket.com For people who love food! We are a producer-only market, so everything sold at market is guaranteed to be grown or processed by our members. Throughout the season we have more than 40 farmers and food vendors set up in our open-air market. Old Cheney Road Farmers’ Market proudly accepts SNAP and Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SNFNP) coupons, and credit/debit cards. Open every Sunday, rain or shine! EBT/ SNAP, Cash, Credit Cards, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) A handful of vendors will take the NFMSC and WIC coupons. The information booth is not able to redeem them. Baked Goods, Artisan/Craft (Handmade by seller), Concession Food (Ready to Eat Food), Produce, Herbs, Eggs, Specialty foods (value added by grower, example: (salsa, honey, jams/jellies, pet treats, dehydrated food), Transplants (annuals), Transplants (perennial), Fresh Cut Flowers.

OMAHA FARMERS’ MARKET–AKSARBEN VILLAGE
67th & Center Streets Omaha, NE
Sundays May 7–October 15 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. 402-345-5401 kbeck@vgagroup.com oahafarmersmarket.com The Omaha Farmers’ Market accepts ranges of vendors such as produce, dairy, meat, baked goods, crafts, bedding plants, ready to eat food, flowers, coffee, tea, etc. We are located in a high traffic area with a fantastic atmosphere equipped with a large grassy park (Aksarben Village). The market has over 100 vendors. EBT/ SNAP, Cash, Credit Cards, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) A handful of vendors will take the NFMSC and WIC coupons. The information booth is not able to redeem them. Baked Goods, Artisan/Craft (Handmade by seller), Concession Food (Ready to Eat Food), Produce, Herbs, Eggs, Specialty foods (value added by grower, example: (salsa, honey, jams/jellies, pet treats, dehydrated food), Transplants (annuals), Transplants (perennial), Fresh Cut Flowers.

OMAHA FARMERS’ MARKET–CHARLES DREW HEALTH CENTER
30th & Grant St. Omaha, NE
Wednesdays July 5–August 30 3:30 p.m.–5:30 p.m. 402-345-5401
kbeck@vgagroup.com oahafarmersmarket.com Produce only Market with 5–6 vendors providing easy access to fresh, local food for the clients of Charles Drew. EBT, Credit Cards, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) Produce

OMAHA FARMERS’ MARKET–OLD MARKET
11th & Jackson Streets Omaha, NE
Saturdays May 6–October 14 8:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. 402-345-5401 kbeck@vgagroup.com oahafarmersmarket.com The Omaha Farmers’ Market accepts ranges of vendors such as produce, dairy, meat, baked goods, crafts, bedding plants, ready to eat food, flowers, coffee, tea, etc. We are located in a high traffic area with an historic atmosphere equipped with shops (Old Market). The market has over 90 vendors. EBT/ SNAP, Cash, Credit Cards, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) A handful of vendors will take the NFMSC and WIC coupons. The information booth is not able to redeem them. Baked Goods, Artisan/Craft (Handmade by seller), Concession Food (Ready to Eat Food), Produce, Herbs, Eggs, Specialty foods (value added by grower, example: (salsa, honey, jams/jellies, pet treats, dehydrated food), Transplants (annuals), Transplants (perennial), Fresh Cut Flowers.

WENNINGHOF’S FARMERS’ MARKET
6707 Wenninghoff Rd. Omaha, NE
Sundays June 4–September 24 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. 402-571-2057
9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. Sat & Sun kbeck@vgagroup.com
wenninhofffarmmarket.com Fresh, local food for the clients of Charles Drew. EBT, Credit Cards, Nebraska Farmer Market Senior Coupons, WIC (Women, Infant and Children Nutrition Program) Produce

Asparagus with Lemon Butter
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:
1 pound fresh asparagus
2 Tablespoons butter
1–2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice, depending on your taste
Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:
1. Feel or break off the tough lower ends of stems. Cook asparagus in a wide 6 to 8-quart pot of boiling salted water, uncovered, until just tender, 5 to 7 minutes.
2. Drain well in a colander, return to pot and toss with butter, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Note: I usually cook asparagus in a large skillet. I find that with a skillet it is easier to get all the asparagus submerged.

Sprung

Prairie Plate Restaurant
Lakeside farm-to-table dining in rural Nebraska.

From the farm, through our kitchen, to your table.

40105 Branched Oak Rd. Waverly, NE 68462
April–New Year’s Eve, Wed–Sat, 5–9 p.m.
PrairiePlateRestaurant.com 402-786-2239

buylocalnebraska.org
Breaking Bread

Erin Schoenberg

My Aunt Cathy and I are very different. We rarely (aka never) agree on political matters. Although you might think we have absolutely nothing in common, when we get together, the topic of conversation comfortably presents itself.

We ALWAYS talk about FOOD.

We talk about growing veggies and saving seed, about mulch and harvest windows, farmer entrepreneurs, braiding garlic, grass fed beef, fresh strawberries...and real cream...for our shortcake.

Nothing is more natural or important as the connection over real food. Yet just as it brings people together, it divides us as well. There are preconceived ideas of the type of person who shops at farmers’ markets, upscale grocers, suburban supermarkets, and rural grocery stores alike. Where do these perceptions get us? And more importantly, how do these notions push the local food movement forward? (They don’t.)

We need our local farmers to succeed, for our locally owned businesses, storefronts and restaurants to stay open and thrive.

Farmers are stewards of the land, they are important local employers, they produce the most ancient and important fuel for our row crop farming neighbors, vegan colleagues, or the thousands between, you push the conversation forward.

Nothing is more natural or important as the connection over real food.

While BFBL guide readers and market savvy folks grow in number each season, there will always be a huge percentage of people in this state and country who won’t ever buy direct, go to the farmers’ markets, or join a CSA. And that is OK! Just as we need producers of all type and scale, we also need to consider consumers with different buying habits and purchasing power. We need local food to be accessible at supermarkets, in rural grocery stores, in diners, and in everyday food culture.

When you go to the store, ask if they carry local meat and dairy. Make a point to thank stores and restaurants who stock local items on their shelves and in their kitchens. Buy those products, encourage your friends to come to the same, even tell the person next to you in the aisle how impressed you are. Thoughtfully encourage other stores and restaurants to buy local too—always with a good attitude and friendly manner, or you risk driving the wedge deeper. And when you’re at the farmers’ market yourself, remember to stock up for the week’s meals (not just the day’s snack).

Share food comfortably with neighbors and acquaintances. When you make friends and give respect across the board, whether it’s your row crop farming neighbors, vegan colleagues, or the thousands between, you push the conversation forward.

Heck, start some seeds and throw a canning party at harvest. Call your Aunt Cathy and chat frost dates and tomato trellising. For present and future generations.

Priming agriculture and food systems that hold healthy land, people, communities and quality of life, for present and future generations.

Lincoln’s authentic farm-to-fork cafe and bistro

The HUB CAFE

Two blocks North of O Street on 21st, just East of UNL city campus

250 N 21st St. Lincoln, NE 68508

5995 G Road - Nebraska City, NE 68419 - (402) 873-5293

Grains and Dried Beans


EMERALD ACRES

Roger Doerr
Lincoln, NE
402-480-8197
drippedlifechoices.com
facebook.com/EmeraldAcresFarm

Red Beans

Antibiotic Free, Heirloom, Hydroponic, Sustainable

CLEAR CREEK ORGANIC FARMS

Robert & Kristine Bernt
Spalding, NE
308-750-1086
rk_bernt@yahoo.com
Clearcreekorganicfarms.webs.com

Pinto

On Farm Store, Heirloom, Non-GMO, Sustainable

Heirloom Tomato Salad

Serves 6

Ingredients:

4 1/2-inch thick slices crusty bread
2 Tablespoons red-wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3 Tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
3 pounds mixed tomatoes, cut into bite size pieces

Directions:

1. Slice and toast the bread
2. Whisk together vinegar, salt, mustard, and pepper. Add oil in a slow steady stream, whisking until dressing is emulsified
3. Add onion and tomatoes. Toss gently to coat. Season with salt and pepper. Place bread on plate. Top with tomatoes and serve.

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CHECK THE MAP FOR A PRODUCER NEAR YOU

WE HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO FIND YOUR LOCAL PRODUCERS. JUST MATCH THE COLOR OF YOUR REGION WITH THE COLOR OF THE PRODUCER’S NAME IN THE MEMBER LISTINGS.

AREA 1
13 All-Be Farm, Julian
14 Bluff Valley Farm, Rule
15 Common Good Farm, Raymond
16 Darby Springs Farm, Cresco
17 Fox Run Farms, Braynard
18 Heartland Nuts ‘N More, Valparaiso
19 Hollister Farms, Martell
20 Kimmel Orchard, Nebraska City
21 Martin’s Hillside Orchard, Cresco
22 McKenzie Acres, Rising City
23 Nebraska Food Cooperative, Julian
24 Paradise In Progress Farm, Nebraska City
25 Robinette Farms, Martell
26 S & M Ranch, Des Moines
27 The Market Place, Sutton
28 Trax Farms, Martell
29 West Blue Farm, Milford

AREA 1 LINCOLN
America’s Best Wayu, Denton
Arbor Grove Produce, Lincoln
Community Crops, Lincoln
DS Family Farm, Malcolm
Emerald Acres, Lincoln
Finkel Farm, Lincoln
Fickle Cattle Company, Pleasant Dale
Golderen Pastries, Lincoln
Grow with the Flow, Denton
Hub Cafe, Lincoln
Lincoln Lakehouse Farm, Waverly
Shawn’s Gourmet Grocer, Lincoln
Lincoln Haymarket Farmers’ Market, Lincoln
Old Cabin Farmers’ Market, Lincoln
Open Harvest Co-op Grocery, Lincoln
Prairieville, Lincoln
Prairie Plate Restaurant, Waverly
Produce From the Heart, Lincoln
Shadow Brook Farm, Lincoln

AREA 2
20 Blair Superfoods, Blair
29 Daniels Produce, Columbus
30 Johnson’s Farm, North Bend
31 Milkowa Acres, Madison
32 MyeLean Beef, Norfolk
33 Wilf Dead, Norfolk

AREA 3
4 Clear Creek Organic Farms, Spalding
5 Diamond N 7 Ranch, Hastings
6 Grand Central Foods, York
7 Grow Nebraska, Kearney and Grand Island
8 Lambert Meats, Elgin
9 Nebraska Mushroom, Grand Island
10 Oak Ridge Farms Hydroponics, Ord
11 Prairie Pride Poultry, Grand Island
12 Scratchtown Brewing Company, Ord

AREA 4
1 Bear Hollow Farm, Harrisburg
2 Lazy K Eggs, Ogallala
3 Straight Arrow Bison Ranch, Broken Bow

(1) RED: Butler, Saunders, Sarpy, Douglas, Seward, Lancaster, Cass, Clay, Fillmore, Saline, Gage, Otoe, Holt, Nuckolls, Thayer, Jefferson, Pawnee, Richardson
(2) PURPLE: Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Pierce, Washington, Thurston, Madison, Stanton, Cuming, Burt, Platte, Cozad, Dodge, Washington
(4) BLUE: Cimarron, Dawes, Box Butte, Scottsbluff, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne, Sheridan, Garden, Dawes, Gurnett, Cherry, Arthur, Keith, Perkins, Chase, Bussed, Hiltz, Halsey, Lincoln, McPherson, Hooker, Thomas, Logan, Frontier, Red Willow, Furnas, Heron, Gosper, Phelps, Dawes, Custer, Bins, Loup, Brown, Rock, Keya Parta

buylocalnebraska.org
Buying Local Doesn’t have to Stop When Summer’s Over!

Nebraska family farmers offer many locally grown and value-added products all year long, including:

- Beef, buffalo, chicken, fish, goat, lamb, ostrich, pork, rabbit, turkey, etc.
- Eggs, butter, cheese, kefir, ice cream, milk, yogurt
- Breads, baked goods, cider, dried fruit, herbs, honey, jams, nuts, preserves, etc.
- *Don’t forget about these locally grown products: flowers, soaps, transplants, trees, wreaths and woody floral*

Find it fast at buylocalnebraska.org
Butternut Squash with Shallots and Sage

Yields 4 Servings

Ingredients

- 2 Tablespoons olive or vegetable oil
- 2 shallots, halved and sliced crosswise
- 1 butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into cubes, about 4 cups
- 1/2 cup chicken broth or water

Directions

1. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add shallot and cook until translucent. Add squash and continue to cook for about 5 minutes.
2. Combine broth, brown sugar, and salt. Stir to dissolve sugar and salt. Add mixture to squash. Cover and cook until squash is tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in vinegar and pepper.
Where can I find local food, and why is this important? Across the country there is increasing interest in local foods and local food systems. How does local food contribute to our farm families and communities? Where do we find local foods? And what is the future?

Local food is not new. Nearly a century ago, the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station surveyed farm families and found that two-thirds of their food was grown at home ($505 from their own land, and $230 purchased from outside), and what they bought was mostly from local sources [Bulletin 219, 1927]. Today even farmers purchase most of what their families consume.

What has changed? Our specialized farms and processed foods result from the industrial revolution, building economies of scale, producing crops suited to specific climates, depending on global systems with subsidized fossil fuels. We have bananas or strawberries any day of the year, if we can afford them, at prices that don’t reflect long-term ecological costs.

Local foods internalize many of these costs, and give a fair return to those who produce what we eat. Farmers’ markets in the U.S. have grown three-fold in the last 15 years [USDA]. CSAs are readily accessible in many Nebraska communities. Direct sales and ‘pick-your-own’ alternatives provide local sources. Buying Fresh and Buying Local means ‘knowing your farmer’ and how the food is produced, while building time-honored trust between people. Local food has far fewer ‘food miles’ than the average calorie that travels three thousand miles before it is consumed. Potential relaxing of food regulations in the U.S. could push more of us to put trust in our local farmers.

Centralized brick and mortar food hubs for Nebraska are in planning stages, with potentials for economies of scale and relief for farmers from some marketing costs. Local food councils with farmers, non-profits, and local government officials are examining systems, setting local goals, and looking for ways to pursue new initiatives. A dollar spent on locally-sold products multiples some two to three times in the local economy, unlike the same dollar spent on imports. According to Prairie Fire [September 2012] only 10% of the $4.4 billion spent on food in Nebraska stays in the state. Purchase of local food can change this statistic.

For our food security and our economy, it is wise to move toward more local foods.
You’ve heard the slogans and seen the bumper stickers promoting a resurgence of local foods—“Go Local,” “Support Your Farmers,” “No Farms, No Food,” but what is really at the heart of this movement? At the heart of the current “local foods movement,” I believe, is a longing to reconnect with both the people that live and share spaces with us (our community) and with nature. This deep longing comes from a culture that in the last few decades has become increasingly isolated, disjointed, and disconnected. Engaging in the exchange of goods, especially food, whether the exchange involves money or not, reconnects us with those around us who have the skills and desire to provide for us.

One of the best examples of this exchange of local food played today is through Community Supported Agriculture programs offered on many small-scale farms. When you as an individual or family receive a box or a basket full of fresh produce, eggs, milk, bread, flowers, herbs, or whatever is provided in your CSA share you reconnect with the land and the hands that take care of the land. A localized food system looks like this—you get to know your farmers, you learn what is happening in one another’s daily lives and on the farm, you share a common space, you feast on the food they’ve grown, raised, and/or wild-harvested, you express gratitude for fruits of their labor, and for the land that allowed these things to come into being.

This re-connection is important for the older generations who remember the days when you knew where the food on your dinner table came from, and it is important for the younger generations who scarcely know the names of the trees, how to grow a tomato, or where eggs come from. Whether you are visiting the farmers’ market, volunteering at a local farm, attending a workshop on soil health, planting your home garden, sharing a meal at a locally-owned restaurant that sources its ingredients from nearby producers, or picking elderberries on the prairie, the continued localization of our food reconnects us with what is most important—all living things (including soil!) In my work at The Big Garden and as a farmer our work lies in supporting the land, keeping it healthy, and raising up the next generations of gardeners and farmers, gatherers, seed savers, and nature lovers!

Why Local?

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Collards with Potatoes
Serves 4

Ingredients:
2 bunches collard greens or a mixture of collards and kale
3 medium potatoes, preferably Yukon Gold
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 or 4 slices of bacon, diced
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
Hot pepper sauce or vinegar for the table

Directions:
1. Remove the tough center stem. Slice greens crosswise into 1/2-inch strips. Wash in several changes of water. Drain. Set aside. (This can be done ahead of time. Refrigerate until ready to cook.)
2. Wash potatoes and cut into about 1-inch cubes. Set aside.
3. Bring about 8 cups of water to a boil. Add about 2 teaspoons of salt. Add greens and cook for about 5 to 10 minutes. This will change depending on the toughness of your greens and how tender you like your greens. Add potatoes and cook for about 7 to 10 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, cook the bacon until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside. Pour out all but one tablespoon fat. Add the olive oil. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and red pepper flakes. Cook for about 1 minute.

At Buy Fresh Buy Local® Nebraska, we are proud to call these folks our sponsors:

Their commitment to the BFBLN program enables us to continue to develop outreach, marketing and education programs that supports a brighter tomorrow for Nebraska’s small to mid-scale farmers and ranchers and the lands on which our food is grown. And to strengthen our local food network which provides diners, farmers, chefs, and food service operations to build lasting relationships, develop market opportunities for locally grown products, and provide consumers with more opportunities to eat great local food.