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For Immediate Release

Hoosiers Encouraged to Participate in GOING LOCAL Week by Eating More Local Foods

Event supporters' long term goal is "eating of Indiana locally grown and produced foods will become the norm, not a novelty at Hoosier dinner tables across the state".

An increasing number of individuals are rejecting well traveled food items in favor of more locally grown and produced ones. They call themselves "locavores". The term refers to individuals who choose only to eat foods that have been grown and/or raised within 100 miles of their homes. Locavores pride themselves on finding and using ingredients that are locally available and in season. While few can realistically adhere to the extreme "rules" of a locavore diet, more and more individuals are expressing a desire to eat fresh, local, and in season food. In fact, the trend toward eating local food is the number one culinary trend in the United States. The supporters of GOING LOCAL Week in Indiana hope to encourage Hoosiers to follow that trend and eat more locally grown and produced food for a number of reasons.

Why Eat Local?

Depending on whom you ask, people have different reasons for wanting to put locally grow food on their tables. Some approach it by promoting the pure pleasure of eating freshly harvested food, the availability of varieties of food that are not normally stocked in grocery stores, and getting back in touch with the seasonality of their food. For some, it's about food safety and the ability to trace a product back to its producer. Many note that locally grown food doesn't sit on the shelves for a long time before it is consumed and is more nutritious. Others have an economic view reminding us that some experts point out over 200 farms per day in our country are closed or incorporated into larger enterprises. And there are those who voice concern for our environment and the use of fossil fuels in food transportation quoting the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture's statement that the average tomato travels 1,569 miles from the field to the grocery store.

The Economic Impact of Local Food Purchases in Indiana

Whatever the route, the conclusion is still the same. Eating local food is good for us, good for our environment, good for the strength of our Indiana farms and statewide food system, and good for the Indiana economy. The collective economic impact of each individual shopper who makes a choice to buy local food is astounding. If half of the over 2 million families in Indiana would spend \$25.00 a month on local foods, the annual immediate economic impact to our local farm economy would exceed \$300 million dollars. That number is further enhanced by the fact that a dollar spent on local food will "turn over" a number of times in the community so the initial dollar may actually generate an economic impact of several more dollars as the producer spends his/her dollar locally and others who then receive those dollars do the same. A recent study on the impact of local food dollars spent in the Seattle area

(<http://sustainableseattle.org/Programs/LFE%20Files/LFE%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf>) demonstrated that for every \$100 spent on local food, the local community benefitted by \$200-\$500 in economic impact. If we use that calculation for the aforementioned \$300 million, then the economic impact to Indiana local communities could be in excess of between \$600 million and \$1.5 billion dollars per year!

GOING LOCAL Week

GOING LOCAL Week is a one week “challenge” to Indiana citizens to eat at least one Indiana locally grown or produced food at each meal during the seven day event which is scheduled for August 31-September 6th, 2008.

The objectives of GOING LOCAL Week are to:

- Create an appreciation for the abundance and diversity of the Indiana food shed.
- Make Indiana citizens more aware of the availability of local foods in their own communities.
- Provide support and recognition for Indiana local food producers.
- Increase Indiana residents’ consumption of locally grown/produced foods in a long term effort to encourage them to regularly purchase more locally produced items for their weekly meals so that “eating of Indiana locally grown and produced foods will become the norm, not a novelty at Hoosier dinner tables across the state”.

According to the GOING LOCAL Week event supporters, when you buy local food, you are making a conscious choice to better your families’ eating habits, protect the environment, and improve the local rural economy. How do you start? It doesn’t take a tremendous effort--small changes can make a big difference.

- Do some of your weekly shopping at local farmers’ markets, farm stands, and farm markets.
- Visit an orchard or U-Pick and harvest your own produce.
- Ask your local market if they sell locally grown food. Find restaurants that do the same. Support these establishments.
- Participate in a CSA.
- Take a farm tour in your area.
- Research special foods that may be local to your area and seek them out.
- Take a cooking or food preservation class which features local foods.
- Encourage others to join you in this effort during GOING LOCAL Week. Host a pitch-in picnic or covered dish party and ask everyone to bring something made with local ingredients. Spend the evening talking about the food’s origins and learning about what’s available in your area.

Indiana Local Food Resources

Information about Indiana food and producers, listings of local food events and farm tours, as well as recipes featuring Indiana’s fresh, local, and in-season foods can be found on the GOING LOCAL site (www.goinglocal-info.com).

To find local foods and food producers, individuals are encouraged to use Indiana Market Maker which is a searchable data base of Indiana food and food producers (<http://in.marketmaker.uiuc.edu>).

GOING LOCAL Week is supported by the GOING LOCAL site, Purdue University New Ventures Team, Office of Building Better Communities at Ball State, Indiana Cooperative Development Center, and the Purdue Extension.

Photos to support release content are available upon request from victoria@goinglocal-info.com .

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