

# 5.3 Regional Agriculture Economic Development: “Buy Local” Campaigns

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# Lecture Outline: Regional Agriculture Economic Development: “Buy Local” Campaigns

## A. The Rationale Behind Region-based Agriculture and Food Systems Development Programs (also known as “Buy Local” campaigns)

1. Problems with the current U.S. agri-food system – Social and environmental issues in food and agriculture (see Miles and Brown, 2003)
  - a. Increased consolidation in food and agriculture, resulting in the decline in economic viability of small-scale agriculture (see Unit 1.0: Small Farm Viability Today)
  - b. Impacts of large-scale industrial agriculture on rural communities (Goldschmidt, 1947; Flora, 2001)
  - c. Inadequate and unhealthy living and working conditions for agricultural laborers (McWilliams, 1935; Allen, 1994)
  - d. Environmental quality and agro-ecosystem degradation (Altieri and Nicholls, 2001)
  - e. Loss of agricultural biodiversity
2. The potential advantages of local food systems (Norberg-Hodge et al., 2000, 2002; ISCC, 2000; De Selencourt, 1997)
  - a. Strengthening the regional agricultural economy – Purchasing locally produced foods and food products allows for the direct support of local farmers. Direct market sales provide growers with an increased percentage of the food dollar, which may contribute to the economic viability of small farming businesses.
  - b. May result in the recirculation of money within a given community, and thereby support other locally owned businesses
  - c. Reduced amount of energy used in the transport of produce food products
  - d. Freshness of produce
  - e. Conservation of agro-biodiversity – Small-scale direct-market producers often use a wider diversity of cultivars than larger-scale growers
  - f. Community development – The development of closer interpersonal relationships between consumers and growers

## B. Regional Agriculture Development Programs (see: [www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org); [www.caff.org](http://www.caff.org))

1. Defined: Regional agriculture development campaigns are organized and maintained by multiple stakeholders within a given community (e.g., nonprofit organizations, produce retailers, farmers’ markets, restaurants, growers, and public and private institutions such as schools). These stakeholders work to encourage the viability of a region’s agricultural economy by ensuring marketing outlets for regional growers.
2. How regional agriculture development campaigns function
  - a. The formation of regional agricultural associations – Farmers, restaurateurs, food retailers, and other food enterprises all join a regional association and provide information on the products they provide or products used in their businesses. Members and/or nonprofits contribute funds to association for promotional work.
  - b. The development of regional produce and product labels – The association develops regional labels that identify products as being grown and/or produced in a given region under specific labor management and land use practices
  - c. The development of business relationships between regional producers and retail food enterprises – Members of association are then encouraged to form business relationships where regional food enterprises purchase products directly from local growers and other food producers

- d. Labels identifying regional products are displayed in participating food enterprises and at farmers' markets, thereby allowing consumers to differentiate commodities in the market place and select regionally produced products, if desired
- e. Non-profit organizations or regional agriculture associations promote the purchase of regional food products through advertisements in local media. These advertising campaigns are designed to educate consumers about the benefits of buying regionally-produced commodities and to profile businesses and growers within the membership association.

### C. Examples/Case Studies

1. Food Routes – Established in 1997 to promote sustainable food systems in specific regions of the United States, Food Routes uses state-of-the-art communications techniques and public policy innovations to encourage new partnerships and direct marketing opportunities for growers. Food Routes Network has worked with 10 community-based nonprofit organizations from across the U.S. to develop and implement a “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” marketing campaign intended to encourage public awareness, and stimulate new business relationships and marketing opportunities among farmers, consumers, and food retailers.
2. Participating U.S. organizations in Food Routes “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaign
  - a. Alternative Energy Resources Organization, Helena, Montana  
See: [www.aeromt.org/buylocal.htm](http://www.aeromt.org/buylocal.htm)
  - b. Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Santa Cruz, California  
See: [www.caff.org/index.shtml](http://www.caff.org/index.shtml)
  - c. Eat Local Foods Coalition (Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association), Unity, Maine  
See: [www.meepi.org/elfc/](http://www.meepi.org/elfc/)
  - d. Ecotrust, Portland, Oregon  
See: [www.ecotrust.org/](http://www.ecotrust.org/)
  - e. Land Stewardship Project, White Bear Lake, Minnesota
  - f. Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems, East Lansing, Michigan  
See: [www.miffs.org/projects/buylocal/buylocal04.asp](http://www.miffs.org/projects/buylocal/buylocal04.asp)
  - g. Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)  
See: [www.asapconnections.org/](http://www.asapconnections.org/)
  - h. Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture, Millheim, Pennsylvania  
See: [www.pasafarming.org/](http://www.pasafarming.org/)
  - i. Practical Farmers of Iowa, Ames, Iowa  
See: [www.practicalfarmers.org/buyfresh.asp](http://www.practicalfarmers.org/buyfresh.asp)

# Resources

## LITERATURE CITED

- Allen, Patricia. 1994. *The Human Face of Sustainable Agriculture: Adding People to the Environmental Agenda*. Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz. Issue Paper #4.  
*Examines the social issues that must be addressed in working toward sustainability, including food and income distribution, labor conditions, concentration of ownership, and research priorities. Includes examples of programs that focus on solving these problems Available online through CASFS publications: [www.ucsc.edu/casfs](http://www.ucsc.edu/casfs).*
- Altieri, Miguel A. and Clara Ines Nicholls. 2001. Ecological impacts of modern agriculture in the United States and Latin America. *In Globalization and the Rural Environment*, Otto T. Solbrig, Robert Paarlberg, and Francesco di Castri (eds.), pp.123-137. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.  
*Provides a concise overview of environmental impacts of conventional agricultural technologies and land use practices in both industrialized and developing nations.*
- De Selencourt, Kate. 1997. *Local Harvest: Delicious Ways to Save the Planet*. Lawrence and Wishart.  
*Outlines the array of benefits—for people and the environment—that responsible food production and marketing can bring. It also shows that good food costs less when it's local.*
- Flora, C. B. 2001. Shifting agroecosystems and communities. Chapter 2. *In Interactions Between Agroecosystems and Rural Communities*, C. B. Flora (ed.) 5-13. USA: CRC Press.  
*Chapter two gives an overview of agroecosystem interactions with market, state, and civil society. Natural and social capital are discussed as a backdrop for the importance of sustaining agroecosystems as a part of sustaining rural communities. See: [www.crcpress.com](http://www.crcpress.com)*
- Goldschmidt, W. 1947. *As You Sow: Three Studies of the Social Consequences of Agribusiness*. New York: Harcourt, Brace.  
*Groundbreaking study of the different ways in which different types of farms affect the nearby communities.*
- Integrity Systems Cooperative Co. (ISCC). 2000. *Adding Values to Our Food System: An Economic Analysis of Sustainable Community Food Systems*. Prepared for the United States Department of Agriculture Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.  
*This extensive paper, prepared for the US Department of Agriculture, examines the economic viability of sustainable agriculture to determine if it is cost competitive with industrial agriculture. It argues that under certain conditions of production, processing, and distribution, sustainable agriculture is highly competitive with conventional systems. In particular, this study shows that farmers can maximize their revenue by selling directly to the customer rather than going through the industrial agricultural marketing system. Additionally, it finds evidence that sustainable food systems can offer local communities a viable means for economic development. Available online through Food Routes Library: [www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org).*
- Miles, Albie and Martha Brown (eds.). 2003. *Teaching Organic Farming and Gardening: Resources for Instructors*. Santa Cruz: Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS).  
*The 600-page curriculum manual covers practical aspects of organic farming and gardening, applied soil science, and social and environmental issues in agriculture. Sections 3.1 – 3.3 provide instructional resources for addressing social and environmental issues in agriculture. Available online at [www.ucsc.edu/casfs](http://www.ucsc.edu/casfs).*
- Norberg-Hodge, Helena, Todd Merrifield, and Steven Gorelick. 2000. *Bringing the Food Economy Home: The Social, Ecological and Economic Benefits of Local Food*. International Society for Ecology and Culture.  
*An ISEC report showing that the globalization of food is not only undermining farmers and damaging the environment, but also posing a real threat to human health, food security, local economies and, ultimately, consumers.*

Norberg-Hodge, Helena, Todd Merrified, and Steven Gorelick. 2002. *Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness*. Zed Books,

*Based on the 2000 ISEC report, this book includes some new and updated information, a resource guide, and an index.*

Norberg-Hodge, Helena, Peter Goering, and John Page. 2000. *From the Ground Up: Rethinking Industrial Agriculture*. International Society for Ecology and Culture and Zed Books.

*An analysis of the roots of the environmental, social, and economic crises facing modern industrial agriculture, and a review of more sustainable options.*

### ADDITIONAL PRINT RESOURCES

Coming into the foodshed, by J. Kloppenburg, J. Hendrickson, and G. W. Stevenson. *Agriculture and Human Values* 13: 33-42, 1996.

*This article addresses the importance of proximity and accountability, and how the distance involved in the conventional food system disables a consumer's sense of responsibility for the social and ecological consequences associated with their food.*

Consolidation in food and agriculture: implications for farmers and consumers, by Phil Howard. *CCOF Magazine*, Winter 2003/04. Volume XXI, Number 4.

*Provides a concise qualitative and quantitative description of the concentration of ownership in the U.S. agri-food system and how these consolidation trends are being replicated in the organic food industry. Available online through the CCOF Foundation, [www.ccof.org](http://www.ccof.org).*

The Development of American Agriculture: A Historical Analysis, by Willard W. Cochrane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

*The definitive critical history of U.S. agricultural development. Full of insightful analysis and commentary as well as exhaustive history. Introduces the concept of the "technology treadmill" as a major problem in U.S. agriculture.*

Factories in the Fields: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California, by C. McWilliams. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1935.

*Excellent and critical historical analysis of farm labor in California. Special emphasis is placed on the ways in which ethnicity and the seasonality of labor demand combine with industrial capitalism's infiltration of agriculture to create an unjust labor system.*

From Farming to Biotechnology: A Theory of Agro-Industrial Development, by David Goodman, Bernard Sorj, and John Wilkinson. Oxford, New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987.

*An integrated theory of the nexus of research, policy, technological development, and capitalist penetration in agricultural development. Considered a seminal work in modern political economy of agriculture.*

Teaching Organic Farming and Gardening: Resources for Instructors, edited by Albie Miles and Martha Brown. Santa Cruz: Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS), 2003.

*The 600-page curriculum manual includes information on the social and environmental impacts of conventional agriculture, and describes sustainable agriculture alternatives. Available online at [www.ucsc.edu/casfs](http://www.ucsc.edu/casfs).*

Weaving the Food Web: Community Food Security in California, by the Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC). CFSC and the California Community Food Security Network, 2000.

*Features eight innovative community-based food projects drawn from around the nation's most populous state. Includes articles by leading organizations working on critical public issues such as hunger, obesity, the grocery gap, and the diminishing numbers of independent farms.*

United States Department of Agriculture. A Time to Act: A Report of the USDA National Commission on Small Farms. Miscellaneous Publication (MP 1545), 1998.

*The National Commission on Small Farms on the status of small farms and ranches in the United States was established in 1997 with a two-year mandate to research, analyze, and make recommendations to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on strategies to enhance the economic livelihood of smallholder operations. A set of eight detailed policy recommendations range from establishment of fair and competitive markets for small farms to establishing future generations of farmers and promoting humane working conditions on farms.*

## WEB SITES

Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS):

[www.ucsc.edu/casfs](http://www.ucsc.edu/casfs)

*The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems is a research, education, and public service program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, dedicated to increasing ecological sustainability and social justice in the food and agriculture system. On the UCSC campus, the Center operates the 2-acre Alan Chadwick Garden and the 25-acre Farm. Both sites are managed using organic production methods and serve as research, teaching, and training facilities for students, staff, and faculty. The CASFS operates a 100-member CSA program, and conducts research and publishes articles on the efficacy of alternative food initiatives such as CSA.*

Community Alliance with Family Farmers:

[www.caff.org](http://www.caff.org)

*CAFF is a nonprofit sustainable agriculture education organization and serves as one of 10 U.S. community-based nonprofit organizations that has developed and implemented a “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” marketing campaign.*

Community Food Security Coalition:

[www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

*The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3, North American organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local, and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. CFSC seeks to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and to create a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability.*

Crossroads Resource Center in Minnesota:

[www.crcworks.org/index.html](http://www.crcworks.org/index.html)

*Crossroads Resource Center is a nonprofit organization dedicated to encouraging sustainable community economic development through providing online publications on the following topics: Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators, Local Economic Studies, Neighborhood Data, Ethnicity, Culture, and Local History.*

Food Routes:

[www.foodroutes.org](http://www.foodroutes.org)

*FoodRoutes Network was established in 1997 to foster and promote sustainable food systems in critical regions of the United States by using state-of-the-art communications techniques and public policy innovations. In 2000, FoodRoutes Network became a nonprofit, 501(c)3 organization focused on impacting the public policy arena, generating marketplace opportunities, and stimulating partnerships around sustainable food systems. The web site serves as an information clearinghouse for the development of “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaigns.*

International Society for Ecology and Culture:

[www.isec.org.uk](http://www.isec.org.uk)

*The International Society for Ecology and Culture (ISEC) is a nonprofit organization concerned with the protection of both biological and cultural diversity. ISEC has developed and maintains many programs that focus on the promotion of local production and consumption of products as a means through which economic and cultural self-determination are maintained.*

Local Harvest:

[www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org)

*Local Harvest is a nonprofit venture of Ocean Group, built with the goal of creating and growing a definitive and reliable “living” public directory of small farms, and other socially and environmentally responsible food sources nationwide. This directory is used by Local Harvest and its partner organizations to help people develop relations with food producers in their local areas, help farmers develop new markets, and provide tools for sustainable agriculture groups to manage their memberships and provide various services to their constituents.*

**NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS ADMINISTERING  
“BUY FRESH, BUY LOCAL” CAMPAIGNS**

Alternative Energy Resources Organization:  
[www.aeromt.org/buylocal.htm](http://www.aeromt.org/buylocal.htm)

Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP):  
[www.asapconnections.org](http://www.asapconnections.org)

Eat Local Foods Coalition of the Maine Organic Farmers  
and Gardeners Association (MOFGA):  
[www.meepe.org/elfc/](http://www.meepe.org/elfc/)

Eco-trust:  
[www.ecotrust.org](http://www.ecotrust.org)

Michigan Integrated Food and Farming Systems  
(MIFFS):  
[www.miffs.org/projects/buylocal/buylocal04.asp](http://www.miffs.org/projects/buylocal/buylocal04.asp)

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture:  
[www.pasafarming.org](http://www.pasafarming.org)

Practical Farmers of Iowa:  
[www.practicalfarmers.org/buyfresh.asp](http://www.practicalfarmers.org/buyfresh.asp)