

# Why Buy Local?



## Background

Newfoundland and Labrador's geographical landscape and remoteness – along with ever-rising transportation costs – create an even higher dependency on other provinces and countries for fresh food. Inclement weather, labour disputes, or mechanical issues with the ferry system can greatly decrease access to fresh, healthy foods, and the long distance trucks travel to ship food to the province may impact a product's food nutritional value, freshness and shelf life (Quinlan, 2012).

Climate change, adapted growing varieties, and new technologies have enabled producers to diversify their offerings to better suit customers' increasing demands (Doyle, 2014). While Newfoundland and Labrador is known for growing traditional "Jiggs Dinner" vegetables such as turnip, carrot, cabbage and potatoes, our producers are growing more than 100 different vegetables and fruit locally. In addition, our farmers also produce other food categories such as:

- Meat: beef, pork, lamb
- Poultry: chicken, turkey
- Eggs
- Dairy: cheese and milk
- Honey
- Herbs

## Benefits of Buying Local

Buying local results in numerous benefits for families, communities and the environment.

### Food Sustainability

By supporting local farmers today, you are creating demand and opportunities for producers in the future through development, succession and new farmers. This is crucial for food security, especially given our current reliance on importing food we are capable of growing at home.

### Support for local farmers

Buying local food provides income to farmers to maintain and develop their farms and help produce affordable, nutritious, high-quality food for the future. While vegetables and fruit tend to be seasonal, many vegetables are locally produced and available year round. Local farmers take their responsibility to consumers seriously – supporting a local producer who is providing a safe, quality product is mutually beneficial.

### More Nutritious

Produce is susceptible to nutrient loss once it's harvested; therefore, the shorter the time between the farm and your table, the less likely nutrients will be lost. Importing food from outside of the province requires travel on trucks and boats, resulting in more time between harvest and consumption. Buying local enables consumers to regain that nutrition back into their diets and aid in improving overall health.



### Better Value for your Dollar

Food produced close to home gives you more value for your dollar. When you buy from a local producer, the product is harvested within hours or days of your purchase, maintaining its nutrients and freshness. In addition, preserving local produce during peak harvest seasons through canning and freezing enables you to eat local year round, while maintaining a high level of nutrition and flavor.

### Fresher

The closer to home food is produced, the fresher and tastier it will be. The Newfoundland and Labrador eggs you buy at the store come from a local farm, and it only takes days for eggs to ship from farm to grocery store. When you buy from a local vegetable producer, that produce was most likely harvested on the morning of your purchase.

### Tastes Better

Food produced here is allowed to ripen naturally and is not harvested until it is ready. Our province's growing season with its cool nights gives our produce a certain sweetness that is our unique taste of place.

### Contribution to Local Economy

Choosing fresh and delicious local food helps create jobs and supports our economy. Farmers are using other local businesses such as hardware stores, gas stations, mechanics, and more; the money you spend locally is passed on through other businesses in the area.

### Better Quality

Local food is picked at peak season, allowed to ripen naturally, travels less distance, and may be consumed within hours of harvesting. Given all those conditions, buying local results in a much better quality when you purchase.

Quinlan, A. (2012). Building agricultural capacity in Newfoundland and Labrador. [pdf] St. John's: Harris Centre. Available at:

[mun.ca/harriscentre/reports/arf/2011/11-SPHCSR-Final-Quinlan.pdf](http://mun.ca/harriscentre/reports/arf/2011/11-SPHCSR-Final-Quinlan.pdf)

Doyle, Emily (2014) An Environmental Scan of Factors Relevant for Sustainable Food Production in NL. Project Report. The Harris Centre.

### Environmental Considerations

Newfoundland and Labrador's farmers take pride in being good stewards of the land, helping to preserve it for future generations. Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture programming, such as Environmental Farm Planning, enables farmers to be good stewards of the land. Having our food travel less distance provides us with a better product to feed our families and contributes to improving our carbon footprint.

### Creating Entrepreneurs and Jobs

Although more than 400 farms in Newfoundland and Labrador contribute \$138.6 million to the local economy, the province is currently only 10 per cent self-sufficient, which means there is immense opportunity to grow and generate more food, more farms and more jobs. Agriculture helps support local businesses, create new businesses, employ residents so they can work at home, and create opportunities and stability in rural communities.

### How Can You Help?

- Ask your local grocery retailers for more Newfoundland and Labrador produced items in store
- Look at packaging to identify where the item comes from
- Visit farms in your local area
- Visit farmers' markets
- Visit fall fairs
- Follow Newfoundland and Labrador farmers on social media
- Visit [gov.nl.ca/farm-guide](http://gov.nl.ca/farm-guide) for listing of farmers, harvest availability, contact information, festival and events, harvest schedule and more
- Share your support by using the hashtag #ISupportNL Agriculture

#### For more info please contact:

Crystal Anderson-Baggs, MBA., B.Comm (Co-op)

Market Development Officer

[crystalandersonbaggs@gov.nl.ca](mailto:crystalandersonbaggs@gov.nl.ca)

#### Dept. of Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture

Market Development Division

P.O. Box 2006, 192 Wheelers Road

Corner Brook, Newfoundland A2H 0J1

