



LOCAL AND ORGANIC FOODS

Making a commitment to purchasing organic and/or locally-grown produce, dairy products and meats is perhaps the most fundamental greening opportunity for your restaurant. Purchasing organic and locally-grown ingredients has benefits both for the environment, your chef and your customers.

- Organic vegetables are grown without synthetic fertilizers and pesticides which are energy-intensive to produce and pollute water supplies. Organic meats and dairy products are raised on organic feed without the use of antibiotics or artificial hormones.
- Meat and vegetables grown in the Midwest require far less energy to transport than food grown in distant states or overseas.
- Locally-grown food is fresher — in many cases, delivered to you the day it is harvested. This means it both tastes better and lasts longer.
- Local growers can custom-grow to chefs' needs.
- Buying local encourages customers to appreciate "seasonally appropriate" foods — squash and root vegetables in the winter, saving the tomatoes and melons for summer when they're locally-available and at their peak of flavor.
- Many local foods come with a "sense of place" that is very appealing to customers in an era of industrial food production.



There are dozens of local and organic growers within delivery range of the Chicago area. Ways to identify them include:

- Work with distributors and co-operatives that focus on local and organic growers such as Goodness Greeness (www.goodnessgreeness.com), Home Grown Wisconsin (www.homegrownwisconsin.com) and Organic Valley (www.organicvalley.com).
- Visit the Green City Market held Wednesdays and Saturdays in Lincoln Park and meet with some of the growers directly.
- Talk to other restaurant owners and chefs who buy from local producers. A list of some of these can be found on the Green City Market website.
- Visit www.FamilyFarmed.org which lists many local organic growers, and attend the FamilyFarmed.org Spring Expo.
- Join the Chef's Collaborative, a network and resource center for chefs and restaurant owners interested in sustainable agriculture and fisheries.www.chefscollaborative.org.

