Benefits of Locally Grown

- Reduces the costs, both monetary and planetary, of transportation, processing, and packaging
- Promotes a stronger local economy by reinvesting tourism dollars in the region
- Is more nutritious as produce is most nutritionally dense within three days of harvest and tastes fresher
- With increased demand for local food, local farmers are more likely to diversify their production, thereby making it easier to farm more sustainably
- Plastic packaging used to keep food fresh is not required for local food therefore reducing plastic and waste
- Local food is often tightly linked to a region’s history, people, and natural environment and thus may have a higher appeal to tourists
- Supporting local farmers helps preserve local open space

Benefits of Organic Products

- Is a seal of recognition by the US Department of Agriculture that a product is grown by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations
- Organically raised livestock cannot be given hormones or antibiotics, must have access to the outdoors and must be fed 100 percent organic feed
- Organic farming uses less energy because it avoids synthetic fertilizers (which are petroleum products) and most pesticides
- Slightly more nutritious than conventionally grown food
- Ingest few-to-no pesticide and fertilizer residues
- Increasingly available through standard suppliers

Challenges of Local Products

- Critics argue that supporting local food damages the economies of third world nations, which often rely heavily on food exports and cash crops
- Can be difficult to find through standard suppliers
- Most products are not available year round

Challenges of Organic Products

- Trucking organic products around the world to accommodate demand emits more greenhouse gases
- Difficult to verify certified products are truly grown sustainably
- Can result in tourism dollars leaving the community
Tips for Seasonal/Local Eating

- Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for information on local agriculture products in your area (www.ces.ncsu.edu)
- Look for logos that indicate products are locally grown, such as the Goodness Grows in NC and Freshness from NC Waters
- Plan menus according to seasonal availability. A produce availability chart can be found at www.ncagr.gov/markets/chart.htm
- To find unique products contact the NC Specialty Crops Program at www.cals.ncsu.edu/specialty_crops
- Ask your suppliers where their produce comes from and if local sources are available
- Tell your customers that you use local products. You can indicate on your menu which items are from local farms, and provide information about those farmers and farms
- Consider starting your own vegetable or herb garden.
- Consider partnering with a local farm or gardener to offer combined gardening and cooking classes
- Participate in local agricultural events such as the NC Dept. of Agriculture’s Best Dish in NC competition
- Encourage your local economic development organization to provide farm to table programs

Options for Fresh Food in NC

A List of Healthy, Fresh, and Seasonal Food Sources:

Find farmers markets, pick-your-own, roadside stands, and direct to market sources of locally grown products: www.ncfarmfresh.com

Learn more about sustainability, agriculture and how you can become more involved: www.carolinafarmstewards.org

For more information on how your business can become more involved with local agriculture in the southern Appalachian region: www.buyappalachian.org

Find fresh, local seafood from the coast of North Carolina: www.carteretcatch.org