

Week Five Newsletter

The Value of Farmers Markets

Farmers' markets play an important role in connecting communities with local agriculture. These markets provide a space where farmers can sell their products directly to consumers, creating a stronger relationship between the people who grow food and their communities.

In West Virginia, farmers' markets often feature a variety of locally grown specialty crops such as leafy greens, sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, and sweet potatoes, depending on the season. Because many of these crops are harvested shortly before being sold, they are often fresher and more flavorful than foods that travel long distances before reaching store shelves. Farmers' markets also allow community members to learn more about seasonal foods, discover new ingredients, and ask farmers about how their crops are grown.

341

registered farmers' markets
and stands as of 2025



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Environmental and Economic Benefits of Buying Local

Purchasing locally grown foods can benefit both the environment and the local economy. When food is grown and sold within the same region, it typically travels a much shorter distance from farm to table. This can reduce transportation emissions, lower the need for extensive packaging, and help decrease the overall carbon footprint associated with food distribution.

Supporting farmers' markets also keeps more money within the local community. When people buy directly from farmers, they help support family farms, create opportunities for small businesses, and contribute to local job creation. By choosing local specialty crops whenever possible, consumers play an active role in strengthening a more sustainable and resilient food system.



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Supporting Local Food Systems

Individuals and communities can support local food systems in many simple ways. Visiting farmers' markets, purchasing seasonal produce, and trying locally grown specialty crops are great places to start. Choosing foods grown nearby helps reduce the distance food travels while providing fresher and often more flavorful options. In West Virginia, seasonal crops such as leafy greens, sweet corn, tomatoes, beans, squash, and sweet potatoes are commonly available throughout the growing season and can easily be included in everyday meals.

Community members can also support local agriculture by participating in community gardens, attending food and agriculture events, or sharing recipes that highlight seasonal ingredients. Learning more about where food comes from helps people make informed food choices and strengthens connections between farmers and consumers.

Supporting local food systems benefits both farmers and communities. Buying locally grown foods helps keep money within the regional economy, supports small farms and local businesses, and promotes healthier eating habits. By supporting farmers' markets and local agriculture, communities help create stronger connections between people, food, and the land, leading to a healthier environment and a more resilient local economy.

