



Questions and Answers

Q: What is the Presidents' Council?

A: The Presidents' Council is a collaborative initiative by 27 of Ontario's major commodity marketing boards, academia and government agricultural groups. The Chairs and Presidents of these organizations participate in the Council with a common goal of identifying issues and opportunities that affect the long-term sustainability of the agriculture industry in the province.

Q: How is the Presidents' Council different from other Ontario-based agricultural groups?

A: Many of Ontario's leading agricultural groups have and are still actively promoting the foods produced in this province. In addition to the specific marketing efforts of individual commodity groups (e.g. milk) consumers are likely familiar with some of these other organizations (e.g. Foodland Ontario) and/or their related campaigns (e.g. the "Good things grow in Ontario" and the "Homegrown" initiatives).

The Presidents' Council is different because it includes representatives from all sectors of the industry (livestock, dairy and eggs, fresh fruits and vegetables, cash crops, etc.) as well as the provincial government and academia. They have voluntarily come together for the common purpose of building a face and voice for Ontario's farmers and the important role that they play in contributing to the province's economy.

Q: What does it mean to "buy local"?

A: While there is presently no clear definition for "buy local," there appears to be a general consensus behind the intent of buying locally produced agri-food products. For example, we know that on average, the food we consume travels 1,500 miles between the farm source and our plates – this is known as 'food miles'. By consuming more locally produced food, we can reduce food miles and support our own local economies, minimize harmful greenhouse gas emissions related to transporting goods, and enjoy the health and quality benefits of fresher foods.

Q: Is the local food movement just another fad or can it have real benefits for Ontario's consumers and producers?

A: A lot is being written about the local food movement today. While local food isn't the absolute solution to many of our modern challenges (e.g. supporting local economies, environmental concerns, improving overall health, etc.), it certainly can help address them, and should be considered part of a long-term strategy.

Q: What can consumers do to help grow the future for Ontario's agriculture industry?

A: Consumers have a significant role to play in contributing to the long-term sustainability of agriculture in this province. It begins by recognizing Ontario's farmers and their contributions to the provincial economy, to the production of a high-quality and nutritious local food source, to the social structure within the province's rural areas, and to the environmental benefits related to contributing important green space.

Supporting Ontario's agriculture industry means choosing to buy locally produced goods. This includes more than just fresh seasonal produce; about 25 percent of goods on grocery store shelves are made using Ontario-grown crops. Consumers can ask their retailers to identify those products and help make selecting them easier.

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