

# Proximity



# • 0km AGRICULTURE •

## WHAT IS LOCAL FOOD?

IN PART, IT IS A GEOGRAPHICAL CONCEPT RELATED TO THE DISTANCE BETWEEN FOOD PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS. IN ADDITION TO GEOGRAPHIC PROXIMITY OF PRODUCER AND CONSUMER, HOWEVER, LOCAL FOOD CAN ALSO BE DEFINED IN TERMS OF SOCIAL AND SUPPLY CHAIN CHARACTERISTICS.

**Local based on distance travelled:** Food miles are the distance food travels from where it is grown to where it is ultimately purchased or consumed. Definitions based on geographic distance vary depending on the state or region and on whether the food is fresh or processed, among other factors.

**Local based on marketing outlet:** is based on the types of marketing channels used by farmers to distribute food from the farm to the consumer.

## WHICH ARE THE ALTERNATIVE FOOD PRODUCTION OPTIONS?

There are many distinct ways for community groups or entrepreneurs to sustainably produce food in the city. Urban agriculture is the general term used to define agricultural production (crops and livestock) in urban and peri-urban areas for food.

**Community supported agriculture:** provides a direct link between local farmers and consumers by allowing members to purchase a share of a farmer's crop before it is produced each season.

**Communal allotments and community gardens:** land plots, usually rented from local government, collectively worked by a group of people and offering individuals a way of growing a portion of their own food in a collaborative environment.

**Land/garden share:** pairs up gardeners who have nowhere to grow their own food with garden owners who have the space to grow but for whatever reason are not able to.

**Food producer co-ops, cooperative gardens:** the entire space is managed as one large garden through the coordinated efforts of many community members.

## WHICH ARE THE FOOD DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS?

From an ecological point of view the great benefit of direct links is the reduction in food miles, the distance that food travels between farm to fork. There are many ways of linking up producers and food consumers:

**Food consumer co-ops and food hubs:** collectively buy products from producers and wholesalers to distribute among their members and/or to sell on to other consumers.

**Farm shops:** starts from the other end of the chain with the producers.

**Local directories and exchanges:** to let the public know what is available locally, e.g. to publish a local food directory, listing all producers in the area who sell their own food locally.

**Box schemes:** The grower commits to providing a box of assorted vegetables every week to each customer and the customers in return commit themselves to accept a mix of whatever vegetables are in season.

**Subscription farming:** The food is distributed similarly to the box schemes but the consumers pay for a whole season's produce at the beginning of the season.

**Market stalls and farmer's market:** where producers sell their own food directly to the public.

## SOME CONSIDERATIONS: 0km AGRICULTURE

- Production of fresh food for household consumption, gaining gardening experience and an easier and cheaper supply of food.
  - Possibilities for recreation within the city boundary (reduces costs for transport and fuel consumption).
- Promotion of organic farming nearby the city, reduction of land abandonment and city's ecological footprint.
- Proximity agriculture makes regions healthier and less dependent on food agreements with other regions.

## SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION

- Sustainable consumption is all about consuming products and food grown or manufactured nearby, so that we can all reduce the environmental impact of transport.
- "Zero-kilometer" restaurants basically offer local foodstuffs on their menu – something that is produced, baked, cured, farmed and cultivated in and around a designated radius.
- "Slow food" means 40% of the ingredients must be sourced within less than 100 km, or 60% have to be from as nearby as possible.

## INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS

- What kind of groups can support or sponsor a community garden?
- What is the difference between the box-scheme and subscription farming?
  - What does it mean "food miles" and how you can reduce it?
    - What does "organic" product means?
    - What does it means "local food"?