

# LOCAL FOOD IN MONTANA

**In the 1950s Montana farmers, ranchers, and processors provided over 70% of the food consumed in Montana. By 2007, Montanans ate less than 10% of their food from Montana producers.**



## Why local?

### Know your food

**B**uying local food connects eaters and growers. Local food may be grown on land that you can see or a by a neighbor in your community. You can know and understand what practices your growers use, eat freshly harvested products, and taste the flavors of your region.

### Food Security

**B**y keeping your diverse agricultural community thriving, you can help ensure that channels stay open for your community to access good food. As fuel prices fluctuate and global transportation becomes more expensive, the strongest regional and local food systems will remain stable. Global markets won't dictate your food security.

### Local Jobs

**E**ating locally supports many small and local businesses. Buying locally keeps your food dollars circulating in the local economy. Buying directly from producers also helps them get full retail price on their food, rather than being undercut by the commodity market.

By ensuring that many local producers are thriving in your community today, you can help invest in the long term future of your community's economy.

## Rural Economic Development: Wealth is leaving our rural communities

**I**t is becoming increasingly clear that current monoculture systems which promote cheap crops to be exported are removing wealth from our rural communities. Expenses are outweighing the gains, middlemen are acting like monopolies, and farmers are being squeezed more and more tightly.

Consumers are still eating three times a day, but their money is spent on food that isn't raised or processed locally. Millions of dollars leave the state each year; much of that money could go directly to producers and local businesses. According to food economist Ken Meter of the Crossroads Resource Center, each dollar spent on local foods is spent seven more times before leaving the community.



## Where to find local food online:

AERO's Abundant MT project at  
<http://www.aeromt.org/abundant/>

### Meat Processors buying and selling Montanan meat

- Lower Valley Processing - *Kalispell*
- Ranchland Packing - *Butte*
- Pioneer Meats - *Big Timber*
- Stillwater Packing - *Columbus*
- Bear Paw Meats - *Havre*
- Project/RanchHouse Meats - *Billings*

### Institutions buying Montana foods

- **University of Montana** - *Missoula*
- **UM Western** - *Dillon*
- **Montana State University** - *Bozeman*
- **Dahl Memorial Healthcare** - *Ekalaka* (+10 others)
- **K-12 Schools:** Kalispell, Missoula, Livingston, Ennis, Sheridan, Boulder, Darby, Hamilton, Corvallis, Stevensville, Hot Springs, Polson, Whitefish, Bigfork, Terry, Hinsdale, Saco, Miles City, and Malta Public Schools

<http://farmtocafeteria.ncat.org/institution/>

Keep informed!  
 Take action!  
 Join 

Northern Plains Resource Council is a conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montana citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.

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Visit our website:  
[www.northernplains.org](http://www.northernplains.org)



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Range Rider \$50+    General \$40    Living Lightly \$15-39

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