

Resources and Reality:

Food Security in Pima County

Welcome. This website is designed for *all* members of the Pima County community. Whether you are looking for volunteer opportunities in the Tucson area, or trying to find out where to go to apply for a federal food program, this website is a good place to start.

As you navigate this site, keep in mind that while food security has a lot to do with food, it also has to do with much more. While rent, utilities and transportation costs are fixed, one's food bill is not. For too many families, cutting the food bill is the first step to take when money is tight. In the web of food security, we cannot treat economic and policy issues as irrelevant.

Not only does food security apply to our own present needs here in Arizona, but to the future of food production in this state, America and the world. So, the environmental and agricultural decisions we make now will not only affect us today, but will affect future generations as well. We hope this website will encourage you to educate yourself to become as involved in your community as you are able, whether it's writing your Congressman or getting out a hoe and a pack of seeds!

None of our efforts towards a secure, stable, environmentally sound food supply that is accessible to all will happen unless we educate ourselves, recognize that we live in a community that is deep with gifts, and take action on an individual level. Each link below (education, gardening, policy, etc.) is designed to arm you with some aspect of fortification in movement towards a food secure community. Thanks for being here.

This website was designed and created by Elizabeth Whelan and Kim Jones, two Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows. The opinions and information provided in the links and documents on this website do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Congressional Hunger Center or the Tucson Community Food Bank. Our only hope is that you will find enough information on this website to make your own informed decisions about Food Security.

Sponsored by the Community Food Security Center of the Tucson Community Food Bank; 3003 S. Country Club Road; Tel: (520) 622-0525

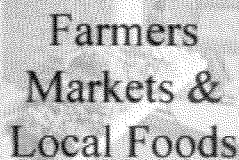


Today, locally based diets are nearly nonexistent. Only a tenth of the food eaten in Iowa, America's breadbasket, is grown within the state; most produce now arrives by truck via a Chicago redistribution center, traveling more than 1,500 miles before it reaches the dinner table in Des Moines... Nationally, 93 percent of all fruits and vegetables make similarly long journeys, requiring tremendous amounts of fossil fuel and reducing freshness and nutritional value. And with food passing through six to eight hands before it reaches you, the portion of the food dollar going to the farmer who produces it shrinks, making family farms increasingly less viable.

**Eating in: the benefits of locally produced food. (Food For Thought).
Sierra, Nov-Dec 2002, by Gary Nabhan**

Eaters... must understand that eating takes place inescapably in the world, that it is inescapably an agricultural act, and that how we eat determines, to a considerable extent, how the world is used.

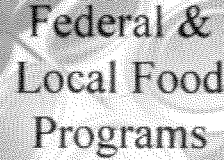
Wendell Berry, What Are People



Farmers
Markets &
Local Foods



Education



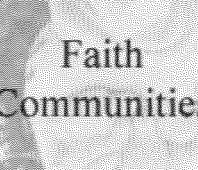
Federal &
Local Food
Programs



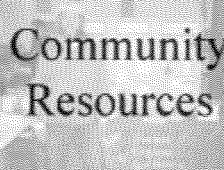
Gardening



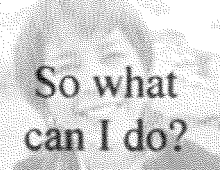
Policy



Faith
Communities



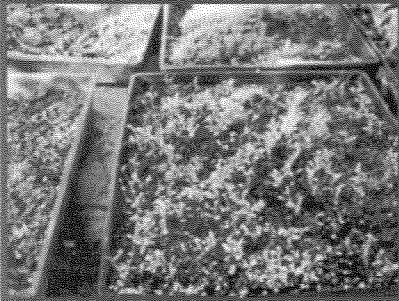
Community
Resources



So what
can I do?

The day that hunger is eradicated from the earth, there will be the greatest spiritual explosion the world has ever known.

For?



Humanity cannot imagine the joy that will burst into the world on the day of that great revolution.

-Federico García Lorca



Farmers Markets & Local Foods

[Home](#) • [Education](#) • [Federal & Local Food Programs](#) • [Gardening](#) • [Policy](#) • [Faith Communities](#) • [Community Resources](#) • [So What Can I Do?](#)



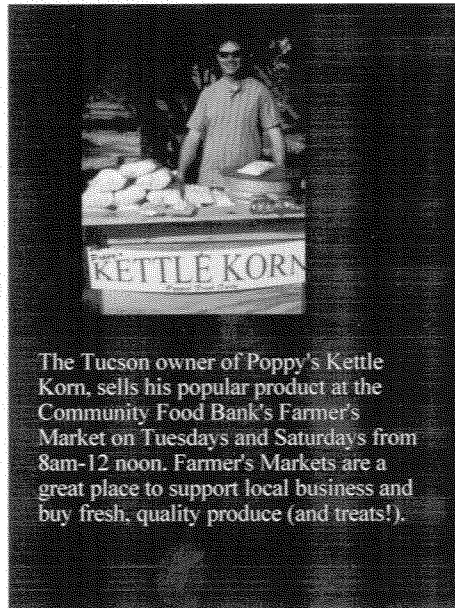
10 Reasons to buy Local Food:

1. Locally grown food tastes better - Food grown in your own community was probably picked within the past day or two. It's crisp, sweet and loaded with flavor. Several studies have shown that the average distance food travels from farm to plate is 1,500 miles. In a week-long (or more) delay from harvest to dinner table, sugars turn to starches, plant cells shrink, and produce loses its vitality.

2. Local produce is better for you - A recent study showed that fresh produce loses nutrients quickly. Food that is frozen or canned soon after harvest is actually more nutritious than some "fresh" produce that has been on the truck or supermarket shelf for a week.

3. Local food preserves genetic diversity - In the modern industrial agricultural system, varieties are chosen for their ability to ripen simultaneously and withstand harvesting equipment; for a tough skin that can survive packing and shipping; and for an ability to have a long shelf life in the store. Only a handful of hybrid varieties of each fruit and vegetable meet those rigorous demands, so there is little genetic diversity in the plants grown. Local farms, in contrast, grow a huge number of varieties to provide a long season of harvest, an array of eye-catching colors, and the best flavors. Many varieties are heirlooms, passed down from generation to generation, because they taste good. These old varieties contain genetic material from hundreds or even thousands of years of human selection; they may someday provide the genes needed to create varieties that will thrive in a changing climate.

4. Local food is GMO-free - Although biotechnology companies have been trying to commercialize genetically modified fruits and vegetables, they are currently licensing them only to large factory-style farms. Local farmers don't have access to genetically modified seed, and most of them wouldn't use it even if they could. A June 2001 survey by ABC News showed that 93% of Americans want labels on genetically modified food - most so that they can avoid it. If you are opposed to eating bioengineered food, you can rest assured that locally grown produce was bred as nature intended.



The Tucson owner of Poppy's Kettle Korn, sells his popular product at the Community Food Bank's Farmer's Market on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 8am-12 noon. Farmer's Markets are a great place to support local business and buy fresh, quality produce (and treats!).

FIND A

FARMERS MARKET

[Arizona's Farm to Family Directory](#)

[Links to local foods](#)

Be [informed](#) about local food. Here are a few [articles](#).

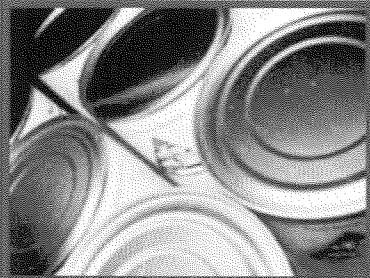
What's [seasonal](#) in Arizona? (So you can shop with the seasons.)

Start your *own* garden! (You can't get any more local than that....)



Federal and Local Food Programs in Tucson

[Home](#) • [Farmers Markets & Local Foods](#) • [Education](#) • [Gardening](#) • [Policy](#) • [Faith Communities](#) • [Community Resources](#) • [So What Can I Do?](#)



Each food program has its own unique system for qualification and administration. The processes for qualification described on this page are basic guidelines. Given the complex nature of federal food programs, there may be exceptions to every rule. *Be patient. Ask questions.* Persistence is often the key to accessing the resources to which you are entitled.

Tips for qualifying...

- 1) **Knowledge is Power** – Research the program that you're applying for.
- 2) **Ask Questions** – Clarify your situation and needs
- 3) **Be Patient** – Food program employees see many clients. They may be stressed, too.
- 4) **Be Prepared** – Ask what you need to bring with you to your qualification appointment and be sure to have it with you.
- 5) **Be Prompt** – Keep your appointments and arrive on time.
- 6) **Go to the Right Place** – Call before your appointment to ensure that you're going to the right clinic.

The Programs...

FOOD STAMPS

The Food Stamp program has been helping low-income families to obtain funds for the purchase of food since the late 1930s. Although these funds used to come in the form of coupons, or stamps, now an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system has been instituted across the country. Under this EBT program, the Food Stamp program provides a monthly electronic deposit of funds into a recipient's EBT account. In Arizona, the Food Stamp Program is administered by the Arizona Department of Economic Security's (DES) Family Assistance Administration.

[More information about FOOD STAMPS>>](#)

WIC – THE WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN NUTRITION PROGRAM

The WIC program aims to improve the nutrition and health of low-income, nutritionally at-risk pregnant and nursing women, infants and children under the age of five. In addition to providing supplemental, nutritious foods, the WIC program also provides nutrition education and counseling and screening and referrals to health, welfare and social services. In Arizona, WIC is administered by the Arizona Department of Health Services in partnership with the Pima County Health Department at the local level.

[More information about WIC >>](#)



[Home](#) • [Farmers Markets & Local Foods](#) • [Education](#) • [Federal & Local Food Programs](#) • [Policy](#) •

[Faith Communities](#) • [Community Resources](#) • [So What Can I Do?](#)

Gardening ties tightly into issues of **food security**, nutrition and freshness.

Food Security: Starting your own garden on even a small plot of land can save you a significant amount of money each month. If you are on Food Stamps, you can use your EBT card to buy seeds and food producing plants. If you are in the Tucson area, you can collect free seeds (limited variety) and free compost for your land (you must pick it up) from the Southside Food Production Network at the [Community Food Bank](#).

Nutrition: Nutrients leach from produce as it sits in a truck or on a grocery shelf for days. So, your own produce from your backyard will not only *taste* better, but it will be more nutritious.

Freshness: You can't get fresh produce that is more local than your own backyard or community garden!

Find out [here](#) what vegetables in Arizona are in season during what months!

Need help getting started? Check out:

A Guide to [Gardening in Tucson](#) (Hard copies available at the Food Bank. Call the Food Security Center at 622-0525)

COMMUNITY GARDENING

[Click here](#) to see the advantages of community gardening.



BACKYARD GARDENING

Want to start your OWN garden? Grow for your own table, or to *sell* at the Farmer's Market! The Food Bank provides support for any individual interested in starting a backyard garden. The Food Bank has free seeds (limited variety), free compost, and advice. Just call the Food Bank at 622-

FOOD POLICY

[Home](#) • [Farmers Markets & Local Foods](#) • [Education](#) • [Federal & Local Food Programs](#) • [Gardening](#) •

• [Faith Communities](#) • [Community Resources](#) • [So What Can I Do?](#)



• [Food Policy Links](#)

•

[Analysis](#)

• [Tucson's Chef's have something to say! Read the](#)

[Cuba Collective Statement of](#)

[Concerns for food policy.](#)

• [View the International Commission on the Future of Food and Agriculture's](#)

[Manifesto on the Future of Food](#)

What is food policy?

Food policy is far more than agricultural regulations and food related health codes. According to the State Food Policy Council website maintained by the Drake University Agricultural Law Center, a food policy is "any decision made by a government institution which shapes the type of foods used or available as well as their cost, or which influences the opportunities for farmers and employees or effects food choices available to consumers." Examples of food policies include:

- Land use decisions that help to preserve farmland
- Agricultural regulations that encourage the direct sale of local produce through farmers' markets and farm stands
- Public health campaigns that encourage exercise and healthy eating
- Policies that promote healthy food options in schools including the removal of vending machines and the inclusion of local produce in school lunches
- Programs and policies that aim to increase physical access to healthy, affordable food for all of a community's citizens

What is a food policy council?

A food policy council is a group of people with an interest in all aspects of the food system that gather together to collaborate on projects, policies and partnerships related to food and agriculture. Although food is the common ground around which collaboration occurs, food policy councils address and respond to a wide array of community concerns including, but not limited to, public health, job creation and economic development, community building and quality of life.

For more information please read, "[Food Policy Councils: Practice & Possibility](#)" a report by Sarah Boron, Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow.

What's happening in Arizona?

The Arizona Community Food Policy Coalition, a group of stakeholders in the food system including representation from city and state government, anti-hunger groups, and non-profit organizations, is working toward the creation of a statewide food policy council. In addition, Community Food Connections, a non-profit organization committed to working to end hunger and increase community food security throughout Arizona has been formed. For more information visit [Community Food Connections](#).

What's happening in communities around the US?





So what Can I do?

[Home](#) • [Farmers Markets & Local Foods](#) • [Education](#) • [Federal & Local Food Programs](#)
[Gardening](#) • [Policy](#) • [Faith Communities](#) • [Community Resources](#)

What can YOU do to work toward community food security?

- 1) Buy Local
- 2) Money Matters– Economic & Labor Practices
- 3) Be Eco-Aware
- 4) Knowledge is Power– Educate Yourself
- 5) Organize!Get involved in YOUR community
- 6) Eat Simply & Simply Eat– Healthy Eating on a Budget
- 7) Grow your own!

