

HOW TO BUY LOCAL FOOD: SIMPLE STEPS

BY JULIE MURPHREE, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

Local food — grown, raised, or produced within a short distance from where it's consumed — offers numerous benefits: fresh produce, and support for local farmers and economies.

Arizona Farm Bureau's [FillYourPlate.org](https://www.fillyourplate.org) is a solid resource for buying local and for us, local means anything produced within the boundaries of our wonderful state, Arizona. For real adherents to local, it may be a 50-mile radius, though the smaller the radius the more challenging the "buy local" mantra becomes unless you are growing and raising your own food in a "homesteading" environment.

WHY BUY LOCAL FOOD?

Before diving into the tips, it's worth understanding why local food matters. Local food systems foster community connections, preserve farmland, and celebrate the mix of local food grown in an area. Locally grown produce is often harvested at peak ripeness, ensuring better flavor and higher nutrient content. Additionally, buying local supports small-scale farmers and producers, keeping money within the community and strengthening regional food security. For example, purchasing directly from farmers or local markets can return up to 90 cents of every dollar to the local economy, compared to just 15 to 20 cents from large retailers.

The following tips will guide you through the process, making it easier to integrate local food into your diet.

TIPS FOR BUYING LOCAL FOOD

Visit Farmers' Markets: Farmers' markets are one of the best places to find local food. These markets bring together farmers, artisans, and consumers, offering fresh produce, meats, dairy, and baked goods directly from the source. To make the most of your visit:

- **Research local markets:** Use resources like LocalHarvest.org or FillYourPlate.org to find markets in your area. Many markets operate seasonally, so check schedules.
- **Shop early:** Arrive early for the best selection, as popular items like heirloom tomatoes or fresh eggs often sell out quickly.



- **Talk to vendors:** Ask farmers about their farm and specifically about an item they sell. This builds trust and helps you make informed choices. Plus it's fun to visit with the farmer!

Join a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Program: CSAs allow consumers to buy shares in a farm's harvest, receiving regular deliveries of fresh, seasonal produce. This model supports farmers by providing up-front capital and ensures you get ultra-fresh food.

Arizona is known for launching CSA's in the early 1990s, pioneering this form of local agriculture.

- **Find a CSA:** Websites like LocalHarvest.org or the USDA's directory list CSAs by region. FillYourPlate.org also connects Arizona residents with local CSAs.

Understand the commitment: CSAs typically require a seasonal or annual subscription. Be prepared for a variety of produce, which may include unfamiliar items like kohlrabi or sun-chokes. Many of the farms will provide recipes, especially with produce items you might not be familiar.

- **Experiment with recipes:** Use CSA boxes as an opportunity to try new dishes. Again, many CSAs provide recipes or suggestions for using their produce.

- **Share with others:** If the quantity is too much, split a share with a neighbor or friend to reduce waste.

Shop at Local Food Co-ops or Independent Grocers: Food cooperatives and independent grocery stores often prioritize local products. Co-ops are member-owned and focus on sustainable, community-driven food systems.

- **Check for local labels:** Look for signs or labels indicating locally sourced items, such as "Grown in Arizona" or "Local Farmer." The Arizona Department of Agriculture's "Arizona Grown" label is undergoing a refresh. Stay tuned on what will be revealed in the months to come.
- **Ask store staff:** Employees at co-ops or small grocers are often knowledgeable about their suppliers and can point out local options. Even larger grocery stores are making an effort to feature and highlight local

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CROP PROTECTION HELPS WIN THE BATTLE OF THE BUGS

BY JULIE MURPHREE, ARIZONA FARM BUREAU DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

According to a report by UC Agriculture and Natural Resources, farmers lose 10% to 40% of their crops to pests and plant diseases. On a global scale, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) highlights that it's easily 40% in certain countries. These losses cost the global economy more than \$220 billion annually, with invasive insects alone costing at least \$70 billion.

What's worse, losses mean less food for you and me and the global community. With a growing population, the battle against bugs must be won. And, major crop loss also means higher prices for food.

Pests and plant diseases are persistent threats in reducing food yields and quality, often an overwhelming situation for our farmers. But one offensive weapon in the war is crop protection. Crop protection practices, including pesticides and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), are vital to prevent these losses from doubling and to help meet global food demands. And, with today's science-based modern practices in crop protection beneficials (think butterflies, ladybugs and honeybees) and human health thrives.

How is this possible? Much has to do with how crop protection is employed. For ease of understanding, we put the major practices used in bullets below, focusing on crops and human health.

- **Evening Aerial Applications: A Safety-First Approach for All Involved!**

As the sun sets over Arizona's vast fields, our aerial applicators take to the skies—not for drama, but for pure practicality and protection. Nighttime means calmer air to minimize drift, empty fields to safeguard hardworking farmers and field workers catching their breath at home, and a gentle nod to our pollinator friends like bees, who've safely tucked into their hives for the night. It's all about safety, plain and simple, ensuring everyone—from the soil to the supper table—stays out of harm's way.

- **Record-Keeping and Expert Guidance: Transparency You Can Trace**

Every crop protection application comes with meticulous record-keeping, because accountability isn't optional in Arizona agriculture, it's



Yuma farmer John Boelts in one of his cantaloupe fields, confident that today's crop protection tools help keep yields high, food safe and nutritiously tasty.

the backbone. Our highly trained Pest Control Advisors (PCAs) that must be licensed and annually attend continuing education classes, craft their pest management plans on official Arizona Department of Agriculture Form 1080s, open books anyone can access, examine, and evaluate. It's our way of saying, "We're not hiding a thing; come see for yourself how science and stewardship guide every decision."

- **Pounds of Protection, Ounces of Precision: Targeted and Temporary Tools**

Those headlines about "thousands of pounds" of pesticides? Let's set

the record straight, they're crop protection products applied at just ounces per acre, laser-focused on the villains like damaging pests while sparing the heroes: beneficial insects, wildlife, and our precious environment. These modern marvels break down quickly, leaving no long-term legacy, because today's tools are designed for precision, not persistence.

- **EPA's Reentry Rules: The Clock That Keeps Workers Safe**

Here's the gold standard from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): every registered pesticide carries strict reentry intervals, mandatory buffers that keep workers out of treated fields until it's proven safe, anywhere from a quick 4 hours to a cautious 72. When we apply under the cover of darkness, that clock starts ticking with fields blissfully empty, turning evening ops into an extra layer of benefit for our teams. Safety isn't a suggestion; it's the law we live by.

- **Yuma's Legacy of Leafy Greens: High-Value Crops, Timeless Tradition**

Yuma didn't wake up yesterday to specialty crops—it's been decades of dedication to high-value wonders like those vibrant leafy greens that grace winter salads nationwide. This isn't a flashy new shift; it's Arizona agriculture's steadfast story, feeding America with the same reliable roots that have nourished us for generations. As science reveals new options, farmers employ them. Chem-

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ONE APP, MANY BENEFITS: HOW THE FB BENEFITS APP PUTS MEMBERSHIP VALUE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

BY STAFF REPORTS

For Arizona Farm Bureau members, benefits are more than a perk. They are tools designed to support everyday life, from saving money to finding trusted services and partners. The FB Benefits App brings those tools together in one convenient place, making it easier than ever for members to access the value of their membership wherever they are.

Available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store, the FB Benefits App lets members access their benefits anytime, anywhere. Whether at home, on the road or in the field, the app puts Farm Bureau benefits right at members' fingertips.

The FB Benefits App serves as a centralized hub for Arizona Farm Bureau member benefits. Instead of searching through emails, websites, or printed materials, members can open the app and quickly find discounts, programs, and resources tailored to their needs. With just a few taps, users can explore what is available and how to use each benefit.

One of the app's key advantages is convenience.

Members can log in securely and instantly view available benefits, partner offers and exclusive savings. From automotive and travel discounts to health, wellness and lifestyle services, the app helps members easily navigate the full range of offerings. Each benefit includes clear information on how to redeem offers, access services or connect with providers, eliminating guesswork.

The app also makes it easier for members to stay informed. New benefits, limited time offers, and updates are added regularly to ensure members do not miss opportunities to save. Push notifications allow users to receive timely reminders and alerts about new programs, helping them make the most of their membership throughout the year.

Another important feature of the FB Benefits App is personalization. Members can browse benefits by category to easily find offers that align with their lifestyle. Whether someone is looking for vehicle savings, hearing care, insurance options, travel perks, or local services, the app organizes benefits in an easy-to-navigate format. This structure helps members quickly connect with programs that matter most to them.

The app also supports stronger connections between members and Farm Bureau partners. Many of the app's benefits come from trusted companies and organizations that understand the needs of Arizona farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. By working with vetted partners, Arizona Farm Bureau ensures that members not only receive discounts but also access quality services they can rely on.

For members who travel frequently or manage busy schedules, having benefits accessible in one place can be especially valuable. The FB Benefits App eliminates the need to carry physical membership cards or remember multiple login details across platforms. With the app, proof of membership and benefit details are always available, reducing hassle and saving time.

Security and ease of use were also priorities in the app's development. The interface is designed to be intuitive, even for users who are not especially tech-savvy. Clear menus, straightforward navigation, and simple instructions make the app

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Member Benefits on the Go!

Get easy access to special benefits for Farm Bureau members – download the Farm Bureau Member Benefit App!

Arizona Farm Bureau

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Arizona Farm Bureau

AMERICA'S FAVORITE PORK CHOPS: A SIMPLE RECIPE FOR BUSY ARIZONA FAMILIES

BY STAFF REPORTS

At the Arizona Farm Bureau, we know that dinner time is more than just a meal—it's a moment to connect, unwind, and enjoy real food grown with care. If you're looking for a quick, satisfying recipe that's big on flavor and easy on prep, this one's for you.

Straight from the National Pork Board, "America's Favorite Pork Chops" is a favorite for families nationwide. And it's no surprise why—this recipe checks all the boxes: simple ingredients, bold flavor, and quick cook time. Whether firing up the grill on a summer evening or planning a no-fuss weeknight dinner, this dish delivers every time.

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 loin pork chops
- ¾ cup Italian dressing
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

INSTRUCTIONS:

Combine the pork chops, Italian dressing, and Worcestershire sauce in a self-sealing plastic bag.

Seal the bag tightly and place it in the refrigerator to marinate. For deeper flavor, let it sit overnight for at least



20 minutes—or longer if you have time.

When ready to cook, remove the pork chops from the bag and discard the marinade.

Grill the chops over a medium-hot fire, turning once, for 8 to 11 minutes.

The pork is done when the internal temperature reaches 160°F on a meat thermometer.

WHY PORK?

Pork is a lean, affordable protein that's easy to prepare and family-approved. Cuts like loin chops are packed with flavor and versatile enough to fit any menu. Paired with local Arizona-grown produce or a side of roasted vegetables, you've got a complete meal that celebrates everything we love about fresh, local food.

SUPPORT LOCAL, EAT WELL

When you buy pork in Arizona, you're supporting local families, rural communities, and a resilient agricultural economy. Recipes like this bring that commitment home—literally—to your table.

So, next time you're at the store or planning your next meal, remember: Arizona pork is always a smart (and delicious) choice. 

ENTERTAINMENT



ENTERTAINMENT



PERSONAL/BUSINESS



PERSONAL/BUSINESS



MEMBERSHIP VALUE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

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approachable for members of all ages. Secure login features help protect member information while ensuring quick access when needed.

The FB Benefits App is not just about saving money. It is about maximizing the value of membership. Arizona Farm Bureau works year-round to build partnerships that support members' personal and professional lives. The app ensures those benefits are visible, accessible, and easy to use, rather than overlooked or forgotten.

As Farm Bureau continues to grow and evolve, the app provides a flexible platform for future benefits and enhancements. New partners, expanded offerings, and additional tools can be integrated over time, allowing the app to adapt alongside members' needs and priorities.

For new members, the app provides a clear overview of the wide range of benefits included with membership. For longtime members, it serves as a reminder of the value available beyond advocacy and community. In both cases, the FB Benefits App reinforces the idea that Farm Bureau membership extends well beyond the farm gate.

By consolidating benefits into a single, easy-to-access platform, the FB Benefits App simplifies the membership experience and helps members get more from what they already have. Downloading the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store is a simple step that unlocks year-round value, making membership benefits easier to find, easier to use, and harder to miss. 

NEED A SPEAKER? WE'LL CALL A FARMER FOR YOU!

BY STAFF REPORTS

With most of us being virtual meeting pros, you can now book one of our Fence Line speakers to give a virtual presentation to your group. We will come in person as well. We ask that your group has a minimum of 25 in attendance and then give us more than one scheduled date option to accommodate our farmers and ranchers as well as Arizona Farm Bureau staff.

When was the last time you spoke to a farmer or rancher? Or, curious about the "State of Arizona Agriculture?" Our speakers are always willing to talk about the benefits of Arizona's agriculture whether it's an in-person meeting or virtually via Zoom or Microsoft Teams (our audience minimum for virtual meetings can be smaller).

Fence Line, the Arizona Farm Bureau Agriculturalist Speakers' Bureau, is a nonprofit program that educates consumers about agriculture practices, food safety, and

locally grown food. Reach out to us if you're looking for an expert in Arizona agriculture.

Some of the topics that our farmers and ranchers and Farm Bureau staff are passionate about:

- Food Safety
- Buying Local
- The Economic Vitality of Arizona Agriculture
- The State of Arizona Agriculture: The Big Picture
- Farming Methods
- Misconceptions about Agriculture
- Agritourism
- Animal Care
- Protecting your Food Supply

For more information about Fence Line, call 480-635-3609 or email joelcarr@azfb.org. We can handle any topic you're interested in as it relates to Arizona agriculture! 

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TRAVEL



BATTLE OF THE BUGS

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ical pesticides have become so safe they are now labeled "soft pesticides" since many no only target the bad bug, leaving the ladybug to do her work as well with no harm.

- **The Ag Health Study Speaks Volumes: Debunking Health Myths with Hard Data**

Don't let scare stories sway you, the landmark [Ag Health Study](#), a massive, ongoing longitudinal look at farm life, simply doesn't back claims of rampant diabetes, obesity, pulmonary woes, endocrine glitches, or cancer spikes in rural ag communities. It's science over sensationalism, reminding us that real evidence paints a picture of resilience, not risk.

- **Epidemiology vs. Evidence: How EPA Cuts Through the Noise**

Too often, detractors cherry-pick epidemiology studies hinting at correlations but lacking that crucial cause-and-effect punch. But here's the truth: the EPA demands dose-response data proving real links before anything hits the shelf. They scrutinize every study—including reliable epidemiology—folding it into decisions on registration, labeling, and those mandatory 15-year reregistration reviews (or sooner, if new info emerges). It's rigorous, it's required, and it's what keeps our system trustworthy.

- **From Lab to Field: The Marathon of Modern Crop Protection**

Bringing a new crop protection product to market? It's a 12-year odyssey costing companies an average \$286 million in research, with the EPA vetting every endocrine angle for dose-response proof of safety. Even then, regulators can pull the plug if needed. And get this: today's "soft pesticides" are precision strikers, zapping only the bad guys while ladybugs and butterflies keep up the good fight—a far cry from yesterday's blunt instruments.

- **EPA's Independent Eye: Verifying Data for a Safer Tomorrow**

The EPA doesn't take our word for it, they pore over epidemiology from independent scientists and universities, alongside registrant-submitted research, verifying and validating every bit to ensure it meets U.S. law's sky-high safety bar. Cumulative risk assessments for classes like organophosphates and carbamates? Check. Synergistic effects? They're on it too. It's exhaustive oversight for an industry that feeds us all.

- **No Silver Bullet, But Worlds Safer: Training and Tools for Today**

Let's be real, no product, organic (yes, organics uses chemical pesticides too) or otherwise, is zero-risk, but today's options are leaps and bounds safer for people and planet than the pesticide cocktails of yesteryear. That's why every grower, PCA, and applicator earns a state license, clocks annual continuing education, and why field

workers get tailored pesticide training in plain language before stepping foot in the rows. It's commitment in action, from license to last harvest.

- **Our Shared Story: Bridging Divides Through Food Safety and Heart**

At its core, this is multifaceted work in food safety and human health rooted in a profound love for the land that sustains us and the lives it touches. It's our hopeful chance to tell Arizona agriculture's tale with pride and openness, mending gaps with genuine appreciation and respect for America's unmatched food system, the safest on earth. Join us in celebrating it; after all, every plate tells a story worth sharing.

You can be assured that Arizona and American farmers are committed to food safety. The food they grow for you and me, they feed to their own families. Our farmers are passionate about what they do. The thousands of conversations and interviews I have with our aggies prove this. I have heard their stories; I am confident in their effort to keep their families and us safe. It's a war to keep safe, nutritious and tasty food on our plates that they will win. 



**Your future self
will thank you.**

When it comes to planning for the future, sometimes getting started is the hardest part. That's where we come in. From life insurance and annuities to retirement planning and more, we'll help you get started and stay with you every step of the way.

Contact your local Farm Bureau agent today.

 **FARM BUREAU
FINANCIAL SERVICES**

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HOW TO BUY LOCAL

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products by providing easy access and signage so you can identify what's local.

- **Compare prices:** Local food at co-ops can sometimes be pricier, but bulk buying or member discounts can make it more affordable.

Buy Directly from Farms: Purchasing directly from farms—through farm stands, pick-your-own programs, or online stores—cuts out the middleman and ensures maximum freshness.

- **Locate farms:** Use FillYourPlate.org to find farms you can visit that offer direct sales in Arizona or check LocalHarvest.org for national options.
- **Plan seasonal visits:** Many farms offer pick-your-own opportunities for fruits like strawberries or apples. Check harvest calendars to time your visits.
- **Support farm events:** Some farms host tours, dinners, or workshops, which deepen your connection to the food source.
- **Inquire about bulk deals:** Buying in bulk (e.g., a bushel of apples) can save money and allow you to preserve food through canning or freezing.

Use Online Platforms for Local Food: Technology has made it easier to source local food through online marketplaces and delivery services.

- **Explore platforms:** Websites like FarmMatch or MarketWagon connect consumers with local producers. FillYourPlate.org offers a searchable database of Arizona farms and products then links to the farms that sell directly.
- **Check delivery options:** Some farms and CSAs offer home delivery or pickup points, ideal for busy schedules.
- **Verify local sourcing:** Ensure the platform prioritizes local producers by checking their sourcing policies or product origins.

Learn to Shop Seasonally: Local food is inherently seasonal, meaning availability changes throughout the year. Embracing seasonality enhances flavor and reduces reliance on imported goods.

- **Use seasonal guides:** The USDA's Seasonal Produce Guide or FillYourPlate.org's seasonal charts highlight what's in season in your region.
- **Plan meals around seasons:** For example, focus on tomatoes and zucchini in summer, root vegetables in fall, and citrus in winter.
- **Preserve for off-seasons:** Learn to can, freeze, or dry surplus produce to enjoy local flavors year-round.

Grow Your Own or Participate in Community Gardens: While not strictly "buying," growing your own food or joining a community garden is a hyper-local approach.

- **Start small:** Grow herbs, tomatoes, or greens in pots or a small garden plot.
- **Join a community garden:** Community gardens offer shared spaces to grow food and connect

with local growers. Find one through the American Community Gardening Association.

- **Trade with neighbors:** Swap homegrown produce with others to diversify your local food supply.

Read Labels and Ask Questions: Not all "local" claims are accurate. Some retailers use vague terms to market products as local when they're not.

- **Look for specifics:** Labels should indicate the farm's name or location (e.g., "Grown at Mortimer Farms, Dewey, AZ").
- **Ask for transparency:** If a product's origin isn't clear, ask store staff or vendors for details.
- **Avoid greenwashing:** Be wary of terms like "fresh" or "natural" that don't necessarily mean local.

Budget Wisely for Local Food: Local food can sometimes cost more due to smaller-scale production, but there are ways to make it affordable.

- **Buy in bulk:** Purchase larger quantities of staples like grains, beans, or meat to freeze or store.
- **Focus on value crops:** Root vegetables, beans, and in-season produce are often cheaper than out-of-season items simply because the item is available in abundance if the crop season was abundant.
- **Compare unit prices:** Check price tags for unit prices (e.g., cost per ounce) to ensure you're getting the best deal.

The Promise of Local in an Arizona Grocery Store is Real

In Arizona, it's not very hard to find local food even in a typical grocery store. The secret is shopping the parameter of the store, also known as around the edges.

Dairy Products: Nearly all fluid milk (that gallon or quart of milk) comes from our local Arizona family dairy farms. And, we have yogurt, cottage cheese and other dairy products made right here in Arizona.

The Meat Case: In the meat case, a University of Arizona study found that 52% of beef was from Arizona ranchers. To find more local beef and purchase it directly from the rancher, go to FillYourPlate.org and search "beef."

Arizona Leafy Greens: During the winter, all your leafy greens such as spinach, Romaine lettuce, and other leaf lettuces come from Arizona produce farms, mostly from Yuma.

Buying local food is more than a trend; it's a lifestyle choice that supports health and community. By visiting farmers' markets, joining CSAs, shopping at co-ops, or even growing your own food, you can make a meaningful impact while enjoying fresher, tastier meals. And finding local food in a traditional grocery store isn't difficult.

Resources like FillYourPlate.org and LocalHarvest.org make it easier than ever to find local sources. Start small, ask questions, and embrace the seasonality of local food to transform your plate and your connection to the food system. With these tips and resources, you're well-equipped to fill your plate with the best your community has to offer. 



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“The Farm Bureau saved my life because it provided a community of amazing individuals who, in turn, allowed me to become a part of their tribe!”