

SIX REASONS TO SHOP AT YOUR FARMERS' MARKET



In May our fancy turns to thoughts of fresh produce and Farmers' Markets. Oregonians hold a special place for Farmers' Markets; every community with a Farmers Market promotes it, brags about it, and takes special pride in it.

Here are six reasons to visit your Farmers' Market:

- 1) **By buying locally we "Care for God's Creation" by reducing the number of food miles our food travels from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer.** A typical carrot travels 1,838 miles to reach your dinner table. The food miles for items in the grocery store are, on average, 27 times higher than the food miles for goods bought from local sources.
- 2) **Farmers' markets enable farmers to keep approximately 80 cents of each dollar spent by the consumer.** By "Option for the Poor" the U.S. Bishops apply the basic moral test-how our most vulnerable members are faring-and "extend in a special way to those who work in agriculture... Those who farm must have decent wages and a decent life."
- 3) **Many Farmers' Markets accepts WIC and SNAP, which means that more Oregonians can access healthy, fresh, affordable, sometimes organic, locally-grown food.** Without Farmers' Markets the cheapest foods are often highest in calories and lowest in nutrition but the cheapest foods are what is available when you try to stretch your food stamps (SNAP and WIC).
- 4) **Farmers' Markets help farmers stay in business.** Catholic teaching about the "Dignity of Work" insists that farmers must be able to support themselves and their families through their work.
- 5) **You can create a special relationship by talking with the local farmer.** Food systems, or supply chains, generally include the grocer as the middleman. "When we go to the supermarket, we rarely think about where our food comes from, who produces it, who harvests it, or what it takes to process, package, and distribute it [food systems]." (*USCCB: Pastoral Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers*)
- 6) **Buying local essentially supports your local economy—the farm—and supports community.** The U.S. Bishops explain in the Catholic teaching "Call to Family, Community and Participation" that each person lives and develops in community.

Catholic bishops hold a special place for agriculture "because it touches all our lives, wherever we live or whatever we do. It is about how we feed our own families, and the whole human family. It is about how we treat those who put food on our table and those who do not have enough food. It is about what is happening to food and farming, rural communities and villages, in the face of increasing concentration, new technology, and growing globalization in agriculture." (*USCCB: Pastoral Reflections on Food, Farmers, and Farmworkers*)



Office of Life, Justice, and Peace