

# Food Miles

## **What are food miles?**

Food miles are the distance food travels from where it is grown to where it is ultimately purchased or consumed by the end user. It is estimated that the average American meal travels approximately 1,500 miles to get from where it was produced to your plate.

## **Why are food miles a cause for concern?**

- Long-distance, large-scale transportation methods use huge quantities of fossil fuels. Currently it is estimated that we put almost ten kcal of fossil fuel energy into our food system for every one kcal of energy we get as food.
- Transporting food over long distances also creates large quantities of carbon dioxide emissions and degrades the environment.
- Produce that is being transported for a long distance is often picked while still unripe and shipped with lots of packaging to keep it stable for transport and sale. The nutritional value of this food is less, and the negative impact on the environment is greater. Competition from imported food can make it hard for local growers to make a living.

## **What can I do to reduce food miles?**

- Ask your grocer to purchase from local and regional producers and to provide clear labeling to identify products produced closer to home.
- Find your neighborhood farmers' market and buy food from local producers
- Buy local products from your neighborhood grocery store
- Consider joining a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program
- Start a garden

*Source: Center for Urban Education about Sustainable Agriculture*