

Wal-Mart Makes National Commitment to Buy Locally Grown Produce

To ensure that our customers have access to fresh, quality produce, Wal-Mart is committed to purchasing more agricultural products from local growers. Offering locally grown produce means Wal-Mart can not only provide higher quality, lowered priced fruits and vegetables, but also support farmers in the local economy and reduce the environmental impact of transporting food.

In today's economy, our customers are looking to us to be an advocate and find solutions that save them money on their groceries and other products they need. By cutting shipping costs, local sourcing is one way Wal-Mart is keeping grocery prices down to help customers save money and live better.

Growing Our Locally Grown Selections

- Over the past two years, **Wal-Mart's partnerships with local farmers have grown by 50 percent**, and the retailer is committed to expanding this even further. **Hundreds of growers** across the United States provide produce sold in Wal-Mart Supercenters and Neighborhood Markets, **a figure that is expected grow**.
- During the summer months, **locally grown fruits and vegetables** that are both grown and available for purchase at Wal-Mart within a state's borders **make up a fifth of the produce** available in stores.
- Wal-Mart estimates that **it purchases more than 70 percent of its produce from U.S.-based suppliers**, making the company the **biggest customer of American agriculture**.
- The company now **highlights locally grown produce with in-store signage** at Supercenters and Neighborhood Markets across the country. The easy-to-recognize signs include official state-grown marks, indicating approval by the state's agriculture department. Locally grown is also **featured online at www.walmart.com/locallygrown**.

Cultivating Local Economies

- Whether through buying from local suppliers or paying local taxes, **Wal-Mart pumps millions of dollars into local economies**. Buying from local suppliers helps to create jobs, too.
- According to the USDA, the United States has lost 4.7 million farms since 1935. By purchasing locally grown produce, **Wal-Mart supports America's family farmers**.
- Beyond the hundreds of growers Wal-Mart sources from, the company **does business with 61,000 suppliers** across the country, supporting millions of jobs nationally.

Shortening the Distance from Farm to Fork

- Wal-Mart's locally grown program will not only save Wal-Mart customers money on healthy, fresh produce, it will also **reduce food miles, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and conserve fuel** by lowering the number of miles food has to travel.
- **"Food miles" are the distance from the farm to the fork**, and it is estimated that the food in an **average meal travels 1,500 miles** before it gets to you. Wal-Mart is taking a number of steps to reduce food miles:
 - In the past, all of the fresh cilantro sold in Wal-Mart stores was sourced from California. By working with grower-partner Duda Farms, the company **began sourcing cilantro from Belle Glade, Fla.** for distribution across the East Coast. **Introducing Florida-grown cilantro resulted in an estimated savings of 250,000 food miles in a single season.**

- Wal-Mart now **sources more than 12 million pounds of peaches from 18 different states**, not just well-known growing areas like Georgia and South Carolina. By sourcing from so many different states and selling the product locally, Wal-Mart **saved 672,000 food miles and 112,000 gallons of diesel fuel**. The total freight and gasoline savings combined equal more than \$1.4 million.
- Wal-Mart is working with state departments of agriculture and local farmers **to develop or revitalize growing areas** for products like corn in Mississippi and cilantro in southern Florida, which had not grown there before or which were once native crops.
- Wal-Mart believes that local farmers can grow the products today's consumers want in ways that will **relieve pressure on current sources of water, land, energy, and labor**. Reducing our reliance on mono-culture farming promotes biodiversity and surety of supply.

Good News is Cropping Up

- "Wal-Mart has been going green, but not entirely for the reasons you might think. By sourcing more produce locally - it now sells Wisconsin-grown yellow corn in 56 stores in or near Wisconsin - it is able to cut shipping costs...Marc Turner, whose Bushwick Potato Co. supplies Wal-Mart stores in the Northeast, says **the cost of shipping one truck of spuds from his farm in Maine to local Wal-Mart stores costs less than \$1,000, compared with several thousand dollars for a big rig from Idaho**. Last year his shipments to Wal-Mart grew 13 percent." ("Wal-Mart puts the squeeze on food costs," Suzanne Kapner, *Fortune*, May 29, 2008)
- "Wal-Mart's new local sourcing effort **benefits the company two-fold -- it reduces transportation costs and supports its sustainability goals** to sell products that are earth-friendly and ethically sourced. It will also mean **customers will find produce that is fresh and ripe, and helping support the local economy**." ("Wal-Mart sourcing produce from local farmers," Kimberly Morrison, *The Morning News*, June 18, 2008)
- "All across South Carolina, you will be able to go into Wal-Mart and make an easy buying decision -- knowing you are doing something **great for yourself, great for your health and great for the economy**." (South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, WYFF-TV, June 25, 2008)

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