

How can we reduce our Food Miles?

EARTH FIRST

by Yvette Black

Have a look at your breakfast bowl... or your lunch plate... how many items have come from your local region? The term 'food miles' relates to how far our food has travelled to reach our plate. It is increasingly important to consider what impact your food choices have on the environment and local producers.

Driven by TV chefs, such as Jamie Oliver, retail giant Tesco in the United Kingdom have a fast-growing reputation for being the most innovative retailers. They have introduced standards such as improved labelling of foods to indicate their carbon footprint. We should also consider our own backyards and regional markets as a source of food for our needs.

Back to our breakfast bowl... if most of your food comes from your local area, you could call yourself a "Locavore". Locavores focus on eating foods produced from within a short distance from home, such as a "100-mile-diet". So how can we achieve this?

- **Buy from local markets:** the re-appearance of farmer's markets has strengthened the community and provided the opportunity for the shopper to talk to the producers themselves. The money goes straight back to the producer and not with larger retailers.
- **Grow your own:** maintaining your own vegetable or herb garden has many benefits. You can pick and eat the fresh produce on the day, you can share the produce with friends/neighbours, you can use your own organic compost thus reducing your waste, and the ownership over your own patch is rewarding.
- **Help out in a community garden:** if you don't have the space for your own garden, contribute to your nearest community garden. Check out the community garden at the Environmental Learning Facility within the showground in Orange.
- **Check the labels:** take that extra moment to make sure the products are from Australia.

We are spoilt for choice in the Central West with producers at our doorstep supplying delicious items including venison, jams, poultry, organic fruit and vegetables, wines and olive oils. The flow-on effect of being a 'Locavore' and reducing your food miles not only supports the environment and the local economy but also supports a healthy lifestyle in both mind and body.

Important Date:

Orange Regional Farmer's Markets — TODAY 8am-12noon at Robertson Park.

References:

1. 'ECOS' magazine, Issue No.146
2. G Magazine, January – February 2009
3. Good Living, Sydney Morning Herald