Local Food: restaurants and local supply chains

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What is Local Food?

• When you have food coming from all around the world within 24-48 hrs what then is local?
• Why should it even matter?
• The growth of new Nordic cuisine? Elitist? White? Simplifying a complex picture
  – Foraging?
  – Foodways?
  – Hesburger, kebab, pizza and falafel?
New ‘Geographies’ of Local Food

- **Landscape/foodscapes**
- **Sense of place**, e.g. rootedness, search for the “authentic”
- **Relationships**, e.g. the relocalisation of production; community/regional food security with its associated concern over food deserts (poor neighbourhoods where fast food outlets, convenience marts and liquor outlets have replaced grocery stores); poor rural neighbourhoods marked by subsistence wages
- **Distance**, e.g. food miles, wine miles
- **Scale**, e.g. local vs regional; issue of consumption, e.g. individual, household, restaurant, institution; issue of production, e.g. lack of significant diversified agriculture, lack of sufficient local infrastructure in place for processing, storing, distributing, and retailing agricultural goods once supplied
- **Use/Production/Supply chains**, e.g. foraging, diversification, food tourism, regional development, B2B relations
- **Security**, e.g. food security, biosecurity, biodiversity
Benefits usually associated with local food systems

• Benefits attributed to a more localised food system:
  – Reducing transportation and energy needs
  – Improving nutrition and health
  – Advancing environmentally sensitive agricultural practices
  – Enhancing local economics
  – Fostering community interaction and social networking
  – Protecting local farms and farmers
  – Preserving food safety
Role of Hospitality & Tourism in Foodsheds

• ‘The restaurant and institutional food service sectors pose tremendous opportunities for the rebuilding of food systems...The white-tablecloth restaurant world has been a critical ally in putting the local food issue into the public spotlight by showing the public the culinary possibilities and introducing them to the local economy on the plate. This part of the restaurant world has also footed the bill for many of the early initiatives during the last two decades’ (Ackerman-Leist 2013: 202)

• Moving beyond the white-tablecloth restaurant?

• Incorporating tourism into foodshed assessment by differentiating between permanent and temporary populations as well as their different forms of consumption

• Buying local products produces less waste in restaurants

• Importance of proper portion size to waste/waist control

• Animal welfare reform, sustainable livestock production, worker codes of conduct

• Direct purchasing as a stimulus to the growing of new products and varieties

• Helps conserve biodiversity potentially

• Local tourism activities

• Contribution to regional branding

• Employment generation and business start-up and survival
But: The local scale does not automatically translate to better

Depends on the criteria

- environmentally appropriate
  - Energy/emissions
  - waste
  - biodiversity
  - soils
  - water
- accessibility
  - food security
  - food justice
- economic dimensions
  - business development
  - market value
  - brand value
  - value chain issues when the local market is too small for the amount of producers
  - Inappropriate competition
- resilience

### New forms on intermediation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aggregation</th>
<th>combining; washing; cooling; grading, sorting and packing; repacking; storing; marketing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>chopping and pureeing; canning; baking and confection; dehydrating; freezing; labelling; facility use for farmers and food processors; food business incubation; workforce development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution model</td>
<td>non-profit; farmers cooperative; farmer/consumer cooperative; specialised local distributor; combined local and regional distributor; charitable food system</td>
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Avoiding the local trap

• ‘What makes local food systems economically viable... is an interest on the part of consumers in that locality to purchase locally. Insofar as they are willing to do so, such purchases do show the potential for significant benefit to the economic prosperity and stability of the community as a whole’ (Blum-Evitts 2009: 47).

• The “local trap” (Born & Purcell 2006) is the assumption that regionally-based (and small-scale) agriculture is de facto ecologically sustainable and socially just; this correlation is not necessarily true. Rather, sustainability and justice come out of particular agendas which may use the ideas of large and small scales (and local and global) strategically (DuPuis & Goodman 2005)
Restaurants & Local Foods

- Study of Restaurants, Producers and Wholesalers in Christchurch and Vancouver
- Benefits and barriers in using local food
- Surveys and interviews

- Vancouver and Christchurch restaurants and chefs have a favourable attitude towards the purchase of local food products through farmers, farmers’ market vendors, and wholesale distributors, though there is no consensus on what local means
Purchasing barriers & constraints

• Restaurants and chefs most preferred method of purchasing local food was through wholesale distributors in both samples because of the convenience with respect to time, price, quality, customer services, and logistics issues, while price fluctuations and the on-time delivery of products were mentioned as obstacles for sourcing from wholesale distributors by restaurants and chefs.

• Common barriers for purchasing local foods from farmers for restaurants and chefs and wholesale distributors included inconsistent quality, inadequate availability, and transportation and delivery logistics.

• Time commitment to source locally was biggest barrier to those not purchasing local...
Producer barriers

- Barriers in selling to local restaurants and chefs by farmers and farmers’ market vendors included small volume and placing the orders on-time, delivery costs, and cost of production.
- Restaurant satisfaction with local wholesale distributors have created new opportunities for farmers to work collaboratively with them in including more local food products in their distribution channel.
- Stakeholders described economic factors, social interactions, and social-emotional goals for participating in local food systems.
- Findings demonstrated that relationship/trust building with local farmers over time appeared to be the key factor that affects local food purchasing decisions for restaurants and chefs and wholesale distributors in both study area.
Motivations

• Establishing personal relationships emerged as the primary reason reported by producers for selling to restaurants in the region.

• Restaurants and chefs and wholesale distributors were motivated by a desire to obtain fresher products and higher quality products in their purchasing decisions of local foods.

• The other reasons wholesale distributors favoured purchasing in region were customer demand, supplier loyalty, and faster availability of the products associated with shorter transport distances.

• From the perspective of farmers and/or farmers’ market vendors issues in selling regionally were personal satisfaction, products appreciation, and being paid fairly for products.
Other conclusions

• Farmers need to give greater attention to volume requirements, delivery schedules, food safety assurance, information about product availability, and develop trust-based relationships with their buyers to create better market access for local foods.

• Guaranteed consistency of product quality, food safety assurances, ability to deliver quantity needed or ordered, and convenience in order process biggest differences between study areas. But really all about relationships and trust (and time)

• Chefs are opinion leaders; chefs utilise wait staff, menu descriptions, and other form of communication tools (e.g. social media) to promote local foods to their customers in both samples.

• Wholesalers
Recent source publications


Hall, C.M. 2012, The contradictions and paradoxes of slow food: Environmental change, sustainability and the conservation of taste, pp.53-68 in *Slow Tourism: Experiences and Mobilities*, eds. S. Fullagar, K. Markwell & E. Wilson, Channel View, Bristol.
