

Sagehill explores the economic opportunities of local foods.

Statistics show that when a typical North American consumer sits down to eat, each ingredient has traveled on average 2,414 kilometres. To make sure the produce arrives in the best condition, it is shipped in controlled environments. However, controlling temperature and oxygen comes with a high-energy cost, and transportation and storage are becoming more expensive due to rising fuel costs. Even with a controlled shipping and storage environment, nutrients are slowly depleted. If we eat local fresh harvested foods, fossil fuel energy consumption is minimized and the nutritional quality and flavor of our food is maximized. Fresher foods also keep longer, so there is less spoilage and waste.



By purchasing local produce, a greater portion of the food dollar stays within the community and promotes the regional economy. Commonly cited figures indicate that in conventional markets, 91 cents from every dollar is directed to transportation, processors, brokers, marketers and retailers, while nine cents goes to the producer. In farmers' markets or direct sales, the producer captures 80 to 90 cents from every dollar. Economic spin-offs from agri-tourism are also increased, because farms or farmers' markets become interesting destinations where other locally produced goods and services can be provided. ¹

Sagehill Community Futures attended a local food event held in Watrous on March 24. The event organized by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture (Watrous office) was well attended by individuals looking at establishing market gardens, food hubs, and developing year round vegetable production. ***Sagehill is interested in developing opportunities surrounding local foods, are you? Give us a call to see how we can help.***

¹ Information provided by Forrest Scharf, with his permission, in an article written for Agriview. Forrest is a Provincial Specialist, Fruit Cops, Crop Development Branch, within the Ministry of Agriculture.