Food Systems Definitions
Glossary

Food Systems

The network of connections that bring food from production to our plates, and beyond. The journey may be global, local, or a mix. It includes the social, political, environmental, and economic factors that influence the path of food. The steps along food's path to plate may include: production, transformation, packaging, distribution, retail, consumption and more! There is no single form of a food system - they are different all around the world (and even between communities), and will change over time.

Global Food System

A global food system is a system that relies on connections across the world to produce and distribute diverse foods. Global food systems allow for some foods to be available anywhere, at any time, regardless of season or region. Some considerations for global food systems include:

· Availability of greater food variety through all seasons

· Possibly lower food costs

· Massive fossil fuel use in production, transformation, packaging, transportation, storage

· The large scale of production leads to a larger environmental footprint

· Potential for greater economic, environmental disparities between people and regions

· Many people are involved in the system, and the quality of their involvement may be unknown

Local Food System

A local food system is a food system that depends on the connections within a region to produce seasonally and regionally specific foods, and distribute them fresh within the community. Local food systems limit the steps in food's path to the plate, which brings the producer and consumer into a closer relationship. Some considerations for participating in a local food systems include:

· The shortened food path may reduce the environmental footprint

· Less transportation and processing means less fossil fuel consumption

· Fresh produce is more nutritious

· Food availability is limited to season and region

· Money in a local food system circulates within the community

· Food may be more expensive due to a smaller scale