

Local Food and Sustainability

Local farming and purchasing in schools play a crucial role in promoting sustainability. Learn what YOU can do to foster a robust environment and community!

Local Food is Good for the Environment!

Serving locally and sustainably sourced food is an important step for lowering your school's carbon footprint. Local farming practices help restore the environment by building healthy soil, reducing greenhouse gases, and resulting in cleaner air. It also produces minimal to no harmful runoff, providing clean drinking water and better habitats for wildlife. By incorporating natural composting and recycling methods, we can also divert food waste from landfills and decrease the release of harmful fumes into the atmosphere.



What is a "Carbon Footprint"?

The "carbon footprint" measures the overall greenhouse gas emissions produced by individuals, organizations, events, or products. It takes into account energy consumption, transportation, and the manufacturing of goods.

Protecting our Biodiversity

Over the last century, we've lost about 75% of the genetic diversity in our food. Fortunately, our small farmers and backyard gardeners are the true heroes, nurturing heritage and native crops while sharing local crop seeds. These varieties are less water-intensive and well-suited to their growing regions. Biodiversity strengthens our local food system, reducing our reliance on a limited number of vulnerable crops and a commercial food system that negatively impacts our ecosystem.

The Role of Schools in Sustainability

Serving local, climate-friendly foods is not the only way to lower your carbon footprint! An estimated 30-40% of all food produced in the U.S. is wasted, which makes up 22% of landfill waste. When this food breaks down, it produces **methane**, a powerful greenhouse gas, which harms the environment. Incorporating strategies to reduce food waste and eliminate single-use plastics can also make an impact!

- Schools can start **composting**, add **milk dispensers** (instead of cartons), and make use of **salad bars** and **share tables**.
- Additionally, schools may try organizing a **plastic-free lunch day** to reduce the use of single-use plastic contributing to waste landfills. [Click here](#) to learn more about plastic-free days!

