

# Food

## *Introduction*

“Eating is an agricultural act.” - Wendell Berry

By nature and necessity, we are all part of the *food community*. From seed to retail, each and every one of us is intimately involved in the extended food supply chain. Almost nothing else is as important to our very survival, yet we take for granted the role food plays in our lives – a role that goes beyond mere nutrition. We need to reconnect with this economic, environmental, social, and cultural resource.

## *Some Interesting Food Facts*

A ten-year California study measured the amount of flavenoids, which have been shown to reduce high blood pressure and reduce the incidence of heart disease and stroke, and found that, with regard to the flavenoid *kaemferol*, there was 97% more kaemferol in organically grown tomatoes than those found on the supermarket shelves.<sup>1</sup>

After the recent, well-publicized bulldozing of about 900 hectares of CanGro peach orchards in the Niagara region to make way for urban development, Canadians are questioning our ability to be able to feed ourselves when:

- only 0.5 percent of Canada's land is considered to be class 1 farmland, and more than half is in Ontario
- our best, prime local farmland is being paved at a staggering rate
- our population continues to grow exponentially<sup>2</sup>

It can take thousands of years to make one centimetre of topsoil needed for farming, so agricultural land should be considered a limited natural resource. Yet between 1996 and 2006 Ontario lost more than a *half-million acres* of prime farmland to sprawling development.<sup>3</sup>

## *Food and Food Security*

A vision of a complete community includes a multitude of ways to access healthy food. But there are many other benefits that arise from creating local food security. These include:<sup>4</sup>

- enhanced personal health
- economic development
- more meaningful jobs
- increased community spirit
- reduced overlap and duplication in services and programs
- increased viability of smaller family farms
- protection of rural culture



<sup>1</sup> Study by Dr Alyson Mitchell of the University of California

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Farmland Trust and Canada Census

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Healthy Food, Healthy Community: Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition

- improved water and air quality
- economic and environmental stability
- safe and supportive communities

### **Healthy Food, Health Life**

Cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, kidney disease, and respiratory diseases account for 75% of deaths in Canada. Low-fat diets high in fruits and vegetables are known to reduce the risks of these diseases, yet a study in the Waterloo region showed that *fewer than half the residents in this rich agricultural region consume even the minimum daily recommended number of servings of fruit and vegetables.*<sup>5</sup>

### **What You Can Do**

- Grow and buy organic food
- Plant and eat from your own vegetable garden
- Buy food from local growers
- Start a community garden
- Can and preserve local foods
- Encourage local restaurants to use food grown locally
- Encourage government, hospitals, businesses in your community to buy food locally
- Eat 7 helpings of vegetables and fruits each day; 5 helpings for children under age 6
- Joint SC's Food Committee, E-mail: [info@sustainablecobourg.ca](mailto:info@sustainablecobourg.ca) and let us know you want to join the Food Committee

### **Further Information:**

- Go Green Together, [www.gogreentogogether.ca](http://www.gogreentogogether.ca)
- Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, [www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/community-food-security](http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/community-food-security) This site has great material and how-to-do manuals, and it has many links to other excellent web sites.



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<sup>5</sup> Ibid