

Diversifying Local: Expanding the Local Foods Movement to Include Culturally Appropriate Foods

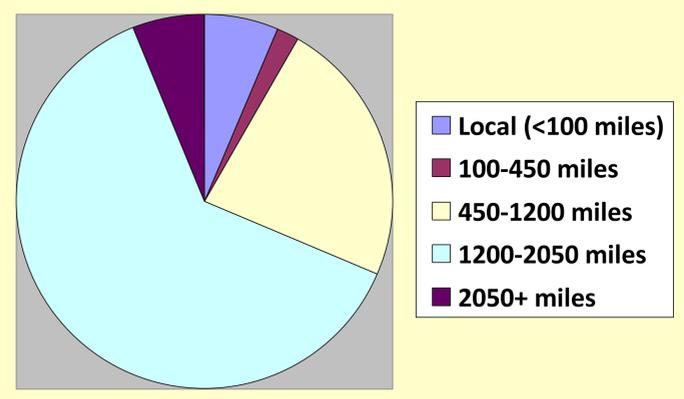
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Introduction:

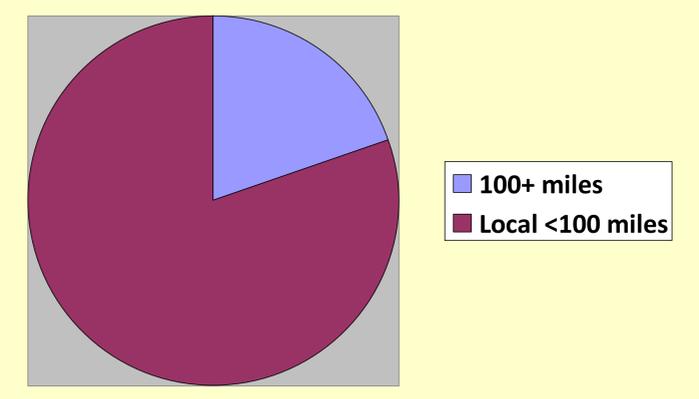
The local foods movement offers environmental, economic and social benefits to its consumers, but it is criticized for being limited to white, affluent consumers. **How can the local foods movement be more culturally inclusive? Providing local access to culturally appropriate foods can ensure increased involvement of diverse cultural groups.** Culturally appropriate foods are foods needed for the traditional diets of various ethnic groups. These specialty foods are typically imported rather than locally available. The traditional diet of Hispanics is of particular relevance to the Central Minnesota area due to a large and growing population of Hispanics.

Local Availability of Hispanic Foods



The food miles from distributor to St. Cloud, MN of 48 Hispanic products were calculated and it was determined that only 3 were locally available while most came from over 1200 miles away

Local Availability of a Typical American Diet



Of the five market basket foods, only lettuce was not locally available in the winter season. The meat market, the MN street market and farmer's market are venues that provide these typical American foods locally.

Diverse



Hispanic foods in the market basket including tortillas, chiles, beans, rice and tomatoes

Drab



Vs.

Potatoes, meat, bread, milk and lettuce are the five foods included in the market basket of the typical American diet

Hispanic Food	Distributor/Source
Beans	Peru (2 types), El Salvador, Mexico, Chicago, Texas, Nebraska, New Jersey
Tortillas	Texas, Georgia, Mexico, California, Minnesota (2)
Hot Peppers	14/22 types from Mexico, Chicago, New Mexico
Tomatoes	Mexico (4), Canada (2), Florida, Nebraska, California
Rice	Mexico, Chicago, New Jersey

Methods:

- ◆ An extensive literature review of the local foods movement was conducted which included newspaper articles, USDA publications and consumer survey data
- ◆ Interviews with local farmers market vendors, CSA members and co-ops to determine barriers to a more diverse movement
- ◆ A case study of the local availability of foods for the Hispanic traditional diet was conducted involving a market basket of five main Hispanic foods including rice, beans, tomatoes, chiles and tortillas

Conclusion:

Culturally appropriate foods need to be more available on a local level, to encourage diverse groups to buy locally. The case study of Hispanic foods in Central Minnesota, revealed that most of these ethnic foods are imported and thus not available at a local level, while foods for a typical American diet can often be found locally.

Solutions To the Diversity Problem?

- ◆ Improved communication between local producers and consumers through marketing campaigns directed towards marginalized groups
- ◆ Education for diverse groups on the benefits of local as well as local availability of their traditional foods
- ◆ Support and attention of social justice concerns from funders, policy-makers, scholars and local food advocates

A survey of Hispanic foods was taken at El Torito Mexican market in Waite Park, MN as well as the Hispanic foods section of Cash Wise Grocery to determine the origin of Hispanic foods.

