

IF I BUY AN APPLE AT THE GROCERY STORE, WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Most food produced in the United States comes from large agribusiness, despite the presence of over two million small, family owned farms across the country. Nearly every major commodity is controlled by just four corporations. These industrial farms provide a less nutritional product and take away business from local farmers, who have their own families to support on a meager \$19,274 average salary. According to USDA statistics, the U.S. loses more than 17,000 farmers each year who can't keep up with these large corporations. The demise of each farm is a blow to their local economies.



DOESN'T EVERYONE HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD?

No. In many cases, lower-income individuals do not have access to healthy food because many reside in areas where fresh food is not accessible or there is not a grocery store nearby to provide fresh options. These areas, known as "food deserts," are often inundated with convenience stores and fast food restaurants that are sometimes the only options available for those who are unable to drive or do not own a car and have to rely on costly or inconsistent public transportation.

SO HOW DO PEOPLE AFFORD TO BUY FOOD?

Thankfully many people who cannot afford fresh, healthy groceries on their own incomes have access to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits. In 2013, over 47 million people partook of SNAP benefits with an average monthly benefit of \$133 per person. SNAP benefits can be redeemed at almost all major grocery chains, as well as an increasing number of farmers' markets. However, in 2009 (most recent available data), 64% of all SNAP redemptions occurred at large supermarket chains, while only 7% were redeemed at farmers' markets, wholesalers, and nonprofit cooperatives. Once again, farmers are missing out on selling their products and consumers are purchasing less nutritious food.

BUT IT'S EASIER TO STOP AT THE CLOSEST SUPERCENTER ON MY WAY HOME.

You certainly have that option; one out of every three dollars spent on groceries in the United States goes to Wal-Mart anyway. Convenience is hard to argue with, but consider this: the apple that you purchase was shipped on average 1,500 miles and has been exposed to countless chemicals and preservatives to keep it looking pristine until you purchase it at a big box retailer. An apple from a local farmer at the farmers' market is generally fresher, more flavorful, and has more nutrients since typically only 24-48 hours has elapsed since it was picked and transported on average 44 miles to the market. In addition to the health benefits, you're also making a more environmentally conscious choice by shopping local.

WELL, I'M CONVINCED! HOW DO I BECOME INVOLVED IN CREATING A HEALTHIER, MORE JUST, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM?

We would love to provide you with information to assist you with enacting positive change in your communities. Please provide your e-mail address and we will connect you with further information after you have had time to recover from Bonnaroo.