

Are You Gonna Eat That?

Posted by [Marliese Franklin](#) on Wed, Apr 16



It's a spring ritual as regular as forsythia blooms and baseball: [farmer's markets](#), served by over 1000 farmers, are sprouting up all over the state. They showcase everything from smoked goat cheese and lavender honey to dinosaur kale, but they also help bridge an often strained urban-rural connection.

Those markets may be [increasingly popular \(and expensive\)](#), but Larry Lev of [OSU Extension Service](#) argues that local eating only goes so far. He has estimated, for example, that only 2% of food eaten in Benton County was *grown* in Benton County. Just what does that number say about Oregon's agriculture? Could more Oregon-grown food be *Oregon-eaten*? Is it desirable? Is it possible?

Harry MacCormack of the [Ten Rivers Food Web](#), a network of about 50 growers, processors, truckers and citizens, thinks so. He wants to boost that percentage to 30 by the year 2012. TRFW cites the rise in fuel costs to transport food, the high cost of agricultural inputs, and the number of poor people in Oregon as vital reasons to achieve this goal as quickly as possible.

How would Oregon's agriculture -- what farmers grow, and what they get for it -- have to change to accommodate more localized consumption? Are you a farmer who wishes more of your harvest was processed and eaten locally -- but whose hazlenuts or wheat is being shipped to Europe or Japan? Are you a shopper who has to buy the cheapest lettuce you can find, regardless of where it was grown or how far it's traveled? What would it take to become a [locavore](#) state?