The benefits, challenges, and strategies of adults following a local food diet

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ABSTRACT
Supported in part by a variety of popular books, websites, and other media, the interest in local food is building dramatically, and a growing number of people are increasing their purchases of local food. This paper describes a study that explored the perceived benefits and challenges of following a diet consisting exclusively of local food in southwestern Virginia, as well as the strategies for coping with its limitations. Nineteen individuals participated in a four-week Local Food Diet Challenge, which included eating only foods produced from within 100 miles of the participants' homes. Part of a larger study looking at the nutritional impacts of a local food diet, this study included a pre-diet questionnaire that gathered participants' demographic characteristics, shopping patterns, eating behaviors, and attitudes toward local foods; consumption-reporting forms during the diet period; and a post-diet focus-group discussion for participants to share their experiences in following the local food diet. In this paper we report the major themes that emerged in the focus groups and offer recommendations for locavores and organizations attempting to maximize local food consumption.

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The mission of the Center for Regional Food Studies at the University of Arizona is to integrate social, behavioral, and life sciences into interdisciplinary studies and community dialogue regarding change in regional food systems. We involve students and faculty in the design, implementation, and evaluation of pilot interventions and participatory community-based research in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands foodshed surrounding Tucson, a UNESCO-designated City of Gastronomy, in a manner that can be replicated, scaled up, and applied to other regions globally.

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2019 Shareholder Commentary: Cultivating a Network of Citizen-Scientists to Track Change in the Sonora-Arizona Foodshed

Example of Programming:

Reimagining Community Cultural Identity, Monday, April 1, 2019

Public Lecture by Carlton Turner, Lead Artist/Director of Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture)

In this talk, Carlton Turner will use the work of Sipp Culture as a framework for how rural communities are grappling with reimagining their cultural identity in the wake of systems consolidation (in educational, medical, and food systems) and expansion of the digital divide across race and class lines.
Carlton Turner works across the country as a performing artist, arts advocate, policy shaper, lecturer, consultant, and facilitator. He is the founder of the Mississippi Center for Cultural Production (Sipp Culture), which uses arts and agriculture to support rural community, cultural, and economic development in his hometown of Utica, Mississippi.

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—Dr. Nancy Creamer, Director, Center for Environmental Farming Systems, North Carolina State University
Assistant Professor of Community Food Systems

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Choosing Local, Traditional Foods. My husband and I are taking all this very personally. We have experienced health challenges as a result of years of following government and corporate food ways. Today, we no longer follow government guidelines and TV sponsors. We are doing our own research, and going our own way. And, we are much healthier as a result. Today she's here to talk about the benefits of a local, traditional foods diet. My husband and I have gone beyond organic in our quest for good health. We now buy 95% of our food from local farmers. The Virginia Tech Extension Service did an analysis that showed if each household in the state spent just $10.00 a week on local foods, it would bring 1.65 billion dollars annually to the state economy.