

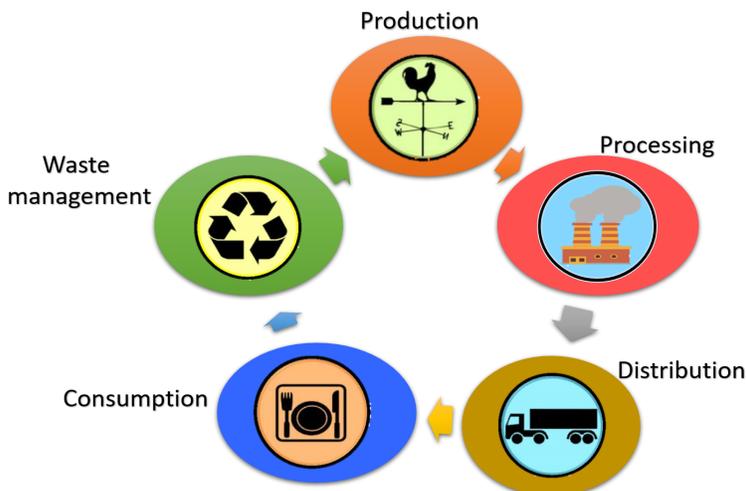


Eat Local To Boost Food System

For references, just click underlined links

Food systems are the chains of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management. Despite food being a necessity to sustain life, it is only in recent years that food systems have been a focus of serious professional planning interest. While it may seem that healthy eating policies are the work of public health departments, it is planners and developers who shape the neighborhoods and layouts of cities. [Food systems planning](#) is concerned with improving a community's food system through the collaborative planning process of developing and implementing local and regional land-use, economic development, public health, transportation, and environmental programs and policies to:

1. **Preserve** existing & new opportunities for local and regional agriculture
2. **Promote** sustainable agriculture and food production practices
3. **Support** local and regional infrastructure involved in the processing, packaging, and distribution of food
4. **Facilitate** community food security, meaning equitable access to safe, nutritious, culturally appropriate, and sustainably grown food at all times across a community, especially among vulnerable populations
5. **Support** and promote good nutrition & health for all
6. **Facilitate** the reduction of solid food-related waste and develop/manage a reuse, recovery, recycling, and disposal system for food waste and related packaging



A [community food system](#) that stresses local and regional food production and sales as well as ecologically friendly, sustainable farming practices reduces the amount of energy and resources needed for food production and distribution. It also limits the negative environmental impacts of agricultural production on land, water, air and even [climate change](#). We can enhance the regional economy, improve food and environmental quality, and foster community food security by buying food from [local farms and producers](#).

Local food systems play a critical role in building [community wealth](#) for several key reasons:

- Growing, processing, and distributing food locally creates and sustains more community-based jobs.
- Direct marketing between farmers and consumers (e.g. farmer's markets) boosts local farmers' incomes.
- Small family farms are more likely to purchase farm-related supplies such as machinery, seeds, other goods in their own community and engage in farming practices that do not harm their community's physical environment, than large corporate farms.
- Farmers markets and food cooperatives help ensure dollars remain and circulate locally while creating more vibrant communities.
- Urban agriculture projects turn vacant land into productive, income-generating spaces and often include job training or employment opportunities for low-income youth and other urban residents.

By eating locally we increase our personal health and boost our local food system. Imagine a community where [all policies](#) at the local, state, and federal level support the community's efforts to create a healthier food system.