

Could you commit to living locally this Lent?

The average number of miles that our food travels has doubled over the last 30 years.

Food transport accounts for a significant part of greenhouse gas emissions from transportation which is the biggest source of GHG in the Yukon (54%).

The Yukon Government draft climate change strategy says:

Harvesting and producing more of the food we eat locally increases food security (many of us remember what happened when the highway into Yukon was closed for three days a few years ago – empty grocery shelves everywhere). It also contributes to the economy and reduces how much food we need to ship into the territory. Local harvesting activities include subsistence hunting, gathering and fishing. Local food production can include community greenhouses and gardens, backyard gardens, larger-scale agriculture and farming and small-scale animal husbandry.

So, what changes can you make?

Local living involves buying food produced as locally as possible. This may mean cutting some of your usual favourite foods out of your diet and focusing on local produce. We now have year-round Yukon root vegetables available in Yukon grocery stores (potatoes, carrots, parsnip, turnip, beets, etc.). In addition, we have local greens and herbs from hydroponic growers and fresh and frozen fish like farmed Arctic char and wild salmon and other seafood from our own lakes and rivers and nearby Alaskan producers. Local eggs are also available in most grocery stores here. We also have good local bakeries for bread, bagels and sweets. Some of these products may be more expensive but we are less likely to waste food that costs more. And food waste is one of the biggest problems in Canada – over 50% of our food is wasted and if it does not make it into compost bins, but instead goes into landfills, it produces methane – the worst greenhouse gas there is.

It is also important to look at buying food that is in season. To reduce your carbon emissions, it's important to focus on purchasing **seasonal local food**.

Of course, the most locally sourced food is food that you produce yourself! Could you look at growing your own sprouts from seeds (easy, quick and nutritious with just seeds, glass jar and water) or making your own bread or cereal (granola, porridge)?

You might also consider reducing food miles by bulk buying from local food co-ops, joining together with neighbours and friends.

As well as buying locally produced food, you might like to try sourcing other products and services as locally as possible too.

Finally, think about how you travel to source your food: you can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of your food by walking, cycling, or taking public transport to where you buy it.

What difference will this really make?

You'd also be supporting your local economy. Increased local spending has a 'multiplier' effect, as money spent locally typically re-circulates again at least 2 to 3 times, not just on wages and local suppliers, but also on services like printing, insurance, and distribution.

Adapted by Heather MacFadgen from Living Lent – creating a climate of change

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Money spent locally
recirculates

