



Making the food connection!

Foodlink Waterloo Region
2008



Tough Times on the Farm?

Farm share of retail food prices are low—and declining!

4% of the consumer price of wheat crackers went to the farmer (6% in 1981)

Cost of Farming outstripping Returns

Combined inputs increased between 26% and 74% since 1992

The prices of farm products have increased only 16%

Debt Load vs. Farm Receipts

Total farm debt \$27.2 billion in 96, \$40.8 billion in 01

Total farm receipts \$30 billion in 96, \$36.3 billion in 01

Working off the Farm

•in 1965, farming contributed approximately 47 % of the farm family's income (32% in 1990, 26.5% in 2000)



Canadians are
addicted to
cheap food!

--Canadian consumers spend around 10% of their annual income on food

Food Localism:

a recipe for healthy communities



Economy

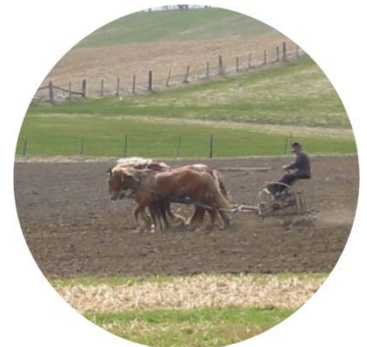
- Enterprise development
- Farm profitability
- Job creation

Society

- Preserving rural heritage (livelihoods and culture)
- Rural-urban connection
- Healthier eating

Environment

- Reducing food miles
- Farmland preservation
- Crop diversification, watersheds, sustainable production



Localizing our
food system
means...



*“More dollars in farmer’s
pockets and more local
food in people’s mouths”*

Sourcing Local Food

it just makes sense!



Regional Consumers

- Value freshness and taste
- Are concerned about food quality and safety
- Want to support local farmers and farm businesses

Local Farmers

- Can guarantee freshness
- Know their product
- Are concerned about protecting livelihood and rural heritage



“Foodlink is a grassroots champion of a healthy, local food system”

Our Mandate

Together with farmers, retailers, food processors, restaurants, distributors and consumers we are

Identifying and promoting **local** food

Improving consumer **access** to local food

Providing **support** to farms, markets and community businesses

Engaging the community in local food systems policy and issues



Projects and Services



**Buy Local! Buy Fresh!
Map**

Local Harvest Newsletter

Taste Local! Taste Fresh!

**Web directory
online food mapping (2009)**

**Policy and Community
Engagement**

Branding Campaign

**Market Linkages and
Consulting**

BLBF License



Mapping Results in Waterloo Region

- Seventh year, **collaborative** marketing initiative (140 or 9.5% of region's 1,440 farms participated)
- **Diversity** of farm listings (farm-gate, freezer trade, farmers' markets, u-picks and CSA's)
- Best **guarantee** of local food (logo recognition, farm-gate signs, provides consumer with source info)
- **Effective** marketing tool (increase in visitors and sales, option for small farms-40% less than 5K)
- **Valued** as a consumer education tool (seasonal availability, products, wholesale product roster)
- Rural **tourism** component



Foodlink's Local Harvest

- Farm profiles
- Seasonal food facts
- Local sources and production statistics
- Recipes and more...

Foodlink
Waterloo Region

Fresh in focus
Maple Syrup

Local Harvest

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Features

Farm Profile:
Burkhart's Maple Products

Elmira Maple Syrup Festival
A "Sap Story"

Buying Maple Syrup in Waterloo Region

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Local Farm Profile: Burkhart's Maple Products

For generations, the coming of spring has marked one of the busiest times of the year for the Burkhart family. Their farm, with its large patch of forest and the rolling countryside west of St. Charles, is home to one of our region's time-honored crafts—the production of maple syrup. Aaron Burkhart, who took over the maple syrup operation from his father, continues to produce and sell top quality maple syrup and maple products following a business tradition begun by his grandfather some 50 years ago. With proper tree management and a focus on quality, the business has flourished, making Burkhart's Maple Products a highly sought after commodity, featured on store shelves and at farmers' markets in our region.

In early March, Aaron Burkhart begins tapping the nearly 2,200 mature sugar maple trees that cover 70 acres of the family farm. The exact timing of this activity changes from year to year as the flow of maple sap is dependent on temperature, which can affect both volume and quality. Aaron is quick to point out that weather is one of the more challenges in the maple syrup business. Optimum conditions for sap flow are when the temperature rises to about 5 degrees C during the day and fall to minus 5 degrees C at night. A shift in these temperatures could make the difference between a poor season and a bumper crop! In a normal year, each tree will produce about 40 litres of sap, collected via small taps drilled into the tree.

The sap has traditionally drained into buckets under these taps. On more advanced operations such as the Burkharths, the sap flows directly into a plastic pipeline that runs throughout the sugar bush, eventually draining into large collection tanks. Aaron Burkhart estimates that he has nearly 15 miles of "pipeline" connecting the sugar maples on his property.

Once the sap is collected from the tanks and buckets, it is taken to the sugar mill to be boiled down into maple syrup. The Burkharths' gigantic, wood-fired boiler circulates the sap until it reaches the proper consistency and flows out as maple syrup ready for bottling. Each batch is graded (primarily by colour, but also by flavour and sugar content), poured into bottles, which range from 500ml, to 4 litre sizes, and labeled. The production chain, from tapping the sap to labeling, requires an enormous amount of work. In peak periods, Burkhart's maple syrup is processed well into the night, requiring the efforts of two full-time and two part-time employees.

OUR Food Community Choice



Get to know the **faces** behind your food!



Taste Local! Taste Fresh!



"A sampling of the region's best from local farmers and chefs"

- Puts the **spot light** on local food
- Creates new **business** relationships
- **Marketing opportunity** for local farms, processors, caterers and restaurants
- Creates **new demand** for local food



Buy Local! Buy Fresh! campaigns in Ontario

Brant County • Oxford County
Rainy River • Chatham-Kent
Huron and Perth Counties
Grey and Bruce Counties
Hamilton • Wellington County
Waterloo Region

Local Food Local Farms

Eat **quality** with
confidence in
your **community**



Expanding the Marketplace for “local”

Up-scaling Food Localism requires moving beyond “farm-direct” sales strategies

Growing and **consolidating** available supply

Encourage **Value-added** products

Forging new market **connections**

Maximize “local” **branding**



Local food
isn't cheap...

...its priceless!

