**Locally-Grown Marketing Campaigns**

**Increasing Farmer Sales and Profits**

In many states, programs to buy locally grown produce have resulted in increased sales and prices for the participating farmers. A Massachusetts initiative called “Be a local hero, buy locally grown produce” resulted in a 50 percent increase in product sales and a 57 percent increase in prices for participating farmers. Over half of the consumers surveyed in Ohio said that keeping local farmers in business was important to them. Letting your customers know that your product is grown locally can give you an effective edge over your competition.

**Buy Fresh * Buy Local ~ Island Fresh**

The Hawai’i Dept. of Agriculture, CTAHR and Hawai’i Farm Bureau Federation are partnering to produce materials designed to inspire Hawai’i consumers to purchase more local produce. Expanding on consumer recognition of the popular Island Fresh logo, “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” encourages Hawai’i consumers to purchase local food for better taste and freshness, to help strengthen the local economy and community, and to preserve open space. The campaign seeks to bring Hawaii’s farms, farm families, and their produce greater attention in local newspapers. In addition, Island Fresh “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” posters, plastic bags, and promotional items are available to participating farmers, retailers, and restaurants.

**Local Farmers Make the Difference**

In order for a program promoting locally grown produce to be effective, more than a slogan and logo are needed. Promotion does not mean just advertising. A promotional campaign must convince consumers that they should buy local. For “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” to be the most successful, local farmers must share their stories with consumers. Local farmers can connect with retailers and restaurants by participating in food and farming events or by visiting a store for a tasting event. Retailers and restaurants can be very helpful in spreading the word. After all, retailers and restaurants sell directly to the final consumers.

**Exceptional Product Quality**

Consumers are likely to be willing to pay more for locally grown products because they feel the products are higher in quality. Freshness, taste, and food safety may all be factors that influence the consumers purchase decision. If consumers have a bad experience with locally grown products, it will affect everyone involved in the program. Marketing experts report that a person with something bad to say will tell nine people, whereas a person with something good to say will tell only one person. The entire effort is better served if only high quality products are marketed in the program.

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**Get the most out of “Buy Fresh * Buy Local”**

- Farmers wishing to “catch the wave” of interest generated by the Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign can be prepared in the following ways.
- Consider yourself a spokesperson for local agriculture. Be prepared to explain why consumers should buy locally grown foods.
- Share your farm story with your customers. Many people are interested in farming and like to know how and where their food is grown. Good photos of your farm, your family, and your farm products help you tell your story.
- Focus on product quality. Be sure to feature only your best produce as locally-grown.
- Partner with a local retailer, restaurant or farmers’ market for a “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” tasting event.
- Tell your distributors and retailers about the campaign. Ask them to get involved.
- Help your customers easily identify locally-grown products through signage, labeling and packaging. Incorporate “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” into your existing advertising. Use “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaign materials with your clients.
To actively participate in Hawaii’s “Buy Fresh * Buy Local” campaign:

For more information about the initiative:
Contact Miles Hakoda, CTAHR, at (808) 956-3093; email: mhakoda@hawaii.edu

To volunteer for Tasting Events and Farmer Interviews:
Contact Jody Smith, CTAHR, at (808) 956-7774; email: smithjos@hawaii.edu

Copies of the seasonality poster are available in September statewide from:
Your local Cooperative Extension Service Office
Your local Department of Agriculture Office
Your local Farm Bureau Office

To learn more about locally grown food campaigns:
“Be a Local Hero: Buy Locally Grown”
www.buylocalfood.com

FoodRoutes
www.foodroutes.org

FREE Internet Listing for your Agricultural Products
Help chefs and retailers quickly locate your locally grown products by listing them on the Hawai‘i Department of Agriculture’s database.
http://www.hawaiiag.org/hdoa/

“Buy Fresh * Buy Local” Farmer Support Website
http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/sustainag/BFBL.asp

For inquiries about this article,
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