



When we sit down to eat, it is often surprising how little we know about what is on our plate. Each ingredient could have travelled over 1,000 km to reach us. When we add up the contents of a typical shopping basket the food miles are equivalent to travelling nearly twice around the Earth.

For the uninitiated, ‘food miles’ is a term commonly used to measure the transport distance travelled by food products between where they are grown and consumed. The idea has grown and has even spawned the term locavore (a person interested in eating food that is locally produced, not transported long distances to market).

But why do we care? We care because the energy costs involved in food production and the transport of goods from paddock to plate have a negative impact on our environment, contributing to climate change and greenhouse gas issues. Short transport distances means it has a smaller carbon footprint.

Eat Local Exercises

1. Why could locally grown food ‘taste better’ than food grown far away?
2. What additional resources go into moving food great distances compared with locally produced foods?
3. Approximately how many days could there be between locally grown tomatoes being harvested and them being sold at Adelaide Central Market?
4. What techniques do major supermarket chains employ to keep fruit and vegetables for up to six months before you buy them?
5. Why would food retailers need to, or want to, keep fruit and vegetables for so long?
6. Why does ‘eating in season’ help the environment?
7. Have you seen any examples of specific breed meats at the Market? Why might the sale of specific breeds be important, environmentally? Are there parallels in the world of fruit and vegetables?