



Earlier this year, we passed legislation designed to increase the amount of local food purchased by the state.

The Local Food, Farms, and Jobs Act sets a goal for all state agencies, colleges, and universities that receive \$25,000 from the state for the purchase of food. The goal outlined in the legislation is that by 2018, 10% of all the food purchased by the agency is either grown or packaged in Arkansas. The goal increases to 20% in the years following.

This summer, we invite you to increase the amount of local food you are bringing to the table by visiting an area farmers' market.

Farmers' markets connect consumers with where and how their food is grown. They create new economic opportunities for producers and draw young people back to rural communities.

There are over 400 local makers and producers selling their produce across the state. From Arkansas strawberries to locally made honey, Arkansans can purchase a variety of produce practically grown in their backyard.

Farmers' markets foster appreciation for Arkansas's farms and ranches. And they help to increase healthy food access in rural and urban communities across the country.

One study shows that shoppers have 3 times as many social and informational encounters at farmer's markets than at national chain grocery stores.

The benefits to our economy are numerous. Growers selling locally create 13 full time jobs per \$1 million in revenue earned. Those not selling locally create 3.

Locally owned retailers, such as farmers' markets, return 3 times as much of their sales to the local economy as they do chain competitors.

And they help our farmers. 25% of farmers' market vendors derive their sole source of income from the market.

USDA reports that produce prices at farmers' markets are lower on average than grocery store prices.

You can find a list of markets around the state at www.arkansasgrown.org.