



Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve

At the Farm Gate



Farm Fresh

Farm fresh eggs, grass fed beef, free range chicken, saskatoons, strawberries, tomatoes, morel mushrooms and garlic. Foodies, tourists and locals alike are all hot on the trail of locally grown fare. For good reason too! There are some scary statistics out there. Our food typically travels anywhere from 1000 to 3000 km from farm to fork. Even here in rural Manitoba!

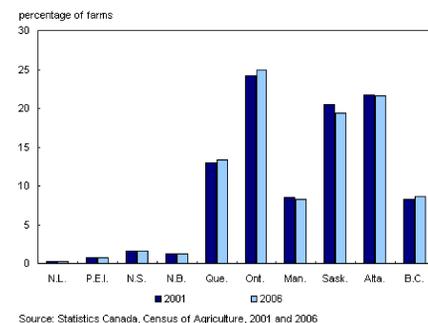
Consumers are starting to become interested in 'local food' and are looking to make connections with Manitoba farmers.

The RMBR "At the Farm Gate" project is interested in promoting:

- healthy and sustainable land and communities;
- access to local, tasty and healthy farm fresh food for everyone;
- a fair price paid to farmers for growing this food;
- a small-scale, sustainable and fair food system that better serves the interests of the land, our families and local communities; and
- that we all have an important role to play in order to make this happen, including you!

Small Farms

The number of farms in Canada continues to drop, according to data from the 2006 Census of Agriculture, declining 7.1% to 229,373 farms over the five-year period between the censuses (Table 1). This represents 17,550 fewer farms than in 2001. Yet the drop in farm numbers belies a sector - with some 327,060 operators according to the latest census — that continues to show resilience. The stability of the Canadian agricultural land base between 2001 and 2006, at 167 million acres, is one indication that agriculture continues to adapt.



In provinces where the number of small farms has risen or was stable, more farmers are selling their produce to farmers' markets or direct to customers. As for consumers, their interest in alternative commodities- products typically of interest to new farmers on small farms-continues to grow.

Sustainability

EXCEPTIONAL TASTE AND FRESHNESS

Local food is fresher and tastes better than food shipped long distances from other provinces or countries. Local farmers can offer produce varieties bred for taste and freshness rather than for shipping and long shelf life.

STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Buying local food keeps our dollars circulating in our communities. Getting to know the farmers who grow our food builds relationships based on understanding and trust, the foundation of strong communities.

SUPPORT FAMILY FARMS

There's never been a more critical time to support our farming neighbors. With each local food purchase, you ensure that more of your money spent on food goes to the farmer.

HEALTH

Knowing where our food comes from and how it is grown or raised enables us to choose safe food from farmers who avoid or reduce their use of chemicals, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, or genetically modified seed in their operations.

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Local food doesn't have to travel far. This reduces carbon dioxide emissions and packing materials. Buying local food also helps to make farming more profitable and selling farmland for development less attractive. When you buy local food, you vote with your food dollar. This ensures that family farms in our community will continue to thrive and that healthy, flavorful, plentiful food will be available for future generations.



At The Farm Gate

TRENDS

A growing number of people would like to follow food trends such as the "100-mile Diet", eating locally, cooking more meals at home, sustainable eco-conscious eating and green foods. These same people are concerned about the quality of the food that they are eating, their health and the health of the environment.

LOCAVORES

These "locavores" want to eat foods grown or produced locally so they support fresh foods, farmers markets, family farms, sustainable agriculture, the reduction of greenhouse gases and in general a healthier environment.

Many of the small family farms in the region are already producing wonderful quality products that they have for sale at their farm gate such as farm fresh eggs, grass-fed or free-range beef, pork, and chicken, jams, jellies and preserves, baking, fruits, vegetables, and much more.

AT THE FARM GATE

- **Develop a directory and network of people/farms/business who are within the Riding Mountain Biosphere Reserve - or very close to the boundaries - that are selling product "At the Farm Gate".**

- **Produce a pamphlet that will highlight the people, their products and the seasons their products are available.**

- **Host seminars and workshops**

- **Encourage people who live, work and play in the RMBR region to purchase food and other necessities locally**

- **Help to build a strong and sustainable regional economy.**



Taste the Difference Locally Produced Makes !

Premium Taste. Produce picked and eaten at the height of ripeness has exceptional flavor and, when handled properly, is packed with nutrients.

Maximum Freshness. Buying locally means you pay for taste, not transportation and packaging.

Unique Varieties. Local farmers often grow a large assortment of unique varieties of products to provide the most flavorful choices throughout the season.

