



Don Wambles
Administrator

STATE OF ALABAMA
FARMERS MARKET AUTHORITY



Contact: Don Wambles, (334) 242-2618

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Guest Editorial

Submitted by: Don Wambles, administrator, Alabama Farmers Market Authority

Email: don.wambles@fma.alabama.gov

Phone: 334-242-2618

There was a time when fresh, delicious fruits and vegetables were available just a short walk from home in the family garden. But times have changed, and today most shoppers work off the farm and buy their food from the grocery store.

Your taste buds can enjoy a trip down memory lane by visiting farmers markets, roadside stands, U-pick operations, grocery stores and restaurants that feature Alabama-grown produce.

But how can you be sure what you're buying was grown by a local farmer? Look for the Buy Fresh, Buy Local logo.

Now in its second year, the Buy Fresh, Buy Local program is a joint venture of the Alabama Farmers Market Authority and the Alabama Farmers Federation. Buy Fresh, Buy Local assures Alabama consumers they can enjoy a freshness that can only be experienced when those items are purchased directly from a farmer.

Local food tastes better than food shipped long distances from other states or in some cases, other countries. Alabama farmers offer produce varieties grown for taste that are ripe with freshness instead of those grown for shipping and a long shelf life.

The www.BuyLocalAlabama.com website provides shoppers with a list of producers in your county or a county near you where you can find some of the freshest fruits and vegetables available. Locally grown fruits and vegetables are usually sold within 24 hours of being harvested.

Buying local helps support the economy in your county and, when you buy food directly from a farmer, your dollars circulate in your community. When you buy locally, you ensure that family farms and businesses in your community will survive.

Shoppers want to know where their food comes from, and knowing how it is grown enables them to choose food from farmers they can trust. They can be sure that these farmers are concerned about the safety of the food they sell and the environment.

So as you enjoy Alabama's bounty of fresh fruits and vegetables this summer, remember to Buy Fresh, Buy Local. Look for the label and taste the difference. -30-

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