

## Rethinking how we value local food

Food is a topical subject. More and more people are becoming interested in not just what we eat, but also where our food comes from. We are also starting to understand that price is not necessarily a good measure of value.

If the true value of food is a topic you'd like to learn more about, here are a few points we think are important, based on the writing of Dr Sean Connolly from the University of Otago. You may like to consider these when you are making your food choices:

- The value of local economic development – local food can support economic development by increasing regional food production and job creation. Each dollar that we spend in the local food system supports local businesses and helps circulates money in our community.
- The value of the environment – food production accounts for a large portion of our ecological footprint. Local food systems can help reduce impacts on the environment, and reward food production practices that enhance environmental systems.
- The value of health and nutrition – processed food can be high in sugar and salt, which is an influence on rising obesity rates and health care costs. Not all food is created equal – fresh, nutritious foods should be valued.
- The value of equity – not everyone has access to a range of food choices. Local food systems can provide opportunities for each of us to contribute to the food system we want.

So how do we place a true value on food? Growing some of your own food is a great place to start. If that isn't for you, here are some other options:

- Think about whom you spend your money with. You can directly support local producers by buying at farmers' markets or at roadside stalls. You can also do this indirectly by shopping at shops, cafes and restaurants who make it a priority to buy from local producers (if you don't know who they are just ask them, it's a great discussion to start).
- Think about connecting up with other people who are growing food and see how you can get involved. This could be your local community garden, or the Community Food Harvest project.

Let's start a conversation about the true value of food, and those that produce it. Through our actions we can all be advocates for a more sustainable and resilient food system.

For more information on any of the ideas mentioned above, visit [www.goodfooddunedin.com](http://www.goodfooddunedin.com), or email [info@goodfooddunedin.com](mailto:info@goodfooddunedin.com).

To read more from Dr Sean Connolly visit <https://www.odt.co.nz/tag/seeds-for-change>

*Good Food Dunedin is a Dunedin City Council-led initiative, supported by individuals, communities, organisations and businesses who share a vision to transform Dunedin into a thriving, resilient, and food-secure city.*