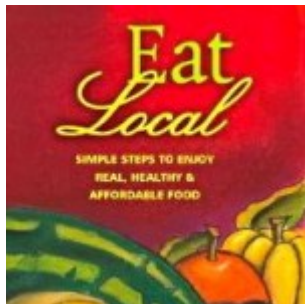


Book proves why eating locally makes a difference

By Kathryn Reed

“Voting with your fork” is a phrase author Jasia Steinmetz uses that resonated with me over and over again as I read “Eat Local: Simple Steps to Enjoy Real, Healthy & Affordable Food”.



How we spend money on food does make a difference in what stores carry and restaurants serve. We have a right to ask store managers and restaurant owners to stock and use local products. Not only do we have that right, some would argue it's an obligation.

In many ways this paperback is a resource guide to eating locally and healthfully. It's not necessarily something to read night after night – but instead in bits and pieces. The chapters are short. After all, there are 45 of them in 186 pages.

Those chapters are then divided into six sections: Introduction, Eat Local: Finding Local Food, Saving Money with Local Food, Eat Well, Join the Local Food Movement, and Appendices.

It's a great starting point for anyone looking to make a change in how they buy food or who wants to know reasons why they should. It also has good reminders for those already on the path to healthy eating.

It's about knowing where food comes from before it reaches the grocery store.

This book is all about why eating locally is important. And

local comes with different definitions. It could be within 100 miles of where you live or your own state or country.

One of the main points is just getting people to be aware of where food is from. Then it explains how eating what is in season is how our ancestors did it for centuries, and how farmers' markets are an ideal place to learn about the seasons of food.

"Rather than consume food, we eat food products that may have come from a plant or animal at one time, but are barely recognizable as anything from nature," Steinmetz writes.

Even though Steinmetz is a professor of food and nutrition at the University of Wisconsin, I did not feel lectured to. I liked the common sense approach to the book.

But some alarming facts were brought forward:

- "U.S. agriculture production is dominated by large farms, i.e., farms with gross sales of \$250,000 or more. These farms contribute 80% of the value of production although smaller farms own 63% of the farmland."
- "One-third of the children born in 2000 are expected to develop diabetes in their lifetime."
- "Current food production accounts for 35% of the greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change."
- "We have lost 6,000 varieties of apples in the last century, largely because of narrow commercial production and retailing."