

# The Basics Why Eat for a Better World?

## A Message from the Food Action Committee

Food – what could be more important? Food is delicious, nurturing and sustaining; it is the fuel that keeps our bodies running.

The preparation, sharing and eating of food is a celebration steeped in tradition and one of our strongest expressions of culture. Eating brings people together!

The food choices that we make everyday have powerful impacts on the health of our bodies and minds, on the strength of our communities and the local economies, and on the resilience and biodiversity of our beautiful, vibrant planet.

The Ecology Action Centre's Food Action Committee is committed to helping Nova Scotians eat for a better, healthier world – and a better, healthier Nova Scotia. We hope that the practical information contained in this pamphlet helps you toward that goal.

**Happy Eating!**



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## Eating for a Better World



A Guide to Environmentally and Socially Responsible Eating

### Eat Local Foods In Season

#### Environmental Impacts

- When choosing locally grown foods, you are choosing to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions. Millions of trucks, ships and airplanes transport food all over the globe and in doing so release countless tonnes of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Buying local is one small, but important step you can take to help slow global warming.

#### Social/Economic Impacts

- Buying locally grown food supports local, independent farmers and means that more money stays in the community.

### Balance Protein Consumption

#### Protein consumption

- People in western countries eat almost double the amount of protein that is required for optimal health.

#### Environmental Impacts

- Local, free-range and grass-fed livestock production has far fewer environmental impacts, benefits from the natural behaviour of the animals, and contributes to the ecological functioning of the farm.

### Eat Organically Grown Foods

#### Social/Economic Impacts

- Almost half of the world's grain supply, which could be used to feed people, is used to feed livestock.
- If you choose to eat meat, buying local helps sustain smaller, more ecologically sound farms.

### Support Fair Trade

#### What is Fair Trade?

- Fair trade ensures that farmers and artisans in developing countries are paid a living wage.

#### Environmental Impacts

- Fair trade products are frequently produced in ecologically sensitive ways.

#### Social/Economic Impacts

- Paying a fair price helps to keep farmers on their fields, reduces the chance that aid will be required and allows communities to stand on equal footing with trading partners.

### What is Organic?

#### What is Organic?

- Organic agriculture is a holistic farming method that avoids reliance on synthetic chemicals and genetic modification. It also strives for sustainability by working in harmony with the rest of nature. In order for a product to be "certified organic" the farmer must produce food according to a strict set of standards and pass a yearly inspection.

### Breastfeed

#### Environmental Impacts

- Breast milk is the ultimate in locally produced foods. Breastfeeding protects the environment by reducing the production, distribution and disposal of infant formula and its packaging.

#### Social/Economic Impacts

- Breast milk is the healthiest food for babies. It is the only food that babies need for the first six months of life. Breastfeeding has many health benefits for mothers and promotes mother and baby bonding.

- Breastfeeding can save your family about \$1500 in the baby's first year.
- Breastfeeding results in substantial savings in health care costs as it improves the health status of both children and mothers.