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## **FROM FARM TO FORK- LOCAL FOOD GUIDE HITS THE STREETS**

**Where to Find and Enjoy the Local Foods of Ventura,  
Santa Barbara, and Northern L.A.**

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA – If you are one of the millions of consumers increasingly interested in eating fresh, locally grown food, supporting local farmers, and helping the environment, your job just got much easier. The first edition *Local Food Guide for Ventura, Santa Barbara, and Northern Los Angeles Counties* is hitting the streets of Southern California.

Available free of charge at farmers markets, retailers and restaurants around the region as well as online, the guide offers Southland consumers a bounty of options on where and how to buy fresh local fruits, vegetables, seafood, meat and dairy products – direct from local farmers and food artisans or through markets, restaurants and other venues that feature locally grown products.

“Local food is making headlines. With growing concerns about food safety, childhood obesity, and global climate change, eaters are becoming increasingly aware of the impact their food choices have on the health of their families, the environment, and the local economy,” says Karen Schmidt of the Ventura County Ag Futures Alliance (AFA) and one of the creators of the guide. “This new guide provides reliable information on where to find delicious, high-quality fresh foods grown by people you can look in the eye, on farms that are within arm’s reach of home.”

Betsy Weber of the Environmental Defense Center (EDC) in Santa Barbara, another guide collaborator, notes that “Even in agriculturally rich areas like Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, our food travels an average of 1,500 miles to get to our dinner plate. By localizing our food choices the economy, the environment and local farmers all win.”

The dearth of information about locally grown foods in Southern California prompted AFA and EDC to join forces with the Davis-based Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF) to produce the first-ever local food guide for the region. CAFF has produced similar guides in northern California, but this is the first publication of its kind in Southern California.

The guide covers all of Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties and the northern portion of Los Angeles County – roughly the area west of Interstate 5 and north of the Santa Monica Freeway. The project partners hope to include all of Los Angeles County in the second edition of the guide in 2009.

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“By eating locally grown foods and supporting family farmers now, we invest in the preservation of good, local food for the future - family farmers will keep producing as long as we support them,” says Temra Costa, director of CAFF’s Buy Fresh Buy Local program. “The guide, also available online, is the perfect resource for those who want to vote with their food dollars and help bring a face back to our anonymous food system.”

In addition to listings of local farmers, food artisans, farmers markets, restaurants, and retailers who feature locally grown products, the guide includes a wealth of information and resources on topics ranging from CSAs (community-supported agriculture) and farm-to-school programs to “locavore” projects, edible landscapes, and much more.

The project was funded by the Columbia Foundation along with sponsorships, advertising, and in-kind support from more than 40 local community groups and businesses.

The guide is available online at [www.buylocalca.org](http://www.buylocalca.org) and [www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org). Printed copies are available at certified farmers markets around the region and at select restaurants, retailers, and farm stands including:

**Los Angeles County:** AOC, Center for Food and Justice, Hungry Cat, Lucques, Melisse, Palate Food + Wine.

**Ventura County:** California Welcome Center, Farm Bureau of Ventura County, McGrath Family Farm, Rainbow Bridge, Underwood Family Farms, Ventura County Community Foundation, Watermark on Main.

**Santa Barbara County:** Environmental Defense Center, Fund for Santa Barbara, Isla Vista Food Co-op, The Orfalea Foundation, Fairview Gardens, Santa Barbara County Farm Bureau, Sojourner Restaurant, Lassen’s Natural Foods

**About the creators:**

AFA ([www.venturacoafa.org](http://www.venturacoafa.org)) is a collaboration of farmers, environmentalists, farm workers, and civic leaders dedicated to keeping agriculture viable in Ventura County. Focus areas include regional food systems, agricultural and environmental stewardship, land use and farmland conservation, pesticide use, and farm worker housing and healthcare.

CAFF ([www.caff.org](http://www.caff.org)) is building a movement of rural and urban people to promote and support family farming as a strategy that provides fresh healthy food; takes care of the land; and contributes to building vibrant, economically just, and viable communities.

EDC ([www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org](http://www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org)) protects and enhances the local environment in Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties through education, advocacy, and legal action. Program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health.

**For perspectives from participating farmers,** please contact Phil McGrath of McGrath Family Farm, Camarillo, at 805-983-0333, Chris Sayer of Petty Ranch, Santa Paula, at 805-320-2157, or Alejandra Mahoney at Blosser Urban Garden, Santa Maria, at 805-878-1456.

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