

# Local Food Fact Sheet



This fact sheet is to help those interested in buying local food to find it, and those producing local food to sell it.

Developing a growing market for local food is a Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) initiative which aims to:

- Increase demand for local food
- Raise awareness of Wye Valley produce
- Raise awareness of seasonality - what is available when

Supporting regional food helps foster traditional farming practices, like the grazing of Hereford cattle, conserving the landscape of the AONB and keeping jobs and businesses within the region. The Wye Valley AONB is predominantly rural and well over half the land is farmed. Agriculture has shaped the countryside and unless farmers can find a strong market for their produce, the landscape as we now know it, will change.

## The benefits of local food

### Environment and conservation

- A local market for local food helps maintain traditional farming systems, like grazing and orchards, which benefit the environment.
- Sourcing food locally, literally from farm to fork, means less "food miles." And if food doesn't travel so far, that means less pollution and congestion on our roads.

### Economy

- Buying local keeps money in the local economy. Every £10 spent in a Wye Valley food business is worth £25 to the local area. Every £10 spent in a supermarket generates only £14 locally.
- Local food businesses generate more local jobs.
- Using locally sourced food helps one business stand out from another.

### Social

- Eating nutritious, locally produced food, is good for the diet and health.
- Buying local food can help build a sense of community.

# Marketing & Sourcing Produce Locally

## 1. Food Directories

There are several food directories serving the Wye Valley and they're useful tools for putting producers, consumers and businesses in touch with each other.

**Producers:** Getting listed in a directory is a first step to getting known as a local supplier. While the listing itself may not generate a sudden surge in new business, directories are often a starting point for newcomers to the idea or the area and it's worth making sure you're in them all.

**Food outlets:** Get hold of all the directories and have a good look at what's available in the area. Call up producers and ask for samples. And nothing beats a visit to see, at first hand, production methods and premises.

- [www.savourthewye.org.uk](http://www.savourthewye.org.uk) is a free web-based directory covering Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Gloucestershire produced by the Wye Valley AONB. You can get listed by visiting the website and clicking on "Producers add your details." Or call the AONB office on 01600 710846.
- Monmouthshire food directory. Published by Adventa, Contact Sandy Greenslade, Tel: 01873 736035.
- Forest food directory. Published by Gloucester Food Links, Contact Clare Gerbrands, Tel: 01453 758060.
- Quality Food and Drink from Gloucestershire, Published by Gloucester First, Tel: 01242 864193.
- Guide to Food & Drink from the Heart of England (covers Herefordshire & need to pay to be a member). Published by Heart of England Fine Foods (HEFF). Contact Jon May, Tel: 01746 785185.
- [www.bigbarn.co.uk](http://www.bigbarn.co.uk) is trying to "make buying local more convenient." It is a national database of producers, and also has excellent information on what's in season when. Producers can get listed free via the website or by calling 01234 871005.

## 2. Farmers' Markets

A farmers' market is where farmers, growers or producers from the local area gather to sell their produce direct to the public. All products sold should have been grown, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, baked, smoked or processed by the stallholder. The public can ask questions, be confident of the origins of the foods and get closer to their sources.

**Producers:** contact the organisers of the farmers' markets below and see if you can attend a few on trial, or go and visit a market to see whether there is a gap in the market for your produce. Markets offer a low-cost entry point for many farmers who have not 'sold direct' before and enable producers to get valuable feedback from customers.

**Food outlets:** farmers' markets are the most high-profile shop-window for local farming businesses. Go and have a look at what produce is available, talk to producers about your needs and meet with others interested in local food.

### Local Farmers' Markets

- **Abergavenny:** 4th Thursday of every month, Market Hall, 9.00am - 2.30pm T: 01873 860271.
- **Chepstow:** 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, Senior Citizen Centre, 9.00am - 2.00pm T: 01291 650672.
- **Hereford:** 1st Saturday and 3rd Thursday of the month, City Centre, High Town, 9.00am - 2.00pm T: 01432 260095.
- **Phoenix Larder:** 2nd Thursday of each month. Brockhampton Village Hall, 5:30pm - 7.00pm T: 01989 740253.
- **Ross-on-Wye:** 1st Friday of every month, High Street, below Market House, 9.00am - 1.00pm T: 01432 260095.
- **Usk:** 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, Memorial Hall, 9.00am - 2.00pm T: 0845 6106496.

### 3. Shops, cafés, restaurants, hotels, B&Bs and pubs ("food outlets")

Food outlets are more willing than ever to stock local produce as it differentiates their business and if the product they are selling or using in a recipe is high quality and local, they are able to charge a premium.

*"Quality and consistency is what we are looking for from local produce. For example chops must be the same size and fit for presentation on the plate."*

Sally Lawrance, Aspen House,  
Hoarwithy, Herefordshire

**Producers:** Find out which shops in your area retail local produce. Many shops are listed in [www.savourthewye.org.uk](http://www.savourthewye.org.uk), otherwise just visit some of your local delicatessens, farm shops, grocers or butchers to see if they source local produce. Find out which food outlets use local produce in their menus. One of the best ways of doing this is to see which establishments have won local food awards. (See box top right). This generally means they have a reputation for high quality local food.

**Food outlets:** If you are using local food already, make sure you write your suppliers' names on the menu so people can learn exactly where your produce comes from and why it is so important to buy local.

If you sell local food or use it in your menu why not enter one of the many local food awards? Winning awards is excellent publicity and can help attract more people to your establishment. When sourcing local food, you will need to be flexible about deliveries. For example the supplier may be able to fit you into their normal route, but you may have to agree to meet halfway or at a farmers' market.

*"The key to approaching chefs is persistence. Try to speak to the head chef, find a convenient time for you to call back or to call in. Prepare your sales pitch in advance and ring them back at every stage, even to remind them to place an order once they have said they will!"*

Val Collinson, Bower Farm Dairy,  
Monmouthshire

### Local food awards

- **Flavours of Herefordshire**  
[www.visitherefordshire.co.uk](http://www.visitherefordshire.co.uk)
- **Savour the Wye Local Food Awards**  
[www.savourthewye.org.uk](http://www.savourthewye.org.uk)
- **Taste of Wales:** [www.wda.co.uk/resources/TTWinnersMag2005english1.pdf](http://www.wda.co.uk/resources/TTWinnersMag2005english1.pdf)
- **Taste of the West Food and Drink Awards:**  
[www.tasteofthewest.co.uk/Awards2005.htm](http://www.tasteofthewest.co.uk/Awards2005.htm)

### 4. Public sector: schools and hospitals

Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Monmouthshire County Councils are all keen to increase the use of better quality, fresh produce in schools, to support the rural economy, reduce "food miles" and packaging, and improve children's eating habits.

**Producers interested in supplying local schools, as well as schools & hospitals keen to source more local food should contact the following groups for information:**

**Local organisations:**

Gloucestershire: Gloucestershire Food Links, contact Clare Gerbrands, T: 01453 758060.

Herefordshire: Bulmer Foundation, contact Peter Norton, T: 01432 294115.

Monmouthshire: Monmouthshire County Council, Healthy School Meals Pilot, contact Emma Taylor, T: 01633 644946.

**National organisations:**

Soil Association, Food for Life, T: 0117 914 2424.  
[www.soilassociation.org/foodforlife](http://www.soilassociation.org/foodforlife)

Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, T: 020 7837 1228.  
[www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)

# Case Studies

## Bower Farm Dairy Grosmont, Monmouthshire

Supplying pedigree Jersey cream, milk & yoghurt to local food outlets.

- Bower Farm produces about 100 gallons of cream and 600 gallons of yoghurt a week, which it sells to local restaurants, hotels and shops.
- Challenges include the cost and logistics of delivery. Bower Farm has a delivery van which was a big outlay to begin with, but worth the investment.
- A phone call and an offer of samples to chefs at local food outlets was a good sales approach, followed by several more phone calls to follow up. The best time to approach chefs is between 10.00am – 11.30am. Chefs have to be actively pursued and you may have to call several times.
- Selling is an active process. Passive advertising is largely a waste of time.
- Bower farm has only been able to stay in farming by adding value to the product. Their reward has been the realization that quality and traceability are valued.

## Phoenix Larder Brockhampton Parish Hall, Herefordshire

A monthly community market of local producers (every second Thursday in the month).

- Phoenix Larder is a community initiative inspired by the Wye Valley AONB's "Savour the Wye" conference.
- Fourteen local producers attend the monthly market at the Parish Hall which is rented by the Phoenix Magazine to cover producer's costs.
- Products include organic bread, cakes, meat, including organic beef, scotch eggs, honey, cider, and vegetables and seasonal products such as geese and turkeys for Christmas.
- Consumers can either buy there and then, or pre-order for the following month. The initiative is also trying to get more B&Bs and local food outlets attending.
- One producer each month puts on either a demonstration or a tasting connected with their product. For example for Pancake Day "Heaven in a Pancake" are providing a pancake tasting.
- Sue Farr, organiser of the Larder comments: "This really makes a difference to farmers' security, generates a community spirit, and is just like a French country market!"
- The market reduces the burden of high delivery costs to individual consumers, high advertising costs and problems associated with finding a distribution point.

## Malsters Coffee Shop and Wigmores Bakery Monmouth

- This vibrant coffee shop, and Rick Stein Food Hero offers a wide choice of foods with selected local ingredients: locally sourced ham, yoghurts, cheese, apple juice and honey.
- Malsters has always used local ingredients but in the last two years has increased its supply as local food has become more available.
- They promote the use of local food on their menus and find that this is a unique selling point.
- Sharon Watkins who runs the café comments: "The costs for local food are not a problem to us, as people are willing to pay more when they understand that these products guarantee good quality, fresh food."
- Wigmores also attend Usk Farmers' Market, which has brought a higher profile and attracts people from Cardiff and Cwmbran who then come to the café.

## Aspen House Hoarwithy, Herefordshire

Guest house with a great reputation for high quality local food.

- Aspen House is Les Routiers' B&B of the Year for Wales and The Marches 2005.
- Sally and Rob Lawrance pride themselves in offering the very best of local produce. Bread and preserves are all made on the premises, and everything they cook is freshly prepared.
- Sally comments: "One of the best things about sourcing local food is the relationship that develops with the producer so that they know our needs and we know and understand theirs."
- Quality and consistency is what they are looking for from local produce - being local is not enough.
- Small deliveries can be difficult for producers but Aspen House has different arrangements with every supplier, depending on where they are based. For example, their meat supplier attends Hereford farmers' market so Sally meets him there to collect the order. Another supplier meets Sally half way. You have to be flexible and inventive but delivery logistics should not put you off local sourcing.

The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an internationally important protected landscape stretching for 72 kms along the River Wye from the outskirts of Hereford to Chepstow. A range of partners work to conserve and enhance its beauty for now and the future.



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