

PROTECT LOCAL GROWERS CAMPAIGN

County of
El Dorado



El Dorado
County
Farm Bureau



County
Agriculture
Department



El Dorado
County
Chamber of
Commerce



County
Environmental
Management
Division



County
Sheriff's
Office



City of
Placerville



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Buy local ag - - it's good for the community!

(Placerville, Calif.)—In recent weeks the Protect Local Growers Campaign has been sharing information about why it is important to buy locally grown, fresh, healthy and safe food. But, the benefits of buying local food don't end with the consumer.

El Dorado County's agricultural industry is mostly represented by small family farming operations that grow our food and fiber. County farmers are well known for specialty crops such as blueberries, apples, wine grapes and other fruit. However, row crops that provide greens, vegetables, berries, and animals for dairy and meat are also produced locally.

A half century ago growers in Apple Hill began selling the products that they prepared from their orchards. Additional commodities like pies, cobblers and juice emerged as important parts of a successful business model. Much of the county's agricultural operations have mirrored this success by selling food and products directly to the consumer, whether at a bake shop in Apple Hill or at a booth in the Farmers' Market.

According to El Dorado County Farm Bureau Executive Director Valerie Zentner, for every dollar of raw "crop value" there is a seven dollar benefit to the local economy. "When folks come to El Dorado to buy food and wine from our local producers, other local establishments like coffee shops, gas stations, and antique stores also benefit." Zentner notes that when a tourist stays overnight the spillover economic benefit increases to \$10, reflecting the additional money spent for food and lodging.

The 2012 Crop Report indicates that the estimated impact of agriculture to the El Dorado County economy was \$366 million. Toward that total, ranch marketing contributed \$159 million, and the wine industry an estimated \$169 million. Ann Wofford, Chair of the County Chamber of Commerce's Ag Council stated, "Agri-tourism is an important part of our market success . . . we provide local jobs, contribute sales tax, and draw tourists to enjoy our beauty and our delicious products! It's good for everyone."

Although it is true that El Dorado "imports tourists" the fact is that the local economy depends on everyone buying food locally. "So if you have a choice, buy local food . . . it's good for the whole community," said Zentner.

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