

FACTFILE: GCE NUTRITION & FOOD SCIENCE

LOCALLY AND SEASONALLY PRODUCED FOOD AND FAIRTRADE



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Learning outcome

- Explain how the following contribute positively to local economies in the UK and producer countries:
 - Locally and seasonally produced food; and
 - Fairtrade

Locally and seasonally produced food

Local food is a term used to describe a method of food production and distribution that is geographically localised rather than national or international. Food is grown, reared and caught close to consumers' homes then distributed over much shorter distances than is usual in global industrial food systems.

Seasonal food refers to the times of the year when the harvest or the flavour of a given type of food is at its peak. This is usually when the item is harvested. As most produce is being grown somewhere in the world at any one time, choosing seasonally produced food more specifically concerns eating produce that is being grown right now locally.

How locally and seasonally produced food contributes positively to local economies in the UK

Locally and seasonally produced food can contribute positively to local economies if the produce is sold directly to the consumer or local shops and restaurants. This keeps more money

circulating around the local economy keeping it alive and providing opportunities for growth of local businesses for example:

- the natural interdependence of small retailers, producers and consumers creates a dense social network that provides employment, good quality food and wider social benefits;
- when the producer sells directly to the local community and cuts out the middle-man they gain more control over the price of the end-product and a greater share of the 'food pound';
- an area with a farmer's market will benefit as the producers have an opportunity to sell directly to the consumer and consumers are likely to spend in other local shops on market days;
- where there are direct links between producers and consumers, then producers are better able to respond to the concerns of consumers, and consumers in return understand better the challenges and vagaries of food production;
- food grown locally, processed locally and distributed locally generates jobs locally and in the long term may retain talent and expertise for local enterprise;
- a local food system provides an outlet for local produce helping to start new businesses and expand existing ones; and
- a local food system can contribute positively to food security and health benefits by increasing access for all people to healthy fresh food.



Fairtrade

According to the Fairtrade Foundation, Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the poorest areas of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Oceania. These workers need support because global trade often discriminates against them in relation to their working conditions, the income they can earn, the opportunities they have to develop and improve and the control they have over their future.

Fairtrade provides this support by setting international standards in accordance with the ISEAL Code of Good Practice on Standard Setting. The standards contain both core requirements and development requirements aimed at improvements that benefit producers and their communities. One set of standards applies to smallholders that are working together in co-operatives or other organisations with a democratic structure. The other set applies to workers, whose employers pay decent wages, guarantee the right to join trade unions, ensure health and safety standards and provide adequate housing where relevant. Fairtrade Standards also cover terms of trade. These standards protect the producers and supports them to become more income-secure and less vulnerable to poverty.

How Fairtrade contributes positively to local economies in producer countries

- Most products have a Fairtrade Minimum Price which is the minimum which must be paid to the producer. It guarantees producers a minimum price for the product they sell as Fairtrade, even if the market price is lower. When the market price is higher than the Fairtrade Minimum Price, producers will receive the higher market price. This helps farmers to secure stable, fair prices and enables them to invest in the future of their businesses, looking ahead with greater confidence.

- Fairtrade is gradually empowering communities to organise into co-operatives and improve their negotiating position within the supply chain. This can enable them to negotiate a higher price for their product than the conventional market price.
- Fairtrade improves access to agricultural services such as organic training and premium markets. As a result, farmers have an incentive to farm better and sell more.
- On top of the price farmers and workers receive for their produce or labour, they receive an extra sum of money to invest in improving the quality of their lives. The Fairtrade Premium is calculated as a percentage of the volume of produce sold. The price is reviewed every three to four years to adjust to local inflation. To become Fairtrade certified, farmers must join together with other farmers to form a co-operative. The Fairtrade Premium is paid at the co-operative level so that the farmers' democratically elected representatives can decide how the money is spent. The farmers have the right to choose any activities that are important to their particular situation, aspirations and priorities. Examples include investment in collective assets to improve crops and yields and improvement in education housing, schools and medical facilities.
- For some farmers, the Fairtrade Standards have resulted in switches to less toxic pesticides, which has a positive impact on producers' health.



Fair Trade Policy

- Farmers and workers who choose to participate in Fairtrade often feel a real sense of control over their future with greater power and voice.
- Fairtrade can support workers to realise their rights and negotiate the terms and conditions of their work through trade unions and collective bargaining.
- Fairtrade Standards are designed to prevent gender inequality, increase female participation and empower women and girls to access the benefits of Fairtrade. Requirements for producer organisations include no discrimination on the basis of gender or marital status, zero tolerance of behaviour that is sexually intimidating, abusive or exploitative and the provision of programmes to support disadvantaged and minority groups such as women.

Suggested Activities:

1. Consider the issues around buying food locally rather than in the supermarket.
2. Survey friends and family to determine their knowledge of Fairtrade and their attitude to its aims.

