

## Media Release

February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010



### “Celebrate Local Food..... From Field to Table”

**March is National Nutrition Month – “Celebrate Local Food – From Field to Table” gives the community an opportunity to consider the importance of eating locally.** Getting back to food basics and looking to our local community for a connection to our food source will help to achieve a healthy way of life. Healthy people make a healthy community.

**Eating local food can mean stepping out your back door to pick some ripe tomatoes, asking your grocer for foods grown in your community, region or province, or visiting a farmer at the local farmers market or where their crops are grown.** “Buying or eating local can be easy,” says Dianne Oickle, Registered Dietitian. “We can all benefit from this choice – children, adults, farmers, local businesses, and the community”. By visiting a farm to buy or pick seasonal fruit, children will see where food comes from. **Both children and adults will gain from eating fresher, less processed, less travelled foods when buying local.**

Is it healthier to buy local? Although it would be challenging to buy strictly from our community year round, **people who eat local food are more likely to eat more homemade meals and turn less to prepackaged convenience foods.** Foods prepared from scratch are often lower in sodium and unhealthy fats, and include more whole grains which add up to a more wholesome diet. Also, buying local foods supports the local economy.

**The movement towards choosing local foods can also contribute to reducing hunger in the community.** “Simple acts such as people growing an extra row in their garden and donating the produce to the food bank, farmers offering gleanings (offering their food after a harvest), volunteers being involved with community gardens and encouraging government policies that promote sustainability are all answers to reducing hunger” says Oickle.

If you are left wondering where to start and how to eat more local food, the Health Unit has information and free resources available on how to eat locally in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District including a listing of community gardens. **Contact the Health Unit’s toll free Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (613-345-5685) and ask to speak with a Registered Dietitian. You can also visit their website at [www.healthunit.org/nutrition](http://www.healthunit.org/nutrition) .**

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