

## **Cabarrus County Local Food Purchasing Policy**

### Purpose:

It is the policy of Cabarrus County to promote economic vitality, support the health and safety of its employees and citizens, and to preserve and protect our natural resources so that future generations will have an opportunity to thrive. The Local Food Purchasing Policy is intended to grow our local food economy, and to make fresher, more nutritious and better tasting food available at all County events that are catered.

### Background:

North Carolina has developed a statewide action guide for the support of a sustainable, local food economy. As part of this initiative, the 10% Farm to Fork Campaign has been launched to challenge families, businesses and institutions across NC to spend at least 10% of their food budget on products grown or raised in NC. As a state we spend \$35 billion a year on food. Spending just 10% of that- about \$1.00 per person per day- would mean \$3.5 billion dollars annually for the local food economy of our state.

In addition to the economic benefits, there are other food-related and environmental issues at the root of some of the most pressing problems we face today.

1. Dependency on Fossil Fuel Energy
2. Diet-Related Disease
3. Food Quality and Safety
4. Water and Soil Quality and Conservation
5. Air and Water Pollution

Most food today travels about 1,200 miles to reach our plate. Buying locally can reduce that travel time (and associated costs), reduce carbon dioxide emissions (air pollution), and conserve energy. Buying food locally is good for Cabarrus County and North Carolina's quality of life through the protection of the natural environment, preservation of farmland and creation of new jobs.

The Wellness for Life mission exists to create an environment that educates Cabarrus County employees, family and retirees and promotes positive lifestyles. The 10 percent NC food policy supports the wellness initiative to encourage employees to engage in a healthy lifestyle by eating food produced in North Carolina. Not only does local food taste better, buying local produce has a higher nutritional value. The most optimal nutritional value in fruits and vegetables is when they are picked at its ripest state. As soon as produce is picked and consumed, and not transported long distances, consumers will have greater health benefits. Eating in season also supports a diverse diet which ensures a range of vitamins and nutrients. Choosing foods from North

Carolina will ensure food security which provides access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food necessary to maintain a healthy lifestyle for Cabarrus County Employees.

Because of these issues and to help support the local economy of North Carolina, Cabarrus County has pledged support to the 10% Farm to Fork Campaign.

**Policy: Cabarrus County Government Employees shall locally source at least 10% of all food served at county catered events and small department-sponsored meetings from food producers within North Carolina.**

County employees are urged to first seek local food for county events from within Cabarrus County.

Responsibility of Cabarrus County Agencies:

- A. The department head of each county agency shall serve as the 10% Local Food Liaison. The liaison will be the agency contact for local food purchases and for information regarding how to source food in a manner that allows the agency to meet the 10% goal.
- B. Disseminate information regarding the 10% campaign to employees.
- C. Publicize the agency's participation in the 10% campaign.
- D. Maintain an estimate of the amount of money spent on food in total and the percentage spent on local food. *A template to help track agency spending is available on the County Intranet Website, The Watercooler. See Appendix A Resource 1.*
- E. Request a signed statement by any supplier of local food stating that products were grown or raised within NC. *A template of such a statement is available on the County Intranet Website, The Watercooler. See Appendix A Resource 1.*
- F. County-Catered events should support not only local food but also nutritious and well-rounded food offerings.

Definitions:

**Agency-** Any department directly under the management of Cabarrus County or occupying space within a building owned or otherwise managed by Cabarrus County.

**Local Food-** For the purpose of the Local Food Purchasing Policy "local food" is defined as food products grown or raised within North Carolina. Where products are simply not available from North Carolina sources (e.g. coffee, which does not grow in Cabarrus County) it is preferable to use locally processed products (e.g. coffee roasted in Cabarrus County).

Appendix A - Resources:

**1. Cabarrus Local Food System**

*Sources for local food*

<http://localfood.cabarruscounty.us>

**2. 10% Farm to Fork Campaign: Building North Carolina's Local Food Economy**

*More information about the 10% campaign.*

<http://www.nc10percent.com>

**3. Know Your Farms**

*Local Food Distribution Company*

<http://knowyourfarms.com>

**4. Got to be NC Agriculture**

*Find out where to get food products from within North Carolina.*

<http://www.ncagr.gov/markets/gottobe/>

**5. Piedmont Farmers Market**

*Information about farmers markets within Cabarrus County*

<http://www.piedmont-farmersmarket.com/>

**6. Cabarrus County Cooperative Extension Agency**

*More information on sourcing local food*

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/>