



Take a Bite Out of Climate Change (Caledon) challenges you to adopt a climate friendly diet. Help us reduce CO₂ in our atmosphere to below 350 ppm and find solutions to the climate crisis (see www.350.org). Sign the local food pledge and make a difference. It is simple - follow these eight simple guidelines when making food choices to reduce food miles and greenhouse gas emissions.

1. Eat with the Seasons – Choose food grown close to home.
2. Shop Local – Farmers' Markets, u-picks, farm stands & local shops.
3. Cook Fresh – Reduce consumption of prepared foods – cook everyday.
4. Eat More Plants – Fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, legumes & grains.
5. Grow Your Own – Try the 100 yard diet – start simple with herbs.
6. Savour the Harvest – Dry, freeze, can, jam, pickle and more.
7. Choose Local Alternatives – Honey & maple syrup to sweeten and local for high emission foods like meat, dairy & eggs.
8. Avoid Food Waste – Reduce and re-use leftovers to avoid refrigerator rot.

This program focuses on concrete actions people everywhere can take three times a day year round with the goal of: make diets climate friendly; to eat fresh, tasty foods; and, to support local farmers, food producers and the local economy. It is run by Eat Local Caledon and the Caledon Countryside Alliance and funded by Community Go Green Fund and Ontario Trillium Foundation. For more information, go to: www.eatlocalcaledon.org.



Background

The Caledon Countryside Alliance (CCA) launched *Eat Local Caledon* in 2007 to help rebuild the local food and farming system in Caledon and Headwaters. The program has met with great success. As an environmental NGO, the CCA wanted to address the issue of local food and climate change. With generous funding from the Community Go Green Fund (Government of Ontario through Ministry of the Environment) and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, *Take a Bite Out of Climate Change* does just that. There are many reasons to “eat local”, this pledge is designed to encourage a climate friendly diet with the following eight guidelines:

- Eat with the Seasons
- Shop Local
- Cook Fresh
- Eat More Plants
- Grow Your Own
- Savour the Harvest
- Choose Local Alternatives
- Avoid Food Waste

Most activities including food create greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that have a negative impact on climate.

In 2003, the energy required to put food on the table in Canada represented 46,000 kilotonnes of GHG emissions or 6.4 per cent of total Canadian GHG emissions according to a 2009 Statistics Canada study titled “Human Activity and the Environment”. The estimate included all energy expended bringing food from the farm to the table.

For the purposes of this pledge, reducing food related GHG emissions will focus on areas that will make a difference and are easy for most people to do. The pledge actions will focus on: eating locally grown and produced foods; shopping local; cooking to reduce prepared food consumption; growing food; processing food; choosing local alternatives; and, avoiding food waste.

For those interested in knowing more facts and information, additional resources are available on the website at www.eatlocalcaledon.org.

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The Case for Reducing Food Miles

Food Miles

Eating Local

There are many reasons to eat local: freshness and taste; support local farming and food production, strengthen local economy; health; and, protect the environment. Eating local will reduce food miles and the resulting GHG emissions.

The Case for Reducing Food Miles

A 2005 study by the Region of Waterloo Public Health examined food miles and the relationship to GHG emissions. A basket of 58 goods (including beef, pears, lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, apples, onions, cheese and carrots) that could be grown in Waterloo Region was used to compare the GHG emission factor for three scenarios: local in the Region; South Western (SW) Ontario and imported. The results support local food has the lowest emissions.

Location	Distance Travelled	Emission Factor
Region	40 Km	0.008 kg/kg of food
Ontario (SW)	250 Km	0.067 kg/kg of food
Import	4497 Km	1.3 kg/kg of food

The SW Ontario goods generated an average of 19 times more emissions and the imported good 161 times more emissions.



The Local Food Pledge in Detail

Pledge 1 - Eat with the Seasons

Choose fresh grown food available close to home, which in Ontario means strawberries in June, apples in September, root vegetables in January and asparagus in May. Many foods are available year round. Look for what is grown locally and across Ontario.

Tip—Season availability charts for Ontario and Peel Region from Foodland Ontario (www.foodland.gov.on.ca) and Grown in Peel (www.GrownInPeel.ca).

Pledge 2 - Shop Local

Shop at Farmers' Markets, Pick-Your-Own, On-Farm Markets, Farm Stands and local food shops (bakeries, butchers and specialty)—they all have fresh grown local foods. At grocery stores, look for Foodland Ontario, Homegrown Ontario and other indicators of local food. At restaurants look and ask about the Savour Ontario food program.

Tip—Look for signs of local food, always ask question if you are unsure about the origin of food. Use an outing to a farm as a recreational activity or education for all family members.

Pledge 3 - Cook Fresh

Prepared foods are high GHG foods as they create a lot of emission through preparation, transport, packaging, and waste. Decreasing consumption of prepared foods, will decrease personal emissions. Learning to cook fresh will also ensure healthier food choices for all by decreasing preservatives and other additives necessary.

Tip—Cook fresh as much as possible using new recipes from the internet and take a cooking class. Cook double meals on weekends and freeze extras for easy weekday meals.



Pledge 4 - Eat More Plants

Increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, legumes, breads and cereals is healthy for you and for the climate. Look to balance meals using the Canada Food Guide to ensure the right mix of food groups.

Tips—Get children to fill up on fruits and vegetables. Experiment with new recipes that incorporate more vegetables, beans, nuts and legumes.

Pledge 5 - Grow Your Own

The most climate friendly food is that you grow yourself—the 100 yard diet. Gardens can be grown in containers, existing beds or even inside. The key is to start small and build confidence. Food always tastes better fresh from your garden.

Tip—Start with a herb pot, lettuce box or tomato planter and add from there. If you already have a garden, try season extension to grow greens almost year round.

Pledge 6 - Savour the Harvest

Preserve the fresh harvest of the summer months by canning, preserving, pickling, freezing, drying, dehydrating and more. The effort is worth it in the winter when you will save time using your very own tomato sauce.

Tip—Host a canning bee to make tomato sauce or salsa with friends or family members. It is more fun when you pool resources and do it as a group. Everybody can take home 6



jars for a morning's work and catching up.

Pledge 7 - Choose Local Alternatives

Many of the foods we commonly use have a local natural alternative. Honey and maple syrup can be used in place of sugar in many recipes.

Ensure high emission items like meat, dairy and eggs are locally raised to ensure they are climate friendly as possible.

Tip—Go to local shops to find local goods.

Pledge 8 - Avoid Food Waste

In 2007, 38% of all food available for retail sale went to waste—that is 183 kg per person. A decrease in food waste throughout the system would result in an equal decrease in emissions. Individuals can work to use all the food bought and eliminate refrigerator rot.

Tip—Freeze leftover vegetables to make soups. Re-use leftovers into casseroles, stews and one-pot or dish meals.



Other Ideas

Enjoy and Celebrate Food

Above all, learn to enjoy, celebrate and appreciate food—especially that grown, made and produced close to home.

Ideas for Getting Started...

Shop at one of the two local Farmers' Markets in Caledon (Bolton or Inglewood) or in a town close by.

Go to a pick your own farm (see Grown in Peel Guide www.GrownInPeel.ca or www.eatlocalcaledon.org.)

Grow Your Own Herb Pot or lettuce box.

Adopt a weekly dinner day to feature vegetables and lentils.

Try Making jam, salsa, chutney or pickles.

Buy local wine—Caledon or Ontario.

Use leftovers in soups, stews and casseroles

Make a dessert with local fruit in season...think berries, apples or pears.

Participate in Eat Local Month—a month full of fun activities to get you started on eating local.



Take the Pledge

Make a commitment to *Take a Bite Out of Climate Change* by taking the pledge. All of these actions will help you do your part to reduce human impact on the planet, while eating fresh, good tasting, locally grown food that you have prepared. A climate friendly diet is good for everybody.

Already Doing	Will Try	Commitment
		Eat with the Seasons
		Shop Local
		Cook Fresh
		Eat More Plants
		Grow Your Own
		Savour the Harvest
		Choose Local Alternatives
		Avoid Food Waste
Name: Email: Signature:		

To get started, sign the pledge and/or register for the program, email [pledge\[at\]eatlocalcaledon\[dot\]org](mailto:pledge@eatlocalcaledon.org).