

Buy local, eat local at area farmer's markets

By Carol C. Giesecke

In May, 2007 Barbara Kingsolver's latest book, "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle?" was released by Harper Collins Publishers.

In it, she describes a year that she and her family spent in which they made every attempt to feed themselves with animals and vegetables grown in their locale.

It quite literally changed their lives. They live in Vancouver, British Columbia, so the growing conditions are quite different from ours in Delaware. However, if you want to attempt a modest experiment of your own, you can make a commitment to buy a portion of your food from local growers.

Do you know anyone who is selling produce or eggs, meat, fish or poultry? We are fortunate in Delaware to have many farmer's markets and road side stands. And there are many farms that have retail outlets on the farm.

Because more and more chefs are promoting locally grown herbs, produce and meats in their restaurants (and on their television shows), more and more people are asking where they can find these products.

Locally grown foods do not

have to travel the long route from California or Washington State. Often, produce that is grown to travel a long distance has to be picked when it is unripe and has been developed from a few special varieties that will ship and travel well. Nutritional value often suffers in the process.

On the other hand, heirloom varieties of apples and tomatoes and other foods that don't travel or store well can be sold and enjoyed locally. One can really taste the difference by biting into a locally grown, recently-harvested apple. There is no comparison with one that was developed to survive shipment and storage. It's the same with eggs, meats, poultry, cheeses, breads and other foods.

So I encourage you to pull over next time you see a sign for locally grown peaches or watermelon or apples — or farm-raised oysters. The Delaware Department of Agriculture has a Web site to show you lots of places to visit to sample Delaware — grown products. Go to www.dda.delaware.gov and click on the Farmer's Market link under the Information section. And when you are in the

store, look for the "Grown Fresh With Care in Delaware" logo.

Editor's note: Dr. Carol C. Giesecke is a registered dietician and the state specialist for Nutrition, Consumer Economics and

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Delaware State News/Dave Chambers
Amos Esh of Lancaster, Pa., looks over some cooked chickens at Spence's Bazaar farmer's market in Dover.

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