

# PICK APPLES, CHANGE THE WORLD



BC's interior tree fruit industry consists of 1,800 farms that generate 5,000 on-farm jobs and 2,500 jobs in packinghouses and support industries.

Climate change is an issue that faces us all and influences every decision we make, right down to what we put in our child's lunchbox.

This week at local grocers, Chinese Mandarin oranges are on sale for \$4.99 per 5lb box. On the other side of the isle BC McIntosh apples are on sale for \$4.99 per 6lb bag.

At first glance it doesn't seem to make much of a difference which one we choose, after all both cost less than \$1 per pound. In the end though, your decision could make all the difference in the world.

Those Mandarin oranges travel up to 9,656 km from where they are grown in China resulting in approximately 1,258g of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) per kg. The McIntosh apples on the other hand, are coming from Kelowna, BC only 1,055 km away resulting in 286g of GHG per kg. The difference is substantial and when multiplied by the number of kg consumed province-wide it becomes staggering.

There is no arguing that the long-haul transportation of domestic and imported fruits and vegetables is a fuel-intensive contributor to the rising level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, that is the very reason the Province of BC is intensively marketing BC produce and supporting local farmers' markets.

On average, the food we eat travels 2,400 km. Some of our choices like Mandarin oranges travel farther and some choices like McIntosh apples travel less but on average every food that we consume on a daily basis travels by plane, train,

truck or boat an average of 2,400 km. Imagine the amount of fossil fuel burned to move that food. Imagine one out of every three transport trucks on the road today moving food. Apple trucks are passing orange trucks on the highway, all moving fruit from one province or country to another based on an outdated global food system that was originally designed around cheap and unlimited fossil fuel.

If we all make an effort to choose regional, in-season fruits and vegetables,

if we simply eat what our province grows, we can reduce our food mile average to less than 1,000 km, significantly reducing our GHG emissions without changing any other habit.

It's important to remember that choosing to buy local and grown-in-BC produce not only minimizes our carbon footprint, it also improves the vitality of regional farms and strengthens our local economy.

So the next time you are comparing apples to oranges, go the distance and spend your money on the road less traveled, that will make all the difference.

## Buzz Word of the Week

**food miles** is a term which refers to the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer

## In The Neighbourhood

The Northwest Premium Meat Co-Operative in Telkwa is a leading example of moving toward a more sustainable food system. This local abattoir and processing facility is owned and governed by the producers and consumers it serves, processing and selling locally raised beef, pork and lamb from a government inspected facility. This new facility allows local producers to be on a level playing field with large meat processing plants, offering consumers the ability to choose local over long-haul.



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Smithers and Telkwa are participating in the Energetic Olympics. To find out how to sign up, go to our website:

[WWW.ONESKY.CA/ENERGETIC](http://WWW.ONESKY.CA/ENERGETIC)