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Is becoming a locavore right?

Many people want to be more sustainable and maintain their local economy. This is what the locavore movement is, however, the reality their actions may be the complete opposite in the long run. The locavore movement is a widespread belief that if you decide to buy from your local farms and only your local farms, the world can suddenly begin its healing process after all the fuel used on the transportation of food that damaged the environment and, just as a bonus, the food will be a lot healthier and nutritious. This is not true, the world cannot become a healthy utopia after communities suddenly decide to purchase from their local farms exclusively. In the end, the movement not only creates a headache for people who now can't just look at the meat, dairy products, and fruits and vegetables sections of a grocery store once their community becomes locavores, but it also forces people to head out and see if their local farm even has the product they're looking for, or if they'll have to travel further out to find said product. Not to mention, there are more implications than just local ones after only purchasing from your local farms.

The locavore movement will fail to bring in sufficient advocates within their communities, especially if they do their research, as it fails to provide evidence that fresh fruits and vegetables are much healthier and more nutritious than packaged fruits and vegetables that

have traveled “extensive distances.” Source B, a pro locavore article, has a quote regarding the nutritional value of fresher fruits and vegetables from a nutritionist, Marion Nestle, “There will be nutritional differences, but they’ll be marginal”(Smith). This shows what a professional nutritionist knows, fruits and vegetables have minimal differences in nutrition, whether they are fresh or were picked a few weeks before consumption and then taken on an adventure, it won’t matter in the long run for your health. Honestly, that says a lot when it comes to the facts the locavore movement wants you to believe, the way it’s phrased throughout the beginning of the article, you’d think you’re losing substantial amounts of nutrients, but then they somewhat bite their words and minimize the embellishment of their words from the beginning after Marion Nestle’s quote is integrated into the text, as she’s a professional and knows what she’s talking about, and, instead focuses on the taste of the freshly picked crops, “Because she loves the taste of fresh food...” (Smith). Despite Marion Nestle’s words just being about enjoying the taste of freshly picked fruits and vegetables, it feels as if the author of the article is trying to make it seem like Marion Nestle is all for the locavore movement, by calling her an advocate. While we know that perhaps fresher fruits and vegetables may be better in taste, it’s not as necessary for a healthier life, and perhaps she’s the type of person who lives to eat rather than eating to live, which people who eat to live wouldn’t necessarily care about when the fruits and vegetables were picked, whether it was of high quality, if the produce was locally grown, or about the little nutrition they lost from the crops being older, as long as they have food in their stomachs. Focusing on the taste of crops weakens their argument after the argument of fresh fruits and vegetables being more nutritional and healthy fell apart, taste isn’t always everything to people.

Another thing to consider is that despite the produce and animal products traveling shorter distances, purchasing from local farms exclusively doesn't exactly contribute much towards saving the environment. Source D is a graph from *Conservation Magazine* that shows what parts of the supply chain emit the most amount of greenhouse gases (Loder). Through the graph, we can see that most of the emissions come from the production process itself and that transportation and even grocery stores are the least of our worries. Perhaps, because we are taking all of these plants and animal products to grocery stores all around the world- which even the smallest of towns have- we are contributing, maybe even the smallest bit, towards the environment by keeping away from traveling to and from a local farm frequently in a vehicle and creating more greenhouse gas emissions, after all, grocery stores are usually a short walk, bike ride, or just a smaller drive for people in both big cities and small towns, while farms are usually isolated due to larger amounts of land needed to cultivate crops and care for large farm animals, and they're especially isolated from major cities. Another thing to note about the graph is that it only considers U.S. households. If we were to consider emissions worldwide, we would likely be creating more emissions from these other countries' citizens traveling to farms in a vehicle if they're anything like the U.S. when it comes to keeping farms away from the cities.

Becoming a locavore community also has different implications for other nations, specifically developing countries whose biggest source of income comes from exporting farming goods. Hypothetically, if a large city or even a whole country becomes a community of locavores, they'd develop their own farms and use the money to purchase the necessary seeds and create their own feed for the animals, but for other nations- especially developing ones who's main focus would be producing raw materials- that city would be a huge loss of income because

their produce isn't necessary for the once consumers anymore as said in Source C, "...it's also true that a campaign to shame English consumers with small airplane stickers affixed to flown-in produce threatens the livelihood of 1.5 million sub-Saharan farmers" (McWilliams). While that nation or the farm company can compensate by trying to create a market for another nation, it won't be so easy. Another negative, who's to say those farmers' conditions aren't dependent on income from other countries? This means that the loss of revenue- even if it's temporary- will cause problems, such as making working conditions worse for the farmers and making it dangerous to even work, or reducing the workers' paycheck and ruining not only their lives but also the families' by starving them or forcing them to skip out on getting important materials for education if there are children in the house.

While on the topic of farm workers' treatment, in the U.S. specifically, we rely heavily on migrant farm workers to maintain the fields. This isn't to say there aren't U.S. citizens or residents on the fields as the Farmworker Justice said in a report, "While there is no doubt that farm labor is hard work that takes skill, stamina, and dedication, U.S. workers, as this report illustrates, are able and willing to be farmworkers," (Farmworker Justice). People of all origins are willing and can work in the fields, but, no matter how much a person may enjoy caring for crops, fieldwork is hard and especially taxing on the body during harvest season. However, the Farmworker Justice also said in the same article, "If we continue to mistreat farmworkers under law and in the fields, U.S. workers will leave agriculture and the only people who will accept agricultural employment will be economically desperate citizens of poor countries," (Farmworker Justice). This statement is about something some of us may not know, but the reason why there are so many migrant field workers comparatively is because that's the type of

work they're used to, and they get exploited. Because of this exploitation, and especially with how heavily integrated it is within the system, newfound farms for major locavore cities will likely use the same cycle as current major produce companies, recruiting migrant workers and continuing to exploit them. To evaluate more on this, farm workers are paid very little compared to other industries for their hard work and dedication, as this is said by an article by the National Farm Worker Ministry, "Many farm workers are paid based on how many buckets or bags they pick of whatever crop they harvest—this is known as the "piece rate,"" (National Farm Worker Ministry). Videos of farm workers picking crops have spread around, becoming viral, and many comments are talking about how there's no skill behind picking these crops. That is an egotistical evaluation of the amount of precision people need to pick the fruit and the amount of dedication it takes to pick up the skill properly to get up to the speed the fields need. It's also not just about picking the fruits, but also the pain from bending down constantly and the repeated hand movements that these workers can't stop unless they want to starve. The piece rate is a huge issue, and if the locavore movement starts to appear in major cities, who's to say the field workers' wages would increase, have a new system such as hourly pay, or just stay the same with the double the work to accommodate people waltzing through, trying to get the best crops, more than likely prepackaged since it takes an expert to know how to pick the crop for maximum life span and to save the farm from getting its crops stolen by everyone. So, because fieldwork itself is physically taxing, we likely will see these communities trying to recruit people in any way they can to work in the fields, and with the way the world's views are changing, fieldwork is a job many people would avoid unless there's higher pay for it and better conditions, especially people who live in major cities that have more white-collar jobs than anything. That would cause

a chain reaction where prices for vegetation would increase due to increased wages, and would complicate the local economy that locavores want to maintain.

To conclude, the locavore movement, in theory, is quite noble, but in reality, the practice would complicate many matters, including international economics and civil rights. Not only does it complicate those major matters that extend further than a local or even national level, but it also lacks proper evidence that it's better to practice than continuing our current consumer chain that works perfectly fine.

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