



UF/IFAS CENTER FOR  
PUBLIC ISSUES  
EDUCATION



# Are you taking advantage of your market next door?

Our research shows Floridians spend \$8.3 billion on local food. Are you getting your share?  
Learn what consumers are saying about your products and what they go out of their way to buy.

[piecenter.com/local](http://piecenter.com/local)



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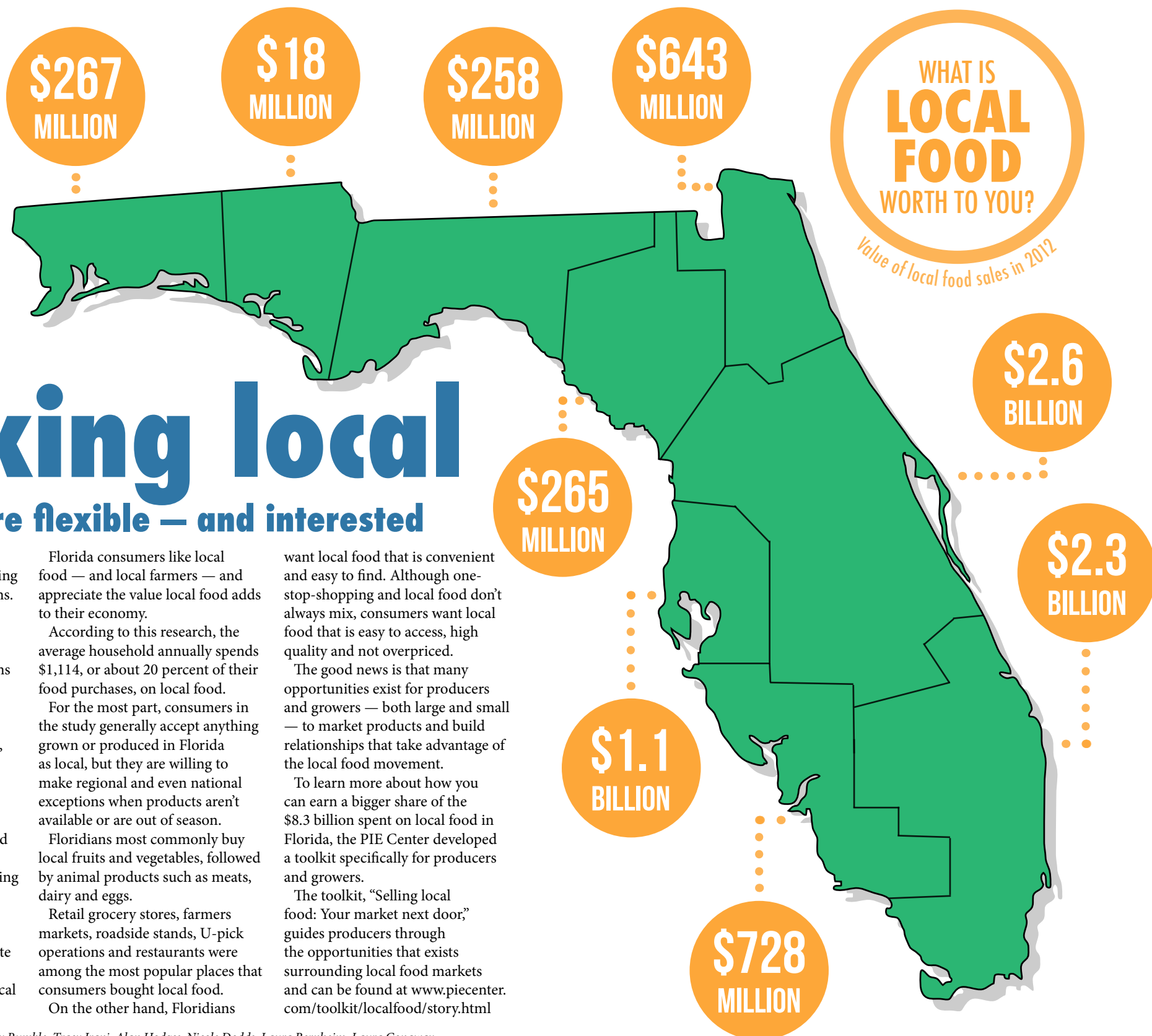
### Selling local food: Your market next door

This online training tool was created to give producers like you reliable recommendations to grow your sales.

## FROM THE MOUTHS OF CONSUMERS

“Would I spend a nickel more because food was produced here and not in Georgia? Yes, I would, if it tastes just as good, yes.”

“I actually like the social interaction of speaking to the person I’m buying food from. You get a lot of really neat stories if you just stop and listen to people.”



WHAT IS LOCAL FOOD WORTH TO YOU?  
*Value of local food sales in 2012*

# Looking local

## Consumers are flexible – and interested

From farm gate to dinner plate, consumers are looking for more local food options.

While examining what’s behind this new consumer trend, researchers at the University of Florida discovered what Floridians think about local food and how much they’re buying.

The UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education led the research, which was funded by a USDA specialty crop block grant, in partnership with the Florida Specialty Crop Foundation.

Consumers in the study revealed that they don’t have a standard definition for local food. Depending on the product, consumers recognize “local” as being grown or produced anywhere from 100 miles away or even within the state of Florida. In fact, consumers are more flexible and interested in local food than previously thought.

Florida consumers like local food — and local farmers — and appreciate the value local food adds to their economy.

According to this research, the average household annually spends \$1,114, or about 20 percent of their food purchases, on local food.

For the most part, consumers in the study generally accept anything grown or produced in Florida as local, but they are willing to make regional and even national exceptions when products aren’t available or are out of season.

Floridians most commonly buy local fruits and vegetables, followed by animal products such as meats, dairy and eggs.

Retail grocery stores, farmers markets, roadside stands, U-pick operations and restaurants were among the most popular places that consumers bought local food.

On the other hand, Floridians

want local food that is convenient and easy to find. Although one-stop-shopping and local food don’t always mix, consumers want local food that is easy to access, high quality and not overpriced.

The good news is that many opportunities exist for producers and growers — both large and small — to market products and build relationships that take advantage of the local food movement.

To learn more about how you can earn a bigger share of the \$8.3 billion spent on local food in Florida, the PIE Center developed a toolkit specifically for producers and growers.

The toolkit, “Selling local food: Your market next door,” guides producers through the opportunities that exists surrounding local food markets and can be found at [www.piecenter.com/toolkit/localfood/story.html](http://www.piecenter.com/toolkit/localfood/story.html)

Researchers and collaborators include Joy Rumble, Tracy Irani, Alan Hodges, Nicole Dodds, Laura Bernheim, Laura Conaway, Andrea Davis, Al Wysocki & Sonia Tighe.

# Bring it home

## Use these tips to grow your local business.

### Develop your personal brand

Build relationships with your consumers — in person and online.

### Take advantage of branding

Whether it’s Fresh from Florida or your own brand, consumers pay more attention to branded food.

### Label your products’ origin

Consumers prefer products that are local but are willing to consider regional and national products.

### If it’s grown here, tell them

Consumers care where food is grown and processed.

### Invest in advertising

Web and social media are a great start but add local media for maximum impact.

### Make buying local food friendly, yummy and easy

Share your story with consumers, offer samples, discuss the quality of your product and consider ways to make purchasing local food easier for the consumer.

### Listen

Consumers will tell you what they want. Take advantage of opportunities and keep an open ear.

[piecenter.com/local](http://piecenter.com/local)



# Connect with your consumers

**T**hrough its research and outreach, the UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education continually looks for ways to help farmers and consumers communicate more effectively with each other.

Over the past three years, our research has shown consumers believe local food is wholesome, fresh, nutritious, available and clean — so it's a good idea to use these words when communicating with consumers.

Because consumers are sometimes skeptical about agriculture, producers should use personal and emotional messages in order to convey that they are part of the communities in which

they operate.

Additionally, consumers responded favorably to words that connect farmers, local products and the preservation of natural resources. Consider how you can talk about what consumers value.

Even though the public might not understand agriculture, consumers are interested in learning more — don't be afraid to show them.

Our three-pronged approach of research, training and communication helps us navigate these complex issues and move closer to our vision — a public that is informed about and engaged in agriculture and natural resources.

## What do you think?

Scan the QR code with your mobile device to let us know how helpful this information is.

