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Environmental and Flavor Benefits of Supporting Local Agriculture Celebrated

Harrisburg, PA – From concerns over food safety, mad cow and childhood obesity to support for family farmers and the environment, the market is growing for locally produced foods. Now more than ever, shoppers are looking for food that is grown and produced closer to home. Why Buy Local?

Superior Taste and Freshness

- **Locally grown and produced foods are exceptionally fresh, delicious and abundant.** Local food is fresher and tastes better than food shipped long distances from other states or countries, so it often reaches you within 24 hours of harvest. Local farmers can offer produce varieties bred for taste and freshness rather than for shipping and long shelf life.

Stronger Local Economies

- **Buying local strengthens your regional economy and supports endangered family farms.** Buying local food keeps your dollars circulating in your community and increases local food security. Getting to know the farmers who grow your food builds relationships based on understanding and trust, the foundation of strong communities. With each local food purchase, you ensure that more of your money spent on food goes directly to local farmers.

Healthy Families

- **Buying locally produced foods safeguards your family's health.** Knowing where your food comes from and how it is grown or raised enables you to choose safe food from farmers who avoid or reduce their use of chemicals, pesticides, hormones, antibiotics, or genetically modified seed in their operations. Buy food from local farmers you trust.

Healthy Environment

- **Buying local food protects the environment. How?**

It's One Way to Reduce Fossil Fuel Usage

- **Most conventionally produced food is extremely resource intensive, traveling an average of 1500-2500 miles from field to plate and resulting in approximately 120 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year – contributing to global warming.**
- Local food doesn't have to travel far. This reduces fossil fuel dependence, carbon dioxide emissions, and use of packing materials.

Protected Land and Open Space

- **Buying local protects Open Space and Farmland.** Keeping local farms economically viable is critical to preserving the beautiful landscapes you see in the rural agricultural areas known as “foodsheds” surrounding towns and urban centers. Buying local food helps to make farming more profitable and selling farmland for development less attractive, ensuring that this farmland is secure well into the future.

It's Easy! Buying Local is easy.

- Visit www.buylocalpa.org to find a CSA, farmers' market, farm stand, or local food outlet near you and look for the Buy Fresh, Buy Local mark in your community.

Consumers want local foods.

- **Across America, interest in buying fresh, local food is gaining momentum.** Recent market studies document this trend, indicating that over 70% of American's are willing to pay more for locally grown foods.

Consumers want local foods

- A North Carolina Study found that 81% of produce shoppers in the region rate "grown locally" as the most important quality they look for.

This is a chance to make real, concrete change and to build the market for local foods: We invite you to support Buy Fresh, Buy Local, or start a campaign in your community today.

"We envision a future with more farmers on the land rather than fewer, vibrant and sustainable Pennsylvania local communities, and one in which fresh, delicious, local food is abundant and accessible to all" said Susan Manager, Program Manager for the Capital Resource Conservation and Development Area Council (Capital RC&D), one of the sponsors of the event.

The dinner is an outgrowth of the efforts of several organizations: Capital RC&D, the Southcentral Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA) and Food Routes. Each of these groups have an interest in supporting and sustaining agriculture in the state and hope to remind the public of the plentiful and delicious products available in south-central Pennsylvania. According to the Buy Fresh Buy Local campaign, buying local provides a number of benefits including: superior taste and freshness, stronger local economies, and a healthier environment through reducing fossil fuel usage and protecting open space. Most food consumed in the United States travels an average of between 1,500-2,500 miles from field to plate, resulting in approximately 120 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year; local food doesn't have to travel far. This also reduces fossil fuel dependence, carbon dioxide emissions and use of packing materials.

Capital RC&D will have a guide to local farm markets, wineries, events and farm stays entitled "Taste the Gifts of Our Region: A Guide to Local Agriculture," on their website by July and in print later in the year. Their web address is www.capitalred.org. The guide will provide listings in the seven-county region served by the RC&D: Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon and York.

Contributors to Tuesday's dinner will include: Spiral Path Farm in Loysville, Strocks Farm Fresh in Mechanicsburg, and Keswick Creamery in Newberg. For additional information about the Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign, contact Jackie Bonomo, PASA Coordinator, at (814) 349-9856 - ext.6 or

www.buylocalpa.org. For additional information regarding the Capital Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, contact the office at (717) 948-6633.