

Synthesis Essay – Locovores

In the United States, there is currently a growing movement of Locovores. A Locovore is a person who has decided to eat locally grown or produced products if at all possible. The movement has been gaining a lot of attention for its possible nutritional benefits, but people like Alex Hallet, in his comic strip, "The Arctic Circle" claim that the entire movement is based around a definition that can be interpreted too vaguely and has no real clear direction (Hallet). Though there can be some negative downsides to the Locovore movement, overall the movement brings greatly benefits the individual, as well as the local community.

Those people and communities who choose to follow the Locovore style of eating can cause greater economic harm and receive very little extra nutritional benefits. Alisa Smith and J.B MacKinnon, in the book "Plenty: One Women...." quote Marion Nestle who says that the nutritional differences will be "marginal" and do not truly matter because in the United States people are not "nutrient-deprive" (Smith and Mackinnon). This means that the nutritional benefits that Locovores claim come from the locally-grown food is very similar, if not the same in many cases, to the food that you can pick-up at a supermarket, like Walmart or Target. Jennifer Maiser, in "10 Reason to Eat Local Food" claims that by supporting local providers you support local land development and thusly you would help your local economy (Maiser). What Maiser doesn't consider though, is the greater economic harm that can be brought by purchasing your food locally. James E. McWilliams in "On My Mind: The Locovore Myth" cites an example in the UK. The UK, he states, buys most of its green beans from Kenya, and if this new movement "shames" people into buying food locally, the local communities will "threaten the livelihood of 1.5 million sub-Saharan farmers" (McWilliams). Buying food locally, may contribute to the one or two or four local farms that provide food for your community, but if people stop purchasing food from the bigger supermarkets, they will be hurting millions more of the famers who provide food for the majority of the US. The very small nutritional benefits that do come out of eating local food, does not seem like enough reason to harm the livelihood of those who depend on the supermarkets and megamarts.

Being a Locovore opens you up to food that has greater nutritional value and is also protected from possible contamination by pesticides or other harmful substance. Jennifer Maiser in "10 Reasons..." says that locally grown food has most likely been picked "in the last 24 hours" and has not had to spend time "cold-stored for days or weeks" in transit. In the same article, she says that food with less distance to travel has less susceptibility to harmful contamination" (Maiser). Eating locally sourced foods does have great nutritional value because it has not had to be shipped across the country or the world, losing its important vitamins and nutrients each minute its gets picked. Local food to, does not need to be kept fresh as it travels, completely eliminating the need for the use of pesticides and preservatives. . In "Plenty: One Man, One Women..." Marion Nestle, a dietician who is one of America's most important critics of dietary policy states that she "absolutely" she would be a Locovore because she loves "the taste of fresh food"(Smith and Mackinnon). As Masier says, food that does not need to travel has less risk of being exposed to other harmful substances while traveling. When it comes to locally grown food, the benefits do not always lie in the nutrition of the food, but rather, the fact that the food is almost always safer to eat.

When a community decides to follow the Locovore movement they can greatly improve the economy of their community. Pallavi Gogoi in "The Rise of the 'Locovore' ..." claims that the Locovore movement has done something "that almost no one would have thought possible" and created the revival of small farms, increasing the number by 20% in the past six years (Gogoi). This means that these farmers now are getting a larger income every time this movement grows, and the money that they make can go back into the economy when they buy more materials for crop growing, improving the community. These families, too, are better off as they are making more money and can live a better life. Jennifer Masier, in "10 Reasons..." too, stated that eating locally means "more money for the economy"

and that when you support local farmers you also support the land development of your town (Maiser). Due to the Locovore movement, smaller farmers have begun to make a comeback and increase their income and number, as well as the local economy of communities greatly improving when people purchase locally.

As the Locovore movement has grown widespread over the past decade, it has come under criticism, questioning whether or not it truly is beneficial. However, the nutritional benefits of Locovorism are there, and contribute to a healthier person, not only by the produce being fresher, but because it is not exposed to harmful chemicals. This movement too, aids in the development of local economies and has helped with the comeback of small farmers, as well. The Locovore movement, though not perfect, truly does benefit a great majority of the people who follow it.