

KNOW YOUR FOODSHED¹

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'Local' and 'locavore' (a person who prefers to eat locally grown/produced food) have become well-known terms, as more and more people are looking for locally grown food. But, another term that is used just as often by food and farming organizations is foodshed, and it has been getting increased coverage in the media and online, even appearing in a recent edition of the Wall Street Journal discussing the new San Francisco Foodshed Project.

But, how foodshed differs from "local" is often unclear to people because they are so similar. A foodshed is an area where food is grown and eaten, and in today's global food system, that could be anywhere in the world. However, if the goal is to develop a more local food system, then it is defined as a more immediate area similar to a community's retail trade area.

A foodshed is often compared to a watershed in that it's a way for communities to use a renewable but scarce resource (such as water or food) more sustainably and in the way that watersheds show how "water flows into a community, a foodshed outlines how food does." Using a foodshed, an area is mapped out considering not just distance or miles, but other factors including land productivity, population density, climate and the natural environment. The foodshed's size depends on these factors and the availability of year round foods and the variety of produce that is grown in an area.

As Roots of Change (ROC) notes, "like a watershed, a foodshed relates to a geographic area that provides the basis for food production. Like a watershed, a foodshed must be maintained. Like a watershed, a foodshed may not be the only source of the resource."

Roots of Change is a collaboration of community, nonprofit, philanthropic, government, and business organizations that all collaborate in pursuit of a sustainable food system in California by 2030. ROC believes that maximizing local food production has economic, ecological, and nutritional benefits, "that will becoming increasingly pronounced as natural resources become more valuable and food related illness more acute. The group helped to organize the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force, who have just developed a report, "The Good Food for All Agenda." The Task Force met last November with the goal of developing a Good Food policy agenda for Los Angeles, "food that is healthy, affordable, fair and sustainable." The Good Food for All Agenda consists of 55 specific action steps around six priority action areas and provides recommendations for how to advance the Agenda.

They are having an event, "Good Food For All: A Taste of the Los Angeles Foodshed" on October 6th to recognize the Task Force and to showcase the breadth of the Los Angeles Foodshed. Similar groups and organizations have undertaken foodshed-mapping projects throughout the US and in the next couple of weeks we will look at some of these other projects and how they are progressing.

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