

COVID-19 Quick Facts

Reliable information to help you through the COVID-19 pandemic



Extension
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Finding Locally Produced Foods

The economic impact of COVID-19 is expected to hit local producers and growers hard, cutting them off from their usual markets and selling opportunities. Consumers face the loss of many usual food options and are worried about how and where they will be able to find food.



How will buying locally produced foods help?

Locally produced foods offer healthy freshness to your family's menu, as well as being a great way to help support local producers. As our food supply chains are stretched with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, buying locally produced foods helps you find some foods that your grocer has difficulty keeping in stock.



How can I find my local food producers?

The Missouri Food Finder (www.MOFoodFinder.org) is a new online tool that easily connects Missouri consumers with people growing and selling locally produced food in their region.

Developed by University of Missouri Extension's Center for Applied Research and Engagement Systems (CARES) in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, the Missouri Food Finder helps address an immediate need — connecting local food producers and consumers.



How does the Missouri Food Finder work?

Missouri Food Finder — on the All Things Missouri website — provides one-stop access for businesses and consumers alike

Farmers, growers and local supplier can enter basic information about the food they sell, their hours, location and contact information. That information will automatically show up on a Missouri map. Consumers simply type in their location to see what options are available in the area they select.

The screenshot shows the "All Things Missouri | mofoodfinder.org" website. At the top, there's a yellow map of Missouri with a red dot on Kansas City. Below the map, the text "Missouri Food Finder" is displayed. A pop-up window for "Schneider Farms LLC" is open, showing details like address, phone number, email, website, and days of operation. The main map shows the state of Missouri with various cities labeled. A legend at the bottom right indicates "Food Source (verified)" and "Food Source (unverified)". The right side of the page has a sidebar with the University of Missouri Extension logo and the text "Missouri Food Finder".

Source: Katherine Foran,
MU Extension writer

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Safe Shopping at Farmers Markets

Shopping at farmers markets is a great way to get healthy fruits, vegetables and other foods while supporting local farmers. Follow these guidelines and enjoy safe shopping at farmers markets, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Be prepared!

- Call the market or check its website or social media pages to see which vendors and items will be available.
- Give yourself extra time. Shopping might take longer with extra safety measures in place, as many Missouri farmers markets have updated their procedures to provide extra safety to customers and vendors.
- Make a list so you can efficiently find the items you need.

Follow these shopping techniques.

- Before entering the market, remind yourself to avoid touching your face and cellphone. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends wearing a mask or other cloth face covering when in places where social distancing can be difficult.
- Make sure to use a designated entry point when going in. The farmers market may have established separate entrances and exits to avoid bottlenecks of people coming and going.
- Choose items with your eyes, not your hands, Nwadike says. Let vendors handle the products you select. Stay at least 6 feet away from other people as much as possible.
- Avoid standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other customers while examining items. Be patient and courteous while people ahead of you complete their purchases.
- Avoid using cash when possible. Many vendors and markets accept debit, credit and EBT/ SNAP cards.
- Make use of handwashing stations or hand sanitizer. CDC recommends handwashing with soap and water, but if handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer can also be used.

For now, resist the temptation to socialize while shopping. Farmers markets are normally a place to enjoy the atmosphere and visit with the vendors and other friends. But right now, farmers markets are most importantly a source of food and a way to support local farmers. Consider sending just one household member to the market at this time.

How should I clean my produce?

Wash all produce before eating. There is currently no evidence that COVID-19 has been transmitted through food or food packaging. Wash the whole produce, even if you don't eat the peel. Wash items such as cantaloupe and potatoes with a produce brush. Commercial produce washes have not been shown to be more effective than water from the kitchen faucet. Research shows that clean, running water is the best way to wash produce.

Source: Londa Nwadike, University of Missouri Extension and Kansas State University Extension food safety specialist