

## 'Sourcing and preserving local strawberries'

We should buy strawberries from local producers because the social, environmental and economic benefits are huge in comparison to supermarket strawberries which may be cheaper at times but the quality, information given about the produce, the freshness, and the effects on the environment are nowhere as good. Buying local strawberries is supporting your local economy by putting money into local businesses which in turn puts money back into the community. This improves local prosperity by keeping money in the region rather than shipping it overseas. By keeping local money circulating within the region it promotes economic growth.

1

Environmental benefits of buying or sourcing local produce are extensive. When we buy strawberries from the supermarket, they generally come from mass producers either around New Zealand or from overseas (coming to the end of the season). This means huge amounts of carbon footprint coming from the trucks transporting the strawberries and from imports from plane and truck travel – this is called food miles. By buying local strawberries we are reducing food miles and our local berry farm also sources local services such as fertiliser. The farm also uses less packaging and recycles whenever possible thus reducing the amount of rubbish going into the landfill and reducing the stress on the environment. Our berry farm also sells fresh jam packaged in recycled glass jars which is also reducing the amount of glass going into the landfills (farm visit).

2

Socially, communities benefit a lot from buying local in many different ways. For example, you go out to our local berry farm and talk to the owners about their methods, how they grow their berries, what chemicals they use and where they source their services from etc. This gives peace of mind to everyone who buys their strawberries from them. The berry farm provides a 'pick your own' service around the Christmas period. Many local families now have a yearly tradition of going out to pick strawberries together. This has given them a chance to create memories with their families and friends. This gives parents stress free time to bond as a family at a time that is usually stressful. Also it is school holidays during this period so it gives the parents something to do with their children that is low cost and easy.

3

Preserving strawberries to make your own jam includes many sustainable practices such as recycling, composting, reducing food miles, reducing waste, reducing food packaging. Health benefits are another positive; also you are passing valuable life lessons on to the next generation that they too could pass on to future generations, developing traditions.

4

Preserving strawberries can save money in a few ways. Buying strawberries in season is when they are at their cheapest. You can freeze the leftovers as they retain their nutrients and flavour and then thaw when you are ready to make your jam. This can be cheaper than buying strawberries only on the day you want to make your jam because the prices fluctuate depending on availability. Also buying in season allows you to buy your fruit from your local berry farm instead of the supermarket. This ensures a good price for fresh quality fruit rather than the expensive lower quality supermarket fruit.

5

By making jam you can save lots of money by recycling old jars as you are not having to go and buy jars then all you have to buy or grow is the strawberries (as long as you have sugar). This will be cheaper than buying strawberry jam already made at the supermarket.

6

Buying/sourcing local strawberries or growing or preserving strawberries can affect our physical well-being. Eating fresh strawberries provides vitamin C, potassium, folate and fibre reducing the risk of bowel cancer by keeping the bowels regular and boosting the immune system which prevents infections/diseases. If we went and did 'pick your own' we would also be getting out in the sun, getting some exercise which will help to reduce the risk of weight gain and other obesity related diseases. The family could feel happy that they would be spending quality time together with family and friends sharing stories and developing stronger bonds. Also there is a sense of community with many local people out there doing the same thing. There could be people we know and could also catch up with a coffee. There could be a sense of achievement and a sense of belonging while spending time together with family and friends.