

Local Foods

 guidingstars.com/surprising-stars/local-foods

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Supermarket sales continue to show shoppers' growing interest in and demand for local foods. In the Hartman Group's Health + Wellness 2019 report, 69% of consumers say they look for locally grown products when shopping. To meet this demand, grocers are sourcing and marketing more local foods in their stores.

The same Hartman report noted that consumers across the board see locally sourced foods and beverages as healthier, but is that true? In this edition of Surprising Stars, let's explore how Guiding Stars evaluates local foods and determines if they really are a nutritious choice.

Guiding Stars & Local Foods

At Guiding Stars, we evaluate the nutritional quality of foods and beverages using information from the Nutrition Facts Label and the ingredients list. Foods are evaluated and receive a score and Guiding Stars rating based on the assignment of credits and debits.

Where a product was grown or produced is not considered in our measurement of nutrient density.

Why isn't a food's production location evaluated by Guiding Stars?

The term local refers to how close a food was grown or produced in relation to where it was sold. It is an unregulated and undefined term, so there is inconsistency in what a retailer calls local. Despite consumer perception, local foods have no proven health-related qualities compared to alternatives from farther away.

At Guiding Stars, we focus on empowering people to make more nutritious choices. Our approach is independent of other factors that determine consumer choice, but do not impact nutrition. For example, if a national and local brand of sausage are both high in saturated fat, added sodium, and added sugars, they should both be limited in our diets regardless of origin. And the majority of Americans could benefit from eating more fruits and vegetables, whether locally sourced or not.

Local Benefits

We appreciate that buying local foods often supports the local economy. We also value the opportunity to connect with farmers. It's valuable to learn how our food is grown and handled. However, buying local may not be an affordable or accessible choice for people with limited resources. Climate and geography also influences how local we can eat. A good variety of local nutritious foods may be limited at certain times of the year in places.

As you shop the aisles of our client's supermarket, you can trust that Guiding Stars ratings will direct you to the good, better, and best choices in terms of nutritional value. Our ratings are a completely independent assessment of the nutritional quality of foods and beverages. They are not influenced by where a product was sourced from. They are not influenced by price, brand, or manufacturer. Whether you're trying to buy local or not, look for Guiding Stars. Our one, two, and three-star ratings will help you make a nutritious choice.



Farmer's Market Vegetable, Beef & Brown Rice Bowl

Give this a try while there's plenty of fresh, locally grown vegetables available. You can personalize the dish by subbing in your favorite vegetables for the summer squash and asparagus.

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