

# Eat green for less

By Brandi Schlossberg

**B**y reducing the use of pesticides and harmful farming methods, organically grown food aims to increase the health of those who consume it, as well as the folks who work to raise it and the earth in which it's grown.

Despite widespread awareness of the benefits of eating organic, many people continue to choose food without the USDA Organic label — because it costs less. Being on a budget, however, doesn't have to mean eating food that's not raised in a healthy way.

“Adapt yourself to the season and the region,” said Philip Moore, Sustainable Eating Issue Chairman of the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club and treasurer of the Great Basin Community Food Cooperative. “By eating what is available regionally and seasonally, you will buy goods at the peak of their freshness and usually at the lowest costs.”

For instance, buy greens all year round,

strawberries in the spring, fresh vegetables in the summer, and tree fruits in the summer and fall. For a full calendar of seasonal fruits and vegetables in Nevada, visit [www.NevadaGrown.com](http://www.NevadaGrown.com).

According to Moore, eating food grown locally — even if it doesn't carry the USDA Organic label — is a smart move for both the planet and the shopper on a budget.

“Local food travels fewer miles to get to your table, therefore using less energy than crops grown elsewhere,” he said. “It's the freshest food you can get — except what you grow yourself.”

If you have a yard, raising your own fruits and veggies is one of the cheapest ways to eat “green.” If not, check out Reno's Great Basin Community Food Cooperative, which stocks both organic and locally grown food, or find a local farm.

“Some Northern Nevada farms, including Custom Gardens Organic Produce Farm, have

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**Food for thought:** Local food travels fewer miles to get to you, thus using less energy than crops grown elsewhere.

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on-farm produce stands,” said Virginia Johnson, co-owner of Custom Gardens, located in Silver Springs. “Our farm also offers a food-for-work exchange program.”

Both Custom Gardens and the Great Basin Community Food Cooperative sell subscriptions to weekly food baskets as well, which can add up to less than shopping for local or organic produce all year on your own.

One dilemma common to green grocery shoppers in Northern Nevada, especially those on a budget, is whether to buy local, organic or both.

“My answer is first, find local sources of food, typically defined as within 150 miles,” Moore said. “Second, buy organic from within the United States or Mexico, and third, wait until it is available from the first two sources.” 

## THE DIRTY DOZEN

Avoid the “dirty dozen,” and buy the following items organic whenever possible. These crops tend to have the most pesticides applied and are often genetically modified if not organic.

**Apples**  
**Bell peppers**  
**Celery**  
**Grapes**  
**Nectarines**  
**Peaches**

**Pears**  
**Potatoes**  
**Raspberries**  
**Cherries**  
**Spinach**  
**Strawberries**

### Local resources

[www.NevadaGrown.com](http://www.NevadaGrown.com)

[www.GreatBasinFood.coop](http://www.GreatBasinFood.coop)

[customgardens.home.mindspring.com](http://customgardens.home.mindspring.com)