



Bollington Civic Society

President

Registered Charity No. 501544

Our planet, our choice

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Food Miles a new imperial measurement?

Am I the only one who has seen an increase in publicity on the topic of food miles? Food miles are, in their simplest terms, the number of miles food has had to travel from its source to our plate, and not as the title might suggest a new standard measurement put forward from Brussels! It seems this is a very hot topic at present, adding to the ever-growing concern regarding health issues surrounding how the food has been sourced and produced. But how many of us consider where our food comes from?

Did you know that 95% of the fruit and half of the vegetables in the UK are imported?

The increased distances food has to travel accounts for increased fuel use, emissions from transportation, energy used to refrigerate and store items, potential decreases in the nutritional value of the food and, ultimately, an increase in waste to be disposed of by the UK. Many of you out there may say that this is the price of progress. What a great shame it would be not to be able to eat items such as strawberries in December or perhaps the obligatory parsnips with your Sunday roast in June (UK seasonality autumn). If I have to be totally honest, I would agree that it is a great treat to be able to have certain items out of season, but what about the impact this has on our local and national producers, and also the environment?

In a supermarket survey, the UK Food Commission has found bottled water that has travelled more than 10,000 miles (16,000km) to reach UK consumers.

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Each year, the average UK adult travels about 135 miles by car to shop for food, more often than not making trips to large, out-of-town supermarkets.

Check labelling on goods to see where they have come from; are there any British alternatives on the same shelf? Buy British produce in its season, buy locally, visit your local farmers market, try your hand at growing your own fruit and veg, and consider joining a 'veg box' scheme.

Supermarkets and other retailers will only change their purchasing and retailing strategies if we, the consumer, change our buying habits in their shops or by going elsewhere (e.g. local farmer / producer).

The issue of food miles is not going to go away, and we are likely to see more media coverage on the topic as time goes by. Whilst the supermarkets and other retailers have a great part to play in ensuring we reduce the number of food miles linked to our purchases, ultimately the choice of what to buy is down to the consumer, which means you and I must decide!

Don't forget to look out for the Bollington Carbon Revolution (BCR) stall at the forthcoming food event! Further information can be found at the following websites and the Bollington Carbon Revolution Website: <http://www.happy-valley.org.uk/revolution> and the following contact number: 07793365862.

<http://www.foodcomm.org.uk/>

http://www.bbc.co.uk/food/food_matters/foodmiles.shtml

<http://www.ukfoodonline.co.uk/allregions/allfruit12.htm>

<http://vegbox-recipes.co.uk/veg-boxes/find-a-box-scheme-results.php?county=Cheshire>

<http://www.sustainablestuff.co.uk/BuyingLocalSeasonableFood.html>