



Sustainability

eSafetyLine

Eating Sustainably

Usually when we think of sustainable natural resources we think of things like water, fossil fuels, lumber. It is also possible to look at what we eat as sustainable. The definition of a sustainable food is one in which the resources used, like soil and water as well as human labor, are used at the rate they are replaced. This can be a pretty cloudy explanation for us as well as the experts in this field. Basically, sustainable food is food that is grown in a way that works to keep the soil healthy, water clean and usable and allows those doing the farming to make a living wage.

This is all well and good but what does it mean when you're trying to feed your family? Where you live will certainly affect how successful you can be at this; if you live in a rural or suburban area it will be easier to use farmer's produce directly or to grow your own. Living in more southern climates allows more food types to be grown over a longer growing season. Here are some tips to help incorporate sustainable eating into you routine:

- **Eat Locally-** This means to use ingredients that you've grown or that you've bought at a Farmer's Market or stand. They are considered sustainable for 2 reasons: 1. They were probably grown on smaller, family owned farms, 2. Because they are grown locally there would be little or no transportation involved.
- **Learn to Cook-** By learning to cook from scratch, more local ingredients can be brought into your family's menu.
- **Eat Seasonally-** With the possible exception of the southernmost parts of the US, most fruits and vegetables grown locally will be determined by a local growing season. Salads, fruits and tomatoes will be much more plentiful (and cheaper) in the summer while root vegetable and hearty greens are more available in the fall and winter months.

- Preserve the Harvest- By eating locally or seasonally, it may be a good idea to find ways to preserve fruits and vegetables during their season. Common, simple methods include canning, dehydrating and freezing. This can help extend the availability of produce for your family well into the fall and winter.
- Grow Your Own- Even if you live in a city, you can grow something- even if it's just some herbs in flower pots on your windowsill.
- Make Your Own "Convenience" Foods- The more processed foods are the less sustainable (and typically more costly) they are. If you buy it from a store premade, like taco seasoning, chicken stock, pesto or tomato sauce, check the Web for a recipe and try to make it at home.
- Eat Animal Products- especially those raised locally. These animals can be more sustainable than grains and vegetables that are grown far away in huge corporate farms.
- Know How Much "Cheap Food" really costs- Although much of the food you can buy at a supermarket is cheaper at the register, it's important to think about why. Large corporate farms use large amounts of pesticides and fertilizers that take a toll on the land as well as your family's health.

This is an area of sustainability that can be more challenging to incorporate into your family than water or fuel conservation. However, eating this way is not only better for the environment and your family but is usually tastier too.

Discussion Questions

Why can eating animal products be more sustainable than vegetables?

What does it mean to "eat locally"?

MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/_____

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

___/___/___
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

___/___/___
Date