



Grapes: Buying Local Helps Reduce Pollution And Protect Your Health

The transportation-related pollution from importing Chilean grapes includes 45 times more particulate matter and 4 times more global warming impact than transporting grapes grown in California.

For more information, please contact **Diane Bailey** or **Miriam Rotkin-Ellman** at (415) 875-6100.



What are the hidden costs of the food you eat? The distance your food travels from the field to your plate (known as food miles) can substantially add to global warming *and* can increase many health risks such as asthma, cancer, and premature deaths. Let's compare locally grown grapes with grapes shipped 5,900 miles from Chile to California.

Why does it matter how far your grapes have traveled?

How your food is grown, stored, transported, processed and cooked can all influence how it impacts climate change and the environment. Transportation-related impacts are particularly important for imported foods, like grapes. Grapes are one of the most commonly imported fruits. Americans eat an average of 7 to 8 pounds per person of grapes each year, almost half of which are imported. In California alone, more than 270 million pounds of grapes are imported per year—almost all of them from Chile, which means they make a 5,900-mile journey in cargo ships and trucks to the Port of Los Angeles, where they then make their way to supermarkets across the state and beyond. This long journey has major costs both to the environment and to people's health. At the same time, California grows 99 percent of America's commercial grapes and exports about twice as much as is imported each year. Chilean

grapes may be more expensive at the market as well. In 2005, average wholesale prices in San Francisco for some varieties of Chilean grapes were higher by approximately 20-30 cents per pound.

Locally grown versus imported grapes in California

The transportation associated with importing grapes from Chile into California causes the release of about 14.6 million pounds of pollutants each year. This includes roughly 14 million pounds (7,000 tons) of global warming pollution annually—the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide emitted from 1,200 vehicles. Another 630,000 pounds (313 tons) of soot and smog-forming pollutants are released into the air—the amount of pollution from 70,000 vehicles.

This pollution is responsible for dozens of asthma attacks and hundreds of missed school days due to respiratory disease in California children.

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In 2005, the transport of grapes from Chile to California using trucks and cargo ships resulted in the release of an estimated 14.6 million pounds of pollutants that contributed to global warming and caused unhealthy air quality in California.

Five things you can do to help reduce your food miles

Choosing to buy local food can reduce global warming pollution, improve air quality, and protect your health. Here are five steps you can take as an individual to protect your environment and your health—without sacrificing the taste and quality of your food:

1. Buy food in season. Grapes are grown in California from June to December. Enjoy them when they are in season and eat other fruits when grapes are out of season here.
2. Buy produce from your local farmers' market. You might also be able to sign up for deliveries of food baskets from local farms, so check for community supported agriculture (CSA) programs in your area. For more information on buying local visit <http://guide.buylocalca.org/> or www.localharvest.org.



The Environmental and Health Price Tag in California

- 14,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂)
- 30,000 pounds of particulate matter (PM₁₀)
- 600,000 pounds of nitrogen oxides (NO_x)
- Up to 75 cases of asthma per year
- Up to 1,360 missed school days per year