

# Use Your **LOAF!**



**LOAF stands for food which is:  
Locally produced, Organically grown, Animal friendly and Fairly traded.**

Green Christian asks Churches to follow one or more of these principles when planning any communal meal. Bread is full of symbolic meaning for Christians. Jesus blessed and broke bread and gave it to his disciples saying, 'Do this in remembrance of me.'

In St John's Gospel Jesus described himself as 'the bread of life.'

When you next eat together can your Church adopt some of Green Christian's **LOAF** principles? Use your **LOAF** to make a difference!

[www.greenchristian.org.uk](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk)



**GreenChristian**

## Locally Produced:

► helping community and neighbour



Buying, growing, preparing, sharing, celebrating and consuming local food is a good way to serve God and help our neighbour and our local community. Sadly the rich variety of local fruit, vegetables, cheese, cakes and pastries has been replaced by the global market place, where you buy the same products all year round.

Purchasing food from local and regional sources means less climate-damaging food miles, less lorry traffic, fewer new roads and runways, support for the local economy and local farmers and regional variety. Mass-marketed food needs lots of packaging to protect it and keep it fresh – which in turn makes more waste. Food waste is a huge problem – caused by excess thrown away in the UK and inefficient storage systems in other countries. If food waste was a country it would be the world's third largest emitter of CO<sub>2</sub> (after the US and China). Importing fresh vegetables and fruit from water-poor countries can be harmful if it causes damage and hardship to ecosystems and people living in those countries.

Buying local supports greengrocers, butchers, bakers, fishmongers, and markets which need your support to survive. Rediscover seasonal potatoes, sprouts, carrots, cabbages, strawberries, apples, pears, and all the vegetables and fruit that thrive in your own region.

## Organically Grown:

► taking care of the Earth

Organic food is good for the environment and may be better for our health. We have a duty to take care of the Earth (Gen. 2.15).

Organically grown food, like the beetroot below, avoids the use of synthetic, oil-based fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides. If we eat organic food we will reduce our exposure to residues of antibiotics and pesticides.



In the Genesis story Adam was created from the soil of the Earth. We are earthy beings, dependent on soil and water. We share our planet with the diverse creatures that make up the Earth community, including the millions of creatures who live in the soil. Organic growing leads to a healthier soil with more organic material (from well-rotted manure and kitchen and garden compost), micro-organisms and other wildlife, and no genetically-engineered organisms are released into the countryside.

Organic farming is also helpful in tackling climate change. It uses less fossil fuel energy, avoids the very large nitrous oxide emissions from fertiliser manufacture and builds up carbon in the soil, removing it from the atmosphere. Instead of synthetic fertilisers, organic farming relies on composting, crop rotation, animal manures and solar powered clover.

## Animal Friendly:

### ► avoiding abuse

Our fellow creatures, including farm animals, are sensate beings. They feel pain and suffer when ill-treated. We have responsibilities from God to care for their welfare and to avoid abusing them (Luke. 12.6). We owe them special care, vigilance, respect, and attention.

14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions worldwide are due to livestock farming. To lower carbon – and especially methane – emissions, we all need to eat much less meat and dairy products than the average UK diet. All of us, whether we choose to be vegans, vegetarians or meat-eaters, can follow the 'A' of the LOAF principles.

Those eating food produced from farm animals need to do everything possible to ensure those animals are treated humanely. Avoid eggs, dairy products, meat and fish that have been produced using intensive farming methods and long distance lorry transport. Campaign for the reinstatement of local or mobile abattoirs. Beware of confusing labels: 'Farm fresh' and 'Country Fresh' are often used to sell factory-farmed products. They say nothing about animal welfare. Look for 'free range', 'outdoor reared/bred', or, as a first step 'RSPCA Assured'. Organically reared animals are subject to the strictest welfare regulations.

We are called to live justly with our fellow creatures, human and non-human. Abundant life for the whole Earth community demands that we produce our food in ways which nurture that life.



## Fairly traded:

### ► creating social justice

There will always be food that cannot be produced in quantity in north western Europe, including bananas, citrus, cocoa, olives, sugar, tea and coffee. Buying these fairly traded foods means that workers who produce the food get a fair wage and better working conditions. Farmers in the UK also need a fair price for their produce. Too often, prices to farmers don't even cover the cost of production. Thousands of coffee, tea and banana workers and farmers are living in poverty. Act justly by looking for the Fairtrade symbol.



Trade needs to be both sustainable and fair. Food writer Colin Tudge suggests: 'Transport of goods should not use disproportionate amounts of energy. The trade must be fair so that the producers do well out of it. The crops for export must be grown without wrecking the ecology of the producer country. Those crops should not in general be grown at the expense of self-reliance e.g. cash crops grown at the expense of land needed for food for the people living there'.

## LOAF Meals

Jesus often celebrated communal meals with his followers. You can follow his example! Download LOAF placemats from Green Christian's website. These invite people to enjoy their meal while thinking about the food they are eating.

Could your Church arrange a meal, like a Harvest, Alpha supper or picnic on Environment Sunday, where the food provided complies with at least some of the LOAF principles?

Some Churches provide simple meals of home-made soup and bread with local, organically grown ingredients.

Others put on a spread of local cheeses, meat from humanely-reared animals, salads, pickles, bread, sweets, fruit juices, wine, coffee and tea – all labelled to show where they were produced and all following the LOAF principles.

One Church distributed seeds around the neighbourhood in Spring, and celebrated harvest with food grown from the seeds.

## Further Information

Find more about LOAF on the Green Christian website: [www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources/loaf](http://www.greenchristian.org.uk/resources/loaf)

Other useful websites for further information on issues raised in this leaflet:

- ▶ **Local:** [www.bigbarn.co.uk](http://www.bigbarn.co.uk)  
[www.farma.org.uk](http://www.farma.org.uk)  
[www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)
- ▶ **Organic:** [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org)  
[www.gardenorganic.org.uk](http://www.gardenorganic.org.uk)
- ▶ **Animal Friendly:** [www.ciwf.org.uk](http://www.ciwf.org.uk)  
[www.aswa.org.uk](http://www.aswa.org.uk)  
[www.catholic-animals.com](http://www.catholic-animals.com)  
[www.vegsoc.org](http://www.vegsoc.org)  
[www.vegansociety.com](http://www.vegansociety.com)  
[www.msc.org](http://www.msc.org)  
[www.rspcaassured.org.uk](http://www.rspcaassured.org.uk)
- ▶ **Fairly traded:** [www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk)  
[www.traidcraft.co.uk](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk)  
[www.ukfg.org.uk](http://www.ukfg.org.uk)

## Other relevant issues

Large scale growing of crop plants to make bio-fuels is unjustly depriving poor people of food to feed rich people's cars: [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk)

GM technology, as currently used, is unnecessary in the developed world and not suitable for impoverished farmers in developing countries: [www.gmfreeze.org](http://www.gmfreeze.org)

## Use Your LOAF!

The decisions we make about our food have far-reaching effects, influencing the way food is produced and animals are treated. LOAF meals can raise questions about over-exploitation of soil and people, fishing methods which bull-doze the ocean floor, and industrial agriculture's dependence on oil for transport, fertilisers and packaging.

## Join Green Christian



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