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## **Nearly 30 families to try a localvore Thanksgiving**

By DAWSON RASPUZZI Herald Staff

With so much locally produced food available in the Rutland area, finding the essentials for a traditional Thanksgiving feast was easy for those who accepted the Thanksgiving Localvore Challenge.

Nearly 30 families committed to the challenge put forth by the Creative Economy's Sustainable Rutland group. Participants can eat only food produced within a 100-mile radius of the city, with the exception of three wildcard items,

Julie and Peter Cooper, longtime shoppers at farmers' markets, said they have always tried to eat fresh and locally produced foods, but this year they are taking it to another level by trying the localvore challenge.

Between the Rutland Winter Farmers' Market and the Rutland Natural Food Market, the Coopers got most of the essentials without leaving the city, including a 14-1/2 pound turkey raised on a farm in Orwell, acorn squash from West Rutland, apples from Shoreham and potatoes from Granville, N.Y.

"We found it very easy with the Winter Farmers' Market and the Co-op right here in Rutland," Julie Cooper said. "It was all brought right to us," her husband added.

In addition to supporting nearby farmers and the local economy, the Coopers said they also made the decision to do their part in helping the world.

"You don't know the hidden costs and the costs on the environment when food is coming from all over the world," Peter Cooper said.

Julie Cooper said all of the ingredients (minus the spices and sugar) she's putting into the feast for the couple and some friends will be from Vermont and eastern New York, although she did make some sacrifices to do so.

"I usually prepare peas as a green vegetable ... I couldn't find any fresh peas though because they're an early summer vegetable," Julie Cooper said. Instead, Cooper said, they found locally produced kale to fill the plate designated for green veggies.

The rest of the necessities were easy to come by though, she said.

"When the Winter Farmers' Market started, that brought out a lot of local growers that would have otherwise closed shop for the winter ... now we have an awful lot of stuff around, it's so easy," she said.

Jim Sabataseo, co-chairman of Sustainable Rutland, said many families like the Coopers responded to the Localvore Challenge.

"There were a lot of people I had talked to ... who said we've never done it but are going to try it," Sabataseo said. "One family is having 30 people over and said they'd be doing it."

On top of 25 to 30 people who said they would be participating, Sabataseo said others in the area are likely going localvore, or at least preparing meals with a percentage of local foods.

"There's a lot of people who it's second nature for and try to do local as much as possible and don't talk about it," Sabataseo said.

Sabataseo said because of the positive reaction the challenge received, the challenge will likely become another turkey-day tradition.

"Hopefully next year we'll do it even bigger and get more families into it, but we are satisfied with the amount this year and how receptive people were to the idea," he said.

"I just thought it was a darn good idea to do something different this year," Julie Cooper said.

Of course, there was one other reason the Coopers went localvore, her husband immediately added.

"Well, it's going to taste a lot better, too, local food is always better without all of the transportation of it and the added preservatives."

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