

[Bluegrass Local Food Summit Farm to Table by Beth Dotson Brown](#)

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[Bluegrass Food Summit: When consumers meet producers](#)

After breakfast today I went out into the fresh spring morning to pick strawberries and cut asparagus. It feels like such a luxury to walk out the door and find these marvelous treats. Everyone, however, isn't able (or sometimes interested) to do that.

For this last installment about the Bluegrass Food Summit, I think it's important to consider how some people are working to bridge the divides among producers, marketers and consumers. When people raise wonderful food locally, we cooks need to be able to get it! Although I didn't hear any definitive answers to the question about bridging this gap at the summit, lots of folks shared ideas from the podium and well as in conversations throughout the day.

It sounds like a simple problem to solve, but it's not. If you grow it yourself or a neighbor offers it to you, it's easy enough to come by but that's often not the case. Even when farmers in my community raise food that I would like to have, it's not always convenient to call them, see if they're home and if they have what I want. Although my town doesn't have a grocery store I can get to one in a neighboring community before I can get to some of the farms in my own county.

That's why I like it when they sell at the farmer's market, which has been one place for producers and consumers to meet for a number of years. Even towns that didn't host farmer's markets are beginning to rethink that. For the farmer, though, a day at the market is frustrating if they spend all of that time waiting for customers and sell very little. Any farmer can tell you there's always work to be done so it's not easy to be away from the farm for a day.

Businesses like Marksbury Farm Market in Garrard County and Good Foods Coop in Lexington make it easier for consumers to buy food produced locally. It's in one place with multiple products the consumer might want or need. I shop at both places and although some of the prices are significantly higher than what I could pay at a large chain retailer, I think it's worth it. As one speaker said, in general good food isn't cheap and cheap food isn't good. I also see it as a way of supporting the local economy.

In Louisville, the [Farm to Table](#) effort is working to connect consumers and farmers. That means farmers are getting help locating larger markets, like restaurants, and promoting their products. Sarah Fritscher spoke passionately about this effort, sharing some of its positive results. It looks like a model others could follow.

More and more, the food is being grown locally, especially in Kentucky where new ways of

farming continue to replace the traditional tobacco-based economy. The results can surely benefit us all.