

Rockwood authors present controversial alternative to eating local

By: Dawn Grimmer

It's common knowledge that eating local is best for our bodies in terms of nutritional content and better for the environment by reducing the energy footprint. However, there's another perspective that may have people rethinking their visits to their local farmers' market.

In *'The Locavore's Dilemma'* by Rockwood authors Pierre Desrochers and Hiroko Shimizu, they dispute the widely held belief that "sustainable farming" and "eating local" are the ways to solve the problems with our modern food supply system. After a thorough review of the evidence, the husband and wife team conclude that these claims are mistaken.

FYI: according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the definition of locavore is: "one who eats foods grown locally whenever possible."

A well-known critic

of the locavore movement, Pierre Desrochers is an associate professor of geography at the University of Toronto and author of over 40 peer-reviewed articles on economic development and globalization, energy and transportation issues.

Hiroko Shimizu was trained as an economist and holds a Master's of Public Policy from University Osaka.

In their bestseller, Desrochers and Shimizu's research deconstructs eating local saying it "distracts us from solving serious global food issues."

Desrochers states: "People would buy local if it was cheap and easy to get. Most food systems used to be local until fairly recently. If it was so good why did people go to such lengths to build this global food system?"

The authors point to the past when food scarcity was common. "People who remember the old days know how

difficult it was when there was a bad year for crops. My parents back home in Japan almost starved," says Shimizu.

When asked about the response they have received to their controversial opinions, Desrochers says: "Young people are idealistic; they don't understand. Our book gives a historical perspective. There are economies of scale and we actually now use less land, water, resources, energy and transportation. This is sustainable really and now we have food security," he says.

Rockwood residents for five years, the couple love the town and Shimizu says their goal is to educate people on this issue whenever they can. She says people only "hear one side of story: that local, organic food is best. We have done so much research; there's no evidence organic is better."

Desrochers sums up: "If you're willing to pay the price – it's your



Authors Hiroko Shimizu and Pierre Desrochers - Submitted photo

choice. Not everyone can afford to do this. As an alternative to feeding

people it's not realistic. You simply cannot scale this model up to feed

the over seven billion people on our planet today."