From Elizabeth City to Waynesville and many points between, farmers’ markets have sprouted up all across the Tar Heel State. To find a local farmers’ market near you, check out www.ncfarmfresh.com/farmmarkets.asp.

Bike, walk, carpool or take the bus

- For a true enviro-shopping event, use energy efficient transportation to and from your local farmers’ market. When you walk or bike (with a backpack for your produce purchases), you don’t use any fossil fuels. And, you will get fit along the way. Carpooling helps reduce air pollution and saves on gas money. It also gives you time to chat with family or friends!

Bring the whole family for food, fun and fitness

- Farmers’ markets are much more than a place to buy tasty, local fruits and vegetables. Many have booths with ready-to-eat foods. Look for a variety of yummy ethnic choices for breakfast and/or lunch. Some markets have music and dancing. Others have family-friendly entertainment and special events. Many are near a park or trail. This is perfect for a walk.

Bring your own bags or coolers

- Many farmers would like their customers to bring reusable bags for their purchases. The best bags for the environment are made of canvas, mesh or heavy plastic. These can be washed after you have used them several times. Many stores and farmers’ markets now have bags for sale. If you plan to buy meat or dairy products, be sure to have a cooler to keep them safe.

Be spontaneous (but only buy what you can use)

- A list is the most cost-effective way to shop for groceries. At the farmers’ market, it’s better to be more flexible. Produce will vary from week to week during the season. It’s hard to know what the best buys will be. If you don’t know how to fix something, ask the farmer for ideas. Be careful not to buy too much even if it looks so good. The cost of wasted food adds up quickly.

Buy from local sustainable farms

- A major benefit of these markets is that you can build a relationship with the farmers. These are the people who till the soil, feed our families and maintain our farming heritage. There’s no need to rush through the booths like you would a supermarket. Take time to talk with the vendors and to thank them for contributing to the local economy.