

# LOCAL MEANS GOOD!

By Suzanne Wentley

**U**nder the shade of a wide-brimmed hat and covered in a fine dust of rich soil, Diane Cordeau took a break from harvesting pink radicchio lettuce, kale, eggplant and onions at Kai-Kai Farm just west of Hobe Sound.

Slipping into the small packing room on the 40-acre farm, she checks boxes overflowing with produce for retail customers and scans the bags filling up for chefs in local high-end restaurants.

"It has to be fresh, fresh, fresh," she said.

For those who care about the taste, nutrition and quality of the fruits, vegetables, meat, eggs and dairy on their tables, it doesn't get any fresher than this.

With farms like Kai-Kai starting to sell more produce through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) memberships, at green markets and direct to restaurants, it's never been easier – and surprisingly affordable – to eat healthy, delicious foods.

Even as we lag behind more progressive communities elsewhere in the nation in the 'Farm to Table' movement, local residents have joined in the trend toward prioritizing their health by eating more produce every day that is locally grown and raised.

"We've noticed in the last three years a significant shift in awareness," said Diane's husband and partner at the farm, Carl Frost. "People are becoming much more focused on local food, what's in the food and the nutrition of the food."

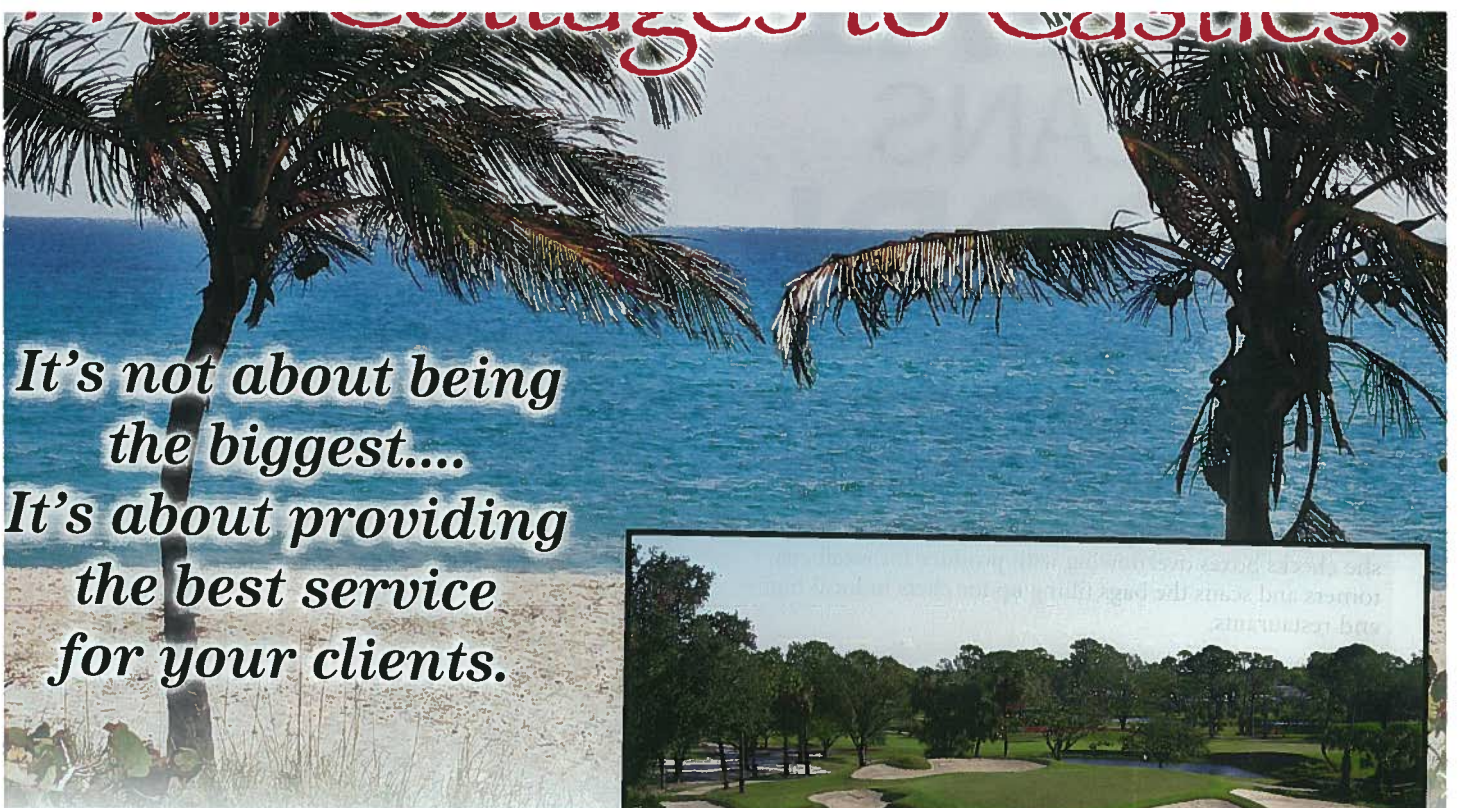
Cordeau and Frost sell to many restaurants in southern Martin and northern Palm Beach counties, including Cafe Boulud and The Breakers in Palm Beach; Café Chardonnay and The Cooper in Palm Beach Gardens; Culinary Café in Jupiter; Ocean Bleu in Tequesta; and The District Table in



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The 'farm to table'  
movement is here  
— and thriving





Lenore Pinello, the owner of In The Kitchen in Tequesta, also frequents the green markets in Palm Beach Gardens and West Palm Beach to purchase the vegetables she uses as a personal chef and for her cooking classes.

"I try to get as local and seasonal as possible," she said. "At Kai-Kai, their greens are in the ground that morning and on your table in the evening. It doesn't get any better than that."

Along with stopping by the market booths for Kai-Kai Farm (which also has a booth at the Stuart green market and markets run by FPL at their centers in Juno Beach and western Palm Beach County), Pinello likes to buy her meats, poultry and eggs from Farris Farm, another local producer.

Drive in Jupiter, which sells microgreens, sunflower sprouts and wheatgrass.

Eufhoria owner Scott Keeler produces about 15 pounds of greens a week – even though he wasn't always a huge fan of the healthy stuff.

"I didn't eat vegetables for the first 40 years of my life," he said. "but what we grow, it tastes so good! You can't buy what we sell at [the grocery store]. It can't get any fresher."

While Keeler sells amounts as little as a half-ounce, at larger farms, many people receive their fresh produce by signing up for CSA memberships. Colleen Nelson of Tequesta has two memberships – with Kai-Kai Farm and with Green





Frost said Kai-Kai Farm has about 100 members, and the cost is about \$30 for a box filled with seasonal produce, including greens, onions, radishes and strawberries.

Nelson said she looks forward to trying different types of vegetables, and points out it's a misconception that local, often organic, fruits and vegetables are more expensive.

"I actually think it's much less expensive, given the fact of quality, freshness and less waste," she said. "I feel it's very economical, compared to going to Whole Foods or relying on green markets when I might not get there in time to get the best pick."

that ship well, ripen off the vine and look good in the store, versus growing for taste. Anyone who's eaten a farm-fresh tomato," she said, "knows the difference."

Adriana Martinez, a ranger at Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Hobe Sound, buys her veggies from Shadowood Farm in western Palm City, where locals can rent organic plots of their own to tend during Florida's winter growing season.

While she currently doesn't have her own plot, she volunteers to weed and stake plants for the community plots. Not only does she find it relaxing and fun, she said it's important to her to support local food production.

"When you think about what you're eating, by the time it gets to the grocery store, how old is it?" she asked. "Most of the places where food was grown locally don't exist anymore. But the people at Shadowood are really passionate about what they do."

Along with growing their own vegetables at Shadowood, residents can also take educational workshops and purchase local produce, honey, eggs and goat's milk from a Saturday market. Memberships are available for reduced prices at the market.

There's also a retail store at the seven-year-old Kai-Kai Farm, located on State Road 76 on the way to Indiantown. Frost and Cordeau started the venture after learning about growing during their time sailing in the Solomon Islands near Papua New Guinea.







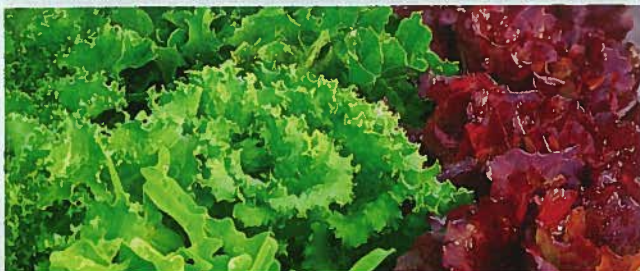
Shadowood Farm. Photo by Sarah Fer

"Like the coral foundation of the islands, local soils, bugs and weather conditions can make the effort a challenge. They've learned what to grow from fellow farmers, talking to chefs and a lot of trial and error." Frost said.

"A lot of rain and bugs – it's the worst environment you can get for growing crops," joked Frost, who grew up in Palm Beach Gardens and Hobe Sound.

Still they do it because they love to see people enjoying local food. Daily, they talk with local chefs to decide what is ready to harvest and what they want to be grown. Their 12 employees also have a lot of conversations with customers at green markets.

"It makes me so happy to see so many people happy about my food," Cordeau said. "That makes me want to plant."



## Kai-Kai Farm

8006 S.W. Kanner Highway, Indiantown

**How to get their food:** Join their CSA, pick up veggies at green markets in Stuart, Palm Beach Gardens or West Palm Beach, or visit their farm noon to 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays or Saturdays

**More information:** [www.kaikaifarm.com](http://www.kaikaifarm.com)

## Shadowood Farm

6220 Southwest Martin Highway, Palm City

**How to get their food:** Rent a plot and grow your own, or buy produce at the farm from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays

**More information:** [www.shadowoodfarm.com](http://www.shadowoodfarm.com)

## Eufhoria

342 Toney Penna Drive, #4, Jupiter

**How to get their food:** Call for custom orders or stop by their bay from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday