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# Pie tour promotes local goods

## Group goes cross-country to tout homegrown food

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By TERRY BIBO

of the Journal Star

**KEWANEE** - Apple? Cherry? Blueberry?

That's so three weeks ago.

When you eat pie at every stop from Los Angeles to New York, you're bound to venture into territory most people have never considered. There was zucchini (Lawrence, Kan.), chocolate pear (Minneapolis), and peach lemonade (Laramie, Wyo). Every niche of America puts its own spin on the local product.

"I was sitting in my office one day and I told my boss, 'I think it would be a great idea to promote local food by eating pie,'" says Diane Hatz, the founder of Sustainable Table, a New York-based, not-for-profit agency that educates consumers about food issues. "So here we are."

Sustainable Table outfitted a tour bus and crammed a five-week agenda with stops at ranches, farmers markets, television stations and colleges. Hatz, bus driver Sharon Leete and documentary filmmaker Steve Clack are on for the whole ride from a West Hollywood restaurant Aug. 2 to Farm Aid in New York on Sept. 9. But food experts and farm advocates have hopped aboard for shorter stints, including Elmwood's Karen Hudson, who consults with the group on projects like the educational cartoon "The Meatrix." She touted a beer and

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peanut chiffon pie.

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"I wanted to try for most unusual," Hudson said.

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For the record, it wasn't bad. But it had to get in line with the eight different pies the group sampled when Hudson joined the Eat Well Tour in the restaurant at Good's Furniture. The Good's pastry chef even came out to share cooking tips and history, particularly for the sour cream raisin the group apparently hadn't seen elsewhere.

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"For me, pie is about something bigger," Hatz said as the forks flashed.

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A veteran of marketing in the music industry, she tries to get her points across in a humorous and non-threatening way. Pie brings a down-home feel to the sustainable table, but the underlying message is serious: Locally grown food is becoming a way of life for good reasons.

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"Taste is number one," Hatz said. "Fresh, local food simply tastes better. Health is number two. You're going to get more local, less chemical."

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Sustainable farmers believe in putting something back into the land, she said. Close to home means lower shipping costs, as well as fewer chemicals, and a more direct connection to consumers. Hatz said the most surprising thing is the growing personal connections the group sees between food producers, customers, markets, restaurants, food banks.

The Eat Well Tour hopes to help by weaving some of those connections together on its Web site, [www.sustainabletable.org/roadtrip](http://www.sustainabletable.org/roadtrip). Later, Clack will assemble a movie from footage he's shot along the way.

Plus, of course, there is pie. If you can't board the bus, you can still try peach lemonade pie at home.

"The recipe is actually on our Web site," said Sustainable Table's Dawn Brighid.

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