Student Anthony

Does the term of 'food miles' help the consumer to choose food? ('food miles' defined and why is it important and relevant)

According to Professor Tim Lang, food miles describe the distance food was transported from the farm to consumer in the early 1990s in the United Kingdom (Organiclinker, 2011). Due to economic globalization, the food miles increased. This means that the import and export are gets grows. Nowadays, since the amount of stores is increasing in difference places of the city, the food miles also increase. What is more, with the purchase online that has sending the foods to your home, the distance can be further and further. This article considers food miles in three sections. The first one is to assess the environmental influence of food, then, the social effects and finally the economic issues.

The assessment about environmental influence of food because of the food miles is vital. Basically, the process of food transport will produce the Carbon Dioxide which may accelerate the speed of global warming. For example, food transport adds nearly 19 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year (Climate choices,2).The different approaches of transferring food, which includes vehicle, water and air, thereby reducing the distance of food miles is the hinge action that could reduce the carbon dioxide emissions. However, since the typical seasonal climates, some food can only be produced at some point, and in that point of view, people may need to transport food from other place or even import food from other country. Furthermore, as a result of the various locations of countries, food can be various in different countries as well, so it needs be transported if needed by other countries’ citizens. Therefore, how to help consumers choosing food, which is local or seasonal, needs to be discussed.

Next, food miles also have an effect on society. It is divided into two aspects, on the one hand, it advantages people; and, on the other hand it produces some disadvantages. As advantages, people can buy the food that produced in different seasons in a shop. In this way, it will increase the employment opportunities in the whole society so that people can get jobs from transportation or selling. For disadvantages, food miles also impacts on the environment such as air pollution and carbon dioxide. As a result of long distance transport and the gasoline that is from petroleum refining used by that transportation, the emission produced by different transportation soared. Moreover, transportation will increase the rate of congestion and the probability of accident. Since the track used to delivering food can make big noise, and because of the increasing of transporting the food, it might contribute lots of noise in the city, which is bad for people’s health.

Thirdly, the transport of food miles gives economic pressure as it leads to the use of petroleum that is a costly scarce resource. The price of petroleum is increasing daily and the cost of transportation is also soaring. The longer the distance, the more money need to be paid, which means consumers have to pay more for their food than they should. It will influence GDP as well, equal to the sum of consumption, government spending, investment, and the difference between the import and export (Anderton, 2008), as the increased price on food may determine the decrease of consumption. If the price of food got too high, it can cause problems. Not only will the decreasing demand hurt the producer, it may also cause social instability because of the lack of food of poverty.

Food miles are increasing and this indicates the complexity in food market as well. It could be seen as a good thing, because the success of the long distance delivery system shows the convenient developed among people. It can also be considered as a way of increasing employment. What’s more, the effects on environment are huge as what discussed above. Others, it may make governments fail if the externality got bigger and the wrong reaction done by the governments. For these reasons, as the influence penetrated into several aspects already, “Food miles” is a crucial element on the development of society.

Reference:

Anderton, A. (2008), *Economics*, 5th edition, London: Causeway Press.

Climate Choices - Children's Voices [online], Available at <http://www.climatechoices.org.uk/pages/food3.htm> [Accessed 3th December 2011]

Organic Linker [online], Available at <http://www.organiclinker.com/food-miles.cfm> [Accessed 3th December 2011]

Feedback:

Anthony, you have written a good essay about the topic given, and I think you have covered the main points well.

I can see that you have used the guide I gave you, well done!

I notice that you have written a well-structured essay, however there are a few issues.

Firstly your choice of references/ materials seems to be very limited and perhaps you could read more about the subject to qualify some of the information with some juicy facts and interesting details from other books, journals, or news articles;

secondly, I am not sure what the word- count is for this essay and you may have to expand on it quite a bit if you are expected to write 2000 words;

finally, there are some persistent grammar mistakes including articles, use of the past tense, plural is/are.

Please check the post- feedback exercises I have given you.

RG