

Online Green Grocer Provides Organic Produce to Kodiak

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A produce delivery system has gained popularity with some Kodiak residents, giving them access to fresh, organic produce each week. Produce distributed by Full Circle, a company based in Washington State, is shipped to Kodiak weekly and distributed to six different pick-up sites around town.

More than 150 local members participate, including Sasha Keplinger, who runs the pick-up site for Bells Flats. She said the contents in the boxes vary, but members can always substitute items with other things Full Circle offers, based on their needs.

"These produce items aren't always available in Kodiak. You may not be able to get organic grapes here in Kodiak, but you can from full circle farm depending on the time of the year, they have different produce available."

Amber King is a site sales associate with Full Circle in Alaska and said the company works with members in Washington, Idaho, California and the Last Frontier. More than 40 percent of the produce in the boxes comes from Full Circle farms, with the rest coming from regional farms and national distributors.

In general, King said the company aims to provide more options and better produce to its members, but tries to do so by supporting local agriculture, not stifling it.

-- (Full Circle 2 : 30 "There's no way that full circle would ever put a local farmer out of business. We fully support local farms and locally organic produce and grown produce. And if Alaska was able to get to the point where we had a large enough volume of that, we would certainly be making those connections and using that, but now it's such a barrier for local Alaskan farms to get certified, that there's not enough out there for us to utilize local ingredients in that direction.")

As for competition with local groceries, King said it helps to bring more produce options to places like Kodiak where quality produce isn't readily available.

-- (Full Circle 3 : 22 "I think it has actually had a beneficial impact, Safeway is actually one of the companies that we're selling our produce to down in Puget Sound that is in excess from our produce boxes. So personally I've noticed a much better variety in not only organic produce, but healthier grains and fresher fruits and vegetables since full circle has arrived. I think it's making people educated and realize that they can make some positive changes in their families and their households and that shopping is the best way to do that.")

King, who is in charge of Alaska sales, said shipping costs for the boxes, like most things, are relayed to the customer. This means someone in Kodiak is most likely paying a different price than someone in Anchorage. Boxes range from \$30 to \$60 per week, depending on size. King said the produce is picked and packed on Sundays, and typically delivered to members on a Wednesday, depending on location. Those interested in participating can sign up online at full circle dot com.

Full Circle isn't the only distributor of organic produce on the island. Safeway carries a selection of certified organic produce, as does Cactus Flats Natural Foods, whose owners could not be reached for comment.

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