

'Buy local' key to agri-success: author

Last Updated: Friday, January 14, 2011 | 1:11 PM ET

[CBC News](#)

The success of the 'local food' movement has the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) looking for more ways to expand agri-business. (CBC News)

The success of the local food movement has the WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) looking for more ways to expand agribusiness.

On Thursday, author Gord Hume spoke to politicians and planners in Ruthven, Ont. about the benefits of buying local. The former London city councillor and broadcaster has written the book *The Local Food Revolution*.

Hume sees tremendous potential for growth in Windsor-Essex's agricultural industry.

"It's wonderful to have the wine tours and everything else. Once you've done that, then how do you take it to the next level? How do you add jobs?" asked Hume.

"Can we build a food terminal here? Does it make sense to ship tomatoes from Leamington to the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto, and then ship them back? To me, it doesn't."

The power of food

Hume believes municipalities need to wake up to the power they have over food.

'Does it make sense to ship tomatoes from Leamington to the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto, and then ship them back?'

—Gord Hume, Author

"Food is the largest single item that municipalities license," said Hume. "Think of all the restaurants, all the food stores and so on."

Hume applauds the idea of turning Windsor airport into a cargo hub, with food as a major focus.

"We've talked about a food terminal. Having food suppliers at the airport is a logical extension," said Hume. "That will help to grow the manufacturing base. Let's face it, a lot of the automotive jobs aren't coming back."

Development commission backs agribusiness

The WEEDC is excited by the success of its 'look for local' campaign, and is vowing to do everything it can to support local agriculture.

"We need to buy our own product," said Lindsay Boyd from the development commission. "We know where

it comes from, we know the standards, you don't have to ship it anywhere."

Joseph Byrne, who sits on the agribusiness committee of the development commission, doesn't see how shipping food to Toronto and back is in anyone's interest.

"If we're looking to offer the best supply to the consumer. That means pick it and get it to the consumer as quickly as possible," said Byrne.

The development corporation sees the wine industry as a shining example of how value can be added to food crops, and said the first goal is to add more processing capacity to local food production.