ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Food Security in La Plata County, Colorado
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ABSTRACT: Local food security in La Plata County, Colorado is the subject of this research. In general, high levels of food security correlate with high levels of production, transportation, and education. Simply because a nation grows mass quantities of food in a single isolated area does not mean that the entire country is food secure. Every region possesses a unique definition of what food security means to the local population. For La Plata County, the general public defines good food security as a situation where all people have access to safe, healthy, affordable, local food. Many other factors contributing to varying definitions and meanings of food security are discussed throughout the paper. History and tactics of American agriculture (organic and industrial) are also discussed. Although local growers are able to supply seasonal produce to those who wish to pay for it, the overall trend proves that the supply is very limited (approximately 2.5% of food consumed in the county is locally grown). The majority of La Plata County growers follow organic practice techniques, which produces a final product very high in quality and generally very low in quantity. Industrial agriculturalists currently feed the bulk of the country. However, their products are not produced, stored, or distributed in sustainable or healthy ways. Industrial agriculture relies on cheap inputs (non-renewable resources), which possess huge problems for both the present (environment, politics, economics, etc.) and the future (health, soil, air quality, etc.). By combining quality traits from organic practice agriculture with productive traits from industrial agriculture, higher levels of quality produce can be produced in La Plata County. With the addition of more cultivated acreage and higher efficiency levels being met, local food security levels can begin to improve in La Plata County.