



**Friends of
the Earth**

What is the Shop Local First campaign?

Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.

Friends of the Earth is:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and over 60 national organisations worldwide
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.

To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051

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What is the Shop Local First campaign?

The supermarkets campaign is pushing for policy changes from the government and competition authorities to restrain the growth of the biggest supermarkets and give more support to independent local shops. But policy change takes time and meanwhile local shops continue to close down or be taken over. The Shop Local First campaign aims to support local shops and markets now by encouraging more people to shop at them.

The short term aims are to:

- Raise consumer awareness of the benefits of shopping in local shops vs shopping in big supermarkets.
- Get consumers to shift at least some of their shopping from big supermarkets to local shops.

The medium/long term aims are to:

- Help to keep local shops viable by encouraging shoppers to use them.
- Get local planning policies in place that support local shops and restrict new supermarket development.
- Encourage local shops to source more local/organic/ethical products by building a relationship with them.

What's included in this pack?

- 1) Introduction – What is the Shop Local First Campaign
- 2) Background – Why is this activity needed and suggestions for further reading
- 3) What can local groups do? - Campaign Ideas
- 4) Case studies from the UK and US
- 5) Q&A briefing to help you answer those sticky questions from the public, journalists, or shopkeepers
- 6) Sample poster and leaflet – you can order more of these if you decide to go ahead with a 'Shop Local First' campaign
- 7) Draft press release for you to adapt
- 8) Response form – to let us know what you're planning, any good examples/campaigns you know about and any extra resources needed for Shop Local Campaigns

The materials in the pack will be available online from May on Friends of the Earth's Community website at

http://community.foe.co.uk/campaigns/real_food/supermarkets/index.html



What are we asking groups to do?

We are asking groups to run a “Shop Local First” campaign this Spring/Summer to raise consumer awareness about the threat to their local shops and the benefits of shopping at them. We think that this campaign could make a real difference in helping to make sure that your community has an alternative to shopping in the big supermarkets

This is different to a Day of Action as we are not asking all groups to take part in the same activity on the same day. Groups can do this as a one off activity in Spring/Summer 2006 but ideally we’d like you to see it as an ongoing activity which can be built upon in the future.

Included in this pack are several ideas for how to do this – you can choose to do as much or as little as you like and you should be able to find an activity that suits the members of your group and is appropriate to your local area – we’d like to see local shops promoted in town and city centres, villages and local high streets. We’ll be providing materials for this activity including some brand new posters and leaflets.

This is different to a Day of Action in other ways too. We are not asking you to get signatures on postcards to send to MPs or ministers, although this may be a part of the campaign in the future. At this stage the activities are more about awareness raising and getting shoppers to switch from the supermarket for at least some of their shopping. However, we have included ideas for further action e.g. putting pressure on your council to adopt planning policies that support local shops.

Ideally we’d like to see this year’s activities as a contribution towards a longer term local campaign aimed at getting people to do more of their shopping in independent shops and at the same time getting independent shops to sell more locally and ethically sourced products (see ‘Taking it Further’ in the campaign ideas section). But the most important thing right now is to get people using their local shops.

How will this activity make a difference?

Campaigns to support local shops can really make a difference. In the US several Shop Local campaigns have been set up under the Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (see USA in the case studies section). Although so far there has been little monitoring of their impact, one survey found that:

- 57% of participating stores said the campaign had a positive impact on their business.
- 21% said they had an increase in sales.
- 90% said they would participate again.

In the UK too local shops think it’s worth joining campaigns to encourage shoppers to shop locally. Thousands of shopkeepers have been involved in an annual campaign run by the Federation of Wholesale Distributors (FWD) called My Shop is Your Shop – Local and Proud of it (see <http://www.myshopisyourshop.co.uk/>). Look at the Case Studies in this pack for some great examples of how locally run campaigns are making a difference.

Research also shows that people would be more loyal to their local shops if they were more aware of the threats to them:

In a survey for the FWD in 2005 more than half (52%) of respondents said they would change their shopping habits if their local store was under threat from larger, non-local competition.

That's why we think it's worth running 'Shop Local First' campaigns to help support local shops.

Why now?

Saving our local shops feels more urgent than ever. The rate of loss of local shops is accelerating (see Background section) and the big supermarkets have their sights set on continued expansion including more shops on the high street. But this is also a time of great opportunity to support local shops. In 2006 there have already been several events that have focussed attention on the growth of supermarkets and the threat to local shops.

- In February the All Party Parliamentary Group published its report on High Street 2015 urging the government to take action to curb supermarket power and protect small shops.
- At the same time the Tescopoly website (www.tescopoly.org), set up by Friends of the Earth and others, featuring local planning site battles gained a lot of media attention.
- In March, following a campaign by Friends of the Earth, the Association of Convenience Stores and others, the Office of Fair Trading proposed a new Competition Commission inquiry into the big supermarkets.

We think that running Shop Local First campaigns whilst there is already media interest in the value of local shops and the problems with supermarket dominance will really help to raise shopper's awareness and make them think about the consequences of where they shop.