What role do ethical ideas about civic and environmental responsibility play in motivating farmers to participate in local food systems? And do local food systems actually provide environmental benefits, in terms of incentivizing farmers to conserve natural resources and reduce reliance on agricultural chemicals? Surprisingly, these questions are far from settled in the literature on local food. In this talk, Dr. Schoolman will discuss findings from studies using diverse sources of data, including original surveys of Midwest fruit-and-vegetable farmers and vendors at farmers markets in New Jersey. Preliminary findings point to the importance of distinguishing between different ways of marketing local food. From farmers markets to CSAs to farm-to-school, different ways of participating in local food systems can be characterized as having different relationships to the social and ecological “embeddedness” and the agricultural practices of farmers. These findings have implications for how everyday people, advocates, and policymakers might evaluate what can be achieved by continuing to support local food systems in the Midwest, New Jersey, and all across the U.S.