



Farm to Vending Machine: Grab 'n Go Healthy, Green Meals & Snacks

Sustainability & Healthy Living Sweeps Chicago with Luke Saunder's Passion Project, 'Farmer's Fridge'

EvG team member Kelly O'Brien met with Farmer's Fridge creator & owner, Luke Saunders and shared what she learned about the innovative new concept.

As their website indicates, **Farmer's Fridge** is a 'fresh twist on an old concept' of **healthy sustainable salads and snacks**....at your finger tips in a kiosk - aka...a vending machine. This kiosk is unlike any you have seen before though! Healthy primarily **organic** salads and fresh daily made snacks in **eco-sustainable packaging** is yours with the touch of a screen. The concept is absolutely brilliant and the very first thought to go through my mind was 'What took you so long'? In Chicago, there is absolutely nothing like it!



Farmer's Fridge was created in the mind of Luke Saunders who was traveling for business in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He was frustrated with being on the road frequently for work and simply unable to find healthy **plant based** options that he could 'grab & go'. Thus, a concept was birthed!

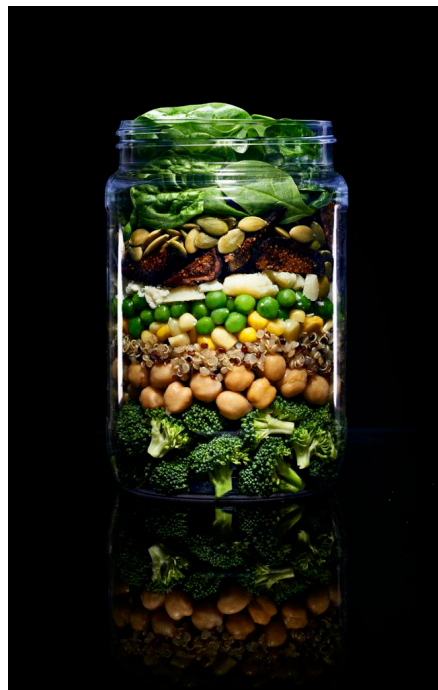


He came to **Chicago** and after months of pouring his heart, soul & finances into creating this concept, Farmer's Fridge opened at its first location in the Chicago Loop {address at the end of this article}. Luke desperately wanted healthy food to be more accessible to people who 'just do not eat healthy' which is the large majority of our city residents. Yes, there are juice cleanses in Chicago and eco-friendly restaurants but Farmer's Fridge is attracting a community of folks in the Loop who also **cannot afford the upscale organic food options** in our city. Farmer's Fridge is for everyone and the more I researched and listened to Luke, I could actually feel the 'green' energy building.



There is so much fabulousness as far as healthy sustainably living wrapped into this kiosk concept that I almost didn't know where to begin! Here are some bullet points:

- Luke & two other cooks make all of the salads at Farmer's Fridge **every single morning**. The ingredients are primarily organic & always **local**. Let me add these salads are large, hearty and incredibly healthy. I ate one for lunch and couldn't finish it so I saved the rest for dinner. I was hooked once I tasted the smart veggie combination and homemade dressing (more on that later).
- The packaging is, in one word, environmentally impressive! Luke was thinking of our environment and for that, we thank you Luke! All jars are **100% recyclable** and there is **on-site recycling** at the kiosk itself. The salads come in these really cool rather stylish jars that are made from **BPA-and Phthalate-free plastic**! This includes silverware & yes, even the napkins are eco-friendly! Yay! Because of the low oxygen diffusion rate, you can keep the salads in your fridge up to two days! They even 'minimize the paper labeling on the jars by screen-printing most of the information. This means less paper waste.
- One of my absolute favorite benefits of Farmer's Fridge that made me appreciate Luke's creation even more is that at the end of each day, the salads are removed from the kiosk and **taken to a local food pantry** to feed those Chicago folks in need. Yes, daily!
- There is just so much creative & thoughtful energy put into the salad combinations and a nutrient profile used in building the layers of each salad. Salads are built around balancing **proteins, antioxidants**, healthy fats, etc. using **superfoods**, nuts, seeds and the most delicious organic ingredients! The names of the salads are a lot of fun as well: The Cheater, Antioxidant Salad, The Detox, North Napa Salad (which I had that was mouthwatering deliciousness). The dressings are sensational!! Farmer's Fridge website includes all of the percentages of vitamin consumption as well as each ingredient via each salad! Brilliant! You **know exactly what you are consuming** and it's all healthy living goodness!
- Farmer's Fridge is **SPE-Certified**, which stands for Sanitas Per Escam, or "Health Through Food" in Latin. It also refers to SPE Certified's **holistic** approach which focuses not just on health but on the Sourcing, Preparing and Enhancing of food.



I could without a doubt carry on about the benefits of Farmer's Fridge to all of you for another hour but you all have other things to do and this is supposed to be an article and not a book :-)

When is Luke expanding Farmer's Fridge so everyone outside of Chicago can be spoiled with this sensational food? He smiled when I asked him this question and I gathered he gets asked this frequently. Farmer's Fridge is literally just getting it's sea legs in the city of Chicago (lucky us) therefore, multiple kiosks will first be seen in Chicago!

<http://ecovegangal.com/eat/restaurant-reviews/item/1198-farm-to-vending-machine-grab-go-healthy-green-meals-snacks>