

Winning It At Home

By Karen Langhauser, Editor-in-Chief, Food Manufacturing

I'm trying hard not to blame myself for the Yankees' Game 5 World Series loss. In my defense, the Yankees' starting lineup was sans Posada, Matsui and Cabrera. AJ Burnett was pitching on short rest. And things just got worse as the game progressed. The Phillies were hitting home runs, forcing the Yankees to make five pitching changes, and at no point did Mariano Rivera, the one change that is always welcomed, even take his jacket off.

And then, in the ninth inning, with two men on base, Jeter came to the plate as the tying run with no outs. For a fleeting moment, victory seemed within reach. And I turned to my fiancé and committed what might amount to a cardinal sin for all Yankees fans by saying, "I don't want them to win it in Philly this way."

No sooner did the words leave my mouth than Jeter grounded into a double play, which was quickly followed by Teixeira's strikeout. Game over. I made the Yankees lose.

At the end of the game, as I shamefully shut off the TV and grabbed a consolation beer, I had a long discussion with myself about loyalty. (No one else was speaking to me at this point anyway.) Ultimately, I granted myself absolution because, as usual, I was the only one who decided to say out loud what others were probably thinking.

I'm sure the Yankees, Joe Girardi and most of their fans want the World Series victory in the Bronx because, in so many ways, a local victory tastes so much sweeter than one on the road.

It seems as though many consumers feel the same away about the food they eat. Those who support "food patriotism" affectionately refer to themselves as "locavores." They fiercely support their local farmers and restaurants, and swear that locally grown and produced foods taste better than those that are mass produced and shipped across the country. They believe that this support will help build more self-reliant local food economies.

Essentially, locavores feel that consumers control the winning lineups that are necessary to compete with food industry giants, and the best venue for sustainable victory is right in our own backyards.

But is this a risky credo to adopt? If we forgo the convenience, variety and lower prices offered by chain supermarkets once and for all, are we backing ourselves into

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a corner? Did I just force the Yankees to try to grow watermelons in the Bronx in November?

What it comes down to for me is loyalty in moderation. I can still support my local farmers without launching a full-scale boycott, and essentially contributing to the collapse of America's entire food distribution network and its ability to provide everyone with affordable, attainable food options.

And I won't feel guilty if I spend a little more and treat myself with fresh blueberries from the farm stand when they are on sale at Wal-Mart, just like I won't feel guilty if I get my wish to see the Yankees win the World Series tonight on their home turf, because we all know where the spoils belong.

What are your thoughts on the World Series? Locavores? Food loyalty? Let me know by e-mailing me at karen.langhauser@advantagemedia.com [1].

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