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A Step Towards a "Greener" Dining Services: Procuring Locally for the Health of Students and the Earth

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Recommended Citation

Fischer, Jessica, "A Step Towards a "Greener" Dining Services: Procuring Locally for the Health of Students and the Earth" (2017). *Senior Honors Projects*. Paper 529.

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JESSICA FISCHER

(nutrition & dietetics)

A Step toward a “Greener” Dining Services

Sponsor: Marsha Garcia (Sustainability Office)

Supporting local food has been a goal of dining services for some time now. Buying local means you know exactly where your food is coming from. Typically the farmer has a direct relationship with the processors that puts pressure on them to abide by all laws and regulations. Secondly, the shorter time between the farm and your table, the less likely that nutrients will be lost during the time it takes to transport food across the country. Third, buying local food builds a sense of community. When you buy direct from a farmer, you’re engaging in a time-honored connection between eater and grower. Knowing farmers gives you insight into the seasons, the land, and your choice of food. On another interesting note, local food keeps taxes down. According to several studies by the American Farmland Trust, farms contribute more in taxes than they require in services, whereas most development contributes less in taxes than the cost of required services. Lastly, buying local food is an investment in our future. Supporting local farmers today means you are helping to ensure that there will be farms in your community tomorrow. This is important in regards to food security, especially in light of an uncertain energy future and our current reliance on fossil fuels to produce, package, distribute and store food.

As a nutrition major, my classes the past four years have served as a reminder of the ever growing environmental issue occurring on this planet. Where we get our food, who we get it from, where is it grown, how is it grown, who is doing the labor, how that system is affecting other systems are all very important questions to ask oneself when choosing what we eat. URI Dining Services, as with any large scale institution, has the power and resources to make a difference in its eco footprint. My project encompasses a few different strategies to help further Dining Services sustainability efforts. These strategies include tracking and marketing where Dining Services gets its food and what companies have sustainable affiliations, advertising ways students can make a difference in their diet with the environment in mind, and performing a study to assess the students’ knowledge of their food options. By making students more aware of their choices, they more aware of the power they have to make a difference

Objectives:

- Learning Objectives
 - Determine the percentage of foods/produce purchased by URI Dining Services that is considered "local"
 - Develop a tracking system with Dining Services and the contracted vendor to monitor yearly progress of procuring a larger percentage of local foods/produce
 - Develop a "marketing" strategy to bring awareness of Dining Services' efforts to procure locally, as well as other sustainable practices dining services already does
 - Develop a study to assess how marketing foods as “local” increases or decreases students eating habits of those foods
- Learning outcomes

- Creation of marketing strategy for URI's dining services sustainability efforts
- Creation of tracking method for local foods being used in dining services
- Assessment of how marketing foods as local may affect eating habits of students

1. Percentages of Food with Sustainable Affiliations at URI: Disclaimer: Data based on available information referring to manufacturers & distributors headquarters

- a. Beef - 75% "Local"
- b. Chicken - 31% Antibiotic Free
- c. Eggs - 91% Organic, 8% "Local", 91% American Humane Certified
- d. Fish - 89% MSC Certified Sustainable Seafood
- e. Clams - 100% "Local"
- f. Pork - 37% "Local", 18% Antibiotic Free
- g. Turkey - 77% "Local"
- h. Vegan - 80% "Local"
- i. Butterfield Produce - 1.25 % Local
- j. Hope Produce - 5.5% Local

2. Tracking System

- a. <https://docs.google.com/a/my.uri.edu/spreadsheets/d/16gFmJONNVNxdf4ULcdE-c4IEiY3rIqCAuKxn1gDVIm8/edit?usp=sharing>

Food	Brand	Origin	Sustainable Affiliations	Purchased	Total(\$)
Beef		NorthEast US			
Comet beef raw Ok Neighborhood		Carving Room		2095	
Beef Delmonico	Bill	Wild Harvest - line caught tuna	California - US tuna salad, salad bars, delis	16521	
Harold Pate's	Edward & Sara	x		82517	
Harold Pate's	Edward & Sara	x		2245	
Brook's Caramel	Harold	x		22651	
Comet beef del Ok Neighborhood			Gluten Free, No MSG, Low Sodium	9551	
Applying golden harvest		x		6551	
Beef Steaks	Bill			3489	
Teriyaki	Bill			142	
Empirestate	Blue Sabar	x	all natural, no preservatives	6271	
Beef steaks	Bill			9	
Teriyaki	Kyann	x	Company has sustainable affiliations with other food	13454	

- b.

3. Marketing Demos



- a.



b.



c.

4. Study and Data Found

- a. Comparing Butterfield Hot Weiners sold on day advertised as local day vs regular day
- b. **4/20 Thursday - Rhody Day: 90 lbs of hot wieners at Butterfield**
- c. **4/27 - Thursday - Regular Day: 60 lbs of hot wieners Butterfield**