



# FOOD AND DINING

Honors 314

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# What is Sustainability?

- According to the 1987 Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, sustainability means:
  - “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

# WCU's Food & Dining Services

- ARAMARK is the current food and dining services provider at West Chester University
- There are a variety of eateries at this University including Lawrence Dining Hall, Rams Head Food Court and The Diner
- What ARAMARK has to say about WCU Dining and Sustainability:
  - We are committed to fostering new connections from field to fork and changing the culture of food by nourishing our guests with menus that emphasize fresh whole foods that are raised, grown, harvested and produced locally and/or sustainably wherever possible, and prepared in ways that respect and maintain quality, freshness and pureness.
  - We are committed to minimizing our environmental footprint by fostering a culture that reduces, reuses, and recycles waste. To support a closed-loop waste management process, our innovative practices include partnering with suppliers who share our vision, working to reduce source packaging, enabling recovery and reuse of discarded materials, and recycling waste to create raw materials for other purposes.

# WCU's Food and Dining Services

- What Aramark has to say about WCU and Sustainability:
  - We consider the environmental impacts of our purchasing practices and how we operate our business every day. We seek to purchase and use environmentally preferable products and services, and recognize suppliers who reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems or services.
  - At ARAMARK Higher Education, we understand that that the energy and water we consume are finite natural resources, and contributes to climate change, health & well being, and the environmental quality in the communities we serve. We advocate and employ energy and water management efforts to reduce consumption, preserve scarce resources, and reduce our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and water shortages.
  - We rely on vehicles to deliver products and services to our many customer locations. We recognize that reducing our fuel use and emissions will have a substantial impact on costs and the environment. We partner with our suppliers, vehicle manufacturers, clients, and governmental organizations to educate our employees on environmental impacts, develop ways to improve operational efficiency, and implement new technologies when feasible.
  - Courtesy of [www.campusdish.com](http://www.campusdish.com) and an interview with Matt Seamon, Director of Operations

# The Current Status at WCU

- A majority of the food (including meat) and food related products used at West Chester University are distributed from Langford, Maryland by the Sysco Company.
  - Sysco is North America's leading foodservice marketer and distributor.
  - It is approximately 1 hr 36 mins, or 75.15 miles from Killinger Hall to Langford, Maryland.
- West Chester also receives food from a variety of local vendors within a 15 mile radius.
  - This food includes local bread, vegetables and fruit.
- Typically there is not a lot of organic food offered at this University, some exceptions can be found in Larry's Market which offers prepackaged organic food.
  - Amy's Organics
- A majority of the meat eaten at WCU comes from CAFO's (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations)
  - CAFOs are agricultural facilities that house and feed a large number of animals in a confined area for 45 days or more during any 12-month period.
  - The number and type(s) of animal(s) the operation houses, and the extent to which waste from the operation could pollute surface water and groundwater, determine whether EPA considers a feeding operation to be a CAFO.
  - In 2003, the nation's 238,000 feeding operations produced 500 million tons of manure. Over half of the total manure came from CAFO's.
- Approximately 20% of the food at WCU is prepackaged.
- Information courtesy of an interview with Matt Seamon, Director of Operations

# Current Food and Dining Programs for Sustainability

- Buying Locally
  - West Chester University Dining Services is a committed partner in the development of a local food presence on campus as an integral part of our dining services program. We work with our vendors to source items locally whenever possible, which include anything from produce and dairy to seafood.
  - Our Pepsi partners distribute from a local bottling plant, which helps to sustain the local economy.
  - We also purchase items in bulk whenever possible in order to reduce waste in packaging.
  - Some of the vendors we partner with in order to support the local economy and companies are:
    - Wawa Dairy Farms
    - J. Ambrogi Produce
    - Amoroso Baking Company
    - Pepsi Bottling Group of West Chester
    - Delaware Valley Linen
    - Delaware County Soda Systems
    - Albert's Organics
    - CoreMark Mid-Continent of Wilkes-Barre
    - Jack and Jill Ice Cream
    - Stroehman Brothers
  
- Fair Trade Coffee
  - Fair Trade Coffee is sold at the Java City in Sykes, Einstein Bros. Bagels in Lawrence Hall, and at Starbucks in the library. Benefits of these programs for coffee farmers mean community development, health, education, and environmental stewardship.

# Local Food Movement

- Over the past decade the politics of food has assumed increasing importance in western countries. Organic farming has become a mainstream movement worth billions of dollars a year and fair-trade goods are now sold in most supermarkets.
- Part of this upsurge of interest in where food comes from has been a recent emphasis on shopping locally by buying foods from crops grown and livestock raised by nearby farmers. In the UK, USA and elsewhere, farmers markets where local producers sell directly to consumers have taken off, providing producers with an alternative to selling the fruits of their labours to hard-bargaining supermarkets.
- Locally-produced foods are also sold directly from farm shops, and through delivery schemes such as weekly vegetable boxes. Increasingly, major food purchasers such as councils and schools are making commitments to buy locally-grown produce for use in the meals they provide. And major supermarket chains such as the UK's Tesco are increasingly stocking ranges of locally-produced foods, selling them at a profitable price premium. Supporters of shopping local argue that it has a great many advantages, from economic support for the area's farmers and greater community cohesion, to environmental and health benefits. But while nobody takes the extremist position that you should never buy locally-produced foods, critics have begun to question whether many of the benefits claimed for shopping local actually exist, and to point out that there may be actual disadvantages of too much emphasis on local purchasing.
- By creating a market for a wide variety of agricultural produce, shopping locally will encourage local farmers to grow and rear a wide variety of crops and animals.

# Advantages of Buying Local

- Benefits the Environment:
  - Local shopping benefits the environment. At the moment most food in the stores has been transported huge distances, often from countries far away. Even locally-sourced food may be trucked hundreds of miles to a big distribution centre, before being sent back to a store near its point of origin.
  - These “food miles” represent an enormous environmental cost in terms of carbon emissions and contribute hugely to the problem of climate change. This is especially true of food that has been air-freighted, a very environmentally damaging practice. In addition, shopping for locally produced food reduces unnecessary and environmentally-damaging packaging
- Fresher and Healthier Food:
  - Buying locally-produced food means that it will be much fresher and healthier. Typical supermarket fruit and vegetables are often picked 4-7 days before they make it on to the shelves, and so may be nearly two weeks old before they are actually eaten, by which time much of their goodness will have long departed. To cope with these long delays, many fruits are picked in an unripe state, so that they do not start to rot on the supermarket shelves – meaning their full flavour has never developed out in the sun on the tree or plant.
  - By buying locally consumers can ensure that they get the tastiest, healthiest food. Experience also suggests that people are more likely to vary their diet by trying new foods if they come from local producers, who can offer tastings and recipe advice.

# Advantages of Buying Local

- Helps the Underdog:
  - Shopping locally supports local farmers and the local economy – rather than huge multinational corporations. Typically farmers are forced to sell to middlemen or big business, such as huge supermarket corporations. This means growers see only a small fraction of the price the public eventually pays in the store (as little as 18 cents of every dollar in the USA).
  - By selling directly to the public at farmers' markets and farm shops instead, producers can ensure that they get a fair price for their crops and livestock. The income this provides is particularly crucial for small producers, and for farmers committed to more sustainable, less intensive methods, such as organic production
- Good for the Whole Community:
  - Local shopping is good for the whole community. Rather than the impersonal experience of visiting a huge out-of-store retailer, shopping for local produce brings consumers into contact with a whole range of different people. Buying from those who actually grew the food and moving from stall to stall turns shopping into a real social event. Dealing with those who actually cared for the livestock encourages much more conversation and forges social bonds, creating sustainable communities and linking urban areas to the countryside surrounding them.
  - Consumers also get a chance to learn about where their food comes from, to enquire about animal welfare standards or pesticide use, and to raise environmental concerns, while gaining an appreciation of the pressures on local farmers.

# Disadvantages to Buying Local

- Not Necessarily Environmentally Friendly:
  - Buying local is not actually environmentally friendly. The idea of food miles sounds wonderfully green, but the concept is deeply flawed. Often it takes much more energy (for heated glasshouses and fertilizers) to grow fruit and vegetables locally than it does to grow them in a country with a more suitable climate and then transport them by road, sea or air. Studies have found that it is better for the environment to produce butter, cheese, lamb and apples in New Zealand and then ship them to Britain, than it is to buy the same items from English producers.
  - And most of the food miles travelled by products come from consumers driving to and from the shops. Indeed, the carefully packed lorries of the huge supermarkets are a more energy efficient way of distributing food than having lots of small producers driving pick-up trucks to farmers markets.
- May Not Be Fresh:
  - Buying local foods from farmers markets does not necessarily mean that the produce is fresher. Today supermarkets' efficient supply chains mean that green beans are on the shelves in Britain or the USA within 24 hours of being picked in Kenya or Peru. As most farmers markets only operate once or twice a week, the chances are that their produce is no fresher than this.
  - In addition, farmers markets are a great marketing brand, but there is no guarantee that all of the goods sold are really local at all. British farmers markets often feature such items as olives and coffee beans, which cannot accurately be described as local.

# Disadvantages of Buying Local

- Protectionism:
  - Buying local produce from farmers markets may be a wonderful social experience, but it also acts as a form of protectionism (which is why farm lobbies are keen on it). As well as artificially increasing family food bills in developed countries, the cult of localism also hits farmers in the developing world by denying them an export market.
  - Over the past decade or so countries like Kenya and Peru have begun to develop their way out of poverty by exploiting their comparative advantages in agriculture. Their commercial farming operations provide fresh fruit and vegetables for rich consumers in developing countries.
- High Cost:
  - Buying only local produce means making a commitment to paying much more money for your weekly shop. 250 years ago, Adam Smith demonstrated that there is an economic law of comparative advantage. This states that each country or region should focus on producing those crops and manufactures to which it is best suited, exporting these and using the income to purchase things which other countries can produce more cheaply and efficiently. This way everyone prospers, gaining the most profit from their special areas of economic expertise, while spending less to buy those things in which others excel.
  - Deciding to buy only local produce flies in the face of economic reality, because much of the food that can be produced nearby would be much cheaper if imported from another country with cheaper land and labour, a more suitable climate and greater economies of scale.
  - The bottom line here is that shopping local can only ever be an indulgence of the rich – ordinary working families must follow the rules of comparative advantage and buy their food cheaply from supermarkets, which can seek out the cheapest and most efficient sources of each foodstuff.

# What We Can Do

## □ The Individual

- Change eating habits
- For example, instead of buying prepackaged foods at Sykes, buy the fresh food.
- For example, instead of buying 2 small cheesesteaks, buy one large steak share to cut down on packaging
- If you live in an apartment: use smaller appliances to cook foods.
  - Ex. Toaster ovens, microwaves, and electric grills use less energy than an oven
- Eat locally grown food from food stands, rather than grocery stores.
- Buy a head of lettuce instead of a pack of salad.
- Consider tap water instead of bottled water or buy one plastic bottle and refill it.
- Label and date leftovers so you don't waste food and don't let it go bad.
- Eat herring and sardines more often: they are not overfished
- The United Nations (UN) recently released a report that stated "the single best way to help the environment is to stop eating meat"
  - The amount of pollution created in raising animals for human consumption is staggering, more than 130 times of human generated pollution. The amount of water used for animal raising is staggering as well.

# What We Can Do

- Go To Local Markets
  - Phoenixville Farmer's Market
  - Oxford Village Market
  - West Chester Grower's Market
  - Kennett Square Farmer's Market
  - Anselma Farmer's and Artisian Market

# What We Can Do

## □ At WCU, current ideas:

- In the most recent issue of the WCU Quad Tara Tanzos outlines the future goals of the Lawrence Dining center/at the February 11<sup>th</sup> Dining Advisory Board meeting it was decided that Lawrence wishes to decrease wasted food by 20%.
  - To do this they are keeping Einstein Bagels longer for enhanced eating options and encouraging students to take smaller portions rather than more than what they actually consume.
- The staff of Lawrence Dining Hall conducted an experiment during the lunch period on Tuesday, Feb. 10. Throughout the lunch period, a total of 340 pounds of waste was accumulated, which averaged out to be slightly over a quarter pound of waste per person who had swiped their card at Lawrence for that meal zone. That's equivalent to someone buying a burger, fries, and a shake at McDonald's and just throwing away the burger.
- Additionally, the staff at Lawrence plans to use more eco friendly dishwashing products

## □ Our ideas:

- Use more recyclable material for packaging, as well as reducing the amount of packaging.
  - Use bulk containers for condiments to reduce individual packaging.
- Create a course or club for planting and harvesting food that could possibly be used at Sykes or Lawrence. Students could buy seeds from local farmers, plant the items, then harvest them. Food items would be grown according to season, so a variety of food at different times could be produced.
- Create a specific dining area (like Rams Head) specifically for organic and local food.
- Reduce the amount of packaged and processed food by 10%.
- The food purchased at Lawrence could be based on weight instead of a set meal price. Or, simply reduce the serving size so not as much food and rinsing water is wasted.

# What Others Are Doing

- Green, sustainable dining is directly interconnected with renewable and alternative energy/anti-pollution/conservation methods used in order to produce the food.
- The University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University recently began receiving a portion of their electrical energy from a 51-megawatt capacity wind farm in central South Dakota - becoming the first universities in the upper Midwest to be powered completely by renewable energy.
- Known once as "The Windmill City," Kalamazoo will be going back to the future with the construction of a 150-foot wind turbine on the campus of Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The turbine is expected to provide 15 percent of the energy needed to power the college's technical wing.

# What Others Are Doing

- The University of Arizona has created the University Thermal Ice Storage Project, a system that spends the evening and early morning hours freezing water that is then used to cool buildings across campus. The project can produce more than 900 tons of ice per hour and the pipes then feed the melting ice, or cooled water, to campus buildings. UA recently received the Energy Efficiency Leader in Education Award for being one of a few institutions to have such a project in operation.
- Florida Gulf Coast University recently received state funding to plant rows of solar panels on 16 acres of its campus. Once completed, FGCU's solar field will supply all of the university's energy needs, and save \$22 million over 30 years. If fully implemented the project would result in the largest university solar field in the world.
- Portland State University hopes to undergo a project similar to the wcu project however they hope to eliminate waste by 100%! They encourage the following: Recycling all cans, glass bottles, plastic containers, cardboard boxes and paper.
- This year, PSU Dining will be setting up a new partnership with an Oregon biodiesel producer to ensure that all used cooking oil will be converted to fuel, preventing roughly 12,000 lbs of fossil carbon dioxide from entering Earth's atmosphere every year.