

BUILDING LOCAL FOOD PROGRAMS ON COLLEGE CAMPUS

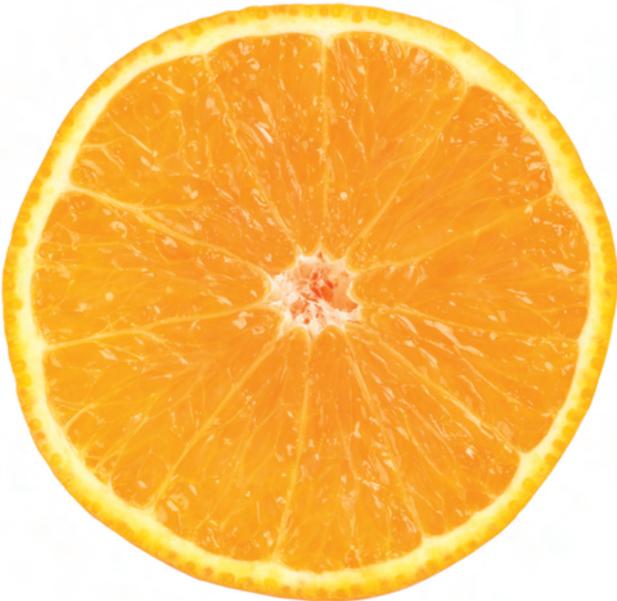
Tips for Dining Administrators, Family Farmers & Student Advocates

FALL 2008



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I. INTRODUCTION

THIS GUIDE PROVIDES tangible guidance on how to conceptualize, structure, and implement food programs that support local family farmers. It integrates CAFF's on-the-ground experience with cutting-edge research conducted at UC Davis and UC Santa Cruz about the Farm to Institution market. It is designed for college administrators, food service directors, farmers, and student advocates. Insight on the broader array of sustainable food criteria – such as organic and humanely raised – are reference in this guide, but content builds mostly on local sourcing. CAFF's Farm to Institution Program offers outreach, policy and networking support throughout California while CAFF's Growers' Collaborative LLC consolidates and distributes produce from networks of family farmers in five California regions: Bay Area/Sacramento Valley, Los Angeles/Ventura, Central Coast, Central Valley and Humboldt.

The aforementioned research project is supported by the National Research Initiative of the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (grant number 2006-55618-17015) and involves three distinct research segments. The first study, conducted by UC Davis' Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SAREP) and titled "NRI Farm to Institution: Distribution Networks: Perspectives from Food Service, Distributors, Farmers," is based on interviews with 17 farmers, 15 distributors and 16 food service buyers. Findings from this are referenced with .

The second set of research, referenced with , was conducted by UC Santa Cruz's Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS), and titled, "NRI Farm to Institution College Student Survey." This research is based on 419 responses from mailed survey sent to 1,000 college students in the U.S. and 1,000 students in California. The third study, referenced with , was conducted by the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at UC Davis, and titled, "NRI Farm to Institution Findings: Survey of Institutional Foodservice Managers." It is based on interviews with 99 foodservice managers at colleges and teaching hospitals in California regarding their produce purchasing practices and preferences.

A special thanks to the research team: Gail Feenstra, Shermain Hardesty, Patricia Allen, Jan Perez, Gwendolyn Keith, Jeri Ohmart, and Tracy Perkins. For upcoming project publications and comprehensive research results please visit the following websites:

UC Davis SAREP: www.sarep.ucdavis.edu

UCD Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics: www.agecon.ucdavis.edu

USCS CASFS: www.casfs.ucsc.edu

To learn more about CAFF's Farm to Institution program or to obtain copies of this guide, please visit our website www.caff.org or contact Aliza Wasserman, Farm to Institution Director, at 510-832-4625 or aliza@caff.org.

II. Understanding College Student Interest

STUDENT INTEREST SPANS GEOGRAPHIC & POLITICAL SPECTRUMS

Students in every region of the U.S. are interested in accessing local and sustainable food on their campuses. Around the country, students say it is at least somewhat important to them that their college provide food that is produced by people who earn a living wage (71% of students); is sustainably produced (62%); and meat that is humanely raised (78%)p. This interest spans the political spectrum, with students rating their political preferences on economic and social issues in a balanced bell-curve, with the majority identifying themselves as centrist (approximately 56%), and the remainder split between right leaning and left leaning. This reflects other national market data on local food that finds interest spanning geographic and political territory.♦+

THE NUMBER OF FARM TO COLLEGE PROGRAMS IS GROWING QUICKLY

Around a quarter of the California colleges surveyed have local food program and a further quarter are developing a local food program, demonstrating a doubling of efforts over just a handful of years.* On the national scene, over 190 colleges recently signed on to The Real Food Challenge that encourages colleges to shift 20% of their campus food purchases to local, environmentally friendly, socially just and humanely raised food within a decade. As such, it's likely that the demand for sustainable food on campuses will continue to increase in the coming years.

CALIFORNIA STUDENTS HAVE HIGHER INTEREST IN ORGANIC

As a whole, the level of interest in sustainable food from California students is on par with students from other regions. However, more California students feel that it is at least somewhat important for their colleges to buy organic products (59% of CA students compared to 48% elsewhere).^{*} Meanwhile, foodservice directors estimated that only 7% of produce purchases are organic,[†] illustrating that colleges seeking to meet students' values can expand their organic purchases.

SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES EQUALLY IMPORTANT

Social issues are equally important to college students as environmental issues. When asked what they wanted their dining services to provide, 'living wage' is ranked around the same as 'sustainable'.^{*} When asked what they want to know about their food, 'working conditions' and 'environment' receive similar ratings. When asked what sustainability means, students most highly endorse qualities that are both environmental and social. There are a dizzying amount of environmental food certifications and standards (nearly 60 at our last count!). You can evaluate which of these standards are robust at the Consumer Reports website www.greenerchoices.org. Evaluating claims in a simple, robust and pragmatic manner is the goal of the Real Food Calculator, which is being developed by colleges around the country and will serve as a critical tool for all colleges when it is released in 2009.

As a rule of thumb, supporting local family farms offers both environmental and social benefits since it reduces carbon emissions by shortening distances traveled and also returns a greater percent of the food dollar directly to family farmers who live and spend locally. Out of every dollar spent in the conventional retail food system, only 20% makes it back to the farmer. In contrast, institutions buying directly from farmers or from non-profit distribution entities, send 60% to 100% of each dollar directly to the farmer. While the average food item travels 1,500 miles before reaching the U.S. plate, buying locally reduces that mileage by 1,400 miles for each bite.

WILLING TO PAY MORE FOR LOCAL & SUSTAINABLY-PRODUCED FOOD

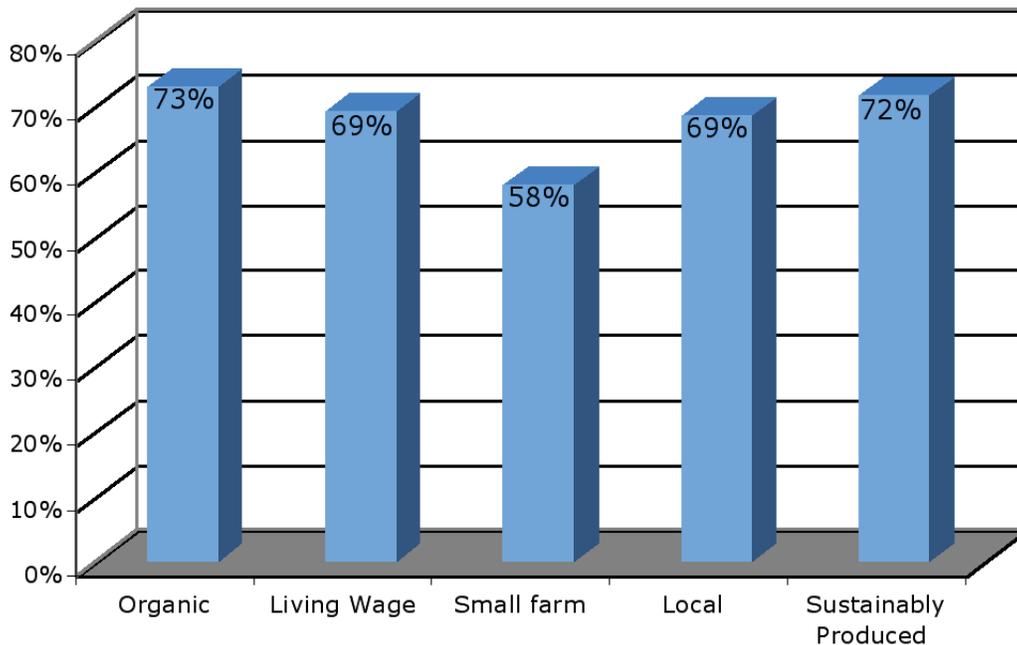
Most college students say they are willing to pay more for local, humane and sustainably produced food. Given the example of a \$3.50 salad, the majority (at least 58%) are willing to pay \$0.25 more – which is a 7% increase – for all the following sustainability criteria: organic, local, small farm, living wage, and sustainably raised.^{*} Sixty-nine percent said they'd pay the premium for local produce. See the graph below for level of interest in each criteria. These figures should not be used as definitive premium data, since they are based on stated intentions, rather than actual behavior. However, they do reflect similar figures from national market data,^{*} and indicate that many students are willing to share the extra cost of sustainably-produced food and can thereby help colleges recover the costs. See Section on Financial Guidelines for further cost sharing suggestions.

QUICK TIP

Test your market!

To determine the exact amount you can pass along to your student body, test a cafeteria or store for one month. Buy and label five items as local – either by using your in-house marketing or by using CAFF’s “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” laminated menu cards. Use different levels of price markups on products that are similar – such as fresh fruit or canned jams -- and track sales volume. You can also change the markup each week of the month. This is a great student internship project, and will reduce staff work time. Keep in mind, however, that staff time to label items as local will be needed for long-term implementation. Consider asking a student intern to develop all the marketing materials and a system to make it easy for staff to label throughout the year.

Percent of salad eaters who will pay at least 25 cents or more for sustainability criteria for a salad that costs \$3.50 (181 Replies).



III. Financial Guidelines

COST OF LOCAL FOOD VARIES GREATLY, 10% - 25% AVERAGE PREMIUM LIKELY

The cost of ‘going local’ varies by region, season, product, and type of distribution infrastructure available in your region. The majority of food service buyers (63%) say there is an additional cost for local produce, and about a third say there is no extra cost. When asked to recall the premium paid for local produce, most college directors said around 13%, with answers ranging between 0%-35%. Many distributors surveyed say the price premium they place on local is generally in the 25% range.¹²

TERMS OF CONVENTIONAL CONTRACT PLAYS KEY ROLE IN COST COMPARISON

One of the main variables in determining the cost differential is the price list your college is getting from their produce distributor, since distributors vary their markup depending on the institution’s volume and perceived finances. CAFF conducted case studies analyzing the prices from local family farmed produce sold through the Growers’ Collaborative compared to the prices being offered to four different types of institutions through their conventional distributors. Local produce prices were as follows:

- 26% higher for a large hospital;
- 10% higher for a small hospital;
- 14% lower for a large college;
- 40% lower for a corporate dining facility.

QUICK TIP

To quickly estimate the cost for your college, track the prices you’re offered for ten items and compare them to the local source-identified produce prices. This will give a rough sense of what price range you’re being charged from your conventional distributor, and how it compares to local produce.

The conventional distributors were charging high-end prices to the large college and corporate dining facility, which made the local produce cheaper. Hospitals and schools tend to get charged low-end prices – making local food relatively more expensive.

EXPECT TO AFFORD 38% OF PRODUCE BUDGET FROM LOCAL

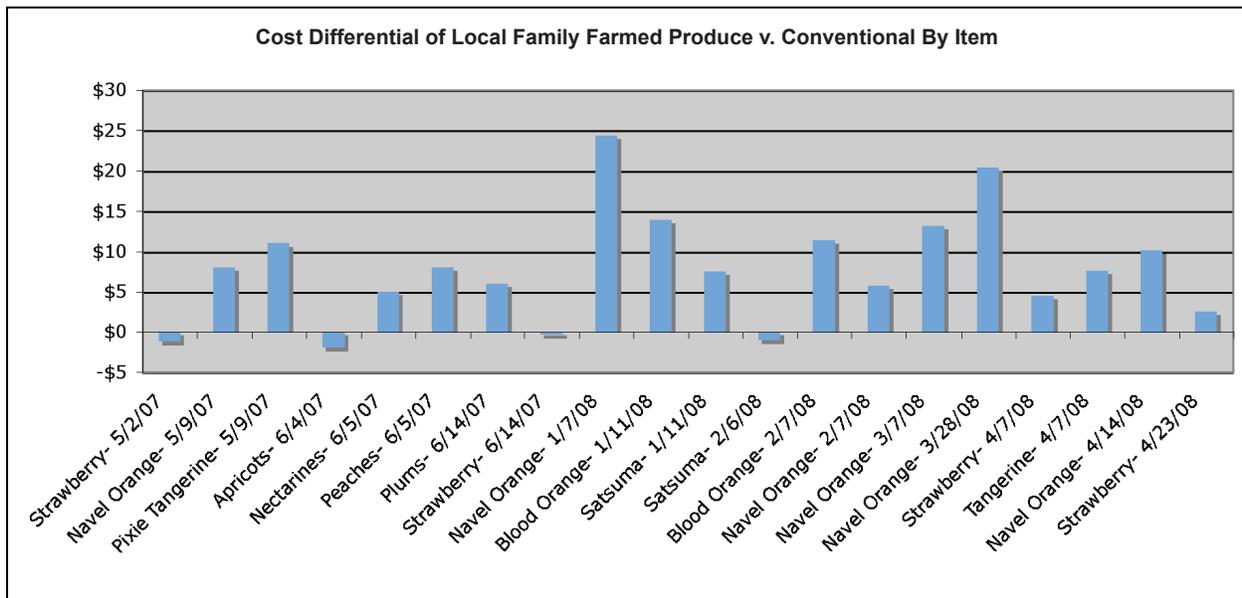
California food service buyers from colleges and other institutions say they can increase purchases from local growers up to 38% of their produce budget without confronting significant barriers.² Common barriers confronted once the 38% of budget is met include: lack of product access due to limited distribution infrastructure; price; and encroaching on the contract terms set with conventional produce distributors, which typically require colleges to buy a certain percentage of their produce from them.

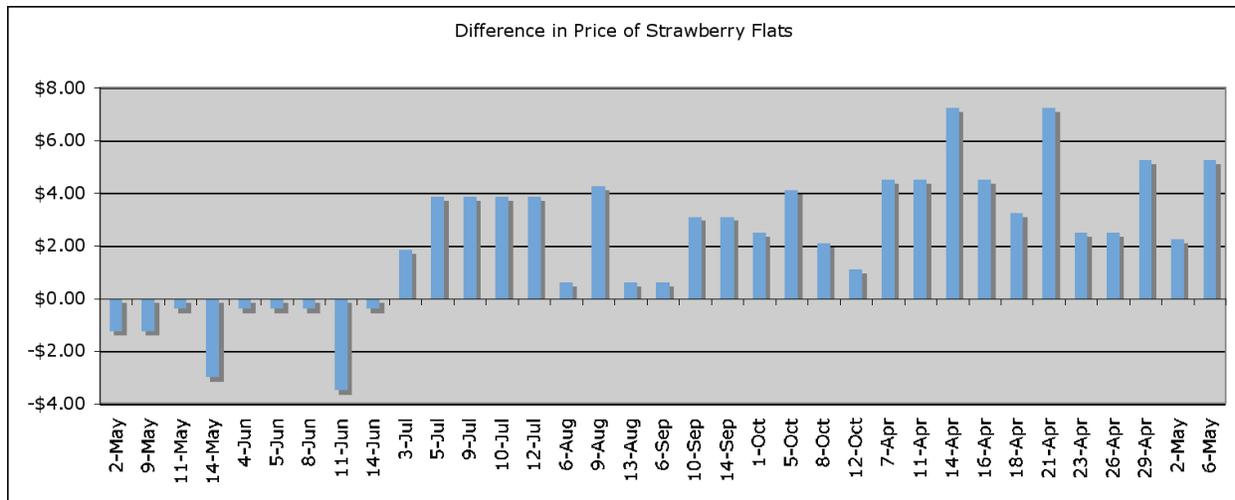
COST OF LOCAL PRODUCE VARIES GREATLY BY ITEM & SEASON

Regardless of what your average price increase will be for local produce, there is a wide range of price differential for any particular item. The graph below illustrates the cost differential found over the course of a year from one of institutional case studies. Note that even with their 25% average price premium, around a quarter of the purchases were cheaper.

SEASONAL PRICE BENEFITS HAVE SHORT SEASON

During the peak of season, when volume is highest, prices tend to fall. This had led some people to expect local produce to be cheaper, since it is by definition always ‘in season’. However, the peak of volume production in a region is only a few weeks long, while the growing season is typically much longer. This graph shows the cost differential of local family farmed strawberries throughout the year. The cost is cheaper





for six weeks, while the growing season is six months. It is difficult for a farmer to make a livelihood off of six weeks of annual sales, no less during the six weeks when prices are the lowest. To address this issue, most farmers grow multiple crops. However some farmers – including the primary strawberry provider used in this case study – have a short list of items that comprise the bulk of their revenue. So while it is helpful for institutions’ budgets to create policies that maximize local produce purchases during the peak season when prices are most competitive – it is preferable to allow purchasing staff to make some level of local purchases even when it is not cheaper.

**FOR MANY, COST NOT YET
KEY PROBLEM**

It is worth keeping in mind that produce is only about 18% of the total food budget, and an even smaller portion of the overall dining service budget. All of the food service buyers interviewed say the higher prices are not a problem because so far, the amount of local and/or organic produce they are buying is not that much. Therefore, in most cases, they are absorbing the increase within their

overall budgets. No external funding sources, such as grants, are used by any of the California colleges interviewed by UC Davis, and the national CFSC farm-to-college survey finds that the majority (68%) do not use such extra funds. A quarter of programs use grants to launch the program, but only 5% use such subsidies to maintain them. Among the 28 California campuses surveyed by UC Davis with local produce buying programs, the average spent on local produce is \$148,000,* while the 106 colleges in CFSC’s national survey spend an average of \$223,104 annually on local food.

**WHEN COSTS INCURRED,
CONSIDER INVESTMENT IN A
HEALTHIER TASTIER SYSTEM**

Taking a broader perspective, food spending in the U.S. is the lowest in the world, and that comes with many externalized costs such as environmental degradation, loss of rural communities, run-off in waterways, and increased dependency on oil. While the U.S. uses 10% of its income on food, other industrialized countries spend double that amount, and non-industrialized countries spend 50-85% of

their income on food. Spending more on local food is a way to address many issues at once, so consider it an investment in a healthier, more sustainable, equitable & better tasting food system.

EXTRA COST CAN BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS

Cost of buying local for the food meal plans can be shared by passing along the cost to students' individual item purchases at campus cafes. This strategy has been successfully employed in colleges and hospitals, where customers pay a price premium for local food, and that payment is used to offset extra costs incurred for student meal plans and in-patient meals that are not paid for by patients. In fact, 42% of colleges surveyed by CFSC's Farm-to-College Program pass along the extra costs to consumers. As noted above in the salad bar example, students are willing to pay a 7% price premium for local produce, and national market data has placed the price premium for retail consumers closer to 15-30%.*

COSTS CAN BE MINIMIZED VIA VEGETARIAN MEALS & SMALLER PORTIONS

The most common way that food service directors address the extra costs, according to a CFSC survey, is to reduce costs elsewhere. Bon Appetit Management Company and San Francisco Physicians for Social Responsibility are each promoting serving more vegetarian meals as a means to cut costs and improve environmental footprints, meat being the most water and carbon intensive part of any diet. At UCLA, students are encouraging other students to ask for smaller portions; UC Santa Cruz dining directors are exploring a variety of waste-reducing options; and UC Berkeley dining directors are encouraging vendors to minimize packaging. These efforts reduce the volume and cost of items coming in to campus, and simultaneously reduces the waste disposal volume and cost. Savings from these greening efforts can be directed to fund sustainable produce, and further green dining service.



IV. Working with Distributors

LEVERAGE OFF-CONTRACT FLEXIBILITY

Regardless of the availability with your main distributor, you can utilize your off-contract flexibility to support local farmers and local distributors that specialize in local goods. The off-contract ratio is often about 15- 20% of your total produce purchase, so you can use this margin to start working with local farms and distributors who specialize in local farms.

ENGAGE DISTRIBUTOR ABOUT TYPE OF LOCAL

The majority (64%) of food service buyers expect their local farmers to be small to mid-scale, however institutional demand for regularity and high quantity can push distributors towards local, industrial farms.^{fb} This is particularly risky in California, with so many large industrial farms around the state. To avoid this, you can seek out distributors who are committed to family farmers, or who are partnering with family farming organizations. CAFF offers this

service to distributors. Start by asking your distributor to consider doing this, and if that does not work, once your produce contract is up for negotiation, consider including language in the bid asking them to disclose what they offer from local small and mid-scale family farms.

BUY FROM NON-PROFIT ALLIED DISTRIBUTORS

Alternately, you can work directly with a non-profit allied distributor that specializes in working with local small and mid-sized farmers. In California, there is CAFF's California Growers' Collaborative that operates in Humboldt, Fresno, Bay Area, Sacramento and Greater Los Angeles; ALBA Organics in San Mateo and Santa Cruz; and Central Coast Grown in San Luis Obispo. These organizations use personal connections and grant funding to minimize the high transaction costs of working with small farmers – which has kept large distributors from working with these growers. They also tend to offer better prices to farmers, since their social mission includes offering growers fair prices.

ENCOURAGE CONVENTIONAL DISTRIBUTOR TO PARTNER WITH NON-PROFIT ALLIED DISTRIBUTOR

Non-profit entities can specialize in identifying, consolidating and overseeing fair purchasing programs with small and mid-sized family farms, while larger distributors can focus on low transportation charges and high volume sales. CAFF is beginning to pilot this type of partnership – in which the non-profit entity consolidates and labels produce from local family farms and the conventional produce distributor markets the product on its catalogue and distributes it through its fleet of trucks.

COMMIT TO COMMUNICATE WITH FARMERS

Local farmers may not be used to the requirements a conventional distributor employs. If the produce arrives over-ripe or too varied in size – communicate your expectations to the farmer who can then consider adjusting their practices. If they can't make it work for this year, a demonstrated commitment from the buyer may encourage the grower to plant a different variety that might work better next season.



V. Guidelines for Farmers

MOST COMMON PRODUCE ITEMS PURCHASED BY COLLEGES

Based on dollars spent, the top produce items purchased by colleges are lettuce, tomatoes, cantaloupe, broccoli, potatoes, and cauliflower.*

INTEREST IN PURCHASING LOCAL DAIRY & OTHER FOODS

Following produce, food service directors are most interested in locally produced dairy products and baked goods (average interest rating of 5.7 out of a possible 7), followed by meat (5.0), juices and shelf-stable foods (4.9), and fish (4.3).*

REQUIREMENTS FOR VENDOR APPROVAL

Sixty-four percent of institutions require vendors to have liability insurance, and 44% require site inspections.* Twenty-six percent had no vendor

approval requirements, which makes it easier to sell directly to these colleges. Farmer-driven distributors such as the Growers' Collaborative and ALBA carry umbrella liability insurance so that farmers do not have to pay this cost.

MODEST VOLUME BUT FAIR PREMIUM OF 5-25%

The Farm to Institution market is growing, but is still quite small. Most farmers who sell in to institutional markets are earning less than 4% of their revenue from these sales.^[2] However, this market is fairly new so may increase as the logistical barriers are reduced. Furthermore, you can expect a premium of 5-25% for these sales. When asked what price premium food service directors are actually paying for local produce, the average premium stated was 5%.* Asked about their level of willingness to pay for a flat of local strawberries, the premium increased to 24%. This was about the same premium level they're willing to pay for organic, sustainable and farms that pay living wages to farmworkers. When asked about the premium for produce grown by small and mid-sized

farmers, the premium dropped to 19%, implying that marketing materials are likely to have the strongest impact if prominently feature the local aspect. More tips on marketing in the next section.

WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ENSURE PREMIUMS PASSED ALONG TO FARMERS

While foodservice directors are willing to pay a premium for local, conventional distributors selling local produce are not necessarily passing this premium along. Distributors say they commonly place a 25% markup on local produce.¹² Yet 33% of distributors noted that it does not cost them more to buy from local farmers, and 13% said it was even cheaper. Note that 20% said it was more expensive to buy locally. So nearly half of the distributors are not incurring extra costs or paying fairer prices to farmers, but may still be charging a 25% price premium. A core driving value behind consumer demand for local food is the added investments it makes in the local economy. Farmers have the opportunity to address distributors about the need to share the price premium. No single farmer can expect to have leverage, but farmers can collaborate and work with representatives to engage distributors and institutions on ensuring that a fair share of the local food premiums are passed along to the farmers.

SIZE AND TYPE OF COLLEGES LIKELY TO BE INTERESTED

University of California campuses, private four-year colleges and colleges with culinary programs tend to have strong support for local sustainable food programs. Very few community colleges have or are developing local sourcing programs, probably because they have very small sites, limited staffing, lower levels of student engagement in operations, and the school and students are more price sensitive. Smaller colleges that serve less than 5,000 meals a day buy the highest percent (18%) directly from local growers or non-profit allied distributors.¹³ Colleges serving 5,000-10,000 daily meals buy around 2%, and colleges serving greater than 10,000 at only 1%. Note that these figures represent percent of the schools' produce budget, so the smaller percent spent by larger institutions can still be a sizeable dollar figure.



VI. Education, Marketing & Making the Case



MAKE THE CASE BY STRESSING BETTER QUALITY FOOD AND LOCAL ECONOMIC BENEFIT

The biggest advantages of buying from local family farms, according to most food service buyers, are better tasting food (stated by 68%) and supporting the local economy (61%).^[2] A distant third reason cited (30%) is to decrease the carbon footprint from reduced fuel use. This reasoning reflects general consumer beliefs, in which local and organic foods are primarily valued as fresher and better tasting than conventionally grown and sourced foods.⁺ Market research on local food finds that the healthier and gourmet connotations of local food has led to the market perception that “local is one of the hottest cues of quality right now in the world of food.”⁺ To tap into customers’ support for this effort, market local food with these key attributes of fresh taste and supporting local community.



You can find an array of “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” marketing materials that suit regions around the country at the FoodRoutes.org network. CAFF has an array of materials for regions within California, including the laminated menu label pictured here. To access this array of marketing and educational materials, contact CAFF about Institutional Partnerships opportunities that include an array of these materials, including menu cards, table tents Farmer of the Month posters, Why Buy Local cards, and regional banners.

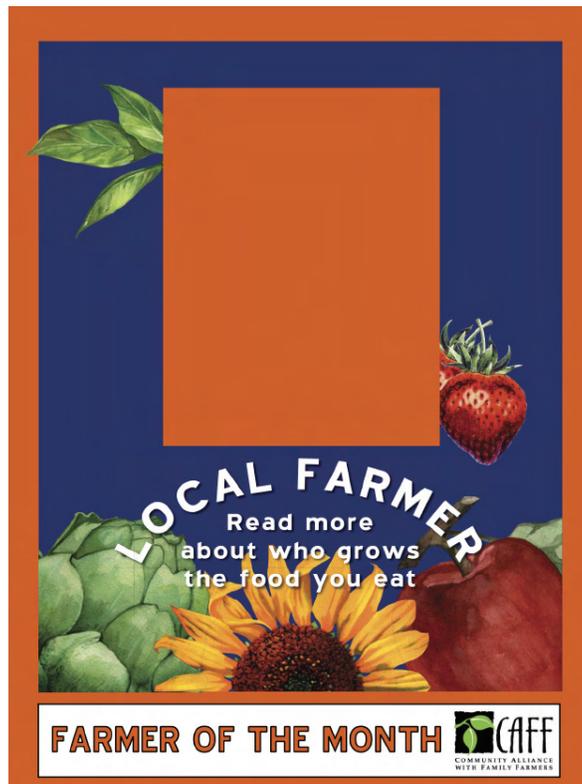
COMMUNICATE EFFORTS WITH POINT OF SALE MATERIALS, SCHOOL NEWSPAPER & WEBSITE

Students want to obtain more information about their food through product labels (62% of students). Secondary preferences include table tents and brochures on food line or table (51%), newspaper articles (49%) and websites (46%).* Only about 10% of students are interested in classroom or campus presentation, implying that education efforts in cafeterias are likely to be the most effective place to communicate sustainable food initiatives. Twenty percent of the students are also interested in farm tours. Using menus and point of purchase cards to label what is sustainable and local is a powerful way to educate consumers while simultaneously providing an easy way to track consumption of the item.

USE IMAGES AND FARMER PROFILES TO TELL THE STORY BEHIND THE ‘LOCAL’

Most people want to learn the story behind local products, especially how they are made (61%) and learning more about the people behind the product (60%).[†] Pictures of the people and places where local products are made are of strong interest to 57% of those surveyed in the national market survey.[†]

Educate students about wider health benefits of supporting local sustainable small-scale agricultural system. Personal health is consistently found to be a primary value for student interest in sustainable food.* Herein lies an opportunity to educate students about the relationship between local food and broader health implications. Consider posting articles from Michael Pollan’s editorials in *The New York Times* to help educate students about wider health benefits of sustainable agriculture.



CAFF's Farmer Profile with images and the Farmer of the Month poster that allows institutions to showcase different local farmers each month.

Guru Ram Das Orchard



Didar Singh Khelsa has been farming organically since 1981. His 16-acre orchard in Esparto produces an astounding diversity of crops. As spring takes hold, you'll find him behind crates of Valencia oranges, Lisbon lemons, kumquats, and white Marsa grapefruit, while summer produces a mountain of apricots, luscious fig, Santa Rosa plums, sweet old-time peaches, Flavorpod nectaries, and Thompson seedless red grapes. Almonds and pears come on in September, along with sugarplums, pomegranates, Hechiya persimmons, and Meyer lemons.

Didar says Esparto's early warm spring weather and heavy clay soils help his produce ripen earlier than just about anywhere in the state. Customers say it gives the fruit a larger size and better flavor to boot. For Didar, this kind of praise reflects not just a lucky accident of geography but also a basic principle of chemical-free agriculture.



Along with a commitment to organic production, spirituality also plays a central role in Didar's life. He took the name Didar, meaning "grateful audience" after converting to the Sikh religion in 1973, and named his orchard after the 16th-century Indian saint and yogi Guru Ram Das. Didar explains that just as his religion teaches that people are put on the earth to love god and serve man, he serves his purpose as he hands fresh produce over to eager customers and friends for their enjoyment. Didar's spiritual connection to agriculture is evident in the crops that he produces and the care that goes into each step of the process.

Adapted from "The Market Corner", newsletter for the Berkeley Farmers' Market.

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE WITH FAMILY FARMERS
**BUY FRESH
 BUY LOCAL**
 WWW.CAFF.ORG
 Produce Sourced Through the Growers Collaborative

VII. Summary

Tips for Getting Started

BUILD EXCITEMENT BY INVITING DINING DIRECTORS TO NETWORKING EVENTS

College food service directors say their decision to expand local sourcing was most influenced by colleagues at other colleges or farmers they've met.¹³ Less frequently cited reasons include student requests, employer support, a chef's background and personal values. Events addressing institutional purchasing of local food are periodically hosted by CAFF, NACUFS (National Association of College & University Food Service), and the annual UC/CSU/CCC Sustainability Conference.

START WITH THE SEASONAL LOW-HANGING FRUIT

And that's fruit! Whole fruit requires no extra processing, is easily added as a side dish or healthy dessert without having to change the main menu, and the enhanced taste is instantly enjoyed.

SHORTLIST OF SEASONAL SWAP OUT OPTIONS

Pick a handful of items you're regularly buying and have a local farmer or distributor identify which are regionally available. Swap that handful of items for locally-grown goods while they're in season. As you look to expand your local sourcing program, you can adjust dishes to incorporate more seasonality and explore unique local varieties. But you can start implementing local sourcing with a focused and manageable short list of produce with any menu.

HIGHLIGHT ONE COMPONENT OF THE MENU

Choose one component of your menu to feature local produce. For instance, you can create a Seasonal Salad Bar, Local Fruit Bar, or Local Lunch of the Week.

BE FLEXIBLE, THIS IS DIFFERENT

While communicating essential expectations is recommended, it is also important to consider which specifications your kitchen can live without. You may be used to receiving all your peaches the same exact size, but is that really necessary for all your recipes? Many smaller family farms don't have the yields nor the machines to sort for uniform size and coloring. On farms that do not spray pesticides to prevent potential cosmetic damage, there can be visual differences, such as thrips scarring on oranges that looks odd but does not impact taste or quality. Remaining flexible with sizing and coloring can be a huge help to working with local farmers.

DEVELOP ANNUAL GOALS

As with many institutional goals, if you don't measure it, it doesn't matter. Decide where you want to be in one year's time and then create monthly & weekly purchasing targets to get you there. The metric can be number of boxes, weight, sales amount or food mile reduction. The goal can be set as a percentage of the total produce purchasing or total food purchasing. The easiest metric to measure is boxes and total dollars spent. Our experience indicates that a solid goal for the first year is ten percent of produce purchases from local growers, with the aim of increasing it by 5 percent each year. Reaching 25-40% of all produce from local sources is a very attainable and robust accomplishment... and qualifies institutions to CAFF partners! The national movement of college students are developing a Real Food Calculator that will significantly help institutions track this progress.

SET FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

To alleviate the anxiety, confusion, and possible disconnect of interest amongst different employees – establish budgetary guidelines. Consider setting a maximum dollar amount, a maximum additional cost per serving or year, or approve the cost for a short-list of items. See Financial section above for more tips.

ESTABLISH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PANEL FOR BUY-IN

To reach a broad set of resources for local food procurement and to institutionalize the commitment, consider establishing a Local & Sustainable Food Taskforce. Such taskforces are most effective when they consist of employees from various departments, including procurement, finance, dining, nutrition and public relations. A cross-functional network of supporters facilitates a broader commitment that can outlive the single initiator of the program.

DEFINE 'LOCAL' AS WITHIN A DAY'S DRIVE, WHICH CAN BE A RADIUS OF 100 TO 250 MILES

While there is no exact mileage that defines local, institutional and distribution systems need simple guidelines for operating, since navigating the subtleties of a local 'foodshed' is too complex. Consider telling your distributor, "We define local as being as close as possible and not beyond X miles". The majority of buyers, farmers and distributors surveyed by UC Davis all defined 'local' within a 250 mile radius, which is a day's drive for a roundtrip market

day.[¶] Another common definition of local is within a 100 miles, and California farmers are most likely to define local within the 50-100 mile radius. National surveys⁺ echo popular support for the 100 mile radius as ideal and 250 as a strong definition. While some food can be obtained within a 100 mile radius of most locations, a 250 mile radius typically allows a much wider net of options, extends the season by several months, and can be a more realistic option for logistical distribution reasons. Non-profit ally distributors, such as CAFF's Growers' Collaborative operates with a principle that maximizes as local as possible and then expands within the 250 mile radius as necessary.

COMMUNICATE THE CHALLENGES & BENEFITS TO STAFF & EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

There are challenges to local sourcing, and it is important to anticipate and communicate expectations around these challenges to the procurement and kitchen staff. Challenges may include: additional time to work with another distributor, different delivery schedule, less consistent sizing, varying colors, processing time, and additional communication time with local growers. Benefits of local sourcing include: richer taste, increased customer satisfaction, reduced carbon footprint, community investment in family farms, brand enhancement, and positive media attention. This new model requires some extra effort, so make sure to communicate to all staff and management that the extra challenges are understood and in light of the host of benefits – consider it a worthwhile investment in your local foodshed.

MOST IMPORTANTLY.... ENJOY THE DELICIOUS SEASONAL LOCAL FLAVORS!

★ NRI Farm to Institution College Student Survey, UCSC-CASFS, 2008.

◆ See range of reports by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Iowa

✦ “Consumer Understanding of Buying Local”, February 2008, The Hartman Group, Inc.

✘ Ohio State University survey of 477 shoppers at 17 Midwest locations, including retail and farmers markets. They used 80 different labels to gauge interest in size of farm, freshness, farm location, and price. Published in American Journal of Agricultural Economics, as reported in Hartman study, 2008.

¶ NRI Farm to Institution: Distribution Networks: Perspectives from Food Service, Distributors, Farmers, UC Davis' Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, 2008.

❖ Community Food Security Coalition's website: www.farmtocollege.org

* NRI Farm to Institution Findings: Survey of Institutional Foodservice Managers, UC Davis Dept. of Agricultural and Resource Economics, 2008.