



Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education Local and Sustainable Food Report 13 December 2013



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The Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education

Colleges and universities approach sustainability as educators, researchers, campus operators, and community stakeholders. Over the past several years, institutions of higher education have increasingly seen the value of establishing offices of sustainability to provide leadership and cohesion to this broad range of roles. According to AASHE's 2012 sustainability staffing survey, 67 percent of 2012 respondents noted that their position was housed within a sustainability office, compared to 23 percent in 2010.

National Wildlife Federation Campus Climate Action Networks

Since 1989, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) has helped more than one million faculty, students, and staff at more than half of all institutions of higher education in the United States in their efforts to transform their curriculum, operations, and partnerships with the broader community for sustainability. In 2008, NWF launched their Climate Action Networks initiative, organizing more than 100 campuses into four regional networks: Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education (CNSHE), the Georgia Campus Sustainability Network (GCSN), Texas Regional Alliance for Campus Sustainability (TRACS), and Upper Midwest Association for Campus Sustainability (UMACS). The networks function independently of one another and are organized to meet the local and regional needs and challenges of the campuses that are members of the network. In organizing these networks, NWF aims to assist in the acceleration of climate action and campus sustainability efforts and to provide a space for sustainability professionals to share successes, challenges, and best practices in reducing carbon emissions and increasing campus sustainability efforts.



CNSHE provides a critical venue for sustainability staff in this relatively young field to work directly with their regional peers. CNSHE formed in 2009 as part of the National Wildlife Federation Campus Ecology Program's campus climate action initiative. NWF Campus Ecology regional field staff convenes the sustainability representatives of Chicago-land area institutions of higher education on a quarterly basis to share best practices and identify partnership opportunities. The network includes 14 public and private four-year institutions and community colleges. Together, CNSHE has supported sustainability initiatives, workshops, and topics including the following areas of focus: composting, green building, recycling, and energy conservation.¹

About This Report

Pointing towards increased consumer demand and the evidence of broad societal benefits, the CNSHE members identified the use of local, sustainable food as a common goal and challenge within their comprehensive sustainability initiatives. In June of 2013, CNSHE members invited their food service provider representatives to a meeting to share ideas and concerns associated with increasing the use of local, sustainable food.

As follow up to the meeting, CNSHE conducted a survey documenting the current local, sustainable food purchasing practices of CNSHE members. This report utilizes the information shared at the meeting and via the follow-up survey to examine the current practices of CNSHE members and to identify the benefits, opportunities, and barriers associated with increasing the Chicagoland area higher education community's use of locally grown, produced, and processed food.

1. *Salaries & Status of Sustainability Staff in Higher Education – 2012: Results of AASHE's 2012 Higher Education Sustainability Staffing Survey*. The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, July 2013. http://www.aashe.org/files/documents/programs/2012_staffsurvey-final.pdf.

Defining Local and Sustainable Food

A key challenge for CNSHE members as they seek to develop and measure their local, sustainable food offerings is defining “local” and “sustainable.” There are no standard definitions, however there are some common parameters.



Local Food: Eligibility for many U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs requires that a product be transported less than 400 miles or remain within the state where it is produced to be considered local. Consumers may access local food directly from the producer, such as through farmers markets and community-supported agriculture, or through intermediated sources, including grocery stores and restaurants.

Sustainable Food: Sustainable food is a broad term that generally refers to food that is produced and processed using methods that foster the health, safety, and well-being of the environment as well as of the farmers, laborers, and consumers. Some examples include food that is: organically grown and produced;² free of added hormones and antibiotics; and produced and grown by laborers who are fairly compensated for their work.

The Value of Local and Sustainable Food

Consumer demand for local, sustainable food has grown substantially in recent years. According to the USDA, local food sales grew from an estimated \$1 billion in 2005 to nearly \$7 billion in 2012.³ In a similar time frame, 2004 through 2011, organic food sales more than doubled, from \$11 billion to \$25 billion.⁴ Proponents for local, sustainable food systems identify a range of environmental, health, and regional economic benefits driving this increased demand. The University of Chicago Working Group in Environment, Agriculture, and Food's Local Food Team recently reviewed research on these benefits. The following is derived from the working group's 2013 report, *Next Steps for Campus Dining: A Study of the Benefits of Local Food Sourcing*, unless otherwise noted.⁵

Environmental Benefits

Campus sustainability initiatives are part of a comprehensive effort to address the rising global temperatures that are driving climate change. Climate scientists predict that the consequences of climate change will include extreme weather patterns, decreased availability of freshwater, drought, and accelerated species extinctions. Some effects of climate change, such as elevated sea levels and prolonged heat waves, are already taking place.⁶

2. To receive a USDA organic label, the food must be produced using “approved methods that integrate cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. Synthetic fertilizers, sewage sludge, irradiation, and genetic engineering may not be used.” Retrieved online November 2013: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/nop>.

3. *USDA Celebrates National Farmers Market Week, August 4-10: Confirms Growth and Sustainability in Farmers Markets*. Release No. 0155.13, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Communication, August 5, 2013. <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdamediafb?contentid=2013/08/0155.xml&printable=true&contentidonly=true>.

4. Osteen, Craig, Jessica Gottlieb, and Utpal Vasavada (eds.), *Agricultural Resources and Environmental Indicators, 2012*. EIB-98, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, August 2012.

5. Cao, Severine, Melissa Chanthalangsy, Liz Lyon, Grace Pai, Jessica Ro, Joan Wang, and Maddie Williams, *Next Steps for Campus Dining: A Study of the Benefits of Local Food Sourcing*. The University of Chicago's Working Group in Environment, Agriculture, and Food Local Food Team, Spring 2013.

6. Retrieved online November 2013. <http://climate.nasa.gov/effects>.

There is broad agreement within the scientific community that the major contributor to rising global temperatures over the past two centuries is increased greenhouse gas emissions due to human activities.⁷ Local food production, when coupled with sustainable agricultural practices, has the potential to significantly decrease food system-related greenhouse gas emissions in two key ways:

- Sustainable fertilization and soil management practices have been shown to reduce nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions.
- Shorter travel distances result in reduced fossil fuel-related greenhouse gas emissions.

CASE STUDY: The University of Illinois at Chicago Heritage Garden

In 2013, the six Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) launched an initiative to develop a heritage garden with satellite sites on the east campus. The Latino Cultural Center (LCC) and African-American Cultural Center (AACC) are leading this effort to engage UIC community members and members of surrounding communities in learning about and experimenting with culturally diverse approaches to sustainable and climate-friendly gardening. For example, many neighborhood gardeners in Chicago include medicinal herbs in their plantings. In addition to contributing to the biodiversity of their gardens and helping to offset the impacts of global climate change, these practitioners also transmit traditional knowledge about the use of natural resources to address health concerns within a culturally specific context.

The LCC and AACC are working with a new group of student leaders on campus called the Heritage Garden Student Task Force, which received a Green Fee grant to pilot a paid internship program in summer and fall of 2013. The goal of the program is to establish a sustainable educational model with activities that can help mobilize other students on campus to link environmental sustainability and cultural diversity issues. These activities include learning about the intellectual framework that guides the garden, field days, readings and discussions, horticulture and demonstrations, story and recipe collecting, documentation and dissemination, a public program, and an art project. The intellectual framework connects an asset-based approach for engaging diverse communities in sustainability action with the UIC Climate Action Plan, the 2010 Strategic Plan, and the Sustainability Strategic Thinking process.

However, it is important that these two benefits not be viewed in isolation, as emissions-heavy agricultural practices can negate gains made by reducing travel distances. An ideal scenario would utilize food production systems that are both local and sustainable.

Health Benefits

Health benefits associated with local, sustainable food can be found in how the food is raised and produced, and how and when the food is made available to the consumer.

FOOD PRODUCTION CONCERNS

Antibiotic Overuse in Farm Animals: The overuse of antibiotics in farm animals poses serious and well-documented public health risks, including the increased risk of antibiotic resistant bacterial infections in people.⁸ Yet large-scale meat and poultry producers commonly administer antibiotics to healthy animals to accelerate growth and enable the use of overcrowded and unsanitary facilities. Sustainable practices protect public health interests by limiting the use of antibiotics in farm animals to therapeutic purposes.

Growth Hormones: Farmers are prohibited from using growth hormones in pork and poultry products, but may use them in beef and dairy products. The use of growth hormones has been associated with a range of negative health effects, including early onset puberty and greater risk of cancer.

7. *Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report*. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, November 2007. http://www.ipcc.ch/publications_and_data/publications_ipcc_fourth_assessment_report_synthesis_report.htm

8. *Antibiotics and Industrial Farming 101*. The Pew Charitable Trusts Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming, April 10, 2013. http://www.pewhealth.org/uploadedFiles/PHG/Content_Level_Pages/Issue_Briefs/AntibioticsinAgriculture101.pdf



Pesticides and Fertilizers: Certain synthetic pesticides have been associated with carcinogenic effects, nervous system and endocrine disruptions, and reproductive health problems. Similarly, some inorganic fertilizers have been found to contaminate food and water, leading to increased health risks. Children are especially vulnerable to the negative health consequences of exposure to synthetic pesticides and inorganic fertilizers. Sustainable practices mitigate health risks by utilizing organic fertilizers and avoiding the use of synthetic pesticides.

FOOD AVAILABILITY AND FRESHNESS

Addressing Food Deserts: More than 380,000 people in the Chicagoland area live in neighborhoods with no grocery stores, limiting their access to healthy food.⁹ People who live in these “food deserts” are at higher risk of a range of health issues, including obesity and diabetes. Local food practices, such as farmers markets, community gardens, and urban farms are part of a comprehensive approach to providing healthy food options to underserved communities.

Freshness and Nutrition: Decreasing the distances food travels makes it more likely that food will reach consumers during peak freshness. Though research is limited, there is evidence that food consumed during peak freshness is richer in nutrients and therefore healthier than less-fresh alternatives.

CASE STUDY:

Working Group in the Environment, Agricultural, and Food at the University of Chicago

The Working Group in Environment, Agricultural, and Food (EAF) is a faculty-led academic group housed within the University’s Program on the Global Environment. The EAF conducts scholarly work focused on topics related to environment, agriculture, and food in the Chicago metropolitan region and beyond. Students participate in EAF through courses, research assistantships, internships, and administration. The University’s Office of Sustainability partnered with the EAF Local Food Team on a research project to examine the benefits of local, sustainable food options. A summary of the report, *Next Steps for Campus Dining: A Study of the Benefits of Local Food Sourcing* is available online.

Regional Economic Benefits

Purchasing locally grown and produced food bolsters local businesses, improving their ability to create and sustain jobs within the community. The wages earned by the employees of local businesses are then spent in their communities, resulting in increased regional wealth retention. Evidence also demonstrates that the presence of a farmers market in a neighborhood improves sales at nearby businesses by drawing more consumers to that community.¹⁰ Urban agriculture, a strategy for closing the gap between local food demand and availability, was recently identified as a growing green jobs market in Chicago, providing additional support for the connection between local food and the regional economy.¹¹

9. *The Chicago 2011 Food Desert Drilldown. 5th Anniversary Edition.* Mari Gallagher Research and Consulting Group, October 2011. http://www.marigallagher.com/site_media/dynamic/project_files/Final_2011_ChgFD_drilldown.pdf.

10. Martinez, Steve, et al. *Local Food Systems: Concepts, Impacts, and Issues*, ERR 97, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, May 2010.

11. *Job Growth Projections and Analysis in Chicago’s Emerging Green Industries: Results and Methodology.* Chicago Workforce Investment Council, Chicago Jobs Council. November 2010.



The Role of Higher Education

Institutions of higher education strive to create dynamic learning environments that honor the values of their students, faculty, and staff. Local, sustainable food programs facilitate this goal in a number of important ways, from supporting the local economy to providing educational and leadership experiences for students.

Educating and Engaging Students

Colleges and universities provide hands-on experiences to help students better understand how their purchasing decisions impact their individual health, as well as the vitality and stability of their region. CNSHE members use a range of strategies to

provide students with the opportunity to directly participate in local food systems, including farmers markets, community gardening, and urban and campus agriculture.

Fostering Student Leadership

Institutions leverage interest in the local, sustainable food movement to cultivate student leadership skills. Students may be provided with an opportunity to inform and shape campus policies, lead campus initiatives such as student-run farmers markets, and provide peer-to-peer education on the value of local, sustainable food.

Academic and Research Opportunities

Partnerships between faculty, students, and staff can provide cocurricular and interdisciplinary opportunities to improve the local, sustainable food movement by examining the benefits, barriers, and potential solutions for increasing access to local, sustainable food.

Partnering with Community Stakeholders

Colleges and universities actively partner with surrounding community organizations, policymakers, and funders to address a range of local challenges. For example, institutions with campuses located in neighborhoods with limited access to healthy food may play an active role in establishing and supporting a local food system that employs and serves local residents.

CASE STUDY:

Windy City Harvest/Richard J. Daley College Certificate Program

The Chicago Botanic Garden's Windy City Harvest program is a nine-month certification training program offered in partnership with the Richard J. Daley College/Arturo Velasquez Institute. Graduates of the program earn a certification in sustainable urban horticulture from City Colleges of Chicago as well as a certification in sustainable urban agriculture from Chicago Botanic Garden. Program participants study at the Richard J. Daley College's Arturo Velasquez Institute, which has a year-round greenhouse, fully equipped classrooms, and outdoor plant production spaces.

The certificate program emphasizes skills that are critical in urban agricultural settings, such as building healthy soils, composting, understanding crop varieties, small space growing, avoiding pests, and post-harvest food handling and safety. The practical knowledge and in-the-field training prepares graduates of the program for employment at Chicago urban agricultural and local foods businesses. In their most recent cycle, 89 percent of the Windy City Harvest graduates found employment with an average wage of \$14 per hour. Recognizing the entrepreneurial spirit of many of their participants as well as the growing demand for local food, Windy City Harvest recently launched a course to prepare individuals who are planning to start a local food business. The course, developed in partnership with an MBA team from DePaul University, provides students with skills they need to prepare and implement a comprehensive local food business plan.

The partnership between Windy City Harvest and Richard J. Daley College is helping Chicago meet its local food needs by preparing the next generation of urban farmers and local food business leaders.



Influencing the Local Market

Colleges and universities play a significant role in their local economies. For example, the University of Chicago is the largest single employer on Chicago's South Side.¹² Implementing a long-term plan to purchase local, sustainable food supports existing local businesses and creates an environment that allows new local food options to emerge.

Current Practices of Network Members

CNSHE members are in varying stages of implementing local, sustainable food programs. Some have well-established programs with consistent definitions, benchmarks, and tracking methods articulated. In other cases, local, sustainable food programs have just begun. The CNSHE conducted a survey of its participants to better understand

the current state of local and sustainable food purchasing at their institutions, and to identify common challenges and opportunities (see Appendix A).¹³

Many of the network members were unable to collect the data requested, either because the information was not already collected by their institution or because it was inaccessible to the sustainability office. However, in many cases the request for data helped to establish a relationship between the fledgling sustainability office and campus dining services and start a conversation on joint goal-setting and partnership opportunities.

It is important to note that due to varying definitions, access to information, and campus dining models, the survey should not be used to draw comparisons between institutions. Instead, the survey can help to identify opportunities and challenges for CNSHE members interested in increasing and accurately measuring their use of local, sustainable food. A summary of the responses can be found in Appendix B.

CASE STUDY: FarmLogix

In the Local Food Survey, Loyola University Chicago and Roosevelt University reported that their food distributors are working with the company FarmLogix to help them meet their local food purchasing goals. Launched in 2012, FarmLogix is a one-stop hub that connects distributors, wholesalers, and other food purchasers with locally produced foods. They do this by shipping food from hundreds of local producers to a handful of aggregation centers. Rather than trying to work with each producer on their own, food purchasers fill out FarmLogix's online form indicating the products and quantities they require, and pick up their orders at a FarmLogix aggregation center. Though relatively new, this process holds promise for helping CNSHE address key logistical challenges associated with local food purchasing.

The Washburne Culinary Institute and French Pastry School, a program of City Colleges of Chicago's Kennedy-King College, also recently started working with FarmLogix to help them increase their use of local food at their restaurants and cafés. The institute's restaurants and cafés provide culinary students with hands-on food preparation and service experience in real-world settings. The partnership with FarmLogix will provide students with an opportunity to both utilize local food and to gain experience with the logistics of sourcing local products.

12. Retrieved online December 4, 2013. http://www.uchicago.edu/community/economic_impact.

13. The following CNSHE members completed the Local Food Survey: Columbia College Chicago, Dominican University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Loyola University Chicago, Roosevelt University, Triton College, the University of Chicago, and the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Survey Results: Challenges and Recommendations

The Local Food Survey surfaced a number of challenges and opportunities for CNSHE members to consider as they explore ways to increase and accurately measure their use of local, sustainable food.



Meeting Demand

Challenge: Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to provide a wide-range and large quantity of products to meet the diverse needs of their students, faculty and staff. CNSHE members consistently cited the limited supply of local, sustainable food available during the academic year as a key challenge to increasing their local food purchasing.

Recommendation: While CNSHE members are unlikely to have all of their food needs met locally, improved processes for connecting local providers to CNSHE distributors and wholesalers can help close the gap. For example, developing food hubs to provide food aggregation, packing, storage, and marketing services can enable food purchasers to more easily connect to local producers.¹⁴

Goals of the CNSHE Meeting with Food Service Providers, June 24, 2013

1. Discuss research on environmental/economic impacts of purchasing local/sustainable food. Learn about challenges with defining “local food.”
2. Provide the opportunity for food service providers to present their sustainability goals and accomplishments.
3. Garner support for and understand what food service providers need to increase their local/sustainable food purchasing.
4. Discuss institutional and municipal barriers and ways to overcome these barriers to increasing local/sustainable food availability and purchasing.
5. Establish a small working group to draft and recommend a CNSHE definition for local food and develop a collaborative project or goal for us to work toward.

Integrating Sustainability and Food Service Goals

Challenge: Food vendors play a critical role in establishing local, sustainable food programs. With a few exceptions, survey respondents reported that they rely on their food vendors to (1) establish relationships with local food producers and (2) determine if a product is organic, usually identified through the use of USDA organic labeling.

Some CNSHE members have built strong relationships with their food vendors over time and have successfully initiated the process of integrating sustainability goals into food service plans. Other members have not yet reached that level of collaboration or have struggled to build relationships with their food representative peers that will lead to integrated planning.

Recommendation: The June 2013 CNSHE meeting with food service representatives presents a successful model for initiating dialogue and setting the tone for ongoing collaboration between the two areas. The meeting allowed for mutual information sharing and frank and open discussions about the benefits, challenges, and possible solutions for building sustainability goals into food service purchasing plans. CNSHE members seeking to establish relationships with their food service providers are encouraged to utilize the meeting agenda as a template for early discussions.

14. *Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois*. Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), University of Illinois Business Innovation Services (BIS), Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) and FamilyFarmed.org. January 2012.



Consistently Defining “Local” and “Sustainable” Food

Challenge: The lack of clear, consistent definitions across CNSHE institutions for “local” and “sustainable” food makes it challenging to measure the impact and progress being made to increase the use of local, sustainable food by the greater Chicagoland higher education community. Examples of definition variations reported in the survey include:

- Local food eligibility distances: Survey respondents reported a range of a 150 to 300 mile radius for their local food programs.
- Local food categories: Some respondents included all food that is locally grown, manufactured, or processed, such as baked goods, beverages, meat and poultry, dairy, and produce. Other survey respondents had data that was limited to a handful of products, such as produce or dairy.
- Sustainable food: Survey respondents utilized a range of indicators to determine if a food is considered sustainable. Examples used by some respondents included: USDA organic and/or California organic labeling, Fair Trade labeling, sustainable seafood labeling, and hormone and antibiotic free labeling.

CASE STUDY: The University of Chicago’s Dining Agreement

The University of Chicago’s Office of Sustainability partnered with their primary food vendor to build sustainability expectations into their dining agreement. Through the contracting process, the vendor agreed to a number of staffing, promotional, and programmatic commitments.

Sustainability Staffing

- The vendor now includes “sustainability” in the list of responsibilities for their on-site staff and agreed to add a sustainability intern to its management team.

Promoting Sustainability

- The vendor will host engaging and interactive events, programs, and special meals to promote sustainable practices and initiatives.
- The vendor will provide educational signage and track and report their success rates back to the University.
- The University and the vendor will partner to hold a campus farmers market featuring fresh, locally grown/produced products.

Composting and Recycling

The vendor agreed to expand composting to their retail locations and student-run cafés and to adhere to all University mandated recycling and composting programs.

- The agreement encourages the vendor to recycle within the kitchen and food preparation settings.

Labeling Local, Organic, and Sustainable Foods

- The agreement sets expectations, targets, and definitions for local food purchasing.
- The vendor will label local foods as being part of the University’s and the vendor’s effort to reduce carbon emissions.

Recommendation: Explore establishing a set of recommended definitions for “local” and “sustainable” food that balances the desire for consistency with the need for flexibility and institutional autonomy.

Collecting Accurate Information

Challenge: Many of the CNSHE institutions either do not currently track their local, sustainable food purchases or that information is not easily accessible to the sustainability team.

Recommendation: CNSHE members are encouraged to work with their food vendors to determine an accurate and consistent approach for collecting and sharing comprehensive information on local, sustainable food purchases.

Setting Appropriate Benchmarks

Challenge: Setting benchmarks on local, sustainable food purchasing ensures that the institution’s food suppliers are given clear goals to guide their purchasing decisions. However, setting appropriate benchmarks requires articulated definitions for local, sustainable food, a realistic understanding of the region’s ability to meet demand, accurate data collection systems, and strong partnerships with food suppliers.

Recommendation: CNSHE members can work with their food vendors to formalize a benchmarking process that: assesses the institution’s current practices in order to determine an accurate baseline, clearly defines the goals of their local food programs, and tracks progress towards those goals.



Additional Next Steps for CNSHE

Establish an Ongoing CNSHE Local Food Peer Learning Process: The June 2013 CNSHE meeting with food service providers jumpstarted a constructive and ongoing collaboration between the sustainability leads and their food service representatives. In partnership with their food service representatives, CNSHE members with established local, sustainable food initiatives are well-positioned to provide technical assistance and support to their peers who are in the initial stages of building a program. CNSHE will establish a process for sharing best practices and lessons learned. Prioritized topics will include data collection, consistent definitions, and benchmark setting.

Engage Students: CNSHE, in partnership with their food service representatives, will host a forum to engage students as active participants in local, sustainable food programs. Forum participants will learn about the value and barriers to local food and will work together to identify opportunities for increasing options within the regional higher education community.

Build Partnerships: CNSHE will identify and, where possible, partner with city-wide efforts to increase access to local sustainable food.

Areas for Future Study: CNSHE members identified two areas where additional information could improve local, sustainable food initiatives.

- Understanding and problem-solving the logistical and legal barriers distributors and wholesalers confront when trying to connect with local food sources.
- Examining the potential for CNSHE members to utilize their collective buying power to reduce duplication of efforts and to make local, sustainable food more affordable for the regional higher education community.

Conclusion

Local, sustainable food programs offer institutions of higher education with exciting opportunities to address serious environmental issues, support the local economy, provide innovative educational experiences, and foster the health of their students, faculty, staff, and surrounding communities. CNSHE members recognize the range of benefits associated with increasing their use of local, sustainable food and are implementing creative solutions to increase and measure these initiatives. CNSHE members have the potential to further enhance and accelerate their use of local, sustainable food by partnering to confront common challenges and barriers.

Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education Participants

Institutions of higher education:

City Colleges of Chicago
 Columbia College Chicago
 Dominican University
 Illinois Institute of Technology
 Loyola University Chicago
 Moraine Valley Community College
 North Central College
 Northern Illinois University
 Northeastern Illinois University
 Northwestern University
 Roosevelt University,
 School of the Art Institute of Chicago
 Triton College
 University of Chicago
 University of Illinois at Chicago

Partner and supporting organization:

National Wildlife Federation—
Campus Ecology



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Appendix A

Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education Local Food Survey

The universities and colleges of the Chicagoland region are interested in understanding the current state of local food purchasing at their institutions and, in the aggregate, the local and sustainable food supply and the opportunities and barriers to improving those numbers. The surveys were returned July 2013.

Survey questions:

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?
2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?
3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?
4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?
5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?
What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?
6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?
What benefits do you gain?
7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?
8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?
9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?
10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?
11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?
12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

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Appendix B

Chicagoland Network for Sustainability in Higher Education Survey Responses



Columbia College Chicago

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

To my knowledge, Columbia currently has no definition nor have we considered this discussion. There is no official policy on food procurement.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

All food (local or not) is acquired through our café provider Café University or from various catering companies contracted for special events. We do not meet and discuss what menus are provided in cafés. Their staff manages that independently. Menus for catered events are discussed, but large food sourcing/procurement conversations likely do not occur.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

Our school does not have a relationship with any farms. The café orders food from Restaurant Depot. If that wholesaler has a relationship with a farm, the college is not aware. We are three times removed from this process by the time food would get to us from farm, wholesaler, and café supplier.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

No response.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

I cannot address this question for the college.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

I cannot address this question for the college.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

Again, we do not have any policy on sourcing of food. The café has informed me they provide organic products, namely tofu and lettuce. They might have other items but the orders vary from week to week. Of those catering providers brought onto campus, a few serve organic food items (Catering By Michaels, Stefano, A Tray to Remember). All these decisions to procure and serve organic food come from the vendor and their internal policies or ethics.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

I am not sure as to what money the cafés spend each year. I did not look into a total dollar amount the campus spends on catering as we would not know at that point what each vendor then spent on local/non-local food.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

The café purchased fair trade coffee from Bow Truss coffee rosters (who are also local). The café spends about \$700/wk. They are open on the average of 9 months out of the year. This would equate to an approximate spending of \$6300 a year on fair trade coffee. They did not inform me of any other fair trade items they purchase. As for catering, I am unaware if any fair trade food items are supplied at campus events.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

I cannot address this question for the college.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

There is no seafood served in our cafés. Catering definitely does provide seafood items, but again, not certain to the extent or cost.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

Not certain to the cost.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

The only issue that might make us stand out is that we contract out all food service needs.



Dominican University

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

Food grown within 250 miles.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

We get our produce from Midwest Produce Company and they work with the local farms. We have been with them since June of 2013. Our previous supplier was Testa Produce.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

We just started with this new produce company so we have not formed any relations with the local growers in our area as of yet.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

The farms we get our produce from are in Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin and Illinois.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

35% of our purchasing is local. All of our purchases come from distributors.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Our main operating times are fall winter and spring. So we are limited to when we can use local growers based on seasonal local grown products.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

Our distributors determine organic versus non-organic.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

With our past vendor we spent over \$20,000.00. We will be keeping track with our new vendor.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

Currently the only food is beverages. The total estimated amount is \$8,000.00 per year or more.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

Estimated expenditure is \$25,000.00 per year.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

Estimated expenditure is \$12,000.00 per year.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

None at this time.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

Not at this time.



Moraine Valley Community College

1. What is your definition of local?

250 mile radius (STARS definition).

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

Sodexo specs.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms?

Just started a CSA drop-off.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate?

Only 1 directly for the CSA, Genesis Growers in St. Anne.

5. What percentage of your food originates from your definition of local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

For Sodexo it is approximately 37%.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

It's an issue with Sodexo and the way they source their foods from their specific vendor list.

7. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

No response.

8. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced? What are your total food expenditures for organic?

We again use STARS: Third-party certified (USDA Certified Organic, Marine Stewardship Council Blue Ecolabel, Food Alliance, Fair Trade).

9. How does dining services promote nutritional education and awareness?

How does it promote organic, local, and/or sustainable food options?

They do not promote organic/local/etc right now, but DO participate in Meatless Mondays and use Facebook to highlight the meatless menu each Monday.

10. To what extent does dining services purchase its food based on USDA or other nutritional guidelines?

Sodexo has their own nutritional guidelines for our food service program; it is largely based on USDA.

11. What are your total food expenditures on fair trade?

No response.

12. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

No response.

13. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

No response.



North Central College

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

For Compass Group, “local” is defined as food grown within a 150 mile radius it is consumed.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

Local food is procured through vendors identified by corporate.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

Our “Ag in the Middle” initiative is working to keep mid-size farmers on the land through closer relationships among a network of independent produce distributors. The focus is on mid-size, independent farmers who rely on their farming community whose numbers have dropped precipitously in recent years.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

Mid-size and independent farmers.

5. What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

100%; however our distributor is dedicated to working with local farmers.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Some of the challenges include the size of the operation as well as seasonal options. The benefits are traceability access to ensure a high degree of food safety, supporting more sustainable farming practices to do our part to lower our carbon footprint and provide a higher quality product to our customers.

7. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

See #5. It should also be noted that we purchase the majority of our foods from local vendors in the Chicagoland area. Sysco, Testa, Pepsi, Alpha Baking, Central Baking, to name a few. If we were to include this type of “local” our percentage is closer to 90%+.

8. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced? What are your total food expenditures for organic?

Currently less than 1.0% (one percent) of total purchasing dollars.

9. How does dining services promote nutritional education and awareness?

How does it promote organic, local, and/or sustainable food options?

We work with a district dietician, as well as our local executive chefs to ensure nutritious meals. We also identify nutritional information through various signage along with providing information on our web menus. Our Balanced U program promotes health and wellness through various monthly topics within our dining facilities.

10. To what extent does dining services purchase its food based on USDA or other nutritional guidelines?

We adhere to USDA guidelines and are also guided by FDA guidelines.

11. What are your total food expenditures on fair trade?

Less than 1.0% (one percent) of revenues.

12. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

Approximately 12% (twelve percent) of revenues.

13. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

Approximately 1.0% (one percent) of revenues.



Roosevelt University

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

Local food is defined as being grown or raised within 250 miles of Chicago. Locally supplied food is food that is manufactured or housed within 250 miles before being sent to us.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

Primarily through Testa Produce and Farm Logix using an online ordering system. Testa offers an automatic substitute to a local alternative when available and lists it as so on their invoice.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

Our relationship is with FarmLogix who has the relationship with local farmers.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

250 acres or less and mainly in Southeastern Wisconsin.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

8 percent is local and all comes through local farms.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Creating the partnerships with local farms has historically been the primary challenge. FarmLogix and their partnership with Testa produce has eliminated that. The second biggest challenge is finding the breadth of offerings we need.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

In the past we have typically taken the word of the producer/supplier. Moving forward we are looking at adopting the USDA's National Organic Certification. We will also always recognize California's certification of organic.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

\$80,000 on local food. \$920,000 non-local.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

\$20,000.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

\$100,000.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

All our seafood is sustainable and varies by need. Approx \$100,000.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

\$103,000.

University of Illinois at Chicago

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

We define “local” as typically within a 250-mile radius of the producing facility. A “local farmer” farms as an occupation, not a hobby. Our primary local vendor, Midwest Produce supports farms in Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ohio and provides the majority of our local produce. We serve only fresh local fluid milk from local Prairie Dairy in Rockford, IL.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

We work with a number of local vendors including Alpha Bakery, Midwest Foods, Supreme Lobster, Chicago Sweet Connection, Rosa’s Bakery, Testa Produce and Christina Foods to order local items in.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

We currently support local farms in Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Ohio by purchasing products grown and processed on local farms through the relationship with our vendors.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

They vary depending on the types of products grown. The farms we support are located within 250 miles of our facility throughout Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Many of which are smaller, family owned operations.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

All of our local food currently comes from distributors and for the year we are at 11% of total local produce and dairy purchased.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Being that we are located in the Midwest, seasonality and availability become a challenge. We strive to provide the best quality product we can feasibly produce and the freshness of local product affords us that capability. In addition, we believe it is important to support local and especially the the community in which we serve. We are constantly on the look-out for opportunities to work with local vendors.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

We are part of the Compass Brand, a large food service corporation by whom standards are determined and defined. Our corporate purchasing department has all the necessary documentation and verification processes to ensure that food identified by our vendors and distributors as organic meets all standards of the USDA’s definition of organic foods.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

Our total food spend for the 2012-2013 year is \$1.85 million.

Our local food spend for the 2012-2013 year is \$160,000.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

Our We Proudly Brew Starbucks locations serve one variety of Fair Trade coffee. Our annual expenditure for that variety of coffee in these locations comes out to nearly \$1000.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

In 2012-1013, \$291,403 was spent on hormone and antibiotic-free dairy and meats.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

In 2012-1013, \$22,369 was spent on sustainable seafood.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

There are several items we purchase regularly that are certified organic. The total expenditure for these combined items for the 2012-2013 year is around \$42,000.



Illinois Institute of Technology

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

Grown or manufactured within 300 mile radius.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

We have relationships with local farms where we secure local food based on what is in season.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

The relationship is handled by the food service supply chain.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

Some of the farms we work with are in Illinois and Ohio and range in size from 350-500 acres.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

The major challenge with acquiring local food is the Chicago climate and the difficulty/inability to get local supplies throughout the year. There are many benefits to acquiring local food; including stimulating the local economy, less smog, and reducing our carbon footprint.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

We receive that information from our distributors.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information. We should have an update by October 1, 2013.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information. We should have an update by October 1, 2013.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information.
We should have an update by October 1, 2013.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information.
We should have an update by October 1, 2013.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

We are currently gathering and reviewing that information.
We should have an update by October 1, 2013.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

No.



University of Chicago

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

We track which food items were grown, raised, processed, and purchased separately. Then track which ones are within 150 miles and 250 miles.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

We added local food procurement into the Aramark Contract. They are contractually obligated to buy 35% within 150 miles and 40% within 250 miles.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

The compost from our dining halls goes to an urban farm very close to the university.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

Very small, a few acres. Less than 2 miles from campus.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

Currently 30% is local. 100% from distributors.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Finding an adequate amount of local food. Due to climate not everything is available all year. The benefits are economic support of developing local food businesses and raising awareness of the importance of local food.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

The item code will reflect if it is organic or not.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

\$2 million for local food. \$4.3 million for non-local.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

Not currently tracked, will be tracked starting 2013.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

Not currently tracked, will be tracked starting 2013.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

Not currently tracked, will be tracked starting 2013.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

Not currently tracked, will be tracked starting 2013.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

We worked with a UChicago professor and her students to do research regarding how we should approach local food. The group we worked with is called Environment, Agriculture and Food at the University of Chicago.



Loyola University

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

The criteria for local food purchases through Aramark Dining Services is that the item needs to be locally grown/raised within a 150 mile radius. For locally processed foods, Aramark partners with local companies with-in a 50-100 mile radius.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

Aramark works closing with their broadline vendors to source local food items. The major vendor contributors to locally sourcing all food items are Testa Produce, who works directly with Farm Logics, Sysco Food Service, Prairie Farms, Alpha Bakery, and Supreme Lobster.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

Loyola owns and operates a small farm at the Retreat and Ecology Campus. A staff person runs the farm year-round and students intern there each summer to produce food and learn the farm business. The majority of produce is used on site as part of the dining services at the facility. A significant amount of food is sold at the Lake Shore Campus as part of a farm stand and a community-supported agriculture project. Loyola has relationships with a small number of local farms through the Loyola Farmer's Market. This is an independent market started by students in 2011. Aramark has relationships with Testa Produce who has connected our dining service with many local farms such as Wiers' farms, Van Solkema's Farms, River Valley Ranch, Nichol's Farm, Anderson Valley Farms and Brunkow Farm. These farms work together to send us locally grown produce, eggs, and dairy.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

The farm at LUREC is 5 acres and located in Bull Valley, IL. Aramark Partners with the many farms in the Midwest region. Here are the most used vendors that we work with on a weekly basis: Nichols Farms and Orchard, 2916 Hawthorne Rd., Marengo, IL, 40 years in operation, 450 acres. Brunkow Cheese and Dairy, Darlington, WI. Weir Farms, 11525 Reynold Rd, Hanover, MI, in operation since 1896, over 600 acres. River Valley Ranch/39900 W 60th St, Burlington, WI. VanSolkema Farms, 2630 Prescott St, Byron Center, MI, in operation for over 117 years with over 600 acres of family owned farm land and partner with over 2000 acres of farm land to distribute produce.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

The percentage of food that Aramark purchases campus wide that is considered local is over 38% - 30.5 %. This number is made up of 9.8% of locally grown/raised foods, 12.1% of locally produced and 8.6% locally processed foods. Our goal is to increase the total # by 5% per year. This year we opened Engrained Café which is our sustainable café on campus. At this time (September 1, 2013) the café is purchasing over 80% local produce, 100% of local fish, eggs, cheese, chicken, and pork, 100% locally processed baked goods and coffee service.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

There are the obvious challenges of supply and seasonal availability. Many students want standard options and not seasonal variation. The majority of our dining services are during times of the year when local produce is not available, but dairy and baked goods are. These issues need to be factored in. The benefits include the environmental improvements and supporting local economies but also the improved quality and taste.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

Only things that are USDA certified are considered organic. Even though no chemicals are used at LUREC, we do not call this an organic farm because it hasn't been certified.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

Aramark total purchases breakdown from 2012-13 38% local purchases.
62% non-local purchases.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

3% fair trade.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

100% of our milk and cheese is hormone-free and 100% of our chicken is anti-biotic free.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

All seafood purchases follow the strict guidelines of the Monterey Bay Seafood Watch. We source all seafood under the best and good choice guideline. The total amount of seafood purchased is 8% of total food purchases campus wide.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

1% on organic purchases.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

Loyola is pleased to be working with Aramark on a number of initiatives that move our sustainable food system forward. Some potential case-studies would be:

- Retreat and Ecology Campus' Farm – student farmers produce food for community-supported agriculture, retreat house and farmstand.
- Engrained Café – opening in September 2013, this sustainable café will work closely with local farmers and food producers to feature seasonal and local produce.
- Biodiesel Program – Loyola's Biodiesel program came from a course considering waste issues. Currently producing over 3,000 gallons of biodiesel for Loyola and Northwestern shuttle buses, capacity expands to 30,000 gallons in fall of 2013.

Triton College

1. What is your definition of local food; what criteria do you apply to determine if food is considered to be purchased local?

No response.

2. What are the processes by which you acquire local food?

We have a relationship with a farm in Wauconda and our one of our distributors also sources local food for us whenever possible. All of the chicken we use comes from very close as well.

3. What is the relationship that your institution has with local farms, if any?

We have a relationship with a farm in Wauconda where we get herbs and some produce when in season.

4. What size are the farms with which you collaborate and where are they located?

I don't know the size of the farm off hand, however I know it is independent. It is located in Wauconda.

5. What percentage of your total food purchasing is considered local?

What percentage of that local food comes from distributors versus local farmers?

No response.

6. What challenges do you face when acquiring local food?

What benefits do you gain?

Benefits include being better for the environment, higher quality if I know the producer, and freshness. Drawbacks include time spent developing relationships, seasonality of ingredients, and sometimes higher cost.

7. How does your institution determine whether food is organically versus non-organically produced?

I rely on my vendors to provide that information.

8. How much money do you spend on local food per year? Non-local food per year?

I don't have the financial breakdowns for the rest of the questions available at this time.

9. Total food expenditures on fair trade?

No response.

10. Total food expenditures on hormone and antibiotic-free?

No response.

11. Total food expenditures on sustainable seafood?

No response.

12. What are your total food expenditures for organic?

No response.

13. Are there any specific issues or case studies from your institution that you would like highlighted in our final report?

No response.