

# SUSTAINABLE ENDOWMENTS INSTITUTE

## REPORT FOR FOOD SERVICES

Using the eight main categories listed as the criteria for grading Food and Recycling the following is an update of activities and progress in Food Services.

### LOCAL FOOD

- Purchasing food from local farmers and producers.

This is one of the areas where we have made the most progress over the past year. We purchased \$2,243,697.24 in locally sourced products which is 25.57% of our overall purchases. Examples of these purchases include Michigan and Wisconsin apples (\$46,328), Indiana tomatoes (\$27,675), over \$600,000 in cheese, milk and dairy products from Indiana and Wisconsin and over \$400,000 in meat products.

- Participating in farm-to-school programs and food production on campus.

Notre Dame facilitated the development of the Indiana College and University Food Alliance, a newly formed group made up of Indiana Colleges and Universities that seek to further sustainable, organic and locally produced purchases in the state of Indiana. This group is working with the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to develop farm-to-school programs that will allow farmers to have a market for their goods and allow colleges and universities to have sources for locally grown products, many of which are sustainable and organically grown.

Last year we hosted a dinner made up of all sustainable and organic foods to create awareness of the programs and we frequently conduct tastings in our dining halls to introduce locally grown products to our students.

- Geographical location and seasonal availability is taken into consideration.

Notre Dame is geographically in a good position due to being in Northern Indiana and able to take advantage of the mid to late summer produce from Michigan and dairy products and potatoes year round from Wisconsin which is geographically as close as southern Indiana. During the late summer Michigan becomes a major supplier of produce for the East Coast and the middle United States. Although the growing season is limited in this area we take full advantage of seasonal availability by purchasing early items such as asparagus and blueberries, winter squashes and apples later in the season and potatoes year round.

### ORGANIC AND SUSTAINABLY PRODUCED FOOD

- Incorporating organic, fair trade, or other sustainably produced foods into the menu.

Notre Dame offers fair trade coffee in all of our units. We also have a fair trade, organic coffee available in our dining halls. We are purchasing organic white and whole wheat

flour from a local mill. We have incorporated this flour into our recipes where possible. Included is a whole wheat organic pizza crust for student dining. We are working with the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago and the Monterey Bay Aquarium to insure we are current with the National Seafood Guide and serving only the best choices or good alternatives and avoiding seafood that is caught or farmed in ways that harm other marine life, the environment or is on an endangered list. Our Executive Chef has done extensive work in this area to insure we have recipes developed that support this endeavor using sustainable seafood.

- Making available organic and fair-trade products in other campus food facilities such as cafes and stores.

We offer fair trade coffee products in all of our cafes and coffee shops on campus. Our Executive Chef has developed recipes for organic pizza crusts for our 24 hour student café. This allows us to take full advantage of the organic flour in our retail unit while providing an organic product to students.

- Supporting organic food production on campus.

We have a central food processing facility that stocks and prepares many of the products that are served throughout the entire campus including our Catering operations. This allows everyone on campus to take full advantage of sustainable and organic purchases and gives us control over what is being served and even packaging to insure it is biodegradable and made from a renewable resource such as corn where possible.

There is another aspect of sustainability that must be addressed and that is how foods are purchased, transported, and processed. We make a conscious effort to purchase truck loads for every commodity that we can to reduce the use of fossil fuels and reduce the gasses released into the atmosphere by tractor trailer trucks. For example, we buy truck loads of chicken products from Tyson, potato products from Lamb Wesson, rice from Rice-land Rice, Coke and Minute Maid products from Coke USA, cooking oils from A.C. Humko and the list goes on. We also consolidate our shipments with a local purveyor when our products do not make up a truck load to keep the companies from sending two trucks.

We are also using sustainable methods of cooking and processing food products. For example, our soups and sauces are produced at one location in 80-150 gallon batches to eliminate the need to produce the items in multiple locations around campus. All of our baked goods for the entire campus are baked in one location, in three ovens, eliminating the need to bake in all units. Last year we produced over 3,500,000 portions of baked goods in the one location. This type of food production saves both gas and electricity. We make products on campus such as burger patties that eliminate a truck coming to campus to deliver frozen patties to us. At one time we bought truck loads of frozen burger patties.

## REUSABLE DISHWARE AND ECO-FRIENDLY TO-GO CONTAINERS

- Decreasing dining hall waste by encouraging the use of reusable dishware.

We have always used all reusable dishware in our dining halls. We are also specifying only Energy Star equipment to insure we are minimizing our water, gas and electric use to make the least impact on our environment. For example, Energy Star rated fryers save

\$600.00 per year and dishwashers save \$850.00 in electricity and \$200.00 in water per year. We have trained our staffs on energy conservation and sustainability procedures such as food waste reduction, recycling, preventive maintenance of equipment (saves 15% in energy use), and water, gas and electricity conservation to insure they fully understand how to reduce use of all our natural resources. They understand “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” is something we have to live by each day.

- Eliminating the use of Styrofoam products.

At Notre Dame we have an array of coffee shops that offer carryout coffee. We have brands that use cups with logos that advertise the brands and are expected to be used by the coffee companies and most of the cups are Styrofoam. The problem is that the alternative is either use of a plastic coated paper cup or to have students bring their own reusable cup. We have a few that will bring their own cup, but not very many. We are working to set up recycling of our polystyrene through our local trash service, however, the plastic coated paper cups have to go to the landfill. There is a process that separates the plastic from the paper but it is expensive and only done in a few places and we don't have a source to send the cups to. The polystyrene is # 6 plastic which can be recycled and it is recycled in various locations around the country. We do use clear drink cups produced from corn for fruit and yogurt cups and cold beverages.

- Offering to-go containers made from recycled, biodegradable, or eco-friendly materials.

We are constantly searching for better packaging that has less impact on the environment and will suit our needs. In some instances we have found items that are cost effective such as the clear drink cups and we are experimenting with carryout food containers made from recycled paper that are double in cost over what we are using now. The increased cost would have to be passed along to the customer to keep us from losing money on the sales. We are testing a plastic trash bag that is produced using recycled plastic. The use of the bag would increase our annual budget by approximately \$6,000 per year that would mostly impact the retail units due to their heavy reliance on plastic bags for trash.

## FOOD COMPOSTING

- Implementing a composting program to manage dining hall food waste. Diversion rates are noted.

We currently are doing two things to handle food waste. We are sending a large amount of vegetable trim, that is generated at our central processing facility, to a local farm for use as animal feed. Since the start of the school year (September thru November) we have sent 14,000 pounds of vegetable trim to the farm. Most leftover cooked food goes to either the Center for the Homeless or the Hope Rescue Mission and is reprocessed into meals for the homeless. We put posters in our dining halls encouraging students to take only food items that they can eat to eliminate food left on plates. Our campus has a program for composting tree trimmings, leaves and grass trimmings. We have discussed dining hall waste and the only thing they could take from us would be clean vegetable trimmings. In order to compost the plate and food waste from the dining halls we would have to first install pulpers in both dining halls. We have estimates for the pulpers and the cost

is \$96,919.00 for North Dining Hall (only a single dishwashing area was estimated due to renovation planning) and \$198,768.00 for South Dining Hall (two dishwashing areas). We are currently working with a student group on campus that is doing a study of our composting needs and will generate a report that can possibly assist us in this project. They are looking at how to compost the pulp produced and what would be required logistically. Our current diversion rate is approximately 16-18%.

## RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR DINING HALLS

- Administering a recycling program for dining hall recyclables, such as bottles, cans, and cardboard. Diversion rates are noted.

Recycling is a priority in all of our retail units and in our dining halls. Our LaFortune Student Center Food Court is a model for recycling with clearly marked blue recycling centers with containers that have explicit instructions and information for recycling. We have bagged recyclables picked up daily by a campus truck and consolidated with the remainder of the campus recycling. We have had cardboard compactors in both dining halls and the central food processing facility for a number of years that compact and bale all cardboard boxes. All tin cans are washed and bagged for recycling. Both glass and plastic bottles and jars are all washed and recycled also. In the dining halls there is a program that supplies our students with newspapers from major cities along with the campus newspaper. These newspapers are collected in recycling receptacles and recycled also. This generates an enormous amount of newsprint on a daily basis. Additionally, we recycle aluminum foil and disposable aluminum pans. We are currently compacting the remainder of the waste and trash. The recycling efforts divert approximately 40% of the waste that would go to the landfill.

We have entered into a contract with an international grease and oil reclamation company that picks up and reprocesses all grease and cooking oils from all of the food service operations on campus.

The dining halls and the retail operations have used brown paper napkins produced from recycled paper for over 15 years. Due to our volume of napkins this has been an important program. If we could pulp our table waste these napkins would be fed into the pulpers and sent to a compost bed to be reused once again as compost.

We have monthly unannounced evaluations of the dining halls and all retail units and we have added recycling to the checklist to insure the quality of each units recycling program is evaluated and reported upward on a monthly basis. This allows us to monitor and adjust as necessary.

## RECYCLING PROGRAM FOR OFFICE WASTE

- Providing recycling receptacles for items such as paper, printer cartridges and batteries.

Food Service offices have recycling containers for collection of recyclable materials and the items are collected in bags and added to the campus recycling. The containers are placed in locations that are convenient for users to recycle. With the campus recently going to single stream recycling it has made it easier for consolidation and collection.

- Encouraging recycling of office materials by faculty, staff and students. Diversion rates are noted.

We make recycling a topic of discussion at most of our operations meetings and track progress of our units in meeting our goals. Our food service staff are all educated on the need to support our programs and do a good job with recycling. We provide recycling containers for the faculty and students to use in our operations, however, in retail units the bulk of containers may be carried out. The buildings have recycling centers in the buildings we are located in, to support the students food and beverage needs, however, we cannot verify how much recyclables are placed into the containers that are away from our locations in student lounges or near classrooms. For the office materials we are responsible for there is approximately 75% diversion rate.

### COMPOSTING LANDSCAPING WASTE

- Composting landscaping waste.

There is a program on campus for composting of landscaping waste.

- Recycling landscape waste into mulch for use on campus.

The mulch accumulated from landscape waste is used on campus where mulch is required.