



THE REAL FOOD CHALLENGE

MAY 2010
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- ❖ RFC IS LOOKING FOR 2010-2011 INTERNS
- ❖ FEATURED FARMER: SHAWN MCMAHON
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SPRING 2010 NEWSLETTER

EARTH DAY AT THE DINING COMMONS!

Thanks to everyone for an amazing Earth Day! The UCSB dining commons celebrated Earth Day's 40th Anniversary by serving a "Climate Friendly Menu" on Thursday, April 22nd. The dining commons made sure that each item in this eco-friendly meal adhered to five very important criteria before being selected:

- The food must be organic and contain no pesticides;
- It should be bought from local farmers and producers, where possible;
- Foods that are excessively processed and packaged should be avoided;
- The menu is aimed at limiting meat, dairy, and farmed seafood, with fresh seafood chosen according to the "green" label of the Seafood Watch Program;
- The menu was also developed with a focus on a more plant-based diet, utilizing whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, and nuts.

At each of the four dining commons (Carrillo, De La Guerra, Ortega, and Portola), a set of footprints denoted the "climate-friendly" items on the menu.

In addition to creating a sustainable menu, each dining commons had a table informing students of the ways they could reduce their climate footprint, as well as information on techno recycling as well as composting. The infamous "Bag Monster" also made an appearance and helped raise awareness about the staggering number of plastic bags used by consumers every year.

What's more, the dining commons sponsored a button design contest with the theme of "Earth Day's 40th Anniversary." This button had to effectively communicate Housing and Residential Dining Services' recognition of and commitment to Earth Day. The winning designer won an iPod Nano and the honor of having their button worn in the dining commons on Earth Day.

These sweeping efforts by the UCSB dining commons demonstrate incredible initiative and devotion to our environment. It is no wonder that UCSB is known as one of the top "green" universities in the nation! Thanks to the dining commons for living up to our title and to everyone for eating climate-friendly food on Earth Day!

-Jennifer Lande

2010 CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE!

A wonderful and enriching opportunity is approaching! The 2010 California Higher Education Sustainability Conference will be held on June 20-23, 2010 at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College. What is this sustainability conference all about? It is an opportunity for students, faculty, and staff to collaborate and share ideas on how to become more sustainable.

This conference is different from other conferences in that the individuals who are presenting are directly engaged in the work that they are presenting. The presenters are experts on their subjects which stimulates excitement and discussion. Presentations on subjects such as energy, food systems, green building, and water will give presenters a chance to share their knowledge and expertise about what has worked on their campuses while giving participants new knowledge and creative ideas to bring back to their schools.

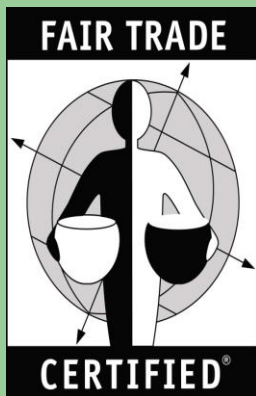
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2010 CALIFORNIA HIGHER EDUCATION SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE: CONTINUED

In addition, there will also be a student convergence consisting of special student-led sessions which will allow participants to meet other participants and exchange ideas. This conference is also an amazing opportunity for networking. Current students will be able to meet like-minded students with whom they will be able to remain in contact with and continue to exchange ideas. For the first time, a community college district will host the conference in an urban core which will allow the conference to highlight obstacles and ideas geared toward sustainability on campuses in urban areas.

Registration for the conference is now open! For more information, please visit the conference's website, <http://2010higheredustainabilityconference.org>.

-Allison Steinkopf



As you meander down those aisles, casually shopping for food, chocolate, or coffee to chain your brain to your books during finals, many have wondered, what is Fair Trade and how is it different from Free Trade?

ROCKIN IN THE FAIR WORLD!

The word "free" has long evoked a rush of fuzzy feelings and a batch of other associative words like: equality, justice, peace. Therefore it is easy to assume that free trade would likewise be a grand economic tool to promote social justice. In theory, the free trade system based on unrestricted international exchange of goods, without government interference, sounds great. But if we take a closer look, this "freedom" falls far short of social justice leaving many to be freely exploited and begs for a restructuring of trade toward one that is fair.

Melissa Cohen from the IV food co-op says, "Free trade sounds good in a perfect society. The problem is, special interests groups often create an illegitimate way of trading that is not necessarily good for the people". This form of unregulated trade is based on the idea that liberalization will promote efficiency and growth, which esteemed economist Joseph Stiglitz emphasizes relies on *assumed* values of an economic system, not on its *fairness* which highlights social and environmental justice.

Why isn't free trade fair? Developing countries though having an advantage of low wages, often have a high cost of capital, poor infrastructure, lower skill levels, and overall lower productivity than the industrialized developed countries they must compete with (Stiglitz). On top of these predisposed disadvantages, "most farmers work modest plots of land and are isolated from markets. The path leading from their farm to your table is long, and filled with powerful intermediaries. As a result, little of the money that you spend on food reaches farmers" (Equal Exchange). Trusting middlemen often allows small farmers to be put lower than economic values, and they must remain slaves of the circumstances their entire lives.

An example of the human failure of free trade is clear in international policy like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), whose unregulated trade has allowed highly subsidized US farm products like corn to be dumped in huge quantities into the Mexican market. The policy effectively caused Mexico to lose over two million jobs since 1994 and rendering culturally, socially, and economically important small-scale farming almost obsolete. There may have been an economic success in increased imports, but as Melissa Cohen agrees we need a redefinition of progress towards one that supports taking care of each other as fellow human beings on a shared planet.

Fair trade works to tighten the gap between the farmer and the consumer, seeing Free Trade's unregulated nature as a danger to small farmers. "... free traders regard voluntariness as the chief component of justice. Fair traders regard the expression of human dignity as the chief component of justice" (Transfair). Market prices are often too low for the laborers to reap a wage reflecting their dignity, so the Fair Trade movement puts the farmer first and asks the consumer to bring along some consciousness when they go shopping.

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ROCKIN IN THE FAIR WORLD: CONTINUED

So how do we choose a better world? While perusing the super market you can check the labels for Fair Trade certified, a process done by organizations like Transfair USA who want to “empower farmers and farm workers to lift themselves out of poverty by investing in their farms and communities, protecting the environment, and developing the business skills necessary to compete in the global marketplace.” For this reason the certification requires importers and retailers to pay a premium price regardless of the fluctuations in world commodity price. In addition to fair price, the requirements of the certification are fair labor conditions, direct trade, democratic and transparent organizations, community development, and environmental sustainability.

Though it is a small step that is in no way going to independently save the world, buying fair trade certified items is like voting with your dollars for a better, more just world. There are fears that the certification could become diluted, as some believe happened with the organic movement, so it is important to educate yourself first and not lose sight of the roots of the change we want just for the label. Stiglitz also points out, “It may be difficult to define what is a fair global trade regime, but it is clear that current arrangements are not fair.” For now, by supporting the movement you directly increase the demand for better trade practices that are so profoundly enmeshed with the treatment of fellow human beings and the environment. Common fair trade items are coffee, chocolate, flowers, fruits and other such cash crops. Change is right here in our own town as the Isla Vista Food Co-op supports Fair Trade and carries many delicious products, like Melissa’s favorite the AlterEco Quinoa or Pachamama coffee. She reiterates, “Yes, for us carrying Fair Trade is often more expensive, but the co-op is about ethics and promotes conscious consumption. Small is beautiful.”

It is such conscious consumption in just your day-to-day food choices that could very well bring about profound change. Maybe we should examine our idea of freedom to see its not about not having others tell you what to do, maybe its about finding a way to scoop as many people up as this crazy world rushes forward and make positive individual choices that are like little stitches, little threads in a global net that may lift everyone up. Yes, we are free, free to choose. So lets choose a fairer world.

Check out these great links to articles, fair trade certification, and a great Fair Trade coffee retailer:

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/02/business/worldbusiness/02trade.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all

<http://www.transfairusa.org/>

<http://www.pachamama.coop/home.cfm>

-Katie Brimm

RFC IS LOOKING FOR SOME FRESH FACES

Are you an agriculturally inclined or socially aware scholar looking for an internship in a new fresh field here at UCSB? If so, the Real Food Challenge is just the place for you. Our program is currently taking applications for 2010-2011 interns looking to make a difference not only within our campus but also our community at large. This rewarding internship will help hone leadership and team skills while helping to curb the negative environmental effects of our food system.

For more information please contact UCSB RFC coordinator Megan Carney at MegCarney@gmail.com



Photo Courtesy of
TransFair USA

FEATURED FARMER: SHAWN MCMAHON

One of the greatest additions to Santa Barbara's ever expanding agriculture community is Shawn McMahon and his leased property which contains Out of Step Farms. This small yet hearty farm is located some two and a half miles from Isla Vista on an acre of land near the intersection of Glen Annie and Cathedral Oaks Road. What sets Shawn's farm apart from the rest of our residential agricultural tycoons is not only the quality of his produce but the ways in which he chooses to sell them.

After graduating from San Francisco State University with a degree in world history, Shawn began working under such prestigious agriculture names as Erin Tormey and Shu Takikawa while continuing his job as produce manager of the Isla Vista Co-op. By age 26, McMahon had taken out a small loan and began his life's passion – to grow healthy yet delicious produce for his community. From his plot, Shawn is able to grow a vast array of seasonal produce like lettuces, heirloom tomatoes and even strawberries which he sells at the Co-op, farmers markets, and even door-to-door. This door-to-door produce vending is one of the most revolutionary ideas to hit the county in some time. Unlike a CSA, Shawn's methods give the buyer a choice of produce and the convenience of home delivery. With a \$15 minimum for Isla Vista and Goleta, and a \$20 minimum for Santa Barbara, home delivery is often a far better choice than a CSA for college students on a budget. In addition to his more than fair prices, Shawn McMahon's produce is something for other farmers to aspire to. After tasting one of his plastic mulch free grown strawberries I was hooked and now get weekly deliveries.

If you would like more information on Out of Step Farms or are interested in becoming an intern, please visit Shawn McMahon's website at OutofStepFarms.com or his Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/pages/Goleta-CA/Out-of-Step-Farms/492423360530?ref=ts>

-Ryan Snider

THE SPRING 2010 SEASONAL RECIPES

In honor of some of the local produce for this season such as peas, parsley, and carrots, here are some recipes that highlight these items. Remember that eating local means fresh ingredients and reduced climate impact because of less transportation of food. Enjoy this local lunch!

Roasted Carrots with Garlic and Parsley (serves four)

adapted from *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison

1 ½ pounds carrots, peeled
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 salt and freshly milled pepper
 10 tiny garlic cloves
 Several parsley springs
 Chopped parsley

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Toss the carrots with the oil, then season with salt and pepper. Put them in a roomy baking dish with the garlic and parsley sprigs. Add 2 tablespoons water, cover tightly with aluminum foil, and bake until tender (25-45min). Make sure that while the carrots are cooking there is a little moisture in the pan. Toward the end, remove the foil and continue roasting until the liquid is reduced and the carrots are browned. Serve garnished with chopped parsley.

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*"Man shapes himself
 through decisions that
 shape his environment."
 - Rene Dubosraphic.*

THE SPRING 2010 SEASONAL RECIPES: CONTINUED

Pea and Parmesan Risotto (serves six)

adapted from *Risotto* produced by Williams Sonoma (general editor-Chuck Williams)

6 cups Chicken Stock
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 onion, chopped
2 ½ Arborio or medium-grain rice
2 cups shelled fresh peas
1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1 tablespoon freshly chopped fresh parsley
Salt and freshly group pepper
Fresh parsley sprigs

1. In a small saucepan over high heat, bring the Chicken Stock to a simmer. Reduce the heat to low and keep the liquid hot.
2. In a heavy large saucepan over medium-low heat, melt the butter and sauté the onion stirring frequently, for 5 minutes or until onion is tender.
3. To the onion mixture, add the rice and stir until a white spot appears in the center of the grains, about 1 minute. Add ¾ cup of stock, adjust the heat to simmer, if needed, so that the liquid bubbles and is absorbed slowly. Stir until the liquid is absorbed. Continue cooking, adding the liquid ¾ cup at a time and stirring constantly, until the rice starts to soften, about 10 minutes.
4. Add the peas and continue cooking, adding the liquid ½ cup at a time and stirring almost constantly, until the rice starts to soften, about 10 minutes.
5. Add the Parmesan cheese, chopped parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Stir to mix well.
6. To serve, spoon into bowls or onto plates. Garnish with the parsley sprigs.

-Allison Steinkopf

SOL FOOD FESTIVAL

The first annual Santa Barbara Sol Food Festival scheduled for September will be a chance to convert unconcerned or simply unknowledgeable eaters into well-informed participants in our food community.

Alison Hensley of Peacock Family Farms, the leading organizer of the Sol Food Festival, states that “this will be a day-long event offering a chance for open dialogue and active demonstrations between the general public and significant players in our local food system.” Experts in the food system will be able to educate community members on the negative aspects of our agricultural food system today, including the drawbacks of agribusiness, factory farms, the risks of fast food and provide suggestions on how to replace these harmful institutions. They will teach gardening skills, encourage buying locally grown foods, celebrate local cuisine, and provide resources on how each individual can start making a difference.

The Sol Food Festival will also act as a forum where community members will have access to answers and resources brought about by people who are knowledgeable and inspired by food and food production. The main goal of this event is to attract people who have little to no knowledge about these issues and educate them, hopefully spreading the word on how to improve the social and environmental consequences of our food system.

The Sol Food Festival will be held on September 25th, 2010. For more details check the Real Food Challenge website or Facebook group.

-Jennifer Lande

THE SANTA BARBARA AGRIFOOD SYSTEM

This year's Sustainability Champion and Environmental Studies Professor David Cleveland has been leading a research team of eleven students working to get a glimpse into our very own Santa Barbara County Agrifood System. This multifaceted project looks into our export-import centered food system and the potential to localize it, coming into contact with both its costs and its benefits. The team has been researching since the fall of 2009 and has interviewed local farmers, distributors, store managers, professors, and has presented findings at the IHC Oil and Water Conference and the Santa Barbara Earth Day Downtown Festival.

Findings of the research so far include the striking inefficiencies in our food system related to export and import of produce. Ranked 21st county in the US in 2008 for farm gate economic output, Santa Barbara has a huge wealth of agriculture, predominately in fruits and vegetables. The research team found that we grow 2,360,803,000 lbs of produce, 99.7% of which is exported (USDA, 2008), and only consume 260,912,000 lbs, meaning the county could be **completely self-sufficient** in this sector. However, despite our wealth of local produce, these findings mean what we are consuming in the county is actually **imported**, as less than **0.2%** of local produce is consumed locally, unless you are consciously shopping at places like farmer's markets or the IV Food Coop, using a CSA, or eating selectively at the UCSB Dining commons. These are some of the explored options for localizing our food system, which means supporting local small-scale farmers. In doing so, some benefits are decreasing greenhouse gas emissions (modestly from transportation, but hugely from not supporting monster industrialized farms), improved community and health, potential for better labor practices, supporting the local economy, decreased use of toxic pesticides, and preserving biodiversity and the aesthetics of current rural Santa Barbara, among others.

Other parts of the project include Santa Barbara land use change, nutrition and food sovereignty, impact on climate change, labor migration, the potential for local food distribution hubs, and local food and gardens in schools. The questions asked and numbers obtained in this project represent a new wave of thinking and consideration of local food systems. The team will be presenting their ground-breaking research at **4pm, May 11th** in the large conference room on floor 4L in Bren, the UCSB Environmental Studies building. Come find out more and have great discussions about a system that directly affects you, your community, and your future. Professor Cleveland's Research Team consists of: David A. Cleveland, Sean Anderson, Ingrid R. Avison, Caitlin Brimm, Heidi Diaz, Anthony Hearst, Kai Hinson, Sydney E. Hollingshead, Nora M. Muller, Corie N. Radka, Tyler D. Watson, Hannah Wright, UCSB. For more information please contact Katie at caitlinbrimm@gmail.com

-Katie Brimm

CALIFORNIA STUDENT SUSTAINABLE COALITION

CSSC's Spring Convergence was hosted by UC San Diego on the weekend of April 30th-May 2nd. You may or may not be familiar with CSSC, so here are some frequently asked questions to get you started.

What is CSSC?

CSSC stands for California Student Sustainability Coalition, an alliance of students and student organizations that collaborate to turn their campuses and communities into examples of environmental, economic, and social sustainability.

How are Real Food Challenge and the Green Initiative Fund related to CSSC?

The Green Initiative Fund (TGIF) is a grant-writing agency that funds student-led environmental sustainability projects on campus, and is itself funded by a quarterly fee approved by the student body. TGIF originated here at UCSB and has been passed at six of the ten UC campuses!

CALIFORNIA STUDENT SUSTAINABLE COALITION: CONTINUED

The Real Food Challenge is part of CSSC's Sustainable Foods initiative, which seeks to create system-wide change toward sustainable campus food systems. The Real Food Challenge at UCSB received a grant from TGIF for academic year 2009-10 to expand the campaign to conduct research on food sustainability and food impacts at UCSB, organize educational and outreach events through the Food for Thought (and Action!) series, and to develop marketing and outreach materials such as this newsletter to support ongoing efforts toward sustainability in campus dining.

What does CSSC do, and how can I get involved?

CSSC's biggest events are their biannual regional convergences, which bring together hundreds of not only students from all around the state and country, but also educators, activists, and anyone interested in sharing ideas and environmentalism with an inspiring statewide community. These convergences are great opportunities for not only networking, skill-building, and learning, but also to simply celebrate the incredible environment we live in, and are a great way to really get energized about making positive change toward a sustainable future.

While these large convergences cover a variety of topics, CSSC and the Real Food Challenge worked to put together a convergence this past February that focused on one very important topic...food! Entitled *Strengthening the Roots*, the convergence drew a crowd of over 100 from all over California to the beautiful campus of UC Santa Cruz. The agenda featured an abundance of local, organic real food, scintillating live music by Jennifer Johns, and a plethora of fun and educational workshops, including one by UCSB's own Real Food Challenge interns.

Where can I get more info?

More info on CSSC can be found at their website,
www.sustainabilitycoalition.org.

-Andrew Chang

REAL FOOD CHALLENGE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

-May 14th come volunteer at Shepherd farms a local organic farm in Carpinteria. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the local food system and to experience all the hard work that goes into producing our food. Spaces are limited so email lizzydish@gmail.com for more info.

-We will also be having a sustainable cooking class towards the end of May. If you are interested in learning how to make healthy and yummy foods from local and seasonal products email us for more information. Hope to see you there!

For a list of upcoming events please join us on Facebook or check out our website

Thanks to the 2009-2010 Real Food Challenge interns



TGIF REAL FOOD
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REDUCE YOUR
CLIMATE
FOODPRINT!*

WE'RE ON
FACEBOOK!

SEE US AT:

[HTTP://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/GROUP.PHP?gid=148178926649](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=148178926649)
