

Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at UBC Farm: Local Food Procurement on Campus

Blair Duffield, Diana Lupieri, Lacey Edwards, Liheng Sun, Michael May

University of British Columbia

LFS 450

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Group 8:

Blair Duffield

Lacey Edwards

Diana Lupieri

Michael May

Liheng Sun

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Executive summary

Local Food Procurement on Campus is part of the UBC Centre For Sustainable Food Systems' Road Map to Action project, "Scaling Up: Bringing local to a global campus." This project seeks to give a broad view of local food procurement at UBC, particularly insofar as the involvement of the SEEDS program is concerned, and identify past and present challenges. This report approaches these objectives with a combined approach, featuring a review of past SEEDS projects, interviews with key actors in the UBC food system, and a brief look at local food procurement at other postsecondary institutions. The insights gained from this threefold approach are discussed and analyzed to identify what we consider to be the two main obstacles currently facing local food procurement at UBC and to produce recommendations on how stakeholders may consider approaching these issues.

This report considers seasonality and associated availability issues, and lack of consumer demand/awareness of local food on campus, to be the two main barriers to local food procurement at UBC. These barriers represent complex issues, which may be unpacked to reveal simpler, more manageable challenges. Through our research and analysis of our findings, we were able to outline recommendations to address these challenges. It is our hope that these recommendations will serve to facilitate increased food procurement at UBC going forward, and inform future research in this area.

Introduction

Aligning with Vancouver's Green City 2020 Action Plan, UBC has been a global leader in campus sustainability and local food procurement (City of Vancouver, 2012). Guided by UBC's visionary plan "Place and Promise", UBC has been working on clear goals and objectives

outlined in the plan (Toope, 2012). Since 2001, UBC Food Systems Project (UBCFSP) has been a major project at UBC, which engages students, staff representatives, and faculty members to create a more sustainable campus food system (University of British Columbia, 2014). Our project is a division of UBC Centre for Sustainable Food System Road Map to Action project: “Scaling Up: Bringing local to a global campus”. Our group shares the core values outlined in UBC’s Sustainability Strategy (University of British Columbia, 2006) and believes that food system sustainability is a vital component of UBC’s overall goal in being a global leader in Sustainable development. “Sustainable Purchasing” considers not only the cost and quality of products, but includes environmental and social impacts, which are associated with our purchasing decisions (Buck, 2011). Our group was able to carry out this project through the participation of multiple stakeholders and the input and direction of the LFS 450 teaching team. Our objectives were twofold. Not only did we seek to provide a broad scale overview of the history of local food procurement at UBC, but we also sought to identify the two most significant barriers to local food procurement on campus. In synthesizing our findings, we aimed to produce feasible potential solutions to those barriers that were identified.

The Local Food Procurement project seeks to identify challenges to increasing local food procurement at UBC. With local food defined as “grown, produced, raised, and processed within 150 miles of the Vancouver campus,” local food spending at UBC constitutes an already relatively high 53% of the food budget (Lambie, 2014). While many financial, operational and educational obstacles have already been overcome, there remains work to be done. We foresee the following areas yet to be explored fully: Scale of production, consistency of supply, food safety concerns and certifications, farmer’s training, cultural and social appropriateness, and procurement policies (University of British Columbia, 2014). While we kept our minds open, our limited time and resources narrowed down our methodologies and topics covered. We choose to

conduct a series of professional interviews with several working professionals on the UBC campus to gain key information that can be used to increase UBCs sustainable food system.

Methodology

Upon receiving this project it was clear that an examination of previous projects would allow us to gain a better perspective of the scope of our project by giving us the clearest insight into the history of UBC food procurement as well as allowing us to gain information regarding the barriers UBC has overcome, continues to face, and future barriers. Together with this, we were able to interview key UBC food system actors to gain insight as to what their role was within UBCs' food system, the actions they had taken, and what they perceive inhibits UBC from purchasing greater amount of locally produced food.

Literature Review

With our knowledge of the SEEDS (Social Ecological Economic Development Studies) library, we began to review previous LFS 450 reports related to our project and encompassed local food procurement within their projects. We conducted a literature review of seven SEEDS project reports that we felt were the most relevant to our project, allowing our group to consolidated relevant information into one document for the ease of future projects and stakeholders (Appendix 3). Within our literature review of peer projects, we focused on three main aspects of the projects which were as follows: how they were related to local food procurement at UBC, what challenges they experienced in their research, and what suggestions they made or action(s) they took to overcome these challenges. In conjunction with our review of past SEEDS projects, we also investigated local food procurement strategies at a three other post-secondary institutions to provide comparison to strategies being employed at UBC. We used this research in conjunction with the information obtained from interviews in order to get a sense of

the big picture and overarching challenges insofar as local food procurement at UBC is concerned. With the insights gained from this investigation of past UBC projects and progress at other post-secondary institutions, we were able to formulate recommendations that will allow UBC to progress in its goal of increasing procurement of local food.

Interviews

We conducted face-to-face interviews with five key actors in the UBC food system in order to increase our understanding of their roles, the history of local food procurement at UBC, and challenges faced in the process of increasing the presence of local food on campus (Appendix 2). We selected interviewees who interact with UBC's campus food system daily and who have power over the choices UBC makes with regards to the food purchased, suppliers and production of meals (Appendix 1). We chose actors from different components of the UBC food system, such as AMS Food & Beverage (AMSFB), UBC Food Services (UBCFS), the SEEDS program, and Student Housing and Hospitality Services. After compiling a list of people we believed could provide us with the information required we began contacting the participants via email to introduce our selves, our project and our goal as well to set up meetings. Our interviews were conducted the week of March 10th to March 25th. Each interview was semi-structured, conducted separately, and recorded to allow us to refer back to them throughout the course of the project.

Results and Outcomes

Selected SEEDS Projects

Numerous past SEEDS projects have focused on the role of local food at UBC. These are varied in scope and application, and have addressed issues such as how to incorporate more local and seasonal foods into UBC Food Service Residence dining halls, and investigating different approaches we could take to extending local food purchasing. In taking a look at some of these

projects and their findings, we receive valuable insight as to some of the barriers that have been experienced in the process of increasing local food procurement here at UBC, and how some of these have been overcome.

1. “The Sustainability of the UBC Food System Collaborative Project III: The Feasibility of Re-Localizing the Food System” by Sara Cameron, Christine Krisinger, Ali Fraser, Ken Ling, Sarah Peterson, Kristi Tatebe, Rob Zeman.

In 2004, Group 14 investigated the feasibility of re-localizing UBC’s food system in order to improve the sustainability of the system. They examined the procurement practices of the AMSFB and UBCFS, as these are the two main food providers at UBC. They discovered that while both food providers tended to prefer local food suppliers when possible, neither had a local food standard at that time—an issue that has been since been remedied (citation needed). Group 14 discovered that there were many barriers complicating the feasibility of increasing local food procurement at UBC. Among these were volume (as UBC could supply up to 51,000 people per day, at that time), seasonality, and price. Furthermore, their analysis questioned the economic sustainability of a re-localized food system at UBC. As research was preliminary at this point and overcoming the aforementioned obstacles lay outside the scope of this project, none of these barriers were expressly dealt with by Group 14. They did, however, succeed in pointing out some of the major challenges that would be faced by future SEEDS projects in this area, and make suggestions for future research, particularly on volume, seasonality, and awareness of local food in the UBC community.

2. “Scenario 3: Education, Awareness and Re-Localization of the UBC Food System” by Renu Bawa, Bonnie Chu, Monique Gobes, Eun-Ae Lee, Linda Nguyen, Flora Sproule, Kathleen Yau.

In 2005, Group 7 investigated the most effective methods of reaching the population at UBC and what messages should be used to raise awareness and support for re-localization of food at UBC. They were not the first SEEDS group to address this issue; for e.g. past projects had suggested campaigns aimed at educating consumers about the benefits of local foods with educational posters, and about Food Miles via pamphlets (Asada et al., 2004). Having reviewed the work of their colleagues, Group 7 recognized the importance of creating professional, appealing educational marketing materials that would be relevant to their target audience, and proposed the slogan “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” and the use of the highly recognizable Buy BC logo. Their work provided insight on how to address one of the major challenges faced by re-localization of the UBC food system: consumer awareness and education. They also noted that perception barriers regarding the price and variety of available local foods could present a challenge, and noted that competitive food pricing would need to remain a priority, and an educational campaign should emphasize the importance of seasonal eating.

3. “The Apple Shouldn’t Fall Far From the Tree: Extending Local Food Purchasing” by Juliana Chan, Mark Fynn, Gita Joshi, Adrienne Montgomery, Bianka Sawicz, Marybel Soto & Ashley Wan.

In 2005, Group 19 set out to extend local food purchasing at UBC, focusing on the purchasing practices of AMSFB and UBCFS. Previous work by Group 2 of the Summer 2004 FSP had indicated that 83% of UBC’s produce could potentially be obtained from a BC source, which Group 19 felt indicated that re-localization of fresh produce should be feasible. They looked at distributors currently used by AMSFB and UBCFS and considered other options, such as working with new distributors or with the UBC Farm to extend local food purchasing.

Over the course of their research, Group 19 found that there were numerous barriers to extending local food purchasing through options such as new distributors, the UBC Farm, and

local food cooperatives. These included inadequate and inconsistent volumes, availability issues, concerns with distribution methods, purchasing methods, and exclusivity contracts, and reluctance to order seasonally, to name a few. However, the primary concerns expressed by UBCFS and AMSFB were adequate volumes and availability, followed closely by quality and price. To overcome some of these issues, Group 19 looked into the idea of working with current distributors to increase local food sourcing. The results of this investigation were promising, as the main produce distributors of AMSFB and UBCFS, Central Foods and Allied Foods, respectively, were positively receptive to the idea of extending local food purchasing.

4. “Bring Local Food to UBC Campus: 2007 UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP), Scenario 4 Report” by Sukhi Atti, Pailin Chongchitnant, Linda Lee, Karissa Robson, Herlina Tedrjowarsito, Iris Tse, and Laura-Ashley Wright.

In 2007, Group 6 took a more specific approach to increasing local food procurement by seeking out one local food distributor that could potentially collaborate with UBCFS and establish a working relationship. They felt that the local, organic foods distributor Discovery Island Organics (DIO) shared the values and vision of UBCFS, and investigated the ability to DIO to meet UBCFS’ requirements for volume, dependability, cost, and quality.

Throughout their investigation, Group 6 found that there were several barriers to establishing DIO as a local food distributor for UBCFS. For one, UBCFS required the majority of produce to be prepared, a criteria that DIO could not meet. As well, price and price-fixing were major concerns. Group 6 found that they were able to meet these challenges head on by narrowing their focus from general produce to BC apples, which UBCFS was interested in providing on residences, and facilitating the negotiation of price and price-fixing between UBCFS and DIO. They recommended starting with whole food items in the extending of local

food purchasing, and suggested that UBC work with their supplier to shift their procurement to include more local food items.

5. “Grown in Your Backyard”: Linking Bernoulli’s Bagels to the UBC Farm in an Effort to Localize the Food System” by Cara Brighton, Emily Doyle-Yamaguchi, Kaitlin Enns, Whitney Stevenson, Julie Willis, Spencer Kelly, Roanne Millman.

In 2007, Group 20 worked on increasing the presence of local food in campus menus by looking at the possibility of incorporating UBC Farm produce in menu items at Bernoulli’s Bagels. They built on the work of past SEEDS projects that had created a model for the incorporation of local food items into UBC food outlet menus (Group 13, 2006) and worked on designing menu items for other outlets (Group 3, 2006). Specifically, they created and sampled three cream cheeses incorporating ingredients from UBC farm.

Group 20 ran into multiple challenges throughout the course of their project. These included issues with seasonality, production levels, and cost issues. Excess demand for UBC farm products was also cited as an issue, although they noted that selling herbs—a UBC Farm product with less demand—to the AMS would fill a niche, and provide a starting point. Group 20 proposed the use of creative solutions to address the aforementioned logistic problems, such as the preservation and storage of UBC Farm products to allow for full year supply.

6. “Incorporating more & increasing support for BC local and seasonal items into UBC Food Service Residence Cafeterias” by Will Arnup, Loretta Chiu, Meryl Herberts, Melissa LeBlanc, Tser-Dean Lin, Jasmine Reeves, Heather Tretheway.

In 2007, Group 5 looked at the feasibility of introducing menu items made with local ingredients to the Vanier Place dining hall. They conducted a taste test survey, contacted local growers regarding growing season availability, and made recommendations to UBCFS and

Vanier Place staff. They produced survey results indicating consumer interest in soups made with locally sourced ingredients, and made initial contact with two local producers.

During their research, Group 5 met with some challenges. They found that affordability of local ingredients could at times be a barrier, and that local ingredients tended to not come pre-cut as per UBCFS requirements at the time. They suggested that introducing soups with locally-sourced ingredients into the menu one day a week could be a compromise to circumvent issues with smaller available supply. They also suggested that as demand increased due to awareness and visibility of local soups, increasing the presence of local soups on the menu may become more feasible. Transportation logistics was another issue that came up; the group recommended looking into coordinating the producers in order to avoid issues with product freshness.

7. “Investigating the Desirability and Feasibility of Incorporating more Local, Seasonal and Sustainably Produced Food Products into the Agricultural Student’s Undergraduate Society (AgUS) Weekly BBQ Menus” by Pearl Yip, Taryrn Uede, Serena Singh, Bonnie Wong, Megawati Tendean.

In 2008, Group 26 worked on increasing the local food items to be included in the weekly LFS Wednesday Evening BBQ menus. They focused on small-scale vegetable growers and sustainably produced meat, and worked to develop relationships between LFS and local farmers as well as UBC farm. They did succeed in developing a menu and beginning negotiations to increase the involvement of UBC Farm, but ran into challenges insofar as UBC Farm’s ability to consistently meet supply needs. Furthermore, some meal suggestions were found to be too elaborate to be feasible in the context of the Wednesday Evening BBQs.

Group 26 suggested that further communication with UBC Farm about supply and availability would be helpful, and it could be worthwhile to look into enhancing storage facilities

to preserve local produce into the winter months. They also adjusted menu suggestions to better suit the needs and limitations of the facilities.

Targeted Interviews

Our interviews with five key actors in the UBC food system produced a wealth of knowledge and insight regarding the challenges that have been faced and addressed throughout the history of local food procurement on campus. Key topics and findings discussed in each interview are outlined below.

Vicki Wakefield, Purchasing Manager for UBC Food Services (UBCFS)

Our interview with Vicki indicated that UBCFS works with both large and small distributors, relying on open and honest communication to facilitate local food procurement. She noted that sourcing local food is not complicated, but that there is only so much that we can buy in BC because certain things simply aren't produced, packaged or processed here, and that how much we can buy local depends on our definition of local food.

The availability of local food changes from year to year; as farmers grow foods for profit, availability of food will change with fluctuations in the economy. She also noted that lack of awareness and consumer demand is a barrier to increasing local food procurement, and that the price sensitivity of consumers can be an issue. Furthermore, the variety of food outlets on campus can make it difficult to raise our local food procurement past a certain point without seriously limiting food options. Our local food procurement at UBC is currently at a relatively high 53% of food spending (Lambie, 2014).

**Ryan Bissell - Executive Chef, AMS; Nancy Toogood, Food & Beverage Manager,
AMS Food & Beverage**

AMS Food & Beverage (AMSFB) is a self-supporting financial entity; millions of dollars go through AMSFB each year and 100% profit goes back into AMS to support students. A team comprised of Food & Beverage Manager Nancy Toogood, Purchaser Nick Gregory, and Executive Chef Ryan Bissell makes purchasing decisions. AMSFB employs up to 220 students a year. In the new SUB, AMS will have the full power to manage the food business, excluding UBC Food Services outlets. Approximately 22-25 percent of food served by AMSFB in the Old SUB is procured from within 100-mile radius.

As a new hire, Ryan brings fresh, sophisticated knowledge to building a network with local farmers in BC area. Ryan has an optimistic and energetic approach to procuring and serving fresh, healthy and local food to students at an affordable price. He takes the mission to a personal level, and sets an aggressive goal at 80 percent local food procurement for the new AMS building; however, he prefers to have some flexibility with the numbers and policies. In contrast to the definition set out by UBCFS, Ryan defines local food as produced or raised within 300 kilometers of campus.

Although Ryan believes that there will be no significant obstacles in procuring local food for the new SUB, some crucial issues were identified. The first of these is the financing and pricing of running a food business. Reverse engineering the food price is crucial to ensure that local food options can be provided at a price that does not exceed students' financial limits. Also of importance is establishing a wide and reliable network of farmers. This will allow AMSFB to utilize the extensive facilities in the new SUB to preserve local products beyond the current seasonality. Extending the availability of these local ingredients will require careful planning and

foresight. Other obstacles mentioned by Nancy include student/consumer awareness, and lack of local butchery facilities for local farmers.

Steve Golob - Chef, Place Vanier Residence

Steve is the Executive Chef in the Place Vanier dining room, and he has been working there for 17 years. Steve's duties include menu design, recipe design and testing, purchasing, cooking and supervising the floor. On a personal level, Steve is passionate about the importance serving local seasonal and fresh food to students.

Steve is involved with initiatives to purchase food from the UBC farm, and in the last year, the dining room purchased between 7,500 and 8,000 dollars worth of food from the farm. Aside from the logistics that Steve handles routinely, he also participates in conferences and green projects. In the kitchen, Steve installed a side bar, which serves sustainable vegetarian food, with ingredients that are as local as the season allows.

Steve mentioned multiple obstacles to local food procurement, including seasonality, price structure, food literacy of students, lack of pushing local food by the BC government, making connections with local farmers. Last but not least, he noted that competition for land use between commercial development and local farming, may endanger the future prospects of local farming.

Liska Richer - Coordinator, UBC SEEDS Program

Our interview with Liska Richer served as an in depth discussion of past SEEDS projects and the challenges that they have faced over the course of the program, and helped to highlight how far UBC staff, faculty and students have come in creating change in the UBC food system. Our discussion indicated that food system change often involves approaching problems from

several different angles and invoking creativity to affect results. She noted that challenges have varied depending on what time period we are looking at, as local food was not as much of a hot topic nor as present on campus even ten years ago. As such, early projects focused on establishing the current state of the UBC food system. In the early projects, it was found that around 60% of our food was of unknown origin. Furthermore, the commodity chain was long and complicated, making it a challenge to work with.

Other challenges that have come up in past SEEDS projects include finding enough supply. Multiple projects have looked into solutions to this problem, including the formation of a coop of growers. Seasonal extension has also been a focus of multiple SEEDS projects. Reliability, consumer demand, and labeling are also challenges to increasing local food procurement. Liska also noted that perception barriers are often a problem in creating food system change, whether these are perceptions on price point, feasibility, or other aspects.

What Are Other Campuses Doing?

Having published Canada's first campus-wide sustainability strategy in 1997 (UBC, 2006), UBC is a leader in sustainability, and has worked diligently to improve the sustainability of our food system on campus. However, we are not the only campus striving to improve our food system and reduce our ecological footprint. University of Toronto, Yale University, and University of California, Berkeley represent just a small sampling of the educational institutions that have made strides in improving their food system sustainability, in part by working to increase the presence of local food on campus.

University of Toronto

In 2007, The University of Toronto committed to sourcing 10% of their food from local sustainable producers (Park, B. & Reynolds, L., 2012). Since then, they have approached local food procurement in multiple ways, with their main focus of increasing consumer awareness and visibility of local food on campus. The University of Toronto has created campus wide local food standards aimed at increasing consumer awareness of local foods and ensuring the maintenance of clearly defined labeling practices. The school is known for its “Local Food Challenge,” in which campus chefs compete to increase the amount of local food served in their dining halls each week (Cox, 2013). Several Ontario farmers are direct suppliers of the UofT dining halls. They also hold an annual Field to Fork Festival in which local food is served by campus chefs.

Yale University

Yale University is another leader in food system sustainability, which has created organic mini farms on campus and worked extensively on scaling up its procurement of regional, sustainable foods. Their 2013-2016 Sustainability Strategic Plan highlights local food in one of its Food and Wellbeing goals, specifically focusing on ensuring that “37% of the food purchased and served by Yale meets one or more of the following sustainability criteria: local, eco-sensitive, humane, or fair” (Yale University, 2013). They also aim to “create a regional food alliance with area farmers and institutions, the Yale Sustainable Food Project, and Yale Dining by 2014” (Yale University, 2013).

Yale Dining has experienced challenges related to supply and affordability in its attempts to scale up regional, sustainable food procurement, and Yale has seen increases in food budget expenses due to the inclusion of “sustainable and organic foods” (Horovitz, 2006). Leila Virji, Sustainable Food Systems Coordinator for Yale Dining also notes that the issue can be

complicated by the fact that different institutions define ‘regional’ and ‘sustainable’ differently (Yale University, 2014).

University of California, Berkeley

UC Berkeley published a Campus Sustainability Report in 2013 indicating that the university had surpassed its goal of raising sustainable food purchases to 20% by 2020, having increased this percentage to 28% in 2012 (UC Berkeley, 2013). In this report, sustainable is defined as meeting one of the following criteria: locally grown, organic, fair trade, or humane. The report details several upcoming food projects, including a planning sampling program in campus dining halls, and improved marketing and scale of their annual Food Day event.

UC Berkeley is also allied with the “Buy Fresh, Buy Local” campaign, having agreed to making a minimum of 10% local food purchases, with a future goal of 25%. Notably, up to 60% of their in season produce purchases are already sourced within a 16 county radius of the campus (UC Berkeley, 2014).

Discussion

Reviewing the selected SEEDS projects outlined past work regarding the procurement of local food at the UBC campus. The work of previous groups focused both on specific locations on campus and on the broader procurement practices at UBC. This allowed for analysis at different scales. The aim of our project was to provide a general background of local food procurement projects at UBC and to identify common challenges faced by these projects in order to help us target our recommendations to the most pressing issues.

In the SEEDS projects that investigated the potential for incorporation of local food at specific locations on campus there were numerous common limitations. The Bernoulli’s Bagel

project and AgUS Weekly BBQ Menus project both stated that availability and supply of local ingredients were key obstacles. The project looking at increasing local food at UBC cafeterias also showed concern about availability. In addition this group suggested informing customers about the use of local food as a way to increase awareness.

Giving students more information about the benefits and presence of local food on campus menus was a theme in the SEEDS projects with a broader scope. The Sustainability of the UBC Food System Collaborative Project stated this in their recommendations along with extending seasonality. The importance of student interest and awareness was developed even further in the Education, Awareness and Re-Localization of the UBC Food System project. The work of this project established how student awareness drives purchasing and was informative in our analysis and recommendations. Looking further into the limitations of the SEEDS projects with a broader scope, it was clear that availability and seasonality were major factors. While these projects were able to identify multiple producers and distributors, from UBC Farm to Discovery Organics, who could potentially supply the campus food system with more local items, no single party could meet all requirements. Limits on student spending and seasonal availability often hampered how much local food could be sourced. At certain times of the year the quantity and quality were sufficient, while at other times supply, cost or quality did not meet with demand. Throughout the selected SEEDS articles the common themes of availability and student awareness became evident as limitations for local food procurement at UBC.

In evaluating the selected interviews with key stakeholders it became clear that the passion and knowledge of these dedicated individuals has been driving change in the UBC food system. The interviewees were able to overcome multiple obstacles in order to expand the amount of local food served at UBC. For chefs Ryan Bissell and Steve Golob, the ability to think creatively about using local ingredients was essential to balancing the increased costs that are

often attached to these ingredients. Both chefs stated the challenge of producing locally sourced meals that fit within student budgets and preferences. A major issue associated with this was the lack of availability during certain times of the year. This was echoed in the interviews with Nancy Toogood and Vicki Wakefield; who also indicated that customers' preferences can run counter to the seasonal products available.

A more in depth timeline of previous local food procurement projects was established by speaking with Liska Richer. She emphasized the importance of innovative thinking to overcome perceived boundaries. One area that Liska felt had not been fully addressed was student awareness of local food usage in the UBC food system. The lack of student literacy regarding local food on campus was also described as a limitation by all other interviewees. Ryan and Nancy stated that they are planning on hiring a new communications employee who will focus specifically on promoting the food served in the new SUB. Chef Steve Golob has been an excellent ambassador for UBCFS and attends numerous events showcasing the local and fresh options serve at the Vanier Place dining hall. While the work of key stakeholders has improved student awareness somewhat it has not been able to reach the broader student body.

Our brief review of sustainable food strategies on other campuses highlights the fact that improving the ecological footprint of our food systems is a growing priority at post secondary institutions. Local food is included in the strategies of numerous universities, with objectives aimed at increasing local food procurement to achieve certain percent goals within a given timeframe.

For example, University of Toronto committed to sourcing 10% of their food from local producers in 2007, and Yale University aims to ensure that 37% of the food purchased and served on campus meets one or more of their sustainability criteria, one of which being 'local.' UC Berkeley surpassed its goal to raise 'sustainable' (i.e. locally grown, organic, fair trade, or

humane) food purchases to 20% by 2020, having increased the percentage to 28% in 2012. What is notable about these commitments is the variance in definition of sustainable,' with varying degrees of emphasis on the significance of 'local.' These efforts are ambitious and often creative in their application, and underscore the significance of UBC's accomplishments in this area, with 53% of food purchased by UBCFS being grown, raised, produced, or processed within a 150-mile radius.

Local food procurement strategies at other campuses have experienced similar challenges to those at UBC, with price concerns, supply, and consumer awareness named as areas of concern. What has been particularly valuable in reviewing the strategies of other universities has been learning about some of the creative approaches being taken to overcome barriers to local food procurement. These include events aimed at raising student awareness, such as the annual Food Day at UC Berkeley, and the Local Food Challenge and annual Field to Fork Festival at University of Toronto. There is also an emphasis on clear, standardized labeling practices at UofT, and on marketing strategies and sampling programs at UC Berkeley. We feel that, especially in terms of raising consumer awareness of the importance and availability of local foods on campus, creative events and approaches such as these may present interesting avenues to explore in the future.

Recommendations

Two main obstacles stood out during our review of local food procurement on campus: the availability and the visibility of local food. These categories cover a wide range of barriers to local food procurement, including logistics like seasonality, local farming, marketing, and consumer demand. Through our interviews with Victoria Wakefield, Liska Richer, Steve Golob, Nancy Toogood, and Ryan Bissel, we were able to observe that UBC is fortunate to have many

staff members who are passionate and knowledgeable about overcoming such hurdles. During our short time with these issues, we were able to identify some large logistical issues that are being dealt with by these staff members, as well as some small changes that we see being made possible in the future.

Firstly, the availability of local food is greatly limited by UBC's large food needs and short growing season. We would suggest capitalizing on what is available to us through our local farms by serving what is seasonal and preserving that which can be canned, pickled, dried or frozen for use out of its growing season. In our interview with Steve Golob, he described working with the UBC farm, which is able to produce a large quantity of Cinderella pumpkins. Steve made these into soups and stews to serve to the students at Vanier. By presenting this seasonal food in an appealing way, he was able to capitalize on local produce. Collaboration between UBC chefs and food procurement staff can help ensure that maximum amounts of local food are being procured and served. We believe that all menus at UBC should incorporate local, seasonal food into their available items.

Similarly, in our interview with Ryan Bissel, he described plans to can, pickle, and otherwise preserve food on site as part of the new SUB's food program. We see this as an excellent learning experience for students as well as a great way to extend the shelf life of local foods. Perhaps future LFS students can research how to capitalize on these sustainable methods of food preservation on campus.

Secondly, we found that communication around local food has a significant impact on its consumption. Several of our interviewees mentioned that consumer demand helps drive a push for local food. Through our group discussions and review of SEEDS literature, we found that many students are simply not aware of local food and its availability on campus. Similarly, ensuring that students understand the value of local food could help increase demand for it.

We feel that implementation of a labeling system for local food items would be an excellent project for a future LFS 450 group. For example, stickers describing the locality of foods would be a quick visual cue for the consumer. A complementary initiative would be to make signage and other literature visible to students to advertise the locality and impact of specific food choices. We feel that signs describing the seasonality of different food items (as found in the UBC Sustainability Guide) would be especially effective. These could be posted in UBC restaurants, cafés and dining halls to give consumers a rule of thumb to refer to regarding food freshness. Consumers would benefit from visual stimulus to support the local food campaign.

Similarly, advertising food items that are locally sourced through marketing initiative such as posters and food demos could increase demand for those items. Food samples and events that advertise sustainable food items would give positive press for the local food movement. It is important to place emphasis on foods that local farmers and UBC staff members have worked to make available. We need to get creative to get students involved in supporting local food.

Scenario Evaluation

The planning of the local food procurement on UBC campus project took on two phases to capture the history of projects related to local food on campus and gain information from key stakeholders in the campus food system. This was designed to provide a solid background of the work that had been completed in the past and the impact that each project had on local food procurement at UBC. Additionally, it would draw on current experiences from day-to-day operations in order to define what challenges are still present and how they are being addressed.

The SEEDS (Social Ecological Economic Development Studies) Program has provided students with various opportunities to research local food at UBC, many of which are held value

for this project. A search of the SEEDS Library was used to gather the background information on local food procurement related projects from past years. These related reports were then used to define the type of research that had previously been completed and the changes that resulted from it. It also highlighted common challenges that informed the discussion and recommendations.

In the interview phase of the project key stakeholders were identified and meetings were arranged to gather information about the current state of local food procurement at UBC. Which involved meeting with the purchasers, managers, and key chefs for both UBC Food Services and AMS Food Services. After meeting with these key stakeholders the information gathered from the interviews was compiled together to gain an overview of common themes and innovative solutions. The group was then able to define the two largest obstacles and recommendations to these obstacles by drawing on the results of the SEEDS report evaluation and the interview compilation.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the methodology used for this project there are some areas that could have been strengthened. In interviewing stakeholders it would have been informative to gather the opinions of more chefs at UBC. The chefs interviewed in the project were more progressively minded towards local food so getting the views of a broader spectrum of chefs may have identified challenges that are common to more chefs. It was also not possible to meet with the purchaser for AMS Food Services, who could have added more information about the boundaries of procuring local food from a purchasing perspective. The input of students and faculty could have added another dimension to the project. While it was not necessary to achieve the outcomes of this project it would be informative in future projects.

In future evolutions of this scenario it would be valuable to gain the opinions of students and faculty in regards to local food in the UBC food system. This would help to gauge how much

interest there is in local food on campus and how best to meet the interest of those on campus. A project could be crafted around focus groups of students from different faculties and gaining information about their awareness of local food on campus and how important it is to them. The information from this report could inform the marketing and communications strategies for UBC and AMS Food Services. Additionally, it could help to inform the menus on campus by blending local food with consumer interest.

The definition of local food as it relates to food procurement at UBC would be another opportunity for future evolutions of this project. Part of the challenge of increasing the amount of local food used in UBC menus is that the definition of local is not clearly outlined for all parties. If stakeholders are pursuing local food procurement under different guidelines it becomes more challenging to identify barriers that are specific enough to encapsulate all definitions of local. A future iteration of the current project could coordinate the key stakeholders in the campus food system in order to initiate a dialogue about the definition of local food on campus. The ultimate goal of such a project would be an agreement or statement outlining a clear, united standard of local food at UBC. This definition could also take into account student opinion through focus groups.

The teaching team and future students of LFS 450 could also engage with this topic. It would be worthwhile to have students discuss UBC's definition of local food in a journal club setting. While the current class did discuss the ecological impact of local food in a journal club setting, it did not focus on the interactions between UBC food purchases, definitions of local and the broader environmental impact.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview Participants

Liska Richer - Coordinator, UBC SEEDS Program

Nancy Toogood - Food & Beverage Manager, AMS Food & Beverage

Ryan Bissell - Executive Chef, AMS Food & Beverage

Steve Golob - Residence Chef , Place Vanier Dining Hall, UBC Food Services

Victoria Wakefield - Purchasing Manager, Student Housing and Hospitality Services

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Steve Golob: What is your responsibility in UBC food services/job description?, How big are your influences throughout the rest of campus?, What initiatives/what have you done to procure local food?, What are your big numbers?, As we understand head chefs have big influences on

food procurement, is it possible to spread your?, What are the biggest obstacles for you to procure local food?, How are the financial outcomes after the increase of procuring local food in your kitchen.

Victoria Wakefield: Can you briefly discuss your role with Student Housing and Hospitality Services? How do you influence the amount of local food purchased here at UBC?, What was the catalyst for making increased local food procurement a priority here at UBC? If possible, could you provide a summary of some of the major events in the process of increasing local food procurement at UBC?, How were you able to increase the local food spending to 53%?, What obstacles are you still facing in increasing local food procurement?, How do you think you can overcome the barriers that are still being experienced?

Ryan Bissell and Nancy Toogood: What is your personal and official approach to local food procurement?, Have you implemented any actions to bring in local food?, What are your big numbers?, What is your definition of local food?, What is your responsibility that relates to food procurement?

Liska Richer: As the seeds coordinator, what is your role in the program?, What are some of the barriers faced by previous groups within the seeds project?, Was reliability or volume the main issue with the UBC farm?, What is your opinion on UBCs definition of local?

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