

Extending BC Local Food Purchasing on Campus

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Scenario 4

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Abstract

The UBC Food System Project (UBCFSP) began as an academic endeavor to make the campus food system more sustainable, from food production to food disposal. Each year, individual groups from the AGSC 450 class work on different aspects within the overarching goal of sustainability. One aspect of shifting towards a more sustainable food system is to increase the amount of local and seasonal foods represented in it. The re-localization of UBC's food system presents an opportunity to reconnect consumers with the source of their food, minimize the environmental impacts of a globalized food market, and support BC's economy and farming communities. Our primary objective is to explore the opportunities and barriers for increased purchasing of local foods on UBC campus. We have focused our efforts on increasing local food procurement for UBC Food Services (UBCFS). Many of the challenges lay within UBC Food Services' (UBCFS) relationship with their current distributor, Allied Food Services. With such large volume demands, UBCFS has looked to large distributors to fill their orders, making change much more difficult. We have recommended that UBCFS negotiate contractual provisions with Allied Foods to request local products, beginning specifically with local apples. As well, we have recommended that UBC develop a local food policy to ensure its commitment to procuring local food. Finally, we have recommended that next year's students look into the possibility of working directly with local producers and look into the feasibility of procuring local greenhouse products.

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Introduction

The relocalization of agriculture presents a profound opportunity to restore farms' positive social and ecological services, and to ensure agriculture is understood as a critical element in the viability and vitality of our societies' health and wellbeing (Jervell and Jolly, 2003). Localization means a reduced reliance on fossil fuels to ship our food across enormous distances; it means economic strength for our rural communities; it means transparency and education for urban dwellers with the opportunity to connect to the growers of their food.

The University of British Columbia Food System Project (UBCFSP), integrated into the AGSC 450 curriculum in 2002, has been an ongoing project working towards a sustainable food system for UBC's Vancouver campus. Different project scenarios cover the diverse aspects of the envisioned food system; a fundamental component of this project is the re-localization of food procurement, specifically aiming to increase the consumption of locally produced foods on campus.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for building a sustainable food system; the solutions to local problems require an intimate knowledge of the local context, as well as an appreciation for the complexities of the system, and the needs of the involved stakeholders (Guba, 1999). When purchasing food, food distributors and providers on campus prioritize the price and quality of food over its source. However, the current price of food does not reflect the environmental costs of transportation, large-scale monoculture production, processing, or packaging.

It is the purpose of this report to explore the opportunities and barriers present for a large-scale transition to the procurement of local foods through existing channels of distribution. We will begin by outlining the UBC food system context and the history of the project from which this

scenario emerged, followed by our vision statement, identification of values, and an explanation of our methodology. Next, we will report on the findings from each of the avenues we have explored in achieving the goal of local food procurement and provide a discussion on each one. Findings and discussion pertain to: Allied Foods and UBC Food Services (UBCFS), as they are the two largest stakeholders in food-procurement decisions; small distributors and producer organizations as alternative routes for local food procurement; and local food projects at the University of Toronto and Simon Fraser University, as they provide insights on successful approaches. We also established the percentage of produce that is being sourced from within BC at this time, which will allow for accurate targets to be set on local produce levels in the future. Finally, we will offer recommendations for the project stakeholders and future students, and provide our overall reflections and conclusions.

Problem Definition:

The overarching goal that our scenario presents is to further incite the connection between local growers and/or distributors and UBCFS, in order to provide campus food outlets with more sustainable and locally grown produce. The UBC food system in this case, serves as a localized model of the larger global food system; increasing its sustainability can act as an avenue for positive change within the larger food system. We recognize the many possible approaches for meeting this challenge; a focused approach, such as shifting the menu items of one food outlet to reflect seasonality can be effective. On the other hand, we also realize the importance of influencing the large-scale structures that can make institutional change difficult. To ensure that this balance of approaches was reflected within the scenario, our group decided to concentrate on procuring high volumes of local produce for food outlets across campus through existing distributors; a decidedly

broad and large-scale approach.

As asserted in the problem statement of our scenario, UBC food providers have expressed great interest in increasing local food procurement practices on campus. However, they face the challenge of meeting consumers' demands for taste, nutrition, and affordability, while maintaining an economically viable business. UBC's food services are centralized; virtually all food outlets are owned and operated by one of the two food providers on campus. These providers are UBC Food Services (UBCFS) and the AMS Food and Beverage Department (AMSFBD), each of which holds contracts with their own set of distributors, such as Allied Food Services and Central Food Services respectively.

In the year 2004, our AGSC 450 colleagues conducted a feasibility analysis for increasing local procurement and concluded that 83% of fresh produce consumed on UBC campus could potentially be supplied locally. "Local" has been defined as produced within the province of British Columbia. In the years 2005 and 2006, our colleagues further expanded the project with the intention of putting local procurement into action at UBC; thus, this is a relatively new undertaking for the UBCFSP.

As the primary contact person for the AMS was on leave for the duration of our research, our group chose to work with UBCFS to explore possible gateways for increasing local food procurement. We also chose to focus on produce items, since it was established that chicken and dairy were already being procured locally, and BC is an excellent but underutilized region for growing fresh and nutritious fruits and vegetables. Specifically, we looked into providing the UBC food outlets with several BC grown products that would be available year round, such as root

vegetables and apples.

Vision Statement and Identification of Values

The Vision Statement developed by the UBCFSP and its collaborators lists the following seven guiding principles as its general targets:

Vision Statement for a Sustainable UBC Food System:

The overarching goal of a sustainable food system is to protect and enhance the diversity and quality of the ecosystem and to improve social equity, whereby:

1. Food is locally grown, produced and processed.
2. Waste must be recycled or composted locally
3. Food is ethnically diverse, affordable, safe and nutritious
4. Providers and educators promote awareness among consumers about cultivation, processing, ingredients and nutrition
5. Food brings people together and enhances community
6. Is produced by socially, ecologically conscious producers
7. Providers and growers pay and receive fair prices

Our scenario spoke directly to three out of the seven principles, particularly 1, 4, and 6.

These three principles home in on the desired outcomes of our scenario's goal of sourcing locally: understanding how our food is produced and processed, appreciating its qualities and nutritional benefits, and knowing where and how far it comes from. Overall, our group agrees that the seven guiding principles together produce a good starting framework within which to re-construct the UBC food system, as the principles encompass all aspects of the food system's cycle, from food growth to food waste.

The only aspect of the Vision Statement that was a source of difficulty for our group was the specific definition of 'local'. As defined collaboratively by the UBCFSP, 'local' spans the entire province of British Columbia. We have found, as we will illustrate further on, that this definition has acted as a major limitation to our objective, especially considering there are some parts of BC that are significantly further away than Washington state. We acknowledge that defining political borders as 'local' allows us to maintain more influence on how our food is produced, and will avoid

food security problems should conflict arise between Canada and the US. We would argue that within the given definition of 'local', political borders should be, if not ignored, then perhaps re-negotiated to encourage the "next best" alternatives for where food is sourced from.

Upon entering this project, most of our group members came in with a moderately anthropocentric perspective determined largely by our experiences and the environments in which we grew up. The ethnic backgrounds within our group range from Asian to Latin American to Caucasian. Coming from urban and ethnically diverse backgrounds, we bring a wide range of viewpoints to the project. In general, we place more importance on the human cause but aim to provide sustainable food to the human population while leaving ecological systems intact. As well, in our research, we deal directly with UBC Food Services, which includes economic sustainability as part of its mandate: "Sustainability – applying social, economical and ecological business practices" (UBC Food Services). Therefore, we are compelled to consider economic sustainability as a major part of our analysis.

We have attempted to consider all three pillars of sustainability (ecological, economic, social) while conducting research and making our conclusions, yet it has been a challenge since we are mainly working with existing organizations that have established priorities. In this respect, we have been able to witness the vast gulf that lies between our own values and those of the businesses in question that must ultimately respond to shareholders.

Methodology:

Our group's research method is based upon the principals of action-based research. The research findings of individual group members was brought back to the group and reflected upon in relation to project goals and our specific scenario tasks. As a group, we decided which ideas and

avenues should be further developed or pursued. Our findings and recommendations are the product of collaborative group learning and research.

The findings presented in this report came from a wide variety of sources, including personal communications, data, interviews and professional websites. Our research builds upon the work – the methodology, findings and recommendations of previous AGSC 450 students, in particular, the 2006 Group 19, Scenario 1 final report. Guest speakers in our AGSC 450 class such as Brenda Sawada, Andrew Parr and Dorothy Yip provided useful relationship building opportunities, and important information and perspectives.

We researched local food procurement initiatives at the University of Toronto (UofT) and Simon Fraser University (SFU). U of T's Local Flavour Plus (LFP) and SFU's Local Food Project provided useful insights into possible/alternative local food procurement models and policies/agreements. We contacted Meredith Starkey and Candace Bonfield from SFU by telephone and email for further details on their project. Dorothy Yip provided us with the customer usage and monthly velocity reports from UBCFS's annual order upon our request. We organized and analyzed the data in order to determine the current level of local food procurement within UBCFS and to determine which products UBCFS currently sells at the highest volume. We referred to several professional online sources, such as Fraser Valley Farm Fresh Products Guide and the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in order to determine which products can be grown within BC, at what volume and at what time of year. Producers and distributors were contacted via email in an effort to gauge the opportunity for collaboration with UBCFS and the UBCFSP. The content and structure of the emails differed depending upon our particular information needs. Distributors and producers

were often contacted by phone in addition to email. For a complete list of the producers and distributors that were contacted refer to Appendix B.

Separate face-to-face meetings were organized with Dorothy Yip (UBCFS) and Ming Jung (Allied Foods). In addition to the interview, Jung gave us a tour of the processing facilities at Allied Foods. We were frequently in contact with Jung and Yip via email and telephone for the duration of the project. Lastly, in order to meet the ethical standards for the UBCFSP, each party we contacted had the opportunity to give their consent, via personal communication or an ethics consent form. They were also provided with an introduction to the UBCFSP written by Alejandro Rojas, the Principal Investigator.

Findings and Discussion:

Findings - The University of Toronto

The University of Toronto has worked towards becoming a more sustainable campus through the collaboration of campus food services and Local Flavor Plus (LFP), a non-profit organization that works to promote local, sustainable food systems. Prior to the formation of LFP, its founder, Lori Stahlbrand, approached U of T food services at an opportune time when the campus was aiming to increase sustainable food practices; as a result of their mutual priorities, LFP was formed (MacDonald, 2007).

Many of the campus' food operations and outlets have been keen on participating in serving more local products, and those that have not yet become involved are very interested in doing so the following year, matching the goal of campus food services. The response from students and community has been extremely positive as taste has been highly satisfactory, and food operators have even set their own local product purchasing goals. U of T food services continue to aim to

increase participation of more food operations, to increase their purchase of local products, and to keep pricing of foods within a reasonable range.

Certification: LFP acts as a certifying body, using collaboratively developed standards to grade local producers. One of the most important criteria is that farmers and producers be local. LFP defines local as “food that has been produced, processed and distributed within the province in which it is consumed” (Local Flavour Plus, 2007). Other LFP standards are based upon farming practices, biodiversity, energy consumption, working conditions, and packaging. The method by which food is transported to campus has remained much the same, as LFP has continued to work with existing distributors and producers, some of which have already been certified by LFP. In addition, many newly certified local farmers, including a greenhouse operation, are also being included into the existing system. Some local farmers and producers are shipping products themselves to campus (LFP: Standards and Certification, 2007).

Seasonality: Many local products, such as chicken, beef, milk are available year round, but because of seasonality, many local products purchased, such as apples, potatoes, squash have to be stored by farmers for several months before being distributed. The chefs have also tried working with seasonal menus, such as harvesting season recipes with squash and pumpkin and other fall items. In general, the goal of this collaboration is to include as much local, sustainable food into the supply chain as possible (MacDonald, 2007).

Discussion – U of T

The U of T campus is very much scattered throughout the city; therefore, it could be easier for each segment of the campus to associate and work with a different LFP certified farmer or producer. Yip of UBC Food Services believes that it may be slightly harder for UBC to establish a relationship with any single local producers because the UBC campus is such a large entity (Yip,

2007).

Findings – Simon Fraser University

Candace Bonfield, the external relations director for the Local Food Project, indicated that the most change would happen, albeit slowly, by working directly with the contractor's large distributors. As such large clients of Allied Foods, she advised UBCFS to apply pressure by creating formal agreements with its distributors, or by having UBCFS formulate a local food procurement policy which Allied Foods would be encouraged to comply with (Bonfield, 2007).

Meredith Starkey, a work-study student at SFU, is currently putting together a database of schools across Canada and the US that have adopted food policies or strategies (see Appendix G). From the information that she gathers, SFU will be drafting a relevant Food Procurement Policy Proposal for their school. The major findings from her work indicate that many universities in North America have supported and invested in sustainable local food projects. Bowdoin College, Colby College, Yale university, University of Northern Iowa, Grinnell College, Harvard University, Middlebury College and University of Wisconsin-Madison already have different degrees of Local Food Procurement Policies or commitments (Starkey, 2007).

Bonfield also encouraged us to talk to the chefs at the various food outlets, since a substantial increase in local food procurement must be derived from seasonality in menus. According to Bonfield, SFU kitchen workers are often willing and eager to integrate seasonal items into the menu. SFU shares the same definition of local as the UBCFSP; within BC's boundaries was deemed the most publicly acceptable definition by a survey conducted at the beginning of the SFU Local Food Project (Bonfield, 2007).

Discussion – SFU

Although UBC and SFU differ substantially in terms of the structure and context for food services on campus, much can be gained through strengthened relationships and information sharing between the campuses. At this point, one of the most strategic approaches being taken by SFU is the development of a food procurement policy, as it establishes accountability within the university, and may be a potential step for UBCFS to take as well.

Findings – Allied Foods

Our meeting with Ming Jung, Sales and Administration Manager of Allied Foods, began with a tour of the processing facilities and a brief exposition on how Allied Food Services runs their business. Allied Foods is a subsidiary of the American Food conglomerate, Sysco Food Services, and is one of the major suppliers in Vancouver, servicing major hotels, McDonalds, and many other food retailers and processors. As a subsidiary of Sysco, they are subject to internal regulation and frequent audits to ensure food standards and sanitation are met. Allied has won the highest level of achievement during these audits over the past five years, and prides itself in customer service (Jung, March 29, 2007).

All the producers that supply Allied Foods must follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and must supply Letters of Guarantee, Certificates of Insurance and Hold Harmless Agreements. These letters guarantee the quality of the product and place the accountability on the part of the producers. Jung explained that some local producers have decided not to produce these guarantees, and it is not possible for Allied Foods to work with them (Jung, March 29, 2007). Allied Foods does, however, try to support local farmers “whenever it’s feasible” (Jung, March 19, 2007; Appendix E).

Allied Foods has numerous purchasers that are responsible for selecting where and from

whom particular products are procured from; they are the individuals who build relationships with producers and decide from whom to buy. Most of their produce comes from the United States, although Canadian products are often competitive due to lowered transportation costs. In addition, there is a growing problem with transporting foods long distances by truck because of rising or inconsistent fuel prices. Food is more frequently arriving one to two days late (Jung, March 29, 2007).

According to Allied Foods however, the US product is more consistent in size and quality, and because there is larger scale production south of the border, it becomes more efficient as they deal with fewer producers. In procuring food from BC as opposed to the United States, Allied Foods generally prefers US products because of superior grading and packaging systems. Uniformity in size for items such as potatoes has been deemed an issue by some customers, and tends to be more consistent in produce sourced from the US (Jung, March 29, 2007).

Jung estimates that BC produces about 20% of the produce that Washington produces. Yet, BC and Washington mirror each other in price and supply; if there are extreme weather conditions or market pressures in one region, the other is similarly affected. In terms of the UBCFSP, Jung suggests that we expand our definition of local to include Washington because it will broaden our options enormously (Jung, March 29, 2007).

Allied Foods has taken on the processing of some food items in order to take advantage of savings from vertical integration. A large portion of UBC's orders are for processed foods such as sliced, chopped, or peeled potatoes and onions. On the customer usage reports these items show up as coming from an "unknown" origin, and constitute about 41% of the total produce volume (refer

to Figure 2). Although Allied Foods maintains the records needed to trace each product back to its origin, they have chosen not to invest the resources into making this information available on the customer usage reports (Jung, March 29, 2007).

Certain store-able items such as apples and potatoes have a greater potential to be procured locally throughout the year. The main issue for potatoes according to Danny, the potato purchaser for Allied Foods, is the variability in size and quality. When they do buy locally, they source from the Lower Mainland Vegetable Distributors, which is a cooperative of root vegetable producers in BC. In terms of apples, Jung asserts that the bulk of local apples are sold to retailers such as Safeway, who sell them without further processing. According to their apple purchaser, however, Allied Foods would be willing and capable of sourcing locally if UBC were to request it, although there may be an associated cost. Jung emphasizes that “UBC has the volume” to make these sorts of requests (Jung, March 29, 2007).

Discussion – Allied Foods

One of the major obstacles we first encountered occurred when attempting to calculate the total volume and origin of produce ordered by UBC Food Services. Due to the technical language of the customer usage reports, as well as the omission of information on the origin of foods that are to be processed in Allied Foods’ facilities, we could not come up with clear calculations. When asked whether Allied Foods could be more explicit in their customer usage reports, Jung essentially refused. This would require added administrative resources and time that would come at a cost. If UBC would be willing to pay this cost, we are still uncertain whether Allied Foods would agree to assume these extra duties.

However, this becomes a major problem for the project since this information is what allows us to determine the volume of products that are sourced locally. Without this information it will always be extremely difficult to verify the origin of the products that we receive from Allied Foods. Although we were unable to achieve any concrete answers from Allied Foods on this matter, it will likely be important for future groups and therefore they may wish to explore the matter further.

As for sourcing locally by means of Allied Foods, it seems a definite possibility because of their strong commitment to customer service. Both Allied Foods' purchasers and Sales and Administration Manager agreed that they would be willing and capable to source locally for certain products, therefore it is now in the hands of UBC Food Services to make the request. It seems most feasible to work one product at a time, and maybe for a specific period of time. For example, UBC Food Services could request locally produced tomatoes during the summer and fall seasons when they are most abundant.

In order to solidify these demands within the relationship between UBC Food Services and Allied Foods, it would be beneficial to add a provision to the contract explicitly stating that UBC Food Services may request certain items be sourced locally and as result be subject to any additional costs, should there be any. As mentioned above, without statements of origin of all the products, it will be difficult to verify whether Allied Foods has complied with these conditions. But this could be dealt with through routine verifications and specific consequences if the contract is infringed, such as donations to UBC Food Services' Sustainability Initiatives.

Jung provided us with a list of the producers that they deal with regularly, therefore another direction to take could be to bypass the distributor and deal directly with local producers (see

Appendix D). As sixteen out of seventy-four of the producers on the list are local, this provides us with enough options to begin exploring the possibility of sourcing from local producers. We can also be assured that their practices are legitimate since they currently deal with Allied Foods.

Findings – UBC Food Services

Our first encounter with UBC Food Services, in a presentation in AGSC 450 by Dorothy Yip and Andrew Parr, provided us with a brief overview of how UBC Food Services works and their involvement in the UBCFSP. To begin, each food outlet is responsible for selecting its own products, and generally UBC Food Services will order on a daily basis; delivery varies however, and can be daily or bi-weekly. Under the direction of Parr, UBC Food Services secures their contracts with distributors through a tendering or bidding process. Every two to three years the contract is put up for bidding and a new contract is signed. The upcoming dates for tendering are as follows: February for fresh protein; May for dairy and fresh produce; and June for frozen groceries and eggs (Parr & Yip, 2007).

Once a distributor is accepted, the terms of contract are laid out in such a way that fixed pricing is guaranteed over a certain length of time (i.e. over an 8 month period). During the two years of the contract, UBC is obliged to obtain all of its food from the supplier with whom it has entered into a contract; for example, currently UBC must obtain all of its non-organic produce from Allied Foods. Any changes to these terms must occur during the tendering process. According to Parr and Yip, UBC Food Services cannot tell distributors where to buy from, and it is on the part of Allied Foods to determine quality and consistency of product assurance. Yet, UBC Food Services states that suppliers must have some sort of sustainability clause or stipulation (acronym R.I.P)

within their practices (Parr & Yip, 2007).

UBC Food Services has recently developed a new mandate, denoted by the acronym SPICE, which now encompasses sustainability as its first objective. As part of this new mandate, they have outlined several Sustainability Initiatives emphasizing their commitment, such as involvement in academic programs, sustainable waste programs, support for the UBC Farm, and the provision of Fair Trade and Organic Coffee on campus. Specifically, their Procurement Standards initiative commits UBC Food Services to giving preference to local food suppliers who demonstrate dedication to sustainable practices. Currently the majority of UBC's meat, eggs and dairy are locally supplied, and UBC Food Services has developed a relationship with Centennial Meats whereby 1% of their sales goes towards sustainability initiatives (Parr & Yip, 2007; UBC Food Services, 2007).

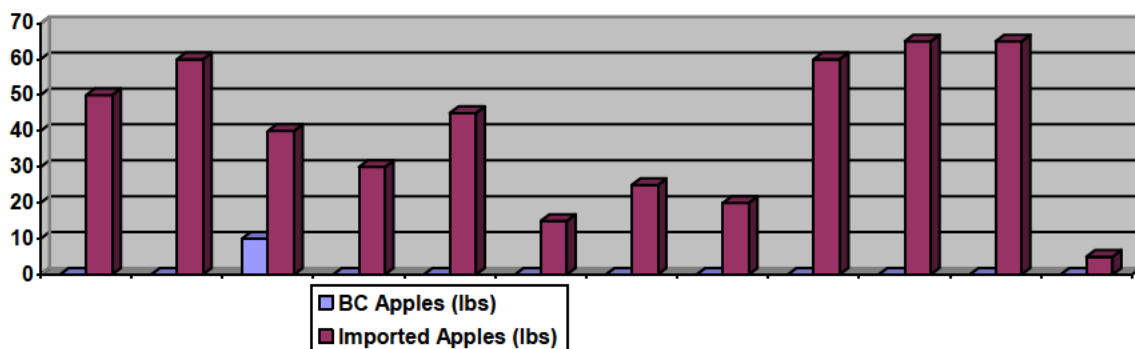
Our second meeting at UBC Food Services with Dorothy Yip was specifically centered on UBC Food Services' relationship with Allied Foods. When asked about U of T's strategy to procure local foods, Yip explained that they ordered food on a much smaller scale, as their campuses were more scattered and some of their food services were contracted out. In terms of attempting to influence Allied Foods to buy locally through the volume of UBC Food Services' orders, Yip seemed skeptical on achieving this possibility within our definition of local. She believes that UBC's food demand is too large for what Allied can realistically supply locally. Yip suggested looking at a wider radius for food procurement and using a graded system for determining locality, for example having a next-best option for ordering food such as Washington state or Alberta. She pointed out that Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD) has a similar grading system which differentiates between "local" with an 800 km radius, and "ultra local" with a 200 km radius (Yip,

2007).

Additionally, Yip supports the idea of starting small by focusing on a few food outlets on campus, such as the Barn, 99 Chairs, and Sage Bistro. Future AGSC 450 groups should be aware that Yip has monthly usage reports for each of UBC Food Services' food outlets and is willing to provide them for our use. She also informed us of a project that may be emerging in the near future for UBC Food Services: a 100% sustainable food outlet. This project is not definite, but may be a possibility in the next three to five years (Yip, 2007).

Finally, Allied Foods procures their produce locally "whenever it's feasible" in accordance with seasonality and other considerations such as price and quality (Jung, March 16th, 2007). We found, however, that many items are coming from the US, even during their Canadian growing season, and believe that there is an immense opportunity to increase local procurement of these items. The vast majority of apples, for instance, are grown in the US (see Appendix A), although the BC interior region is well known for its apple production, and storage facilities make it possible to buy locally throughout the year. To illustrate this point, Figure 1 depicts the source of apples for two of the major UBCFS food outlets, the Barn Coffee Shop and 99 Chairs.

Figure 1: Quantity of local apples at the Barn Coffee Shop and 99 Chairs:



Similar results were found for many other products in comparing the seasonal produce chart for BC

(BC Association of Farmers' Markets, 2007) with the monthly velocity reports indicating where produce was being transported from. Along with apples, produce items that UBCFS orders in significant volumes and could be procured from within BC during their growing season include broccoli, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, and potatoes.

Discussion – UBC Food Services

Our encounters with UBC Food Services gave us a much better idea of the challenges facing them in trying to support the local economy, from fickle consumer demand to distributors' limitations. Their commitment to the UBCFSP is impressive, considering the other demanding responsibilities associated with feeding the UBC population. However, we believe that in order to solidify their role in this project it is necessary for them to create some sort of internal food policy that would formally commit them to a specific target. An example could be a commitment to supply UBC with all local apples when available. Another suggestion is for UBC Food Services to have a proportional commitment to provide UBC with, for example, 25% local food throughout the year.

According to Jung from Allied Foods, if UBC requests certain local foods such as apples, they would be willing to supply them, though at a higher cost. This contradicts what Parr and Yip asserted in terms of dictating where distributors procure their products from. Although Yip seemed skeptical about UBC's ability to influence Allied Foods, we are confident that this could be one of their most valuable tools. Allied Foods obviously values UBC as a customer and would be willing to make modifications, within reason, to their usual protocol in order to retain UBC's patronage.

Detailing UBCFS's requests to Allied Foods in the form of provisions within the contract could be one way to request specific demands, such as locally produced apples. Additionally, this

would be a condition that is acknowledged at the time when contracts are being signed; therefore suppliers have the option of not accepting the terms if they so choose. Because the dates for tendering are fast approaching, now is the time for action. Any policy induction or change in contracts will need to be decided in the coming weeks. Unfortunately the academic year is ending and we do not have the experience to draw up formal contracts or policies, therefore we are hoping that UBC Food Services will take the initiative.

Findings – Other distributors

SPUD and Discovery Island Organics

After attending a meeting with Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD), it was evident that neither of these organizations could meet the requirements of UBCFS at large. For this reason, our group decided to focus on other distributors, such as Allied Foods, who are capable of meeting UBCFS's cost and quantity requirements. Group 4 has, however taken a different approach to Scenario 4, and has initiated an alliance between SPUD and Sage Bistro, in order to increase the presence of local and organic food in some UBCFS outlets on campus. SPUD's prices are relatively high because they are a retailer (of home delivered groceries) in addition to being a distributor (van Seters et al, 2007). In addition, both SPUD and Discovery Island Organics sell certified organic products which do not meet the cost requirements of UBCFS at this time, according to Dorothy Yip (2007). Finally, both SPUD and Discovery Island Organics demonstrated great support for the UBCFSP initiative.

Lower Mainland Vegetable Distributors

Lower Mainland Vegetable Distributors (LMVD) is one of four marketing agencies, along with the Interior Vegetable Marketing Agency Ltd, the Island Vegetable Cooperative Association,

and Vancouver Island Produce. These four agencies represent the 58 potato producers within BC. Along with raw, locally grown potatoes, the LMVD sells a variety of other root vegetables. Manager, Rick Gilmore, mentioned that no farmers in BC grow these products year-round; they do, however, have storage facilities. LMVD already supplies some of these raw products to Allied Foods where they are processed and distributed. LMVD does not have a processing plant, and so their relationship with Allied Foods is important for meeting the processing needs of certain customers such as UBCFS. Gilmore assured us that there is enough product through local growers to supply UBC's demand, although Gilmore suggested it would be more efficient to continue to work with Allied Foods and supply UBC indirectly (Gilmore, 2007).

Greenhouses

As per Jung of Allied Foods, most greenhouses shut down during the winter season as maintaining the heat to properly grow produce is energy intensive and costly. During this season, BC Hothouse will actually import products such as HH tomatoes from Mexico and package them under their name. The only product that is grown year round in greenhouses is the Hot House Butter Lettuce (Jung, March 19th, 2007). The BC Greenhouse Growers Association informed us that the principle issue with year-round supply of greenhouse vegetables is that products are harvested in November, planted in December, and then there is a significant 2-4 month gap before the next harvest takes place (BC Greenhouse Growers Association, 2007).

Fraserland Organics

Fraserland Organics is one of the largest producers of organic potatoes in BC. During a brief phone conversation with manager Shelly Harris, she expressed great interest and enthusiasm in forming a direct alliance with either UBCFS or Allied Foods in providing local and organic

potatoes. She mentioned that they can provide up to 3500 tonnes of raw potatoes annually, which is more than sufficient to meet UBC's raw potato demand.

Discussion – SPUD and Discovery Island Organics

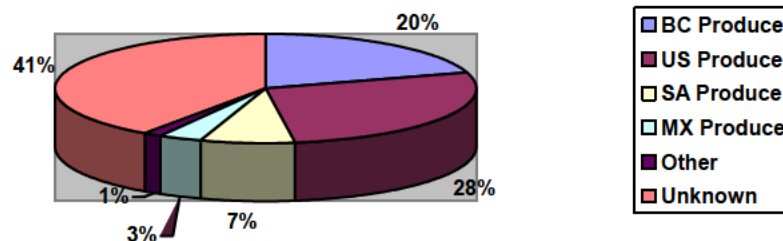
Small Potatoes Urban Delivery offers 100% organic produce, 50% of which can be sourced locally. As the largest organic grocery delivery firm in Canada, SPUD prioritizes organic production, but is interested in increasing their distribution of locally produced foods. At the aforementioned meeting, SPUD expressed genuine interest in the UBCFSP: they demonstrated dedication and support for the cause, helpful insight and suggestions. For more information on the role of SPUD and Discovery Island Organics in the UBCFSP refer to Group 4's final report.

Discussion – Lower Mainland Distributors, Greenhouses, Fraserland Organics

Through our contacts with various producers and distributors through phone and e-mail, we have come up with a list of distributors who are able to provide local produce (see Appendix C). Most of these producers and distributors have expressed interest in working with UBCFS, however, many have asked whether UBC has an existing distributor, and for the safety standards or food quality standards to be checked or approved by the existing distributor Allied Foods. In addition, many on this list are not able to provide processed produce such as peeled potatoes. This may add to the inconvenience faced by UBCFS campus food outlets as a large portion of their purchases are of processed produce.

Findings – Baseline and Future Targets for UBC FS Local Produce Procurement:

Figure 2: Baseline of Local Produce Procurement for UBCFS



Data from the customer usage reports from March 1st, 2005 to February 28th, 2006.

Includes the following food outlets: 99 Chairs, the Barn Coffee Shop, Trekkers Express, IRC Snack Bar; Pacific Spirit Place, A&W, Arts 200 Snack Bar; Pizza Pizza at Trekkers, Koya Japan, Pizza Pizza at PAC Spirit, Reboot Café, Bread Garden, Yum Yum's, Manchu Wok, Café Perugia, Edibles Snack Bar.

The produce sourced from within BC made up approximately 20% of the total produce by weight, and was the third largest category, preceded by food from the United States and that from unknown locations. Small percentages of produce were also coming from South America (SA) and Mexico (MX), as well as “other” imported regions, namely Holland (HL), China (CI), and Malaysia (MA). (See Appendix A for exact food volumes from each location).

The two cafeterias in the undergraduate residences in Totem Park and Vanier Place are not included in the customer usage reports supplied to us by UBCFS. Including these in the overall local food baseline would be helpful since they represent a large food volume and consume a lot of the products that could easily be procured locally, such as potatoes and apples.

The large portion of unknown produce is generally food that is processed: sliced, peeled, diced, or otherwise altered for easy preparation. Jung estimates that approximately 10% of this is coming from BC during the summer growing season, while only about 1% would be grown locally over the rest of the year. Nonetheless, his associate at Allied Foods informed us that up to 80% of root vegetables (which are generally processed) would be coming from the Lower Mainland

Vegetable Distributors (Jung, March 29, 2007).

Discussion: Baseline and Future Targets for AMS FS Local Produce Procurement:

It is important to eliminate the ambiguity local food procurement volumes, and shift from buying local “whenever it’s feasible” to setting hard targets and implementing a strategy to get there. If we continue to take on strategies such as shifting menus to reflect seasonality, without first ensuring that these seasonal products are indeed coming from BC, we may undermine these important efforts. Although specific calculations are still necessary to project the exact percentages, we propose a three year plan to dramatically increase the amount of produce from within BC:

Year 1:

- UBCFS advises Allied Foods to purchase all apples and potatoes from BC, increasing BC produce from approximately 20% to 26% (see Figure 3).

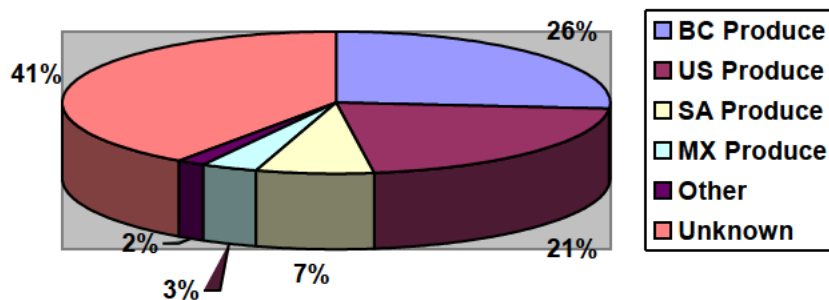
Year 2:

- Ascertain “unknown” origins for processed foods and set percentage goal accordingly
- Realign local produce procurement with seasonality over summer and fall months

Year 3:

- Shift menus on campus to reflect seasonality

Figure 3: Effect of Local Apple and Potato Procurement on Total Local Produce



Recommendations:

For next year UBCFS:

1. Develop an internal local food policy with UBC.

- Following the footsteps of other universities, it is necessary to develop a food policy that commits the university as a whole to the goal of purchasing locally. It will also make the university more accountable to this goal if it is formalized, and will allow it to be passed on

to future administrations.

2. Use UBC's large purchasing volumes to influence distributors (e.g. Allied Foods).

- UBCFS has the power to make special requests because, as a major customer, they are valued by distributors who aspire to make long-term and stable profits.

3. Make a provision in the fresh produce contract that requests that all apples and potatoes be local.

- As a next step, UBCFS can add other products that can be obtained locally during their peak seasons.

4. Implement the 3 year strategy for increasing local food procurement as outlined in the discussion section of this paper.

5. Request clarifications for the origins of processed foods in the customer usage reports from Allied Foods.

- Due to the fact that approximately 41% of all food UBC receives from Allied Foods is labeled "unknown origin", there is no way of knowing how much local food UBC actually procures. If UBCFS is to continue working with Allied Foods in the future, a request to verify origins of processed foods would be necessary.

For next year Agsc450 students:

1. Request for Allied Foods to be an official collaborator with the project.

2. Calculate the amount of summer and autumn produce that *is not* currently being procured locally, but that *could be* according to seasonality charts

3. Communicate directly with product purchasers at Allied Foods.

- Product purchasers have a better idea of the specific limitations involved in purchasing locally, and are also the individuals who end up making the purchasing decisions at the end of the day.

4. Look into direct purchasing from local producers.

- Using the list of local producers obtained from Allied Foods, future students could contact them and determine the feasibility of developing a direct relationship

5. Connect with distributors of BC Greenhouse Growers Association and analyze the energy input as compared to importing the same products.

6. Research local storage facilities that allow for year-round storage of apples and potatoes, and analyze their energy inputs.

7. Add the UBC residences into calculations for the total percentage of local produce on campus.

Conclusion:

The UBCFSP has taken an ambitious step in attempting to increase local food consumption on campus. It is necessary for UBC to articulate and assert sustainability as part of its values and priorities, and undertake real commitments and risks to foster this process. Through our research, we found that UBC campus, as a whole, demands high volume of foods on its daily operation. It is unlikely to rely on small local distributors or producers to supply foods with consistency of quality, quantity, price, and processing demands. To counter this limitation, we have explored several strategies for increasing local food procurement on campus while continuing to work with existing distributors.

Allied Foods has expressed a willingness to supply UBCFSP with locally produced foods with desired quality, quantity and processing upon request. We believe that setting a local food procurement policy is a promising way to assure that UBC will commit to attaining more local, seasonal, sustainable and fairly priced foods. So far, our group has focused on shifting the procurement of potatoes and apples to a local source; we have confirmed with Allied Foods the feasibility of this transition. Due to UBC's high volume of demand, we may need to re-think the definition of local in the context of a radius. Lastly, we suggest that UBC food providers implement seasonal menus in the possible UBC food outlets in an attempt to realign the campus' food system with the growing season.

In the past few years, UBC has made some major commitments to global citizenship through their TREK 2010 Vision Statement. If they intend to produce graduates that are "agents for

positive change”, they must also strive to practice what they preach (UBC, 2006). UBC must be the driver of change, only then will they truly achieve consistency between their pledges and their performances.

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Appendices:

Appendix A: Total Produce Volumes for UBC Food Services

	BC	US	MX	SA	Other (lbs)	(from)	Unknown	Total	BC	US	MX
	(lbs)	(lbs)	(lbs)	(lbs)			(lbs)				
Alfalfa Sprouts	2							2	638 Cups		
Apples (all kinds)	206	3837					30	4073			
Bak Choy	50	109					5	164			
Bananas				5037				5037			
Baby Spinach		16						16			
Basil								0	168 Bunches		
Bean Sprouts	7379							7379			
Broccoli		2150						2150			
Beans (green)	30	98						128			
Blackberries								0	5 baskets		
Blueberries								0	2 baskets		
Cabbage (red and green)	3450	574					334	4358	6 each		
Carrots	60	127					2766	2953			
Cauliflower	207							207			
Celery							2448	2448			
Cilantro								0	14 bunches		23 bunches
Cucumber								0	(544 x 18CT; 9 x 12 CT)		(51 x 12 CT; 84 x 16CT)
Cantaloupe								0		1 each	
Daikon		17						17			
Eggplant								0			(818 x 24CT)
Garlic		7			253	Cl	20	280			
Ginger					241	Cl	33	274			
Green Leaf Lettuce		1737						1737		180 x 24 CT	
Green Onion							300	300		49 bunches (48 CT)	
Grapefruit		102						102			
Grapes				30				30			
Honeydews								0		3 x 8CT	

Iceberg Lettuce						1832	1832	13
								heads
Lemons	71						71	140
								each
Leeks	5						5	43 x
								12CTs
Mandarins			198				198	
Mushrooms	2657					2713	5370	
Onions	88	419				3440	3947	
Peppers (green, yellow and red)	313	439	2001	168	IM	2373	5294	
Potatoes	50	195				410	655	
Pumpkins	4						4	
Romaine Lettuce		10				4361	4371	
Rosemary							0	3 bunches
Sage							0	13 bunches
Salad Mix						8177	8177	
Spinach		610					610	4 bunches 6
								bunche
								s
Starch Col Flo				300	BOWES		300	
Star fruit				2	MA		2	
Strawberries		4					4	
Sugar/Snow peas						8	8	
Sui Choy	38	849					887	
Tomatoes		8265		2.5	HL	40	8307.5	1
								basket
Zucchini	236	267	494				997	
TOTAL	14775	19903	2495	5265	966.5	29290	72694.	
							5	

Appendix B: List of Contacted Producers and Distributors

Producers/ Producer Organizations	Distributors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC Tree Fruit BC Greenhouse Grower's Association BC Hothouse Association BC Vegetable Growers Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allied Food Services Discovery Island Organics Lower Mainland Vegetable Distributors Inc. Small Potatoes Urban Delivery (SPUD)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fraser Valley Farms 	
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Appendix C: List of Producers and Distributors Who Have Demonstrated Interest in Collaborating with UBCFSP and UBC FS

Producers/ Producer Organizations	Distributors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BC Tree Fruit Fraser Valley Farms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allied Food Services Lower Mainland Vegetable Distributors Inc. SPUD

Appendix D: Allied Food Services/Pacific Produce List of Certified Suppliers

Producer	City, Prov/State
ACE TOMATO	MANTECA, CA
AMERIFRESH	SEATTLE, WA
B.C. HOTHOUSE	SURREY, BC
B.C. TREE FRUITS	KELOWNA, BC
WM. BOLTHOUSE FARMS	BAKERSFIELD, CA
BONITA PACKING	SANTA MARIA, CA
BORG PRODUCE SALES	LOS ANGELES, CA
BORTON MARKETING	BAKERSFIELD, CA
BOSKOVICH FARMS	OXNARD, CA
CAL-CEL MARKETING	OXNARD, CA
CALIFORNIA SWEET POTATO	LIVINGSTON, CA
CAPURRO MARKETING, LLC	MOSS LANDING, CA
CENTRAL CALIFORNIA TOMATO GROWERS	MERCED, CA
CENTURY FARMS	ALDERGROVE, BC
CHERTA FARMS	FRESNO, CA
CHIQUITA BRANDS INTERNATIONAL	CINCINNATI, OH
CHIENPING FARM	SAN JACINTO, CA
CHONG LOONG PRODUCE	VANCOUVER, BC
CURRY & CO.	BROOKS, OR
DAI LEE PRODUCE	VANCOUVER, BC
DEL MONTE FRESH PRODUCE	SANTA FE SPRINGS, CA
DELTA PACKAGING CO.	LODI, CA
DENICE & FELICE	HOLLISTER, CA
DOLE FOOD COMPANY	WESTLAKE VILLAGE, CA
EMPEROR SPECIALTY FOODS	RICHMOND, BC
FAVORITE FOODS	BURNABY, BC

FELIX CHAC CHUO FARM	THERMAL, CA
FRESH QUEST	FRESNO, CA
G.W. PALMER	MEMPHIS, TN
GALEY BROS. FARMS	VICTORIA, BC
GRIMMWAY FARMS	LAMONT, CA
HARLEE PACKING	PALMETTO, FL
HORIZON MARKETING	VISALIA, CA
INABA PRODUCE	WAPATO, WA
JOHNNY O'GRADY CO.	SALINAS, CA
JOSEPH S. CHOW LTD.	RICHMOND, BC
KEYSTONE FRUIT MARKETING	GREENCASTLE, PA
THE LITTLE POTATO COMPANY	EDMONTON, AB
LIVE OAK FARMS	LE GRAND, CA
LOWER MAINLAND VEGETABLE DIST.	DELTA, BC
M&M FARM	MIAMI, FL
MAJESTIC PRODUCE	VANCOUVER, BC
MERCER RANCH	PROSSER, WA
METZ FRESH	KING CITY, CA
MIEDEMA PRODUCE	HUDSONVILLE, MI
MISSION PRODUCE	OXNARD, CA
MISTY MOUNTAIN	RICHMOND, BC
MURANAKA FARMS	MOORPARK, CA
NEW MILLENIUM FARMS	SALINAS, CA
NUCHIEF SALES	WENATCHEE, WA
THE OPPENHEIMER GROUP	VANCOUVER, BC
PACIFIC FRUIT INC.	STATEN ISLAND, NY
PACIFIC TOMATO GROWERS/TRIPLE E PRODUCE	TRACY, CA
PAPPAS AND COMPANY	MENDOTA, CA
PATERSON ONION	PATERSON, WA
PEAK OF THE MARKET	WINNIPEG, MB
PETER RABBIT FARMS	COACHELLA, CA
PHOENIX TRADING INTERNATIONAL	VANCOUVER, BC
PISMO-OCEAN VEGETABLE EXCHANGE	OCEANO, CA
PRIME TIME INTERNATIONAL	COACHELLA, CA
QWEST FOODS	RICHMOND, BC
RD PRODUCE	THE NETHERLANDS
RIVER RANCH FRESH FOODS	SALINAS, CA
ROBLING & CATALANI	NOGALES, AZ

SUNFRESH INC.	ROYAL CITY, WA
SUNKIST GROWERS	VAN NUYS, CA
SUNNYSIDE PACKING	SELMA, CA
SUN WORLD INTERNATIONAL	BAKERSFIELD, CA
TA-DE DISTRIBUTING	NOGALES, AZ
TAYLOR & FULTON	PALMETTO, FL
TITCOMB BROKERAGE	NOGALES, AZ
VALLEY PRIDE SALES	MT. VERNON, WA
VAN EEKLEN ENT. LTD.	ABBOTSFORD, BC

**Appendix E: E-mail from Anne MacDonald at U of T
Communication through UBC FSP Group 4.**

1. What was the driving force that pushed you to make the change to local and sustainable food?

U of T has been working hard to become a greener campus over the last few years:

<http://www.media.utoronto.ca/universitymatters.htm>

<http://www.sustainability.utoronto.ca/>

When LFP approached us with this project, the timing was excellent (we were about to commence a RFP process for our foodservices) and given our commitment to increasing our sustainable practices in other areas, this made a lot of sense.

2. Did Local Flavor Plus approach you with the idea or vice versa?

LFP didn't exist at the time that this idea took shape – the founder of LFP approached the University first with the idea for a partnership and was able to form the organization as a result of our agreement to participate.

3. Are all food outlets on campus participating in the transition to serving local and sustainable foods? If not, how many are currently participating?

Most of our food operators are participating; the ones that did not initially participate seem interested in doing so next year.

4. Are there plans to bring more local foods onto campus over time? Are your goals to provide 100% local?

It would be great to have 100% local foods on campus, but I'm not sure that is a realistic goal – it is not our goal at this point. Our goal has simply been to participate and to increase the amount of our participation each year. Each foodservice operator has set its own targets for purchasing (and our largest food contractor has been given targets to meet as part of their contract with U of T).

As LFP certifies more farmers and producers, we will buy from them. The response from students and other community members has been extremely positive, and the food tastes great. As long as we can add products and not increase our food costs beyond a manageable amount, there's no reason for us to limit our local purchases.

5. How do you work around the seasonal variations in availability of produce? For example do food outlets have seasonal menus?

LFP has certified a greenhouse operation and many “hardier” types of foods can be stored by farmers for several months (apples, potatoes, squash). There are also foods that are available year-round, like dairy, chicken and beef.

The chefs do work with seasonal menus as well – this fall the chef from our largest residence experimented quite a bit with pumpkin and squash recipes (the ravioli with pumpkin filling was particularly good!).

6. What does the U of T define as local and sustainable?

The criteria are described on the LFP website:

<http://www.localflavourplus.ca/standards/farmer/intro>

7. How does the food get to the campuses?

LFP has worked and continues to work with existing food supply chains, so the food gets to campus the way that food has always gotten to campus. The difference is that certified farmers are integrated into the existing distributors’ systems. Some local producers do ship themselves (dairy in particular, which is a high volume item in university residences with meal plans, so it is not cost-prohibitive to do this).

8. How did you work around existing contracts with food distributors?

See above response – in some cases we found that we were ordering from producers that met the criteria anyway, in which case LFP has certified those producers. In other cases, we have worked with distributors to get local, sustainable food into the supply chain. U of T does have substantial purchasing clout, which helps us negotiate (or LFP negotiate on our behalf).


Appendix F: Email Communications with Ming Jung of Allied Foods

Hi Maggie,

Thank you for your interest in our industry. Allied Food Services tries its best to support local farmers without affecting the service we provide to our customers. During the winter there are very little BC products available. Most greenhouses or hothouses are shut down for the winter due to the high cost of maintaining the required heat to properly grow their products. In fact, BC Hothouse will import Mexican products such as HH Tomatoes and package them under their name. The only product that is grown year round in greenhouses is the Hot House Butter Lettuce.

Some of the BC products that are currently available and which we supply to our customers are HH Butter Lettuce, Potatoes, Mushrooms, Turnips, Parsnips, Belgium Endive, LE Cucumbers, Sprouts, McIntosh & Golden Delicious Apples.

Although there are many more BC produce items available in the summer months, Allied Food Services may continue importing US grown products due to a number of factors.

Allied Food Services only deal with growers who provide us with Hold Harmless Agreements, Letters of Guarantee and Certificate of Insurance. These documents assure us that the grower is following GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), SSOP (Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures) and GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices). Some local farmers are not willing to provide these documents. 

Quality and shelf life of local products are not as consistent as US grown product. For a distribution company like Allied Foods and for our customers, quality and shelf life of our products are very important. An example is BC grown strawberries. Local strawberries have more flavour but have a shorter shelf life and for most food service applications do not look or work as well as California grown strawberries.

The availability of products is also not consistent. Local growing season is relatively short and there have been times where our orders may not be properly filled leaving us having to scramble to secure products for our customers.

The high cost of fuel has resulted in a number of trucking issues. Putting loads together for US products and ensuring their timely arrival has been a challenge. Produce distributors no longer have the luxury of being as selective on products and volumes like before.

Following are the answers to the questions you raised.

1. Would you be willing to supply the aforementioned products from BC Farms?

As mentioned above, we do use local products whenever it's feasible.

2. What is the estimated price difference for procuring these products locally?

In general, local products are less expensive than US products but their yield and shelf life does not always make the local products a better buy. An example would be a case of local Romaine may be 20% cheaper than US Romaine, however a case of US Romaine may weigh 25% more than the local.

3. We noticed on the customer usage report that processed potatoes and lettuce are coming from an unknown location. Can you specify where they are coming from?

Most pre-cut produce products are processed in our plant. The raw material used in the processing may be local or US. We have experienced purchasers who buy on value and not simply on price. Ensuring good quality raw material, regardless of the origin, is first and foremost. Our production crew has an old saying..."Garbage in, Garbage out!"

4. Can these processed products come from BC?

See answer to #3.

5. What percentage of food supplied to UBC Food Services is procured locally?

It would be difficult to give you an exact number due to the fact the origin of our products change often throughout the year. Based on UBC's purchases a rough estimate would be anywhere between 20-25%

We do support our local growers as much as we can and have close relationships with a number of local farmers. In our business, however, we purchase products that are the best for our customers. I hope I was able to shed some light into our industry and that the information is helpful. I did not receive your consent form. If you require me to complete the form or if you have any other questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thanks, 

Ming Jung

Manager, Sales & Administration

Allied Food Services

Office: 6 

Appendix G: Universities and Colleges with Sustainable Food Policies and/or Strategies

This comprehensive spreadsheet can be acquired by contacting Liska Richer, 2007 UBCFSP Coordinator, or Meredith Starkey with SFU's Local Food Project 