

**BEREA COLLEGE  
LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE**

**REPORT TO THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Berea College Local Foods Initiative (LFI), which is composed of students, faculty, and staff, was formed in Fall 2004. The mission of LFI is “to promote the participation of Berea College in the development of a sustainable food system.” In pursuit of this overall mission, the steering committee has undertaken a number of projects over the past academic year (see Appendix A on p. 18 for a full list of LFI activities for 2004-05).

### *Why the Interest in Local Food Initiatives?*

Eating is now a political act. Responsibility on the part of individuals and institutions calls for learning about the nature of the global-industrial food system and reflection on the implications of its continued dominance (see Appendix B: The Meaning of “Global-Industrial Food System,” p. 19). To begin understanding how this food system works, we need only examine the produce section of a typical grocery store. Lettuces and greens of all types—iceberg, romaine, spinach, collards—are heaped in fresh abundance or sold in bags ready to eat. Green, red, and yellow peppers, celery, corn, summer squash, potatoes, onions, beans, broccoli, and tomatoes are all present. There is also a wide selection of fruits—apples, bananas, and oranges, and often strawberries, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, and grapes. The variety is unbelievable!

In reality, the scene in the local supermarket is a dream. Upon closer examination, it proves to be a false cornucopia. Produce is available beyond its growing season or region because it arrives from places like California or Costa Rica. Even if you were to visit a Kentucky grocery store during strawberry season, it is more likely that the strawberries for sale arrived from another state or even another country. In fact, the average food item travels an estimated 1,500 miles from field to plate.

This lengthy supply line is near the heart of a problem as important as it is complex: our failure to take into account the true costs of the global-industrial food system. As Worldwatch author Brian Halweil notes,

Subsidies for fossil fuels, roads, and other transportation infrastructure and for commodity production, for instance, all make food shipped round the world in a refrigerated cargo container, wrapped in layers of plastic and grown on highly polluting farms look artificially cheap. Proponents of the current system argue that it has succeeded because it is better and more efficient, but this is only true to the extent that many of the costs are not accounted for—from food safety threats to wasteful burning of fossil fuel to loss of economic life in farm communities (*Eat Here*, p. 48).

What are the true costs of the global-industrial food system? In an essay addressing this question, David Orr explores the meaning he finds in Thoreau’s observation that “The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run.” (This essay, “Prices and the Life Exchanged: Costs of the U.S. Food System” from Orr’s *Earth in Mind*, is included with this report in its entirety as Appendix E.) Briefly describing just a few of these unpriced costs—that is, examples of “life which is required” but not reflected in the price of the food supplied—should serve to suggest why many people believe it is past time to move away from an uncritical acceptance of the current food system as the only convenient and affordable option.

Beyond the various transportation subsidies, many unpriced costs involve damage to natural systems. For example run-off from pesticides, fertilizer, and waste from giant livestock farms creates dead zones in coastal waters and contaminates rivers and groundwater around the world. Erosion, salinization, and waterlogging—the latter two resulting from heavy irrigation—claim productive soil at global and U.S. rates well beyond the rate of soil formation. Deforestation in Central and South America proceeds apace largely to supply the export market for beef. And as agriculture has become increasingly dependent on fossil fuel, there is what Orr calls the “uncalculated cost to the environment from the extraction, processing, transport, and combustion” of fossil fuels (*Earth in Mind*, p. 173).

A second kind of unpriced cost involves damage to human health. One example among many, captured well in the following quotation, highlights the lack of protective regulation for the people and ecosystems of some Third World countries, exporters of agricultural commodities to the U.S., and importers of modern agriculture's inputs from the U.S.

Estimates of pesticide poisoning in the third world are as high as 25 million people yearly. . . .The most harmful chemicals end up in the third world. Many of the pesticides that U.S. corporations export are banned, heavily restricted, or have never been registered for use here. Most end up in fields where workers are not provided protective clothing and where safety precautions are the last concern of the farms' owners (*World Hunger: Twelve Myths*, p. 51).

Third, the extent to which the means of more traditional production are being lost—farms and prime farmland to other uses, rural communities, and what Orr calls an intelligence about the land—represents an additional unpriced cost. And, finally, there is the closely associated threat to food security and economic freedom in the increasing concentration of food growing, processing, and distribution into the hands of a few very large, vertically integrated multinational agribusiness organizations. As Brian Halweil observes,

Even economists and politicians who might be staunch free traders—and who may never have collected a warm egg from under a chicken—would likely agree that raising all the world's food in a declining number of places, planted with a dwindling number of crop varieties, and controlled by a shrinking number of companies, is simply foolish. They might even call it a recipe for disaster (*Eat Here*, p. 14).

The list of unpriced costs of the global-industrial food system is long and growing and, for many, provides compelling reason to seek alternatives. It is toward this end that Halweil writes of the need “to rebuild a local ‘foodshed’—that sphere of land, people, and businesses that provides a community or region with its food” (*Eat Here*, p. 12). It seems clear that some ills of the current food system would not necessarily be addressed by simply shortening the supply lines to local and regional scale. But movement in that direction would directly address some and bring others within reach of thoughtful people dedicated to setting a more sustainable course. This report is an exploration of how such movement might take shape on the Berea College campus and in the wider community.

### ***Why a Local Food Initiative at Berea College?***

Beyond any general rationale for local food initiatives, there seem to be many compelling reasons why Berea College is the right place and this the right time for such a project. Among them is the extent to which its pursuit would involve:

- reaching toward the vision of Berea College as an integrated and continuous learning community where students, faculty, and staff focus their learning and action on real-world problems and practical applications;
- integrating learning, labor, and service;
- engaging learning and service within the Appalachian region based on an expanding understanding of the “interdependence of the people, the economy, the culture, and the ecology of the . . . region and their intimate connection to Berea’s mission” (*Being and Becoming*, 2/05 Draft, p. 62);
- moving the College slowly but surely away from nearly complete reliance on the fossil-energy intensive nature of the global-industrial food system;
- fostering stronger local economies, a healthier community, and enhanced local food security; and
- building momentum for the College’s movement toward sustainable practice and an enriched implicit curriculum.

## ***Outline for this Report***

Among LFI's first objectives was to identify challenges to the development of a sustainable food system as well as any special resources or strengths that would be useful in undertaking such an effort at Berea College. Based on that learning, LFI formulated several recommendations for action and further study, which are included in the three main sections of this report: *Challenges*, *Resources*, and *Recommendations*. Following is a preview of the most pressing recommendations and how implementation should begin.

## ***Preview of Recommendations and First Steps***

The following recommendations, the first three of nine that are detailed later in the *Recommendations* section, seem best suited for action in the immediate future.

***Recommendation #1:*** *That Berea College, with leadership from the Administrative Committee, commit itself to increasing, gradually but substantially, the use of responsibly produced regional and local foods at the College. As an essential part of that effort, the College should foster conditions that help ensure the increasing availability of such foods.*

***Recommendation #2:*** *That Berea College's expectations for its partnership with a food service provider be revised to reflect the College's commitment to and participation in the development of a sustainable food system. The Administrative Committee should then determine how best to pursue these revised expectations, whether through an RFP process, explorations with Sodexo only, or consideration of other options such as in-house management. (New expectations that we recommend for inclusion in such a revision are identified in Recommendation #4 on p. 12.)*

***Recommendation #3:*** *That Berea College agricultural products—including meat—be used as the first food procurement option by Food Service, the amount limited only by College production. Goals for the campus use of College food products (e.g., percentage of the dollar value) should be determined through the collaboration of staff from such areas as the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Department, the College Farms and Gardens, Food Service, and the Student Labor Program. In setting such goals, educational needs of the College Farms and Gardens by ANR should be accorded highest priority.*

Two key terms that are used in *Recommendation #1* and frequently thereafter require some clarification: “local” and “responsibly produced.”

The word “**local**” in relation to food production and purchase is used throughout to represent a proximity of growers, processors, and eaters that begins with preference for sources closest to campus first and then extends outward from Berea to the state, the region, and beyond as necessary. Using “local” eliminates the need for awkward phrases such as “local, state, and regional” and also implies a concern for the well-being of local and regional people, culture, and ecosystems.



The term “**responsibly produced**” refers to agricultural and agribusiness practices that incorporate informed concern for the long-term health of the ecosystems and people involved. By this standard, imprecise as it is, over 95% of the food currently used at Berea College is highly suspect.

## CHALLENGES TO A LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

From our exploration of local conditions and the experiences of other institutions where local food initiatives have been pursued, we have identified a number of challenges to the College's successful participation in the development of a sustainable food system. The length of the list and substance of the issues makes us even more appreciative of the experience-based message that "This can be done!" shared by Marc Zammit, Bon Appétit representative who recently spoke at the SENS Seminar on "Food Services for a Sustainable Future."

It seems useful to begin with some reflections from Tod Murphy, owner of the Farmers Diner in Barre, Vermont, and a well-known pioneer in the local food movement. During the Diner's first six months of operation, 70% of its food budget was spent on food grown within 50 miles. Murphy's goal is 100%. His early experience, as recounted by Brian Halweil, suggests some of the challenges and opportunities we see in the current situation at Berea College.

It's February now and there's still snow in the parking lot. But even in the dead of New England's winter, the menu continues to serve a range of local produce, from grain for the bread and pasta to beans, meat, carrots, potatoes, onions, applesauce, cider, and beer.

The diner is thriving. . . . The owners have plans to open four more locations, riding a wave of interest among local farmers, chefs, environmentalists, and concerned eaters who would like to see more locally grown food on grocery store shelves, restaurant menus, and kitchen tables.

But all this interest doesn't mean the work is easy. "I'm slaying dragons every day," says Murphy, referring to the obstacles he faces in running a restaurant built on local food, from onerous food safety regulations designed for industrial scale ventures to shortsighted farm policies that have reduced Vermont's crop diversity, to the crushing weight of global food brands on struggling local businesses.

Murphy sketches out his master plan. . . . A standard diner, Murphy explains, has at most five suppliers, and often fewer. The suppliers are the long arms of the global agribusiness industry—behemoths like Sysco Corporation, the largest food distributor in North America and the second largest food processor as well (\$26 billion in annual sales, and approximately 13 percent of the \$200 billion foodservice distribution industry). Most diners and restaurants just call up Sysco, place their order, and an 18-wheeler drops it off, Murphy says. In contrast, the Farmers Diner has roughly 35 suppliers and plans to add 20 more next year. (*Eat Here*, pp. 106–108)

***Challenge #1:*** *The supply of foods that can be purchased directly from local farmers or processors is one factor that may constrain the growth of local food use at Berea College.*

***Discussion:*** Evidence of a local supply problem can be seen in Bob Perry's recent experience. As director of Food Services for Kentucky State Parks and the Artisan Center, he is leading an effort, supported at the cabinet level of Kentucky state government, to increase the use of locally grown foods in state park and Artisan Center restaurants. Bob describes himself as a "strong believer in local foods, but also a realist," and this spirit of advocacy grounded in the reality of thin profit margins is evident in the program's design.

Produce is purchased from individual growers at each restaurant where "chefs and stock handlers receive the goods and inspect for quality at delivery." The prices offered are set weekly by constructing the average of what "our normal wholesale suppliers" charge the restaurants. The resulting prices for this new local foods market are in the middle: considerably above what growers can get from wholesale suppliers or co-ops, but below what is typical of farmers' markets and roadside stands. A "great story" Bob tells is about a pepper grower near Lake Cumberland who earned more selling 150 pounds of peppers to a state park than 1,500 pounds of peppers to a farmers' co-op. At this point, produce growers are not required to have liability insurance. Very recent regulatory changes have opened the way for the State Parks and Artisan Center to begin purchasing local meats and dairy products as well as produce.

Despite considerable promotion and the absence of an insurance requirement, Bob and his colleagues are finding supply from local growers to be a limiting factor in the nascent program. They remain optimistic, however, that local supply will expand over time to meet the reliable new demand they hope to continue providing (personal communication from Bob Perry, 4/4/05).

Local supply limitations are also experienced by national food service provider Bon Appétit. Even with an aggressive company-wide commitment to buy responsibly grown local foods directly from farmers—within 150 miles in the case of produce—such foods constitute less than 20% of the whole, even for their clients in the most favorable locations. Marc Zammit, Bon Appétit’s Director of Culinary Support & Development, shares Perry’s optimism that, given reliable demand and reasonable prices for this relatively new market between wholesalers and farmers’ markets, local growers will increase their capacity to make responsibly grown foods available for direct purchase by restaurants and institutional food service providers (Bon Appétit website: [www.bamco.com](http://www.bamco.com); personal communication from Marc Zammit, Director of Culinary Support & Development Bon Appétit).

A very successful “Local Food Project” at the University of Northern Iowa has brought several area institutions into cooperation with the university in developing an institutional market to help strengthen the local food economy. After eight years, their experience also confirms that local supply is a challenge: “There is a lack of fruit and vegetable production in our region. At the present time, ten or so farmers that we have relied on are basically it for supplying the institutional market. And many of them at the present time could not supply the present demand, should the cooperating institutions order more.” It takes time, they caution, to strengthen the local food economy. It involves “a new set of relationships, new marketing pathways and, in a way, a new infrastructure. That will take time and continued efforts for a decade or two” (pp. 5 and 6 of [www.uni.edu.cee/foodproject/](http://www.uni.edu.cee/foodproject/) viewed 9/10/04).

One aspect of the supply problem in the Berea area may well be affordable farm labor. Since most small-scale local production is labor-intensive, expansion would require additional workers. Some argue, however, that few are willing to work, including migrant workers, for what small-scale growers using limited mechanization are able to pay. Susana Lein, for example, has already experienced difficulty hiring workers in her effort to increase production on Salamander Springs Farm (personal communication from Richard Olson, 4/19/05).

***Challenge #2:*** *The seasonality of local foods grown for direct consumption is a challenge to all—including food service managers/chefs/cooks and eaters—who are used to the “any food, anytime, anywhere” outlook of the global-industrial food system.*

***Discussion:*** When asked about the problem of seasonality from a supply perspective, Bob Perry said that they “had been encouraging local growers to provide us with as much as they can year round. High tunnels can extend the season for many crops, but I don’t think a lot of growers have gotten into that yet because there was no market for their crops. The state parks are willing to buy whatever can be grown, within reason, and provide this market, but again it has to be at a price equal to or less than we could buy wholesale” (4/4/05 email). Sean Clark estimates that by adding two more high tunnels (hoop houses) at about \$3,000 each, the College Gardens could meet the need for fresh salad greens at Boone Tavern and Food Service all year with the possible exception of a month or two, depending on temperature.

Another aspect of the seasonality problem is how to utilize the overabundance of in-season production. This highlights the need for local access to processing, packaging, and retail services as another way of extending the season—that is, the need for the emergence of more local food businesses. See the discussion under *Challenge #4* and *Recommendation #8*.

***Challenge #3:*** *By involving many more local suppliers, the logistics of meal planning, food ordering, food delivery, and vendor billing would be both more time-consuming and more communications intensive.*

*Discussion:* Currently 95% of the food used at Berea College comes from Sysco, the very situation described by Tod Murphy at the beginning of this section. By contrast, the Farmers Diner had 35 suppliers in March 2004 with plans to add 20 more in the coming year.

Addressing the communication intensive logistics of purchasing from area farmers would almost certainly require more time from our food service provider and/or from the College in a brokering role (see discussion under *Recommendation #5*). Marc Zammit of Bon Appétit underscores these issues while at the same time suggesting that some mainstream food service providers are now committed to overcoming such obstacles:

You should know that purchasing from local producers is not easy. It requires determination and flexibility to make it work. Ordering/billing logistics can be complex if you buy from individuals. We buy from both individuals and from coops [sic]. . . . Lack of delivery infrastructure is a consistent issue. . . . When we come into a new region, we seek out the locals and it's amazing what comes our way. . . . We take responsibility for seeking out local producers, which by the way goes beyond farmers (cheese artisans, local bakeries, etc.). (Email communication, 4/4/05)

***Challenge #4:*** *The scarcity of local food businesses—canning, drying, cheese making, government certified meat slaughtering and packing, baking, salsa making—is a challenge to increasing the supply and use of local foods and to addressing seasonality.*

*Discussion:* Some additional passages from *Eat Here* capture the issues surrounding this challenge:

Farmers and local communities hoping to take back some of the food economy from distant multinationals will need to provide more of the processing, packaging, and marketing services that have moved off the farm and out of sight. Communities with these varied capacities can replace the vertical integration that now takes place at the corporate level, in which one multinational controls the means of growing, processing, and selling the crop.

This entrepreneurial approach to farming is, unfortunately, unknown to most farmers, and has long been neglected in agricultural training and policy. . . . A British government commission that identified substantial business opportunities in local foods noted that, for nearly half of farmers, lack of technical knowledge—about growing new crops or a more complex crop mix, food processing, and business and marketing—was one of the main barriers to developing a local food business. . . .

But as farmers look beyond farmers' markets and CSAs, finding space in a market dominated by giants will be a major challenge. Some of the most intense consolidation in the food chain has occurred in the end farthest from the farmer—in processing, distribution, and retailing—and these markets are now closely guarded. “In trying to get beyond the exchange of raw fruits and vegetables,” says Andy Fischer, director of the U.S.-based Community Food Security Coalition, “it's not easy to find the local packing house or slaughterhouse or cannery. In most communities, the dairy is gone, the cheesemaker is gone, even the bakery is gone, because of the intense consolidation and mergers in agribusiness.”

Today's food processing and retailing units tend to be very large and centrally located, making them inconvenient to smaller, local initiatives. There needs to be “something between Sysco and CSAs explains Jack Kloppenburg, a sociologist at the University of Wisconsin. This huge void holds the greatest money-making opportunity for communities, allowing larger farms and food companies to tap into the interest in local foods and making it possible for a broader range of consumers to eat local. (pp. 110, 111, 113, 114)

For lack of local food businesses, most food grown in Kentucky is much like timber: the raw commodity leaves the state for value-added processing elsewhere and then, after traveling many miles and leaving a trail of profits along the way, re-enters the state as consumer products from the global-industrial supply line.

***Challenge #5:*** *For managers, chefs, cooks and other staff who are used to planning and preparing meals with foods that come at least partially processed from large wholesalers such as Sysco (e.g.,*

*precooked and sliced roast beef, pre-sliced frozen carrots, packaged soup base, etc.), making meals from scratch using fresh food products would require willingness and new training.*

Discussion: One goal of the “Sustainable Food Project” at Yale’s Berkeley College, which serves about 450 students, is to use as much locally grown produce as possible. Aramark, one of the largest food service providers in the country, manages the dining services at Yale, and the Yale/Aramark collaboration involves integrating the purchasing of local foods into their ordering system. They tell local farmers that they will “buy their entire crop of eggplant or squash or lettuce if they can deliver either straight to the dining hall or to a Hartford warehouse used by one of the university’s wholesale suppliers” (*Atlantic Monthly* article, p. 201). In examining this and other higher education projects emphasizing local foods for the *Atlantic Monthly*, Corby Kummer notes that “Cooks are likely to be skeptical or downright hostile toward menus that may offer fewer items with fewer ingredients but require far more labor” (p. 198). One of Yale’s veteran cooks, now a project enthusiast, told Kummer that “the Sustainable Project menus required something completely new: peeling and chopping carrots and onions and celery and garlic rather than opening Cryovac bags of pre-chopped soup base and jars of peeled garlic cloves” (p. 199). Kummer goes on to report that:

The cooks did need some help through what they described as the chaos of the first few months. ‘Jicama and daikon,’ Dawn Boulas, the head pantry cook, said to me. ‘They come in and you think, *What is this?* You’re expected to make salad for four hundred people in two hours and put it out for lunch. The beginning was not pleasant.’

Soon enough the problem shifted from whether the cooks would be willing to prepare the food to whether there would be enough to feed all the students who wanted it. Lines formed out the dining-hall door whenever hamburgers made of grass-fed beef from Wolfe’s Neck Farm were on the menu. One night when scallions were in season, the cooks set out a few pans of whole scallions roasted with just olive oil and salt. They assumed that most students would think them peculiar and leave them: in fifteen minutes, Schoen told me, the pans were emptied. . . .

At the beginning of this year the Food Project’s formula of organic oats, almonds, and raisins, a local honey, and New England maple syrup was so popular that Commons had to take over making it for every College. And the project’s recipe is actually cheaper than buying pre-made granola in bulk. (pp. 199, 200, 201)

Similar caution about the “culture of pre-processed food” comes from “The Local Food Project” at the University of Northern Iowa and their experience in the kitchens of twenty-three cooperating institutions:

Institutional kitchens have become accustomed to pre-processed food and to food items that have long shelf life. . . . Purchasing more local food means you need to cook with them from scratch, with more planning and flexibility to accommodate local products in season. . . . Some local produce are much more perishable than traditional produce, mostly because local varieties were bred for taste, not a week-long truck ride, and lack treatment with waxes and post-harvest pesticides, a necessity for shipped produce. (<http://www.uni.edu/ceee/foodproject/>, p. 7, viewed 9/10/04)

**Challenge #6:** *Current arrangements with Sodexo require \$5 million liability insurance of any vendor from whom food products are purchased. This presents a formidable challenge to the kind of direct-buying from local farmers and processors that is occurring elsewhere.*

Discussion: Quotes provided by David Mayo from Farm Bureau Insurance indicate that the price for product liability insurance for individuals or marketing collectives with gross receipts up to \$180,000 is roughly as follows:

\$1 million coverage	\$790
\$4 million coverage	\$810
\$5 million coverage	\$1,600

(Discussion with David Mayo, Farm Bureau Agent, 5/9/05)

**Challenge #7:** *The nature of the global-industrial food system makes it essentially impossible to track the sources of food currently served at Berea College. Thus little can be learned about the extent to which informed concern is exercised for the long-term health of the people and ecosystems involved in producing the food.*

**Discussion:** As noted earlier, Sodexo relies on Sysco, the largest food distributor in North America, for about 95% of Berea College's food supply. Although some locally grown foods may be part of that mix, the nature of the global-industrial food system makes tracking the sources of such food difficult to impossible. This difficulty is well described in the April 2003 version of *Indicators of Ecological Sustainability for Berea College*:

For example, one of our biggest dollar volume purchases is Tyson Chicken Fingers (personal communication, Josh Eckman). While a chicken may be grown in Kentucky, it may be raised on feed from Iowa, sold to Tyson and then sold to Sysco who then sells to Sodexo, who purchases for Berea College, but Tyson also buys chicken from other poultry-producing states. None of the chickens is labeled by state of origin when they arrive at Food Service. In short, food that is purchased through the global distribution system is not easily traced to its origins. The more processed the food is, the more complex the chain to trace it. (April 2003 edition, Footnote 1 for Indicator #19, Regionally Produced Food, p. 58)

Sodexo does purchase approximately 6% of the Food Service and Crossroads Café total from three Kentucky distributors—Papania's Wholesale Fruits and Vegetables of Lexington, Southern Belle Dairy of London, and Kerns of Middleboro—although not all of the foods they supply are of regional origin (*Indicators of Ecological Sustainability for Berea College*, April 2003, pp. 38 and 58).

**Challenge #8:** *It seems likely that some costs, both temporary transitional and ongoing annual costs, would increase in the short term if the College were to pursue the various actions proposed in the "Recommendations" section of this report. In the longer term, however, cost as well regional food security and the health of local and regional communities, economies, and ecosystems should all be improved. In addition, there appears to be extremely rich educational potential in College movement toward a sustainable food system.*

**Discussion:** Two ongoing cost factors are primary: the cost of food and the cost of labor. Concerning food, conventional wisdom seems to hold that locally sourced foods will cost more than those purchased from large wholesalers like Sysco. However, neither Marc Zammit nor Bob Perry believes this is necessarily true. Both believe that prices offered by institutional food services for local foods can be set at or near the average prices those same institutions are charged by their wholesale suppliers. As noted in *Challenge #1* discussion, this is considerably more that local growers get for selling to wholesalers (through auctions) but less than roadside-stand prices. Both Zammit and Perry believe these in-between prices will drive an increase in the availability of local foods.

In the longer term, Marc Zammit points out that rising fossil energy costs will be reflected less in responsibly grown local foods than in those reaching such distribution centers as Sysco Louisville through global-industrial supply lines. The cost of moving food around the planet is part but by no means all of this picture. Modern agriculture and the Green Revolution that helped produce it depend on petrochemicals through such energy-intensive activities as running tractors, making fertilizer, and pumping water. The vulnerability of this system to oil and natural gas market conditions is captured well by Brian Halweil:

So abrupt changes in the prices or availability of fuel—and many geologists argue that oil production will likely peak within the next decade—could be as big a shock to farming as abrupt changes in weather. The interest in local food could be the first step in breaking this addiction. Farmers who learn now how to raise crops with less oil will be better off when these fuels become scarce. So will communities that have cultivated local food sources. (*Eat Here*, p. 38)

Marc Zammit believes that labor is a more likely source of increased cost than food. Based on Bon Appétit's experience, he thinks Berea's labor costs would probably increase to some extent

since using more unprocessed locally grown foods purchased directly from growers would entail more labor-intensive food procurement and cooking activities (see related discussion under *Challenge #3 and Challenge #5*).

There are some cost factors associated with increasing the use of College-grown foods. On the horticultural side, Sean Clark indicates that more staff support, equipment, and attention to land resources would be necessary. Much of the available land does not have suitable drainage for reliable production. Expansion is possible, but that would mean installing tile drainage or taking land currently used for animal forage production. In addition, there is the proposal of a new road (Rawlings Loop) that would pass through the current gardens, which—if implemented—would cause significant loss to the College’s horticultural production potential.

There are four likely sources of one-time or temporary transitional costs for the College and/or its food service provider that seem likely:

- initial orientation and training for food service staff (see discussion under *Challenge #5*);
- equipment (e.g., hoop houses, installation of drainage tile) to ramp up the supply of College-grown food products for College use;
- building the infrastructure with local suppliers for ordering, billing, and delivery (see discussion under *Challenge #3*); and
- whatever steps the College may take toward fostering growth in the supply of locally produced food products (see discussion under *Recommendation #5 and #8 and Challenge #1 and #4*).

One final cost factor worth considering is the competitive climate in the food service industry among such large players as Sodexo, Bon Appétit, and Aramark. If Berea College were to formulate revised expectations for its partnership with a food service provider—expectations that reflect current thinking about the College’s use of responsibly grown local foods—it seems quite likely that several food service providers would have strong interest in bidding on the opportunity to enter into such a partnership (see discussion under *Resource #8 and Recommendations #2 and #4*).

## **RESOURCES FOR HELPING ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES**

There is much about Berea College and the region which supports the conclusion that this is a good place and a good time to take on the challenges associated with increasing the use of responsibly produced local foods, gradually but substantially, while simultaneously fostering conditions that help ensure their increasing availability. Some of the resources and circumstances that are especially suited to this effort are noted here.

***Resource #1:*** *The Berea College farms, gardens, and land holdings represent significant resources for local food production and consumption.*

***Resource #2:*** *An Agricultural & Natural Resources (ANR) Department within a small private college with liberal arts orientation is highly unusual. The fact that ANR faculty, staff, and students are focused on small-scale sustainable agriculture for Appalachia and beyond is a significant bonus.*

***Resource #3:*** *Some of the special programs at Berea College—Guided Learning, the Ecovillage, the Green Team, the Student Labor Program, CELTS, SENS, EPG, the Internship Program, the Undergraduate Research & Creative Projects Program, the Appalachian Center, Institutional Research & Assessment—and the more traditional academic programs—Business, Economics, Sociology, Nutrition & Dietetics—provide a powerful mix of learning, labor, and service resources to begin addressing the challenges.*

**Resource #4:** *A revitalized Appalachian commitment that seeks “to expand the base of understanding for Berea faculty and staff of the interdependence of the people, the economy, the culture, and the ecology of the Appalachian region and their intimate connection to Berea’s mission ...” (Being & Becoming, 2/05 draft, p. 62).*

**Discussion:** In his paper written for the 1997 Berea College Agricultural Summit, Wendell Berry offered some noteworthy observations and advice related to these first four resources:

What principles linking agriculture to natural systems, economic systems, and human communities should guide our thinking? This, I think is precisely the right question for this meeting ...

Finally, if I had the privilege of setting the agricultural research agenda for a land-owning college with a regional commitment, I would put three items at the top of the list, and I would limit the agenda to those three items for a longish time:

1. Find out how the college-owned land could best be used for the direct economic support of the college community—that is, as a source of food and other necessities—and how variously it could be used as a subject of study and research.
2. Find out what are the needs of the region? I would want to be pretty factual and hardheaded about this—no theories or wishful thinking. What, for instance, is the region importing? What that it imports could it produce? What that it exports is it buying back after processing outside the region?
3. Find out what, in the region or in similar regions, has worked or is working now to preserve both the land and the people. . . .

This is a subject that badly needs to be opened up for discussion all the way to the ground. Berea College, because of its regional commitment, is the right institution to open it up. I am grateful for this meeting. I think it could lead to exciting and useful work. I hope it does.

**Resource #5:** *Significant momentum has been built at Berea College over the last ten years for institutional movement toward more sustainable practice.*

**Resource #6:** *Although crops produced by Kentucky farmers for direct local consumption are in short supply, Kentucky has more farms than all but four states and is the eighth largest U.S. beef producer (Indicators, Indicator #19, footnote 8, p. 58). Furthermore, as local farmers struggle with the transition away from tobacco, a viable alternative for some may be relatively small, diversified farms focused on newly developing local markets.*

**Discussion:** Phase I tobacco settlement money may be useful in helping Kentucky farmers make a transition from tobacco to more diversified farms that would help supply an increasing demand for responsibly grown local foods. If not—either for lack of transitional support or an adequate dependable demand—it seems quite likely that the number of farms in Kentucky will decrease significantly in the near future. This particular time in Kentucky history is one of special opportunity but also of special danger that agricultural land will be lost to other uses. Bill Best notes that few if any local growers are planting tobacco this year: “A lot of local farmers are looking for what else to do” (discussion 4/20/05).

**Resource #7:** *There seems to be much interest in Berea and Kentucky in small-scale responsible growing. Note, for example, the new MERJ Market; the longstanding Berea Farmers Market; the recent proposal submitted by the city of Berea to the Appalachian Regional Commission to study the feasibility a Regional Farmers Market adjacent to the Artisan Center; and the initiative by the state park system, including the Artisan Center, to feature local food products purchased directly from local farmers and processors.*

**Resource #8:** *Some of the largest food distributors and food service providers are taking heightened interest in foods that can be sourced as local/responsibly produced and, in some cases, in fostering conditions that help ensure the increased availability of such foods.*

*Discussion:* Sysco Louisville, the distributor supplying approximately 95% of the food for Berea College, is described by Bob Perry as being “very progressive in this area” (email communication April 4, 2005). And in a recent address, Richard J. Schnieders, Sysco Chairman and CEO, talked about small and medium-scale farmers who can produce for local consumption, saying:

I want to go back to those farmers again and say that losing more and more of those farmers is a huge strategic risk to Sysco . . . . That risk has moved to the top of my list of priorities, because it has such a long-term effect on our business. . . . As I suggested earlier, we can source corn and soybeans offshore; we cannot source fresh salad, fresh heirloom tomatoes, or fresh specialty beef from South America—nor would we want to. There are many products that must be sourced closer to home. (Presentation to Georgetown University Law School, Corporate Counsel Institute, 3/12/04, pp. 12, 13 available at [www.agofthemiddle.org](http://www.agofthemiddle.org))

Among food service providers, Bon Appétit seems to have established national leadership in partnering with higher education clients to pursue the increased use and availability of responsibly produced local foods. Jeff Eisenbarth, from his experience with Sodexo at Berea and Bon Appétit at Willamette University, observes that Bon Appétit seems to be more thoughtful and more committed to action in relation to issues of sustainability (discussion with Jeff Eisenbarth, Vice President for Finance, Willamette University, 5/20/05).

It is instructive to compare the Bon Appétit website with that of competitors. Near the beginning, Bon Appétit says, “Our Dream is to be the premier on-site restaurant company known for its culinary expertise and commitment to socially responsible practices” (website [www.bamco.com](http://www.bamco.com) viewed 3/17/05). Under “Sustaining Your Community” in the section titled “Our Social Responsibility,” they write:

We choose to invest in our communities by buying millions of dollars worth of products each year from local farmers and artisans. By buying directly from the producers we can support sustainable farming practices that nourish and replenish the local land rather than stripping it. We can steer away from pesticides, hormones, and antibiotics. And, we can be sure that the profits are kept with the local grower, not a distance importer, and therefore reinvested into the community.

Farther in the same section, the *Farm to Fork* program is described:

Farm to Fork is a company-initiative to buy locally. Our first choice is the purchase of seasonal and regional produce from local farmers within a 150 mile radius. . . . By buying directly from farmers we have much more control over what types of agri-business we are supporting. We can support family farms and farm collectives such as AMO Organics, a cooperative made up of farmers who have made the transition from farm-worker to farm-owner. We can also support farmers who are preserving the diversity of our food choices by planting heirloom vegetables rather than genetically-modified “super produce.”

Farm To Fork also has an effect on the flavor and nutritional value of the food we serve. A tomato grown without pesticides and ripened on the vine tastes unbelievably better than one sprayed with chemicals, picked while still green, trucked thousands of miles and force ripened in a warehouse. It is especially important to Bon Appétit chefs to start with food that is alive with flavor since we cook everything from scratch and don’t use “flavor enhancers” such as MSG.

Buying 100% locally is not yet practical, but the commitment we have made to Farm To Fork is to help insure that our community can eat well today and tomorrow.

Sodexo’s website provides quite a contrast. Very little is indicated about the economic, ecological, or social aspects of a sustainable food system. For example, when writing about “Contributing to Our Communities” in their “Corporate Responsibility” section, they focus exclusively on the total value of Sodexo contributions of dollars (\$5 million) and in-kind (another \$5 million) to charitable organizations (website [www.sodexhousa.com](http://www.sodexhousa.com) viewed 3/17/05).

On the other hand, Sodexo USA has recently received the “Keeper of the Vision Award for a Sustainable Future” from Food Alliance, a certifying organization noted for meaningful social and ecological standards for farmers and for its success in promoting the use of products from certified

farmers in mainstream food businesses. Closer to home, it is encouraging to note that Sodexo personnel have responded with strong interest to the Local Food Initiative and to the prospect of exploring how a new partnership with the College might take shape around revised expectations.

**Resource #9:** *Many people in and around Berea have expressed interest in the mission of the Berea College Local Food Initiative.*

**Discussion:** In this core of people across the College and community, we may well have the kind of group anthropologist Margaret Mead had in mind when she said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, dedicated citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” The dependence of Berea College and others on an increasingly unsustainable global-industrial food system is one part of the current world that calls out for change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGE ACTION

Each of the recommendations below is designated as immediate, short-term, or long-term. “Immediate” conveys our hope that the recommended action can be undertaken very soon and completed sometime during 2005. “Short-term” indicates actions that we recommend be undertaken before the end of 2005, while “long-term” is used to describe recommendations whose explorations and possible actions may need to wait beyond 2005.

Near the beginning of this report we stated three “immediate” recommendations. For the sake of completeness, we have restated them below along with additional recommendations and discussion.

**Recommendation #1 (immediate):** *That Berea College, with leadership from the Administrative Committee, commit itself to increasing, gradually but substantially, the use of responsibly produced regional and local foods. As an essential part of that effort, the College should foster conditions that help ensure the increasing availability of such foods.*

**Discussion:** *Recommendation #1* urges commitment to the increased use of both “local” and “responsibly grown” foods but provides no guidance on the relative urgency of these two criteria. It is significant to note that although “local” production is not necessarily “responsible,” reducing farm-to-plate supply lines from the estimated 1,500 miles down to a local/regional scale would help address some of the most problematic features of the College’s current arrangements.

First and most obvious among these is that moving food through long supply lines requires large amounts of fossil fuel. Reducing the distance our food travels would be a meaningful step toward reducing petroleum dependence at the College. A broader point is the impact of globalization on social and environmental standards. As Brian Halweil observes, “The ability of agribusiness to roam around the planet, buying at the lowest possible price and selling at the highest, has tended to tighten the squeeze, throwing every farmer on the planet into direct competition with every other farmer” (*Eat Here*, p. 66). In this infamous “race to the bottom,” much social and ecological regulation is either lost or never considered. Third, information about circumstances under which local foods are produced is far more accessible to the College than is information about foods that come from the global-industrial pipeline (see the discussion under *Challenge #7*).

**Recommendation #2 (immediate):** *That Berea College’s expectations for its partnership with a food service provider be revised to reflect the College’s commitment to and participation in the development of a sustainable food system. The Administrative Committee should then determine how best to pursue these revised expectations, whether through an RFP process, explorations with Sodexo only, or consideration of other options such as in-house management. (New expectations that we recommend for inclusion in such a revision are identified in Recommendation #4.)*

**Recommendation #3 (immediate):** *That Berea College agricultural products—including meat—be used as the first food procurement option by Food Service, the amount limited only by College*

*production. Goals for the campus use of College food products (e.g., percentage of the dollar value) should be determined through the collaboration of staff from such areas as the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Department, the College Farms and Gardens, Food Service, and the Student Labor Program. In setting such goals, educational needs of the College Farms and Gardens by ANR should be accorded highest priority.*

*Discussion: Rough preliminary estimates drawn from conversations with Mike Panciera, Sean Clark, and Richard Olson suggest that a realistic goal over several years for College-produced foods as a portion of the whole might well be in the range of 15% to 30% of the dollar volume. The required steps for putting aggressive but cost-feasible and mission-compatible goals in place should be undertaken as soon as possible and given high priority.*

***Recommendation #4 (immediate):*** *That Berea College revise the expectations for its food service partnership such that the food service provider should:*

- *Commit to Recommendations #1 and #3;*
- *Share responsibility for finding ways to overcome the challenges to buying foods directly from local farmers and processors, including but not limited to inadequate supply, insurance, and the logistics of ordering, delivery, and billing;*
- *Share responsibility for the imaginative promotion of student, staff, and faculty learning about food issues through the labor program, the implicit curriculum, and promotional programs to raise awareness about eating choices.*
- *Share responsibility for working toward best practices and improved performance in the areas of pre- and post-consumer food waste and the proportion of food waste composted as indicated in the goals and recommendations associated Indicators #21 and #22 in “Indicators of Ecological Sustainability for Berea College” (April 2003, pp. 40 and 41);*
- *Provide necessary staff orientation and training for planning and cooking meals with unprocessed ingredients obtained directly from local growers;*
- *Employ methods of record keeping that enable accurate calculation of the local and regional foods used at Berea College; and*
- *Be open to exploring the possibility of joining College purchasing power with other local institutions (area schools, hospitals, nursing homes, colleges, etc.) as a way of developing the market for local foods.*

***Recommendation #5 (short-term):*** *That buying food directly from area farmers—meat as well as produce—become the second food procurement option for Food Service, right after food produced by Berea College. Again, aggressive but realistic goals should be set and care taken in tracking progress.*

*Discussion: Given the supply problem discussed in Challenge #1, part of the objective here is to drive an expanding local supply by providing an expanding dependable demand. As Marc Zammit notes about Bon Appétit, “Because of the volume we purchase, most small farmers cannot meet our total needs. In the bigger picture, what we purchase locally is a small percent. On the more local picture, what we do purchase makes a big difference in the lives of the farmers and their ability to sustain their business. . . . We want them to maximize their profits so they can not only maintain, but grow and be here in the future” (email communication, 4/4/05).*

As noted earlier (*Challenge #3*), the relatively complicated logistics of ordering, delivery, and billing with many local suppliers have been a challenge for local food initiatives elsewhere. One possibility worth exploring is for such College programs as ANR and EPG to cooperate in developing student projects aimed at catalyzing the formation of local farmers’ cooperatives to sell directly to the College and any other area businesses or institutions cooperating in the local food initiative. (See

*Recommendation #9* for a discussion about expanding the circle of cooperating institutions and businesses.) The benefits of such co-ops would include a more coordinated local-grower response to institutional needs and more convenient access for institutional buyers to the range of local foods through a one-call ordering, delivery, and billing system. The educational benefits to students involved in brokering such arrangements would be substantial. The “Local Food Project” at the University of Northern Iowa has extensive experience with involving students in projects of this kind.

***Recommendation #6 (short-term):*** *That the issue of product liability insurance as a barrier to the College use of food products purchased directly from local growers and processors be explored with the intention of enabling rather than discouraging as much direct local purchase as possible. The objective should be to minimize the barrier within the constraints needed to protect College assets from unreasonable risk.*

***Discussion:*** As indicated in the discussion of *Challenge #6*, the current Sodexo requirement of \$5 million coverage is a significant obstacle for local producers. Yet we know that others, both private and public colleges and universities, have been able to overcome all barriers to direct local purchase.

As noted in the discussion of *Challenge #5*, for example, the “Sustainable Food Project” at Yale involves integrating local food purchases into the Yale/Aramark ordering system. They tell local farmers that they will “buy their entire crop of eggplant or squash or lettuce if they can deliver either straight to the dining hall or to a Hartford warehouse used by one of the university’s wholesale suppliers” (*Atlantic Monthly* article, p. 201). As a second example, Middlebury College reports purchasing about one-third of its food from local sources, including milk, cheese, ice cream, meats, maple syrup, breads, fruits and vegetables. “Stipulated in the contract with the larger food supplier is a requirement for locally sourced products” (*Sustainability On Campus: Stories and Strategies For Change*, p. 305). And from the University of Northern Iowa, none of the cooperating institutions in their “Local Food Project”—including the university, two hospitals, and three retirement homes—requires local farmers to carry product liability insurance:

Based on our experience, several institutions have told local farmers that a minimum of \$1 million insurance is necessary to become a vendor for that institution. That usually has been the case when the institution has out-sourced dining service to a company that requires such insurance. . . . None of the institutions that our project worked with require such insurance from nearby farmers.

([www.uni.edu.cee/foodproject/](http://www.uni.edu.cee/foodproject/), p. 6 viewed 9/10/04)

Several possibilities that may be worth exploring have come to light at various points during the year:

- that Berea College add a rider to its current policy extending some level of coverage to local growers, possibly contingent on an inspection process for food safety and quality;
- that the state of Kentucky provide some level of insurance coverage, possibly coupled with a food safety inspection process, as a way of helping Kentucky farmers manage a transition from tobacco to the emerging “food service” market between wholesalers and roadside stands; and/or
- that Sodexo agree to lower its \$5 million requirement substantially. In the case of Bon Appétit, one of Sodexo’s competitors, we know that they require \$1 million coverage from individual growers and \$4 million from marketing collectives such as farmers’ markets or co-ops.

***Recommendation #7 (short-term):*** *That one or more members of the Board of Trustees learn about the interest at Berea and elsewhere in the development of sustainable food systems and in exploring the implications of a College commitment to a gradual but substantial movement in that direction.*

***Recommendation #8 (long-term):*** *That the College explore its possible roles in helping seed the expansion of such local food businesses as canning; government certified meat slaughter and packing; fruit drying; baking; and the making of cheese, salsa, chutney, and jam.*

*Discussion:* Much can be said here, both about why the expansion of such local businesses is important to the development of a sustainable food system and how the College may be equipped to contribute in ways that involve rich educational opportunity for students.

The need to expand local food businesses was addressed to some extent in the discussion of *Challenge #4*. Further reflections from Tod Murphy, owner of the Farmers Diner, serve to underscore the importance of this issue. He plans to add government-certified meat and food processing facilities, the latter equipped for canning, drying, and baking. Although Murphy is talking about a restaurant, his observations and those of narrator Brian Halweil underscore part of the challenge and opportunity facing Berea College.

“Most diners use pre-sliced, frozen carrots,” says Murphy, “but our goal is to have a place for processing local carrots in season and also freezing or pickling or canning them for the off-season.” The food processing shop can also use the “seconds” and blemished fruit and vegetables that farmers would normally throw out to make soups, jams, and chutneys.

Murphy’s . . . idea addresses one of the biggest barriers to greater reliance on local food—the difficulty of building back the local crop diversity and food processing capacity that has been eroded by successive waves of consolidation. . . . He estimates that 10 percent of the diner’s costs entail creating supplier or processing capacity that isn’t there. As he looks to expand the diner’s model to other locations, Murphy sees this cost as an investment. (*Eat Here*, pp. 108, 109, 110)

Concerning possible roles for the College, three examples that seem well worth initial exploration suggest the educational potential such projects hold.

- Establishing campus student labor programs in valued-added processing and retailing of meat and produce. Mike Panciera sees significant ANR educational potential for these possibilities.
- With the involvement of Berea’s EPG and the ANR programs, cooperate in sponsoring something similar to ACENet, the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACENet) in Athens, Ohio. Starting in 1993, ACENet established a “fully equipped and approved commercial kitchen” for use as an incubator for local food entrepreneurs.

ACENet now provides training in food processing, marketing, product development, and business management, in addition to pointing start-up processors to local sources for fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy products. The kitchen is used by 300 specialty food businesses, and has spawned more than 120 start-ups and created hundreds of jobs. (*Eat Here*, p. 137)

- Establishing a modest low-interest regional loan fund administered by the College in partnership with MACED to seed entrepreneurial start-ups in the food business area. Two ways such a loan fund could be established are allocating a small percentage of the endowment for this purpose (e.g., \$1 million) or engaging in an “expand-the-philanthropic-pie” fundraising effort for this kind of regionally oriented investment in “social good.” MACED has experience with assisting viable start-up food businesses and strong interest in expanding such activity within the mountain region (discussion with Justin Maxson, President of MACED, 4/28/05).

***Recommendation #9*** (long-term): *That potentially advantageous possibilities be explored for Berea College to develop cooperative relationships with other institutions around shared interest in local food initiatives. Among the possibilities to explore are:*

- *combining purchasing power with other institutions and businesses in the Berea area (hospitals, schools, nursing homes, restaurants, etc.), which could be a catalyst for increasing the available supply of local foods through an increased dependable demand, and*
- *cooperation of various kinds with other state or regional private colleges.*

*Discussion:* For the University of Northern Iowa, joining the purchasing power of cooperating institutions (three initially in 1997, now up to twenty-three and growing) has been an integral part of their highly successful “Local Food Project.” Some of the possibilities worth exploring at Berea are suggested at the beginning of their “short history of our work accomplishments”:

In 1997, with a grant from the Leopold Center, we began working with three institutional food buyers to assist them in buying a greater portion of their food from nearby farms and processors. By 2003, fourteen institutions have spent more than \$1 million buying locally raised foods in our metro area.

In 2003, in Collaboration with Practical Farmers of Iowa and Food Routes Network, we launched “Buy Fresh, Buy Local,” a comprehensive marketing and consumer outreach campaign. In 2004, twenty-three restaurants, retailers and businesses committed to growing our regional food system stronger doubled their local food purchases to \$465,000, compared to \$225,000 in 2003. ([www.uni.edu/cee/foodproject/](http://www.uni.edu/cee/foodproject/), viewed 4/27/05)

The twenty-three “restaurants, retailers and businesses” include one university, two hospitals, three retirement homes, nine restaurants, and eight grocery and retail stores.

A possibility worth considering is involving students, through projects coordinated by ANR and/or EPG, in stimulating the interest of local institutions and businesses in featuring local food products. “Lessons Learned” from the “Local Food Project” at the University of Northern Iowa, emphasize the importance of addressing the time pressure on typical dining managers:

Food service managers are extremely busy. They are unlikely to take on initiatives that will require more work. In our experience, our success was based on providing assistance to the dining managers to make the process of local food buying smooth and practical. ([www.uni.edu/cee/foodproject/](http://www.uni.edu/cee/foodproject/), viewed 4/27/05)

Projects designed to help “make the process of local food buying smooth and practical” could make a significant contribution to increasing the dependable demand for locally produced food products thereby driving an expansion of the supply and a strengthening of the local food economy.

Finally, part of our interest in exploring cooperation arrangements with other private colleges and universities in this area is that Sodexo has the food service contracts for many of them. Josh Eckman has expressed particular interest in this kind of exploration.

## CONCLUSION

Over the past year, members of the Berea College Local Food Initiative Steering Committee have learned much about the various challenges and resources associated with the participation of Berea College in the development of a sustainable food system. LFI has also worked to educate the campus community about local food systems as well as to seek feedback from community members about their existing knowledge (see Appendix A on p. 18 for more information about LFI outreach efforts).

In April 2005, LFI conducted a campus-wide survey to assess the Berea College community's awareness of, interest in, and commitment to local food production and consumption, and over 350 people participated in this web-based survey. Nearly 90% of respondents (to the following statement) agreed or strongly agreed that "The College should consume the food produced by the College farm and gardens." About 81% of respondents (to the following statement) agreed or strongly agreed that they "would rather eat local food if it were more available on campus (and in the Berea area)." Regarding awareness of organizations that promote or provide local foods, 141 people were aware of campus groups, 127 people were aware of groups in and around Berea, 65 people were aware of groups in Kentucky, and 73 people were aware of groups in the U.S. Regarding awareness of the Berea College farm and gardens, 329 people indicated that they knew about the farm/gardens; however, 125 of the 251 respondents who described their knowledge about the farm/gardens indicated that they knew little to nothing about them except their existence.

Based on LFI's research and the general campus sentiment that local food is desirable, it seems reasonable to conclude that there are adequate resources, support, and compelling reasons for Berea College to commit itself to a gradual but substantial increase in the use of responsibly grown local foods. It is likely that some costs, both one-time and ongoing, would increase in the short term were the College to pursue the recommendations proposed in this report. In the longer term, however, the cost, regional food security, and the health of local and regional communities, economies, and ecosystems should all be improved. Most importantly, there appears to be extremely rich educational potential for College movement toward a sustainable food system.

Food Service has already begun working with the College Gardens and Greenhouse to increase the production of salad greens for campus consumption next semester, and discussions are underway concerning how to begin using College-grown meat. A promising beginning! LFI plans to continue its local food research, education, and assessment efforts next year, and we would welcome the opportunity to facilitate and support the next steps toward what could become an enormously important and beneficial development in the life of Berea College.

## **APPENDIX A:**

### **LFI ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2004-05**

#### **Fall 2004**

- ☑ Researched and compiled findings on local food initiatives at colleges and universities around the country—including schools such as Yale University, Middlebury College, and Warren Wilson College.
- ☑ Co-sponsored a CEPC Green Steps Forum, which included an introductory presentation on LFI and a dinner featuring local foods in order to raise campus awareness, initiate conversations, and make connections among campus and community stakeholders.
- ☑ Met with Warren Wilson College representatives to discuss their experience—challenges and lessons learned—in incorporating local- and college-grown foods into their Sodexo-managed food service.
- ☑ Published a *Pinnacle* article on the LFI mission and its work to date.
- ☑ Consulted with Mike Panciera and Sean Clark regarding the feasibility and level of production for integrating College agricultural products in College dining facilities.
- ☑ Held a meeting with Berea College Food Service representatives, including district manager Mal Wightman and interim manager Steve Spencer, in order to open dialogue on Sodexo's interest in such a project.
- ☑ Attended several different conferences with an emphasis on local food movements in order to learn more and establish networking connections [i.e., Sustainability and Higher Education (Portland), "Healthy Food, Local Farms" Conference (Louisville), Growing Kentucky: New Directions for Our Culture of Land and Food Symposium (Lexington), etc.].

#### **Spring 2005**

- ☑ Established a website to increase the visibility and accessibility of the LFI mission, research, and goals on campus and beyond.
- ☑ Compiled a comprehensive database of nearly 500 farmers/producers within the region surrounding Berea.
- ☑ Researched insurance requirements associated with incorporating local food in the College's Food Service operation, which resulted in the knowledge that College insurance provides \$20 million product liability coverage for all Berea College agricultural products, meat and produce, enabling the College to use agricultural products in Food Service and Boone Tavern.
- ☑ Sponsored a SENS Seminar on "Food Services for a Sustainable Future," which included a presentation by Marc Zammit of Bon Appétit, a food service provider that utilizes and promotes local foods whenever possible, and a lunch of local food products.
- ☑ Created and administered a campus-wide survey to gauge the knowledge and interest of Berea College students, faculty, and staff in College-grown and local foods.
- ☑ Began planning a display for Food Service in order to educate students about the importance of locally grown food.

## **APPENDIX B:**

### **THE MEANING OF “GLOBAL-INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM”**

The phrase “global-industrial food system” refers to the dominant system for producing and distributing food products to people around the world. Its notable features include:

- concentration of global food production and distribution in the hands of increasingly few very large, vertically integrated multinational agribusiness organizations;
- heavy reliance on fossil fuels for the fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and irrigation used for production as well as for worldwide distribution, and—increasingly—reliance on genetically modified organisms;
- very long global supply lines that cater to an expectation of “any food, any time, anywhere” by wealthier countries;
- practices in the name of trade liberalization and intellectual property rights that undercut the viability of smaller diverse farms aimed at local, regional, and national food security in favor of industrial mono-cropping for commodity export in exchange for cash to import value-added food products;
- the “absentee landlord” syndrome, which often involves disregard for the long-term health of those ecosystems and people employed in food production; and
- externalized costs brought about through subsidies and lack of regulation, which make the foods supplied, particularly in the United States, appear to be artificially cheap.

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**NOTE:** Sources noted by an asterisk are cited in this document. Other sources represent supplemental reading and resources that LFI consulted in its research.

## APPENDIX D: BEREA COLLEGE LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE MISSION AND SUMMARY

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Berea College Local Food Initiative is to promote the participation of Berea College in the development of a sustainable food system.

### Goals

- To understand and foster the ecological, economic, social, and spiritual components of a sustainable food network
- To promote understanding by Berea College students, faculty, and staff of the sources of their food, thereby increasing appreciation of fresh, local foods
- To increase the purchase of locally grown foods for all of Berea College's dining facilities
- To encourage campus use of College Farm and Garden products
- To provide new marketing opportunities for local growers

### Preliminary Research Objectives

- Learn about the experience of other colleges and universities—successes, challenges encountered and learning opportunities that emerged for students, faculty, and staff
- Develop baseline information about campus food sources
- Develop understanding of any liability or contractual issues associated with Berea College's purchase and use of foods from local/regional growers and processors
- Explore the opportunities and challenges associated with Berea College providing its own foods for use in dining services
- Explore the opportunities and challenges likely to be encountered by dining services managers and workers in moving toward greater reliance on local growers for seasonably available foods
- Learn about the circumstances, needs, and potential of off-campus local/regional growers and processors
- Learn about the experience of other local food initiatives in Kentucky
- Estimate the costs and benefits of a local food initiative that might be pursued by the College, including benefits to the local economy

### Colleges/Universities with Local Food Projects

- [Bates College](#)
- [Bowdoin College](#)
- [Carleton College](#) (benchmark for BC)
- [Dartmouth College](#)
- [St. Bonaventure College](#)
- [St. Olaf College](#) (benchmark for BC)
- [University of New Hampshire](#)
- [University of Northern Iowa](#)
- [Warren Wilson College](#)
- [Yale University \(Berkeley College\)](#)

### Off-Campus Resources for Local Food Initiatives

- [Berea Farmers' Market](#)
- [Bon Appétit Management Company](#)
- [Community Farm Alliance](#)
- [County Extension Agents](#)
- [Food Alliance](#)
- [Kentucky Department of Agriculture Farm to Schools Program](#)
- [Kentucky Department of Parks' KY Proud Purchasing Program](#)
- [Kentucky Sustainable Agriculture Community](#)
- [Mountain Association for Community Economic Development \(MACED\)](#)
- [MCAT/MERJ Market](#)
- [Partners for Family Farms](#)
- [Richmond Farmers' Market](#)
- [Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center](#)