

LFI promoting sustainable food system

Program supporting local food awareness, consumption on campus

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Contributing Writer

The Berea College Local Food Initiative (LFI) is a new campus project with a mission "to promote the participation of Berea College in the development of a sustainable food system." The goals of the initiative are the following:

- 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; and
- To provide new marketing opportunities for local growers.

On Nov. 3, the LFI hosted a presentation and local foods dinner for the second Green Steps Forum sponsored by the Campus Environmental Policy Committee (CEPC). Over 50 people attended the forum, including students, faculty, staff and local community members. Participants enjoyed a dinner of lamb stew and beef chili made with meat from the College Farm, vegetarian bean chili made with local beans, salad greens from the College Greenhouse, as well as other fresh vegetables, pear cider and corn bread from local producers.

The LFI has begun researching the feasibility of

increased local food awareness and consumption at the College by gathering information about (1) local food projects at other colleges and universities as well as other institutions in Kentucky, (2) the College's current food sources, (3) the College's current food production, (4) off-campus local/regional growers and processors, (5) liability and/or contractual issues for the institution, and (6) the estimated costs and benefits of a local food initiative.

Members of the LFI Steering Committee met with representatives from Warren Wilson College on Nov. 10, to learn more about how their food service, which is also managed by Sodexo, utilizes food produced on their own farms and other local farms. The group is now planning a field trip to Warren Wilson in order to gain more first-hand knowledge about how their system works.

The LFI also plans to engage the campus community in the research process through awareness-raising activities such as surveys, discussions in food service, residence halls and additional local food dinners/meetings. If you would like more information about the Berea College Local Food Initiative, you can access the LFI's Green Steps PowerPoint presentation on the College network at \\Fileshare-nt\Departmental\President's Office\ClemonsT\Workspace. You can also access a copy of the LFI's project mission and summary in the Environmental Issues public folder on the Outlook email system. For more information about how you can participate in the Local Food Initiative, please contact SENS House Director, Leslie Ferguson.