

Title: Developing a Sustainable Food Procurement Policy for Cornell

Hosts: Jane Mt. Pleasant, Wendy Wolford

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Abstract:

The Food Focus Team, one of ten university-wide campus committees, is charged with improving the sustainability of Cornell's food system. To advance this effort, we propose the development of a procurement policy for every unit on campus that purchases food. With more than 20,000 students, staff, and faculty, the daily consumption of food on campus has a large effect on Cornell's carbon footprint, contributing to Cornell's greenhouse gas and pollution emissions and global warming. Food production, processing, and transport uses enormous amounts of energy and natural resources, many of which are in short supply. Our food purchases also directly affect local and regional economies, involve moral and ethical questions, and are closely linked to the health and well-being of the Cornell community and beyond. For all of these reasons, Cornell, as an institution, should be thoughtful and intentional about our food purchases. We should identify ways to reduce the negative impacts of our food purchases. We can also use our purchasing decisions to build a Cornell food system that is environmentally responsible, enhances local and regional economies, and contributes to our health and well-being as individuals within the Cornell community.

At this luncheon we invite people from across campus to share their ideas for a sustainable food procurement policy. This complex and difficult task requires the knowledge and experience of people involved in all aspects of Cornell's food system, including growing, purchasing, preparing, delivering, and eating food. We all have a stake in this. At the conclusion of this luncheon, we hope to identify individuals who will be part of a Food Procurement Policy workgroup that will develop a food procurement policy for the campus.