

CASE STUDIES

Farm to Table Conference Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA March 2000

WSU Cooperative Extension agent Curtis Beus was the conference coordinator, assisted in local food coordination by farmer Caryn Robertson, chef Tom French, and many volunteers.

Wine and cheese, and three meals were served to 400 participants. Local food producers donated most of the food. Donations were difficult due to the time of year and the coordinators felt they should have purchased the food to help local farmers.

French used the college kitchen, which caused some friction with the kitchen staff. The coordinators felt that using the college chef would have worked out better.

The menu changed often depending on the availability or promise of donation by the local food producers. Disposing of the leftover food was not planned in advance.

Coordinators also had to run around the state collecting and delivering local foods and getting various permits. Better planning and delegation of responsibilities, with experienced and committed volunteers, are necessary for the procurement of local foods.

But despite the difficulties, they proved that an excellent and satisfying menu could be prepared using local foods, even in March in Washington State. They felt it was worth all of the effort.

Oregon Sustainability Forum, Portland, OR September 2001

Matthew Buck coordinated the event for Sustainable Northwest. There were 825 people for the first two days and on the third day, which was an open house, 3000 people participated. Eighty percent of the menu was prepared using local organic food.

Buck first contacted the Hilton Hotel. Contacts through Chefs Collaborative, a catering manager, and friends were made with the Hilton Chef and, after negotiations, contracts were signed for making use of local organic foods exclusively for the event. If profit margins were kept intact, the chef was ready to cooperate.

Buck had to go long distances and contact various sources even to collect small quantities of local food and it required constant meetings and communication with other conference coordinators. He made checklists to keep track of the progress.

He had to renegotiate the cost with the chef, due to the extra labor and time involved in using unprocessed ingredients. The money was paid directly to the food producers avoiding middlemen, but catering costs were still higher. One reason was the extra costs of local wines.

The quality, taste, and presentation of items were excellent. The event showed the participants were committed to the cause of sustainability, and the event created good will, since they donated the leftover food to workers, volunteers, food banks, and homeless folks.



Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior

Sustainable Foods Division of SNEB

Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
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The **Society for Nutrition Education and Behaviors'** mission is to enhance nutrition educators' abilities to promote healthful sustainable food choices and nutrition behaviors for a vision of healthy people in healthy communities.



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The Food and Farm Connections Team of **Washington State University Cooperative Extension** promotes sustainable, community-based agricultural systems in Western Washington by providing research-based information and educational programs for farmers, consumers, decision-makers, and others involved in the food system.

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A Sense of Place:

Serving Local Food at Your Meeting

Food is an important part of meetings and conferences. Attendees like to learn about the place where the meeting is being held. This definitely includes the food. In the few days spent together, attendees can learn about an area's agriculture, seasonal specialties and local cuisine with every bite.