

Fact sheet: University of California, Santa Barbara

UC SANTA BARBARA SUSTAINABLE FOODS

At UCSB, our mission for the food initiative is to promote the basic human right of secure access to healthy food for our bodies and the Earth by partnering and coordinating with the collective expertise of researchers, campus staff and students, local growers, vendors, and non-profits. We aim to create a food system where the campus and local community have a strong connection with and knowledge of their food system, and where they develop informed choices in the selection and preparation of food that foster equitable social systems, with minimal environmental impact at the campus, community, state, and global level.

Even before the incorporation of food into the UC sustainable practices policy, UCSB had already made great strides towards improving the sustainability of our food systems. The UCSB Campus sustainability plan substantially exceeds the minimum requirements of the UC Policy on Sustainable Practices. UCSB Residential Dining Services (RDS) and the UCEN have already successfully met and exceeded the UC goal of procuring 20% Sustainable Food Products by 2020. In 2012-2013, 38% of the dining services and 22% of the UCEN food purchases were sustainable. Through partnerships with local farmers, Dining Services has also greatly expanded its purchase of local produce, purchasing 41% of its total produce purchases from within 150 miles (53 local sustainable farms) of campus. Additionally, they were able to purchase 15% organic produce in 2012-2013.

UC Santa Barbara is also known for its interdisciplinary research culture and innovative faculty, and this is evident in the variety and nature of food-related research on our campus. This research spans from science and engineering to social science, humanities and fine arts, and education. Scholars at UC Santa Barbara are addressing this important global issue at multiple scales — from the effect of climate change on the global food system, to how to successfully structure and develop policies around global and local fisheries, to research on behavioral change and how that can be applied to personal choices around food sustainability. The Sustainable Fisheries Group of UCSB is well situated as a leader in globalized and localized analysis of economic and political structures for managing fisheries. They routinely partner with a company who helps ensure that their research is communicated effectively to policymakers.

UCSB is also home to the first Environmental Studies Program in the country, the top-ranked Department of Geography in the country (according to the last NRC report), and to the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management. Through these programs and a variety of other academic departments on campus, UCSB offers several courses on our food systems.

UCSB is also striving to address food accessibility needs for our students. The Associated Students Food Bank opened its doors on April 19th, 2011 and by Spring Quarter, 2014 had served 3,000 students who made over 35,000 visits since 2011.

Students and the campus community more broadly also have the opportunity to build a direct relationship with local farmers through the Gaucho Farmers' Market.