



Sunny-Side-Up Gets Sunnier: UNH Now Serves Eggs From Cage-Free, Certified Humane NH Farm

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Dec. 20, 2005

DURHAM, N.H. – If the eggs served at the University of New Hampshire seem a little happier and healthier, it’s because they now come from chickens that have been raised cage-free in a certified humane way. UNH, a leader in sustainable food service, will now buy all its shelled eggs from a certified humane chicken farm in New Hampshire’s White Mountains, making it the first university in the nation to serve certified humane products.

“Our students and customers are increasingly aware of how their food is raised or produced,” said University Hospitality Services (UHS) assistant director Rick MacDonald. “Moving to certified-humane cage-free eggs complements our efforts to serve local and sustainable food when possible.” MacDonald notes that cage-free eggs, which come from hens raised with all-natural vegetarian feed, are higher in healthy Omega 3 fats.

Pete and Gerry’s Organic Eggs, located in the northern New Hampshire town of Monroe, will supply UNH with the approximately quarter of a million eggs the university consumes per year in its dining halls as well as through catering, conferences and at the New England Center. Most of those eggs will be Nellie’s Nest Cage-Free Eggs, which are produced and distributed by Pete and Gerry’s.

“As a family farm, we think this is a fantastic opportunity to introduce future customers to the benefits of cage-free eggs,” said Jesse Laflamme, co-owner of Pete and Gerry’s Organic Eggs and Nellie’s Nest Cage-Free Eggs. Laflamme notes that his grandfather Les Ward, founder of the company, studied poultry husbandry at UNH before World War II. “UNH is where it all began,” says Laflamme. Pete and Gerry’s was the first egg producer in the U.S. to be designated certified humane.

“Certified humane,” a designation granted by the non-profit Humane Farm Animal Care Program, indicates that the eggs have been produced to standards that include a nutritious diet without antibiotics or hormones and animals raised with shelter, resting areas, sufficient space, and the ability to engage in natural behaviors. “We welcome UNH as the first university to serve eggs that are ‘certified humane’ and commend them for taking a stand to help improve the life of farm animals,” said Adele Douglass, executive director of the Humane Farm Animal Care Program.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), which collaborated with UHS as well as the UNH Office of Sustainability on the initiative, also applauded the move. “The University of New

Hampshire has taken a leadership role in animal welfare by phasing out the sale of eggs from caged birds. We applaud their efforts to help reduce animal suffering and encourage other schools to follow suit,” said HSUS Factory Farming Campaign Manager Paul Shapiro.

According to HSUS, the nation’s largest animal protection organization, approximately 95 percent of eggs sold in the U.S. come from hens confined in barren “battery cages,” wire enclosures so small the birds can’t spread their wings or engage in many other natural behaviors.

UHS, an award-winning dining service nationally recognized for its innovative offerings, boasts a number of forward-looking sustainability initiatives. “We’re very focused on making an impact by serving locally grown and produced food,” said MacDonald.

That focus is part of an innovative collaboration with the UNH Office of Sustainability called Local Harvest, which emphasizes serving local and regional foods in UNH dining halls, restaurants, and at catered special events. “Our collaboration with University Hospitality Services is an integral part of a broad community-wide food and society initiative that includes an educational commitment that spans across teaching, research, operations and extension such as the dining halls,” said Thomas Kelley, director of the Office of Sustainability.

In September 2005, a first-of-its-kind Local Harvest dinner brought more than 1500 students, faculty, staff and community members to a university dining hall for a culinary celebration of local agriculture that included exotic and familiar items from farms and producers from New Hampshire and New England. Other projects of the Local Harvest initiative are UHS’s strong support for the UNH Organic Gardening Club, a food waste composting program, and a recently launched waste vegetable oil project that will produce biodiesel for heating greenhouses and powering farm tractors.