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Local Harvest Dinner Celebrates Regions Agriculture

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Local Harvest Dinner Celebrates Regions Agriculture



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Local Harvest Dinner Celebrates Region's Agriculture

UNH Dining, Office of Sustainability Partner With Local Producers for Sept. 22 Meal

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The mussels *provencale* come from the Isles of Shoals, the tikka masala lamb is from Lee, the organic mesclun greens are harvested right on the University of New Hampshire campus. Even the bison chili is local, from American buffalo raised off Durham Point Road.

UNH's first-ever Local Harvest Dinner – a partnership of UNH Dining, local producers, and the UNH Office of Sustainability – celebrates local agriculture Thursday, Sept. 22 (4:30 – 7:30 p.m.) at Elements at Philbrook Dining Hall. The gourmet meal, offered to all students on the UNH meal plan, is open to the public (\$11 adults; \$5.50 youth under 13).

“Our guests will enjoy a delicious meal made with fresh food while they broaden their awareness of some of the benefits of supporting local agriculture,” said El Farrell, Food and Society Initiative program coordinator for the UNH Office of Sustainability. Significant among those benefits, she notes, are supporting local economies and maintaining the vibrant agricultural landscape for which New Hampshire is known.

The Local Harvest Dinner offers cuisine both exotic and familiar: From local cheeses, berries, and vegetables to farm-raised scrod and mussels cultivated off New Hampshire's coastline to locally raised free-range chicken, venison, and bison. “I hope our diners will be quite intrigued by what is produced right in the area,” said UNH Dining area manager Dave Hill, who forged relationships with several local producers for this event. A local partner, the Durham Marketplace, is supporting the dinner, as are the New Hampshire Farm to Restaurant Connection and the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (COLSA) at UNH.

While this Local Harvest Dinner is a first, the university's dining halls are no stranger to local products, said University Hospitality Services assistant director Rick MacDonald. “We buy everything we can from the campus,” he said, noting that Woodman Farm apples and vegetables from the Organic Garden Club are often on the menu. “We're very intentional in how we approach this aspect of our dining program. We try to support the state of New Hampshire and the region.”

The Food and Society (FAS) Initiative works to improve the health and well-being of community life through teaching, research, campus practices and extension that support sustainable, community-based food systems. As a project of the FAS, the Local Harvest Dinner is a part of an effort to increase awareness of and support for locally and regionally produced foods.

For more information about the Local Harvest Dinner, go to <http://www.sustainableunh.unh.edu>.