

Trailblazer: Union Hospital of Cecil County

Union Hospital of Cecil County is committed to purchasing local sustainable meat, poultry, and produce for its cafeteria and patient meals. Local farms have increased their acreage for produce, employed winter greenhouses for growing, and increased poultry flock size to meet the hospital's needs. Forty-nine percent of UHCC's meat and 100 percent of its beef is now purchased locally. Food waste is either composted or sent to an area hog farmer for feed.



UHCC's strategy for healthy foods has been to increase local sourcing for meats, poultry, vegetables and fruits. This involved obtaining local growers and producers for specific categories the hospital was trying to increase: beef, chicken, turkey, local produce, and fruits. The results for this past year indicate:

Fiscal Year 2011

Meat purchases—49% local

Vegetable and fruit purchases—14% local

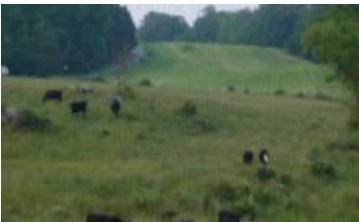
Compared to Fiscal Year 2010

Meat purchases—9% local

Vegetable and fruit purchases— 9% local



The goal of UHCC was to increase the amount of farms that practice sustainable agriculture practices, in the categories of meat, poultry, and produce. UHCC was able to cultivate relationships with local farmers to advance its initiatives; some farms have increased their acreage for produce as well as winter greenhouse growing, and others have increased meat options: one beef farmer is now raising chickens and hogs.



The volume of meat, poultry, and produce purchases that were transferred to a local source were significant, such that the current rate of purchasing is 100% local beef and close to 100% local chicken. We have been purchasing extra volumes during the local harvest and freezing for utilization through the fall and winter months.

UHCC also started composting food materials in March 2011. So far, Union has diverted 20,122 pounds of food waste in six months to a composting facility. For fiscal year 2010, the hospital diverted 22,000 pounds of food waste to a local hog farmer for feed.

UHCC also implemented a waste management program with a goal to increase the amount of recycled materials diverted from the landfill. In the past two years, recycling rates of total waste at the hospital have increased from 18% to 25%. Another goal of the waste management program was to reduce the amount of high cost medical waste. Through education and training, Union Hospital reduced its medical waste by 16% for calendar year 2010, and currently are reducing another 10% from last year.

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