UC San Diego

Working Collaboratively Across the Food System Improves Health at UC San Diego

UC San Diego

Working Collaboratively Across the Food System Improves Health at UC San Diego

Nothing brings people together across diverse cultures, departments and disciplines like food. We all need to eat, and healthy and affordable food is critical to our individual and community health.

This unifying force of food is embodied by **Eat Well San Diego**

This unifying force of food is embodied by Eat Well San Diego, a UC San Diego Healthy Campus Network (HCN) working group dedicated to increasing access to healthy and sustainable food, assessing and addressing food insecurity, and promoting good nutrition across the university. Members of Eat Well San Diego come from Dining, Family Medicine and Public Health, Facilities Management, Health System Nutrition Services, Sustainability, Student Affairs, and the student body. Eat Well San Diego blends the expertise of members in gardening, composting, hospitality, nutrition, and human and ecological health to achieve results across the food system, from sustainable procurement to health outcomes to food waste diversion.

This document spotlights UC San Diego campus and hospital system efforts to improve healthy food access, decrease hunger, and increase the environmental sustainability of food, from procurement through food waste reduction and diversion. Through collaboration, the needs of all campus community members are addressed. Eat Well San Diego focuses on campus food access and sustainability for main campus students, faculty and staff, and on food access and sustainability for hospital patients, providers and staff through collaboration and a synergy of efforts between UC San Diego Dining and UC San Diego Health.

VISIT THE UC SAN DIEGO
HEALTHY CAMPUS NETWORK AT
healthycampus.uscd.edu
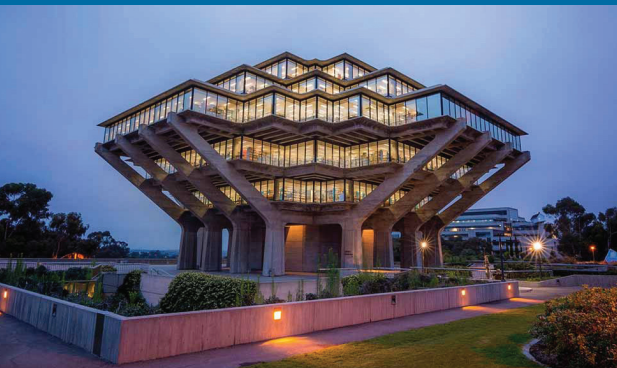
The mission of **UC San Diego Health** is "to deliver outstanding patient care through commitment to the community, groundbreaking research and inspired teaching. Leaders within the UC San Dieo Health understand it is increasingly clear that being a responsible environmental stewart is part of creating a healthier world, and is, in a sense, an extension of patient care."

▶ The mission of the **Healthy Campus Network (HCN)** is to "strengthen the focus on health and well-being at UC San Diego so that our diverse students, staff, faculty, patients, visitors, and volunteers can flourish." UC San Diego launched the HCN under the UC Office of the President's Global Food Initiative. As part of the UC-wide movement, the UC San Diego HCN is creating a strong, sustainable, and inclusive consortium of campus partners to make the university a healthier place to work, learn, and live. The UC San Diego HCN is comprised of over 100 members, facilitated by the Center for Community Health, and represents the diversity and richness of the campus community. Visit the UC San Diego Healthy Campus Network here: http://healthycampus.ucsd.edu.

▶ The mission of **UC San Diego Health** is "to deliver outstanding patient care through commitment to the community, groundbreaking research and inspired teaching. Leaders within UC San Diego Health understand it is increasingly clear that being a responsible environmental steward is part of creating a healthier world, and is, in a sense, an extension of patient care." UC San Diego Health is one of only two health systems nationally to receive the 2018 Sustainability Breakthrough Award from Cardinal Health Sustainable Technologies for the most significant improvement in sustainability efforts.

While the achievements noted below are commendable, there remain challenges to expanding UC San Diego's Eat Well accomplishments. Procurement is a challenge in San Diego County, even though the county boasts the largest number of small farms in the nation (https://www.sdfarmbureau.org/san-diego-agriculture) San Diego County is 4526 square miles which is larger in area than the combined states of Rhode Island and Delaware. San Diego County faces geographical limitations in sourcing of local produce with the Pacific Ocean to the west, an international border to the south and California's Central Valley the prime growing region located outside the 250 mile boundary to be considered locally grown. While a high percentage of the food UC San Diego purchases is locally grown (within 250 miles), it comes from Imperial, CA and Yuma, AZ counties rather than San Diego. The distance between the small growers

(farms under 10 acres) and the urban center is expansive. Much of San Diego County agriculture is dedicated to ornamentals (69% of the crops in San Diego County). The county is among the top ten producers of avocados, lemons, miscellaneous vegetables, tomatoes and oranges in the nation but makes up only 28% of crops in San Diego County (https://www.sdfarmbureau.org/top-crops).

Additional challenges to local procurement is that there is only one processing plant in San Diego located in the southern part of the county near the border. As a result, food grown in San Diego is shipped to centers outside the county for distribution oftentimes north of the county as the farmland in San Diego is primarily located in the northeastern part of the county. The food grown in San Diego County cannot always meet the demands of the large institutions in the county, resulting in a mismatch of need with available product. Furthermore, the vendors used by institutions purchase from growers larger in size and/or smaller growers cannot offer a price point that the vendor is interested in purchasing for the institutions they sell to in the urban areas.

A value that has emerged includes the health of the planet as a core consideration in the health of people and communities. Progressively more people are realizing that plant-based menus are healthier for not only people but also the environment. UC San Diego Dining and Health System procurement efforts are focused on increasing plant-based options to meet the growing demand from customers and to address a variety of sustainability goals. In addition, UC San Diego Health subscribes to "The Cool Food Pledge," a new platform designed to help facilities offer diners more plant-forward choices while collaboratively cutting food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030 from 2015 baseline data. Meeting standards for environmental sustainability, health, and nutrition is accomplished using a variety of strategies, including increasing the balance of plant-based options, along with reviewing procurement history to identify sourced food items that yield the highest levels of greenhouse gases, employing strategies to decrease utilization of those items, and monitoring the impact of those changes.
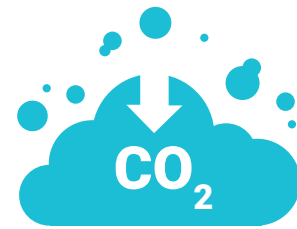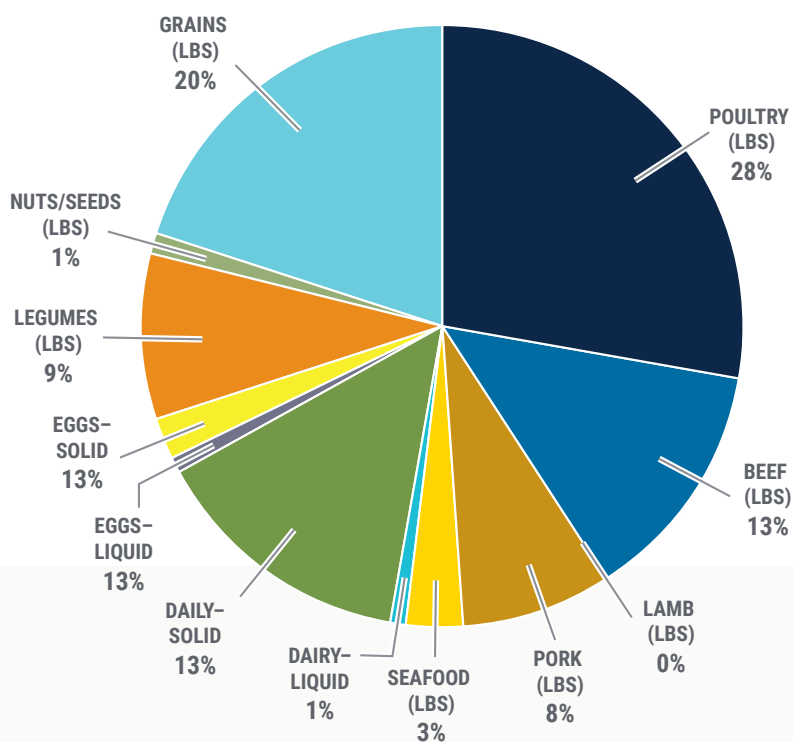

UC San Diego Health subscribes to "The Cool Food Pledge," a new platform designed to help facilities **offer diners more plant-forward choices** while collaboratively **cutting food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 25% by 2030** from 2015 baseline data.

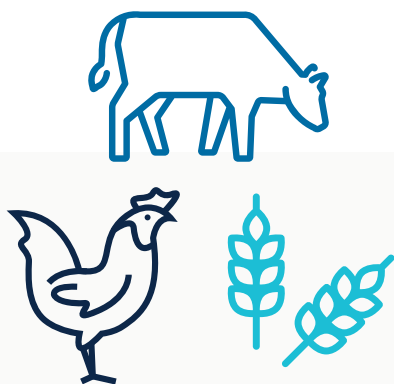# UC San Diego Dining Sustainability Accomplishments (Campus)

Plant-Based Menus

UC San Diego is one of 45 colleges and universities participating in the Menus of Change Initiative. This initiative seeks to make plant-focused, sustainable dining the centerpiece of the program. Menus of Change aims to demonstrate that changing menus is a powerful way to drive improvements in health and the planet. The pie chart below provides an overview of UC San Diego Dining product procurement in the second half of 2018.

Menus of Change aims to demonstrate that changing menus is a **powerful way to drive improvements in health and the planet**.

**UC San Diego Dining Product Procurement by Type
July – December 2018**

Pie chart:
- GRAINS (LBS) 20%
- POULTRY (LBS) 28%
- BEEF (LBS) 13%
- LAMB (LBS) 0%
- PORK (LBS) 8%
- SEAFOOD (LBS) 3%
- DAIRY–LIQUID 1%
- DAILY–SOLID 13%
- EGGS–LIQUID 13%
- EGGS–SOLID 13%
- LEGUMES (LBS) 9%
- NUTS/SEEDS (LBS) 1%

Purchasing and Procurement

As part of the UC Sustainable Practices Policy, "each campus and health location foodservice operation shall strive to procure 20% sustainable food products by the year 2020, while maintaining accessibility and affordability for all students and UC Health Location's foodservice patrons." UC San Diego Health has reached this goal early, while Dining is not far behind. Retail foodservice tenants are encouraged to meet the same procurement goal, though given the constraints of corporate contracts for national franchises, campuses can aggregate the purchases of all retail entities under the jurisdiction of a single operation (http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3100155/SustainablePractices and http://sustain.ucsd.edu/focus/food.html). To help meet this goal, UC San Diego Dining installed the 64 Degrees Tower Farm in August 2018. It generates approximately 200 pounds of fresh produce each month that is served 100 feet away at the 64 Degrees salad bar. In addition, UC San Diego sold more than $25,000 of locally sourced, hydroponically grown tomatoes in UC San Diego Markets last year. Finally, UC San Diego has been recognized as a Fair Trade Certified University and is committed to supporting Fair Trade. All coffees and teas are from ecoGrounds Coffee, a company that is certified Fair Trade and USDA Organic. All UC San Diego Dining restaurants and markets offer exclusively Fair Trade coffee, tea, sugar and at least one Fair Trade choice of ice cream and chocolate. As of fiscal year 2018, 19% of UC San Diego Dining food and beverage spending was on sustainable and local options, including items that are Fair Trade, USDA Organic and other third-party verified. Vendors in University Centers reported that 32% of their food and beverage spending was on local or sustainable items (https://ucop.edu/sustainability/_files/annual-reports/2018-annual-sustainability-report).

Food Recovery Efforts

Currently 44% of undergraduate and 26% of University of California graduate students have reported skipping meals to save money (UCUES 2016 and Graduate Student Well-being Survey 2016 https://www.ucop.edu/global-food-initiative/_files/food-housing-security.pdf). To address this challenge, UC San Diego Dining increases access to healthy food by accepting CalFresh electronic

"each campus and health location foodservice operation shall strive to procure **20% sustainable food products by the year 2020**, **while maintaining accessibility and affordability** for all students and UC Health Location's foodservice patrons."

UC San Diego Dining has donated more than **11.6 tons of recovered food** to the San Diego Rescue Mission.

benefit transfer (EBT) at two UC San Diego Marketplaces (Roger's and The Village Marketplace) and will be expanding to two more locations (Goody's and Earl's) soon followed by the Sunshine Market. To divert recovered edible foods from landfills, UC San Diego's Fresh and Full Food Transportation program (3FT) is a collaboration between the student organization the Food Recovery Network (FRN), The Hub Basic Needs Center (BNC), and the Center for Student Involvement (CSI). The program also diverts edible food waste to Urban Street Angels (USA), a local community-based organziation that serves transitional aged youth facing homelessness. In Fiscal Year 2018, FRN recovered almost three tons of food, including unsold, prepared food from Dining. The Triton Food Pantry receives frequent donations of a variety of fresh and non-perishable food of which they have distributed more than 15.5 tons to address food security challenges on campus. During university breaks and shutdowns (and where otherwise possible), UC San Diego Dining has donated more than 11.6 tons of recovered food to the San Diego Rescue Mission.

Paper and Plastic Reductions

UC San Diego Dining has significantly reduced the use of single-use paper and plastic service items by an estimated two-thirds by using reusable service-ware including plates, cups, bowls, and silverware.

Education

New allergen and lifestyle icons on all menu items help diner's select healthy meals.

Dietary Key

Vegan Menu Options	Vegetarian Menu Options	Wellness Menu Options	Contains Fish	Contains Shellfish	Contains Peanuts
Vegan Menu Options	Vegetarian Menu Options	Wellness Menu Options	Contains Fish	Contains Shellfish	Contains Peanuts

A Sustainable Dining page (https://hdh.ucsd.edu/dining/pages/Sustainable.html) highlights ongoing efforts and partnerships. In addition, a new dining "Choose to Reuse" marketing program targets students and guests, encouraging them to use and return all in-house china, cups, and cutlery, and promoting the use of reusable water bottles, bags, and straws.

On-Campus Gardens

UC San Diego has eleven community gardens, including one in Southeastern San Diego (http://sustain.ucsd.edu/involve/gardens.html). The gardens offer students, staff, faculty, and community members' space to grow food and native plants, as well as the opportunity to participate in Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) (Southeast San Diego). A planned food forest and orchard on campus will have a sustainability theme dedicated to the landscape and outdoor environment, and will contain a composting center, food forest, plant nursery, and recreation facilities that do not use power or water.

UC San Diego Health Nutrition Services Accomplishments (UC San Diego Hospitals)

Healthier Food Initiatives

The "Less Meat, Better Meat" initiative aims to decrease overall procurement and utilization of meat in the meals provided to patients and other customers. UC San Diego Health has revised recipes to decrease serving sizes of animal proteins and continues to add plant-based recipes to both patient and retail menus. In Medical Center Cafes, a plant-based option is served on the hot service line with the opportunity for customers to add meat to their meal at their discretion. In 2018, UC San Diego Health partnered with Key Green Solutions to help collect data on purchases from all UC San Diego Health food vendors, identifying local/sustainable purchases (Antibiotic-Free, Hormone Free, Fair Trade, etc.), and providing

11

UC San Diego has eleven community garden, including one in Southeastern San Diego.
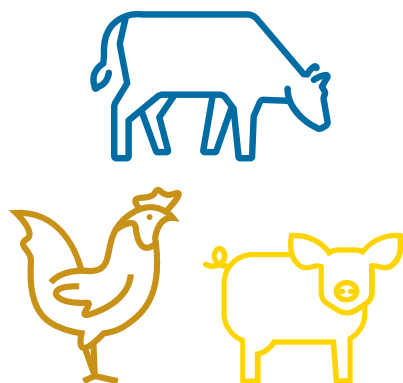
monthly reports to support course corrections when trends away from sustainable purchases are identified.
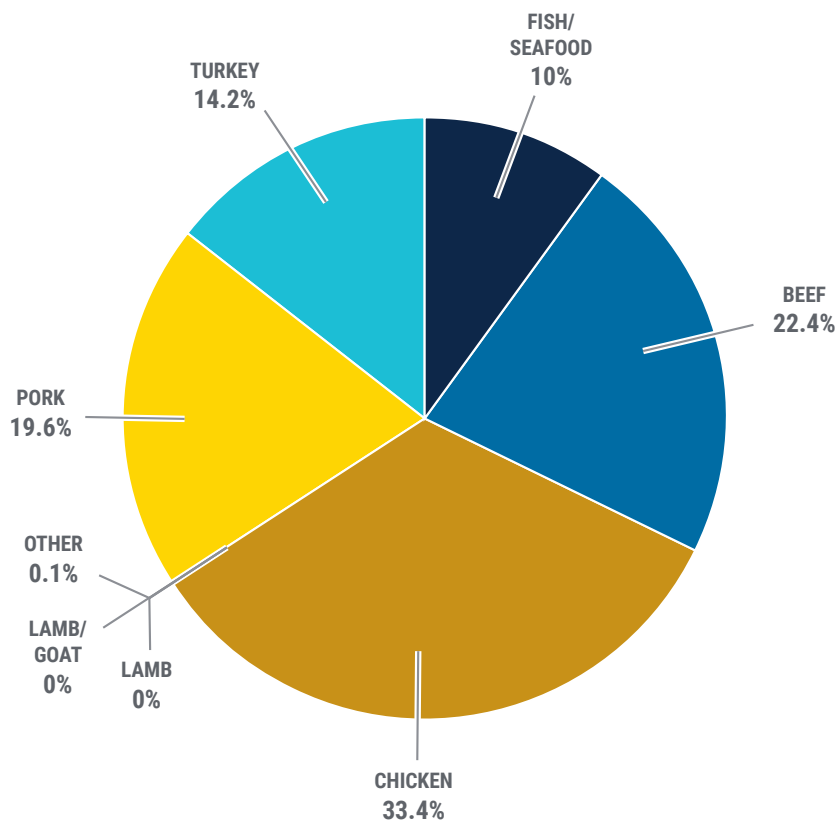
UC San Diego Health initiates sourcing via local seafood partners in 2017 to 2018, partnering with Santa Monica Seafood to source from local fishermen and **increased fish/seafood sourcing from 8.6% in FY18 to 10.0% in FY19** YTD December.

FY19 YTD December:
UCSD Health Spend Breakdown

UC San Diego Health initiated sourcing via local seafood partners in 2017 to 2018, partnering with Santa Monica Seafood to source from local fishermen and increased fish/seafood sourcing from 8.6% in FY18 to 10.0% in FY19 YTD December. The UC San Diego Health Executive Chef has creatively used by-catch products as well. Finally, the Executive Chef coordinates efforts to incorporate seasonal fruits and vegetables in menu development in patient services and retail operations. This practice has enabled the transfer of food dollars to other items such as antibiotic-free proteins and other local/sustainable products.

Cool Food Pledge

UC San Diego Health signed the Cool Food Pledge in October 2018

and is currently working to collect baseline data from 2017. The Cool Food Pledge is a collective agreement between UC San Diego Health and sister Medical Centers at UC Los Angeles, UC Davis and UC San Francisco. The Cool Food Pledge is a collaborative effort to decrease greenhouse gases (GHG) produced by the foods sourced and served in UC San Diego Health operations. The primarily goal is to decrease GHG from 2015 baseline by 25% in 15 years.

Paper and Plastic Reductions

UC San Diego Health has significantly reduced the use of single use paper and plastic ware. UC San Diego Health purchases certified compostable disposable paper and plastic product including paper straws and compostable to-go containers from World Centric.

# Collaborative Accomplishments

UC San Diego Health and UC San Diego Dining are proud of the accomplishments achieved through collaboration and synergy of efforts. When Health and Dining share resources, information, and best practices, sustainability is enhanced for both. For example, financial savings for both Health and Dining were realized when they worked together to procure produce from a single source.

Key initiatives include:

▶ Antibiotic-free proteins, and

▶ Minimizing food waste.

Antibiotic-Free Proteins

In the transition to antibiotic-free proteins, UC San Diego Health has taken the lead, participating in the "Healthy Foods in Healthcare" initiative of Health Care Without Harm since 2014. A key initiative goal is to increase procurement of animal proteins with Certified Responsible Antibiotic Use (CRAU) and to decrease procurement of animal proteins receiving non-therapeutic antibiotics. UC San Diego Health sources from several different poultry providers to
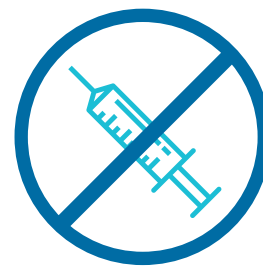
A key initiative goal of the "Healthy Foods in Healthcare" initiative of Health Care Without Harm is to **increase procurement of animal proteins with Certified Responsible Antibiotic Use** (CRAU) and to **decrease procurement of animal proteins receiving non-therapeutic antibiotics**.

Over 120 pounds per week of post-consumer compost have been collected and diverted from landfill.

Dining's pre-consumer compost program with Miramar Landfill diverted **over 172 tons of pre-consumer waste** in 2017 to 2018.

obtain antibiotic-free chicken breasts and to source antibiotic-free (sometimes grass-fed) beef products from third party certified vendors. More than 88,000 lbs. of antibiotic-free chicken and 24,000 lbs. of beef were sourced and accounted for more than 28% of total spending on animal proteins at UC San Diego Health. UC San Diego Health continues to add antibiotic-free proteins as they come to the market, and because of their reputation as a leader in this effort, UC San Diego Health has vendors reaching out as they develop new products.

Following the lead of UC San Diego Health, UC San Diego Dining began the transition to antibiotic-free chicken in September 2018. Currently 100% of all raw, unprocessed chicken and 46% of all chicken purchased by Dining is antibiotic-free.

Minimizing Food Waste

In the effort to minimize food waste, UC San Diego Dining has taken the lead. Diversion efforts include the reduction in single use paper and plastic items outlined above. In addition to its already successful pre-consumer composting program with the City of San Diego's Miramar Greenery, Dining has launched a post-consumer composting operation at 64 Degrees in partnership with a student-run garden on campus, Roger's Garden. Over 120 pounds per week of post-consumer compost have been collected and diverted from landfill. Additional programs are in place to capture post-consumer compost at Roots and UC San Diego Catering. Dining's pre-consumer compost program with Miramar Landfill diverted over 172 tons of pre-consumer waste in 2017 to 2018. Finally, more than 500 participants are using their G.E.T. Eco-Takeout Containers to take their meals to go at Pines and Roots, reducing food waste and limiting the amount of single-use plastics used.

Learning from the work and best practices of UC San Diego Dining, UC San Diego Health entered into a partnership with Resource Management Group (RMG), a San Diego vendor, to begin diverting organic waste from both medical centers. In 2017 to 2018 Hillcrest diverted 64.3 tons from local landfills, and La Jolla diverted 57.3 tons from local landfills. Further, UC San Diego Health partnered with UC San Diego Bannister House in 2018 to provide edible food from the

retail Hillcrest Café to visitors, serving those in need of meals and decreasing the volume of organic waste reaching local landfills. Most recently, UC San Diego Health launched the Leanpath (Food Waste Prevention) program at Hillcrest in February 2019 and on the La Jolla campus in May 2019. (UC San Diego Dining uses Foodpro from Aurora Inc. to do similar work). Leanpath helps operations to weigh food waste from production. The data collected will help improve production accuracy to decrease waste. UC San Diego Health collaborated with UC Campus Food Recovery Network, which is a student run group who picks up over-produce for unused food from the hospitals and delivers to homeless shelters in the city of San Diego. UC San Diego Health and UC San Diego Dining will continue to collaborate with food recovery partners to feed those in need.

In this synergy of effort, a combined 24 tons of food have been donated back to the student body.

24 TONS

In this synergy of effort, a combined **24 tons of food** have been donated back to the student body.

MORE INFORMATION CAN
BE FOUND AT

healthycampus.uscd.edu

AND

sustain.ucsd.edu/focus/food.html

Conclusion

UC San Diego Health and UC San Diego Dining have committed to increasing access to healthy food, assessing and addressing food insecurity, promoting good nutrition, and reducing the environmental footprint of their foodservice operations. Efforts have been particularly effective in the areas of minimizing food waste and reducing the carbon footprint of foods served, both through ongoing procurement efforts and through menu changes such as increasing the availability of plant-based menu options. Efforts to minimize food waste have contributed significantly to parallel efforts to combat food insecurity by diverting edible prepared foods to the campus food pantry as well as to community partners. While local procurement continues to be a structural challenge, UC San Diego Health and Dining are committed to maximizing resources and seeking vendors that support sustainability goals. UC San Diego Health and Dining are each making significant contributions to the health and sustainability of campus and community, with the most profound accomplishments stemming from their collaborative partnership as a result of Eat Well San Diego. More information can also be found at http://healthycampus.ucsd.edu/ and http://sustain.ucsd.edu/focus/food.html.