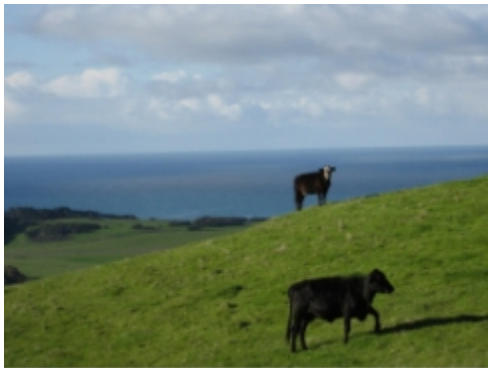


ARAMARK buys its own herd of grass-fed cattle for venue

Pilot program is convention center's latest sustainable food initiative

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Cattle graze along the California coastline on Hearst Ranch

ARAMARK Corporation has purchased a herd of 75 grass-fed cattle from certified sustainable Hearst Ranch to supply its catering operation at the Anaheim Convention Center.

The Philadelphia-based foodservice contract management firm, with sales of \$13.5 billion, said the purchase is expected to provide about 28,500 pounds of beef to the southern California facility, which it runs for the city of Anaheim, for four months starting in August.

“The flavor profile surpasses the conventional products,” said Otis Huemmer, executive chef for ARAMARK at the Anaheim Convention Center (ACC), a division of ARAMARK. “The rich flavor content of the grass-fed and finished beef is unique and is very evident in grilled or roasted dishes.”

As part of the pilot program, Hearst is managing ARAMARK at ACC’s 75 cattle – a mix of Hereford, Angus and Shorthorn breeds. All are grass-fed, free-range and hormone- and antibiotic-free. They are going to harvest this week.

Hearst is certified by Humane Farm Animal Care, which administers the Certified Humane label, and Food Alliance, which certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices as well as certified grass-fed operations.

“We’re using a local supplier to reduce our carbon footprint, the cattle are raised in a sustainable environment consistent with the benchmarks that we’ve established, and owning our own herd provides us greater control of the supply chain,” said Jim Tripp, ARAMARK at ACC general manager.

ARAMARK has partnered with Hearst - the nation’s largest single-source supplier of free-range, grass-fed and grass-finished beef – since 2004.

Brian Kenny, division manager at Hearst’s offices in San Francisco, told **Sustainable Food News** the deal took three years to complete. A purchase price was not disclosed.

"I have been pitching this idea for the past few years and it started to make sense to ARAMARK at ACC this year," Kenny said.

Kenny said Chef Huemmer had figured out how to work with the ends of the animal - the chuck the round and the ribs.

"So, it wasn't much of a stretch to get them to see the value in buying the rest of the animal, which in this case was all of the middle meats (ribeye, sirloin, striploin, tenderloin)," Kenny said.



Hearst is one of the largest cattle ranching operations on the California coast, and operates as part of the Sunical Land and Livestock division of Hearst Corporation, one of the nation's largest diversified media companies.

Hearst is comprised of: San Simeon Ranch, 80,000 acres in San Simeon, Calif. surrounding Hearst Castle -- built by William Randolph Hearst -- that maintains a 1,000-head base cowherd; and the 73,000-acre Jack Ranch, 60 miles east of San Simeon in Cholame, Calif., which maintains a base cowherd of 2,500 heads.

"There are intrinsic benefits for ARAMARK at ACC to be working with us," Kenny explained. "In terms of cost consistency, our price is a factor of constants like photosynthesis and solar energy and variables like insurance costs and overhead. However, the variables in the conventional business are largely tied to the cost of petroleum."

That means the finite supply of beef from the 75 animals is obtained at a fixed cost, he said.

Purchasing cattle is another sustainability first for the ACC. In 2004, it was the country's first convention center to become a full partner with the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch program by committing to source seafood without compromising species survival or the health of surrounding ecosystems.

All of the convention center's coffee comes from sustainable sources certified by the Rainforest Alliance.

The facility also uses local dairy farms for a selection of regional cheeses, area farms for fresh California produce and a local Temecula vineyard for its house wine.

Anaheim utilizes bulk condiment dispensing, post-consumer recycled napkins and biodegradable serviceware.

The convention center is also a Forest Stewardship Council partner committed to environmentally friendly office supplies sourcing and use.