

Makers of organic soup, sustainable flour featured on public school menu **Program supports local economy, reduces greenhouse gases**

by *Sustainable Food News*
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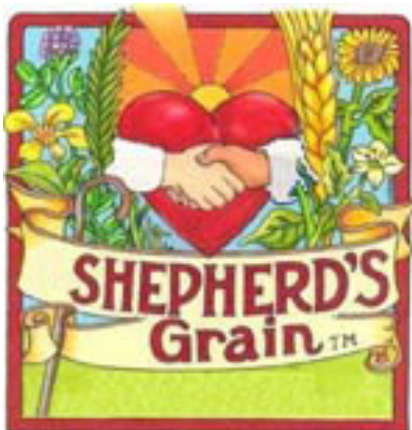
Kids in Portland, Ore., will be served organic creamy tomato soup and grilled cheese sandwiches made with certified-sustainable flour this month as part of the public school district's "Local Lunch" program.

The Portland Public School (PPS) District's program kicked off in October and is designed to offer cafeteria-goers a complete meal made with Oregon grown or manufactured products.

On March 18, the district will serve students Pacific Natural Foods' Organic Creamy Tomato Soup.

The Tualatin, Ore.-based company's natural and organic ingredients also undergo a proprietary Certified to the Source certification program, which works with suppliers to identify ingredient sources and track the history of each ingredient from seed to shelf.

The soup is served with grilled cheese sandwiches made with local Tillamook cheese and Shepherd's Grain flour, which is certified sustainable by Food Alliance.



Portland, Ore.-based Food Alliance certifies farms, ranches and food processors for sustainable agricultural and production practices such as safe and fair working conditions, reduction of pesticide use and toxicity, healthy and humane care for livestock, no genetically modified crops or livestock and no hormones or non-therapeutic antibiotics.

Over 300 farms and ranches in 23 U.S. states, Canada and Mexico are certified as sustainable by Food Alliance. These producers manage over 5.6 million acres of range and farm land, raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, mushrooms, dried beans and lentils, wheat, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

Annual sales of products certified under its comprehensive eco-labeling program hit \$100 million in 2007, and cumulative sales of Food Alliance-certified products reached \$350 million since the group's inception in 1998.

Kristy Obbink, director of nutrition services at PPS, said the community was asking for foods that were grown and produced locally in an effort to support the local economy and in an effort to reduce greenhouse gases.

“We’re still trying to choose kid-friendly food,” Obbink said in a statement. “It’s the same sorts of foods we might provide but with a twist.”