

REED COLLEGE

Parent newsletter

Cooking with a conscience

College cafeterias are stereotyped as domains of over-processed food products, mystery meats, and sugary cereals. But these days, in Reed's commons, a growing concern about where food comes from and how it is produced has sparked new partnerships between Reed's food service company, Bon Appétit, and the groups Food Alliance, Chef's Collaborative, and the Oregon Beef Coalition.

Mac Lary, Reed's general manager for Bon Appétit, explains that the company is becoming more socially and environmentally conscious.

"This company is distinguished from its competitors for its trust in real cooking. That's to say, we cook everything from scratch. We don't have executive managers, we have executive chefs. We don't use cycle menus, we use what's in season."

The Food Alliance, the Chefs Collaborative, and the Oregon Beef Coalition are all nonprofit organizations that promote sustainable agriculture by recognizing and rewarding farmers who produce food in environmentally and socially responsible ways, and educating consumers and others in the food system about the benefits of sustainable agriculture.



Since 1998 Food Alliance has certified more than 160 farms and ranches that have met strict criteria for soil and water conservation, pesticide reduction, wildlife habitat protection, and safe and fair working conditions. The Chefs Collaborative is a national network that promotes sustainable cuisine by celebrating the joys of local, seasonal, and artisanal ingredients and cooking.

With a regional office in Portland, Bon Appétit serves 160,000 meals a week in the Northwest and purchases at least 80,000 cases of produce a year.

Bon Appétit vice president Mark Swenson says, "When we got together with Food Alliance, it quickly became clear that the leadership position they have carved out across the country in sustainable agriculture—both in certification and marketing—is a perfect fit with our mission: serving our customers food that's good for them and the planet."