

Sustainable food certifier signs on first 'certified partner farm'

Dickinson College farm helps educate community on sustainable agriculture practices

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Sustainable food certifier Food Alliance has signed on its first "certified partner farm," described as a farm committed to sustainability and existing for an educational, research or charitable purpose.

Dickinson College operates a 50-acre, certified-organic farm program in Boiling Springs, Pa., that supports biodiversity, promotes sustainable land management practices and grows food for the Dickinson College community.

The farm's Food Alliance-certified fruits and vegetables are available through their Campus Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, campus dining as well as for sale at Carlisle's producer-only market, Farmers on the Square.

"Food Alliance certification proves an operation is on the cutting edge of socially and environmentally responsible farming practices," said Scott Exo, executive director of Food Alliance. "In partnership with Dickinson, we look forward to increasing awareness about sustainability in food and agriculture through their highly regarded educational offerings."

Third-party certifier Food Alliance has certified 384 farms, ranches and food processors in 27 states - raising beef, lamb, pork, dairy products, grains, legumes, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables - for sustainable agricultural and production practices.

These include 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.

The certification requires continuous improvement in social and environmental management practices.

Businesses that meet Food Alliance's standards, as determined by a third-party site inspection, are allowed to use the non-profit's green eco-label to claim social and environmental responsibility, which differentiates products and can strength brands.

The criteria, process and tools used for Food Alliance certification are especially valuable to farms that educate students, farmers and other stakeholders about environmentally and socially responsible farming practices.

Food Alliance Certified partner farms pay only the cost of inspection. Annual certification licensing fees are waived.