

**A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR BROWN UNIVERSITY TO BECOME A MORE
ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN BUILDING A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM**

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1. WHEREAS, including transportation costs, it takes an average of 10 calories of fossil fuel energy to produce 1 calorie of food energy in the United States¹;
2. WHEREAS, on average, conventionally-produced fruits and vegetables travel over one thousand miles between being harvested and being sold, while food from local sources has traveled 27 times fewer miles than food bought at a super-market²;
3. WHEREAS, workers at large-scale factory farms “are at high risk for fatal and nonfatal injuries, work-related lung diseases, noise-induced hearing loss, skin diseases, and certain cancers associated with chemical use”³;
4. WHEREAS, factory farms often bring down local property values with the intense odors they emit⁴, while small farms re-invest more money into local economies by purchasing feed, seed and other materials from local businesses⁵;
5. WHEREAS, family farmers have a vested interest in preserving and nurturing the land and communities in which they live and make their living;
6. WHEREAS, factory farms produce over 335 million tons of manure annually⁶, which are stored for extended periods in large tanks to decompose and emit hazardous gases including hydrogen sulfide and ammonia, which negatively impact the health of animals, workers, community members, and the environment⁷;
7. WHEREAS, this vast quantity of manure also accounts for 20% of anthropogenic methane, a greenhouse gas over 20 times more effective at trapping heat than carbon dioxide⁸;
8. WHEREAS, factory farm wastes, even when reused as fertilizer, are so plentiful that much of the nutrient cannot be absorbed into the soil⁹ and instead runs off into bodies of water where it promotes algae blooms, or else must be shipped to neighboring factory farms using further fossil fuels;
9. WHEREAS, smaller farms can more efficiently and effectively reuse their comparatively smaller quantities of animal waste;
10. WHEREAS, compared to non-local food, local food requires fewer or no preservatives, and does not lose nutrients due to extended transportation and shelf time¹⁰;
11. WHEREAS, at least 300 other colleges and universities already have college farms, fair trade initiatives, or farm-to-cafeteria programs¹¹;

¹ Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 183.

² Rich Pirog, “Checking the Food Odometer: Comparing Food miles for Local Versus Conventional Produce Sales in Iowa Institutions” (Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, 2003).

³ US Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Agricultural Workers” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006).

⁴ Joseph Herriges, et al., “Living with Hogs in Iowa: The Impact of Livestock Facilities on Rural Residential Property Values” (Center for Agricultural and Rural Development, Iowa State University, 2003).

⁵ Jan Flore, et al., “Social and Community Impacts” in *Iowa Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations Air Quality Study* (Environmental Health Sciences Research Center, University of Iowa, 2003), 148.

⁶ USDA Agricultural Research Service, “FY2005 Annual Report Manure and Byproduct Utilization” (2006).

⁷ Farm Safety Association, “Manure Gas Dangers” (Ontario: Farm Safety Association, Inc., 2002), 1.

⁸ US Environmental Protection Agency, “Agriculture,” in *Inventory of US Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990-2004* (Washington, DC: US EPA, 2006), 7.

⁹ Kate Clancy, “Greener Pastures: How Grass-fed Beef and Milk Contribute to Healthy Eating” (Cambridge, MA: Union of Concerned Scientists, 2006), 14-15.

¹⁰ Helena Norberg-Hodge, et al., *Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2002).

12. WHEREAS, 50% of meals served at peer institution Yale University are locally grown¹²;
13. WHEREAS, 10% (\$500,000) of the food budget of peer institution Iowa State University is spent on local food¹³;
14. WHEREAS, American colleges and universities form a significant part of the national demand for food, spending over \$4 billion on food each year¹⁴;
15. WHEREAS, Brown Dining Services spends over \$20 million on food and related costs each year¹⁵, and can use this market leverage to make significant differences in the food systems in which Brown University chooses to participate;
17. WHEREAS, involved students have been working together with members of Brown Dining Services (BDS), who share their passion for just and sustainable food but find themselves with limited resources to pursue these common goals;
18. WHEREAS, Vice President for Campus Life Margaret Klawunn has signaled her support of the goals put forth by the Real Food Challenge (RFC) and BDS, and has agreed to request that the University Resources Committee (URC) financially support their implementation;
19. WHEREAS, programs such as Community Harvest and the Sustainable Food Initiative garden have proven to be popular and successful ways of bringing just and sustainable food to Brown, as has the Farmer's Market, which attracts hundreds of Brown community members every week;
20. WHEREAS, over 1,300 Brown University students have signed the Real Food petition, signaling campus-wide demand for increasing the amount of local, organic, fairly-traded, and sustainable food available in Brown's dining halls;
21. WHEREAS, Brown University can and should be a leader in food responsibility and, by acting as soon as possible, will encourage other Universities to follow its lead;
22. BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Undergraduate Council of Students (UCS) supports the objectives of the RFC, namely, 1) to increase purchases of local, organic, fairly-traded, and sustainable food by 20% of total food budget over 5 years, 2) to employ a team of 8 BDS student interns, and 3) to create a University-wide Food Systems Working Group to evaluate Brown's current participation in the global food system, develop and propose a plan of action to increase Brown's participation in a just and sustainable food system, delegate the authority and resources necessary to complete these projects in a timely fashion, and issue a yearly report to the Brown community assessing the progress of the initiative;
23. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UCS urges President Simmons, The President's Cabinet, the URC, and the Brown Corporation to enact and begin funding as soon as possible, and at latest by the end of FY2009, the goals of the RFC;
24. BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the UCS directs the undergraduate representatives to the URC to advocate to the URC for the full implementation and funding of the RFC goals; and
25. BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the UCS requests a formal response to the RFC goals from President Simmons no later than March 1, 2009.

¹¹ "The Situation," in *About*, <http://realfoodchallenge.org/about> (accessed 7 October, 2008).

¹² Interview with Yale University Dining Services, 19 September 2008.

¹³ Interview with Iowa State University Dining Services, 19 September 2008.

¹⁴ "What We Can Do," in *About*, <http://realfoodchallenge.org/about> (accessed 7 October 2008).

¹⁵ Interview with Brown University Dining Services.