Food, Farm, and Sustainability at Hampshire College: Updates after the Third Year of the Intensive Summer Course, Plus Other New Developments in Expanding Food and Farm Programs at Hampshire.

Abstract:
This summer, 2014, Hampshire College completed its third Food, Farm, and Sustainability Institute (FFSI), an interdisciplinary academic program focusing on food production and sustainable agriculture. In this six-week, eight-credit course, students learn around the country take classes with faculty and also gain hands-on experience at the Hampshire College Farm. Here we will provide an update on this year's course.

In addition, Hampshire is expanding its food and farm programs in general, including a new dining service provider, Bon Appetit, with a goal to obtain as much as possible of our food locally up to 100% of non-imports. We plan to purchase much more of our own food (e.g., tomatoes and yogurt will be early projects), collaborate with area farms, and initiate more student and faculty research projects, daily farm chores, and independent student groups. We will note problems that arise with integrating food and agriculture with production, including academic course work, student and faculty research, and the differences in farm and academic seasons (e.g., fewer students in the summer).

We seek to create a learning community where students work closely with faculty, staff, and alumni to help develop an integrative learning experience in agriculture and food systems, and challenge students to critically assess conventional, organic, and local agricultural practices, including our own, through a multidisciplinary framework.

Food, Farm, and Sustainability Institute
We sought to address the following objectives through a variety of approaches, including academic course work, daily farm chores, research projects, cooperative living, and exposure to many different perspectives: introduce students through academic course work and on-farm experiences to the fundamentals of sustainable, organic, and local agricultural practices, and create a learning community where students work closely with faculty, staff, and alumni to help develop an integrative learning experience in agriculture and food systems, and challenge students to critically assess conventional, organic, and local agricultural practices, through a multidisciplinary framework.

Outline of Course:
Each week of the program has a thematic focus, and faculty members direct representatives of the theme through lectures, student projects, and experiential learning opportunities. Participants include students from American universities, visiting exchange students from Animal Agricultural College in China. Students spend 2-3 hours every day working on the Hampshire College Farm, with others tasked to collect data on student's back.-

The FFSI culminates in a research project, which is 30% of their effort in the course. For projects have been diverse, including "Composting for Hampshire College", "Sustainable Purchasing Guide for Dickinson College", "Sustainable Beekeeping", "Understanding the Farm bill", and "A Sustainable Food System for New York City".

Weedguard Trial
A students and farm interns worked with Brian Schultz to develop a weed control method in a weed guard, a new paper-based sheet mulch used to control weeds. It was applied to a control area and paired as the stops, comparisons were made between standard traditional sheet mulch and the Weedguard trial, 15% of the biodegradable sheet mulch can alleviate pest pressure.

Design and fabrication of pastured chicken pens (picture right)
In response to community, the college would like to provide at least all eggs to the campus, the FFSI students and farm interns worked with Cindy Gilchrist from Finger Lakes Market Place to design and build a chicken pen that is initially used to pursue the Certified Humane standards (pink pictured below). Students also used this experience as an exercise in a mixed budgeting process, which included direct sales as well as CSA models.

The Healthy Food Transition
Launched in 2013, Hampshire's Sustainability Initiative builds upon the College's strong foundation of forward-thinking decision-making. The Healthy Food Transition, a component of the Initiative, aims to change the enterprise of producing, preparing, consuming, and managing food on campus, using food as a means to teach students communicative skills, experimental and social skills, and engage with the surrounding community.

Partnership with Bon Appetit
• Working with Bon Appetit to advance goals of Healthy Food Transition, through targeted events, local sourcing, and community outreach.

Hampshire’s new Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide, the College has specific guidelines to strive towards. By providing Bon Appetit with maximum support in the environmental, social, and economic connections within communities and support the health, human rights, and economic security of the people producing, preparing, and feeding the food.

This year, Bon Appetit increased sales from the farm to the dining commons by 25%.

Center for New England Food and Agriculture
Using the College's land, curricular innovation, and academic and farming expertise, the Center will be a collaborative hub for members of the agricultural community and for the College in general.

We received two grants totaling nearly $300,000 from the Lydia B. Stokes Foundation and the Henry P. Kendall Foundation to support collaborative faculty research programs, sustainable agriculture opportunities, and student internships and research projects. The Center also advances Hampshire College's goal of sourcing nearly 100% of locally sourced food.

Community Supported Agriculture: founded by students in 1998, the college CSA now has over 250 members and serves the campus dining hall.

Maple Syrup: Eggs, and More
The farm is home to cows, pigs, goats, a ram, a llama, 50,000 bees, and a flock of 200 laying hens. The farm produces and sells maple syrup, honey, eggs, and meat to the campus dining hall.

Student Groups and Community Garden:
Several small groups work with the farm such as the Growing Farmers Collective, Orchard Team, Local Foods, Mixed Nuts Food Crop, and Community Garden, which was recently awarded $1,500 for renovations.

Academics:
Students at Hampshire use the farm as a hub for investigating the intellectual, political, and scientific issues surrounding local food production. Recent courses at Hampshire include with lieu of: Agriculture, Ecology and Society, Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Farming; Agriculture and Human Health; Who You Farming: Exploring How Class, Race, Gender, and Sexuality Intersect with Agriculture, and more.

Internships and Work-Study Opportunities:
Students and volunteers are responsible for most of the day-to-day operations of the farm. Student interns funded by the Varney Foundation researched agricultural practices with the local agricultural community to adapt practices for college agricultural production. This summer, two students funded by Lydia B Stokes and Kendall Foundations are researching seasonal local food economy and flavor of cheese production.

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Food, Farm, and Sustainability Blog: sites.hampshire.edu/ffs
• Documents achievements in the Healthy Food Transition, and provides information about the program to the community.