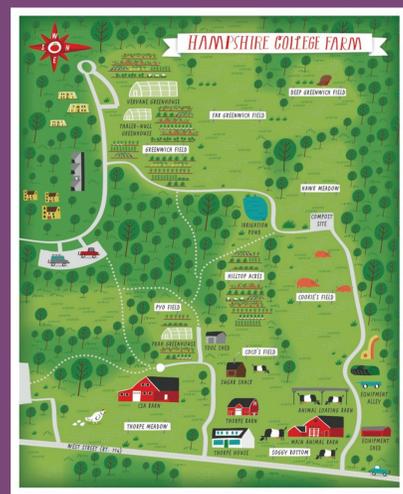


Food, Farm, and Sustainability at Hampshire College:

Update after the Third year of the Intensive Summer Course, Plus Other New Developments in Expanding Food and Farm Programs at Hampshire.

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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 from 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 FFSI.

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 produce much more on our own farm (e.g., tomatoes and yogurt will be early projects), collaborate with area farms, and initiate more small garden and orchard plots elsewhere on campus. We will discuss how we include education with production, including academic course work, student and faculty research projects, daily farm chores, and independent student groups. We'll note problems that arise such as how production goals can conflict with student projects and labor, budget limitations, 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.



Top Left to Right: A student farmer feeds a fresh picked radish to Austin, Hampshire's beloved guard llama; FFS students designed and constructed mobile chicken housing that allows the birds to enjoy fresh pasture while protecting them from hawk predation; The student farm crew harvesting blueberries for the campus dining hall.

Bottom Left to Right: FFS students clean the animal pens alongside the summer farm crew; FFS students preparing transplants with kaolin clay, an organic pesticide; The summer farm crew staking tomatoes.

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 fundamental issues in ecological-focused, sustainable agriculture; Create a learning community where students work with faculty, staff and alumni to have 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.

Our analyses of student assessments and learning outcomes suggest that many of the objectives were met. In particular, on-farm experiences and communal living were effective additions to the academic program. However, strengthening the links between the curricular and co-curricular components of the Institute may yield better learning outcomes in the future.



Outline of Course:

Each week of the program has a thematic focus, and faculty members direct exploration of the topics through lectures, discussion groups, and experiential learning opportunities. Participants included students from American universities, including exchange students from Anhui Agricultural College in China. Students spend 2-3 hours every day working on the Hampshire College Farm, with afternoons dedicated to academic topics.

The FFS Institute culminates in a research project, which is 30% of their effort in the course. Final projects have been diverse, including "Composting plan for Hampshire College", "Sustainable Purchasing Guide for Dickinson College", "Sustainable Bee Keeping", "Unfettering the Farm Bill", and "A Sustainable Food System for New York City".



Weedguard Trial

FFS students and farm interns worked with Brian Schultz and Nancy Hanson to conduct a field trial of WeedGuard, a new paper-based sheet mulch used to block weeds. Using cucumbers and squash as the crops, comparisons were made between standard methods and the WeedGuard, to test if the biodegradable sheet mulch can alleviate pest pressure.

Design and fabrication of pastured chicken pens (pictured right)

In support of an increase in the number of layer hens, sized to provide nearly all eggs to the campus, the FFS students and farm interns worked with Cindy Gill and Shannon Nichols to design and fabricate pastured chicken pens, pursuant to the Certified Humane standards (pen pictured below). Students also engaged with an enterprise budgeting process, which included direct sales as well as CSA models.

The Farm at Hampshire College

The Hampshire Farm encompasses 15 acres of vegetable fields and 65 acres of pasture and hay and serves as both a working farm and a thriving educational center dedicated to educating future generations of healthy, ethical food producers and consumers.



Academics:

Students at Hampshire use the farm as a hub for investigating the intellectual, political, and scientific issues surrounding food production. Recent courses at Hampshire include such titles as: Agriculture, Ecology and Society; Sustainable Agriculture and Organic Farming; Agriculture and Human Health; Who's Your Farmer? 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 daily operation of the farm. Student interns funded by the Vervane Foundation researched avenues for integration with the local agricultural community to advance local food production. This summer, two students funded by Lydia B Stokes and Kendall Foundations are researching local food economy and terroir of cheese production.

Community Supported Agriculture:

Founded by students in 1992, the campus CSA now has over 200 members and sells 50 shares to 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 300 laying hens. The farm produces and sells maple syrup, honey, eggs, and meat to the campus dining hall.

Student Groups and Community Garden:

Several student groups interface with the farm such as the Growing Farmers Collective, Orchard Team, Local Foods, Mixed Nuts Food Coop, and Community Garden Group, which was recently awarded \$1500 for renovations.

The Healthy Food Transition



Launched in 2012, 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, communicate values, experiment with new models of food systems that solve problems, influence our peers, and serve our 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 toward when procuring food that minimizes negative impacts on the environment; strengthens connections within communities; and supports the health, human rights, and economic security of the people producing, preparing, and eating 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 Five College consortium.

- 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 apprenticeships, student internships and research projects, and cross-institutional initiatives that will also advance Hampshire College's goal of sourcing nearly 100% of food locally.
- Partnered with Holyoke Community College and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, to submit a National Science Foundation, Advanced Technology Education (NSF-ATE) proposal, "Application of Clean Energy Technology to Sustainable Agriculture Practice". The grant will include funding for clean energy infrastructure and course development, and will foster collaboration across the institutions.
- This year, there were 15 events related to food and agriculture at Hampshire including the annual Food, Farm, and Sustainability dinner with Gary Hirschberg, Brian Donahue, and Maise Ganzler.
- Curricular innovations include 11 division III thesis projects, 22 courses, from 2012-2014, and the 3rd annual FFS Institute



Top: Bon Appetit staff prepping fresh ingredients from the Hampshire College Farm.
 Below: An early fall harvest for the campus CSA.

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.