



Local Foods Go To College - Pride of the Prairie

The University of Minnesota, Morris is a founding partner in the **Pride of the Prairie Local Foods Initiative**. Through work with **Pride of the Prairie**, people at the Morris campus:

- eat great food grown by people we know.
- spend our food dollars locally - investing in family farms and our prairie home.
- strengthen a sustainable local food system, with regional and national impact.
- reduce the miles our food travels – for fresh nutritious food and energy savings.
- study, work, and learn in partnerships that build community.



Pride of the Prairie is

A **BRAND** that identifies the Upper MN River Valley region and its local sustainable healthy foods.

An **EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT** to help people understand food systems and to make ethical and sustainable choices.

An **INITIATIVE** that is supporting and developing a local sustainable food system.

A **COLLABORATION** of partners representing diverse parts of a food system working together to advance local foods.

Pride of the Prairie prideoftheprairie.org is a collaborative effort of the University of Minnesota (the Morris campus, West Central Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, West Central Research and Outreach Center, and University of Minnesota Extension), Sodexo Campus Services, Land Stewardship Project, Sustainable Farming Association, Morris Prairie Renaissance, Pomme de Terre Food Coop, Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance, area farmers and the Upper Minnesota River Valley community.

The initiative began in Spring 2001 with a new vision for the prairie:

- Morris Prairie Renaissance Project's community visioning process (a multi-year Blandin Foundation funded effort) identified a local foods initiative as asset building priority.
- Morris administrators re-bidding the campus dining services management contract asked the next management company to serve local foods: *"The Contractor shall give first preference to products purchased from community based family farmers (to include organic produce) when the product meets menu requirements and price expectations."*
- The new University of Minnesota West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership made a local foods initiative one of its first priorities, funding the Land Stewardship Project to lead the initiative and convene interested community members and groups.

Seeds for the first local foods initiative on a University of Minnesota campus were sown. Today the program is one of the longest running local foods efforts in Minnesota higher education.

Eating local food...

Sodexo Campus Services, the nation's largest provider of campus dining services was selected to manage Morris's student dining, café, and catering programs in Spring 2001. Sodexo has been "eager to work with the University to identify ways to support local suppliers, and especially, local family owned farms." Inspired by their work at Morris, Sodexo Campus Services is providing leadership in bringing local foods to other campuses in Minnesota and the Midwest – in partnership with Food Alliance Midwest. Food Alliance Midwest recognized Sodexo Campus Services with a partnership award in 2005.

.... and the systems change work to make it easy and sustainable.

Pride of the Prairie is working to build a sustainable local food system. Early farm to college pilots showed quick results that could not be sustained over time. More recent programs showed success in self-managed dining service programs or by working outside food management company systems. Pride of the Prairie focuses on system development and capacity building for a sustainable, just program. A dedicated group of collaborators (farmers; college students, faculty, staff and administrators; leaders in local, regional and national organizations; Sodexo leaders; food distributors; and others) are actively engaged in systems change work. Together, Pride of the Prairie "Foodies" are bringing good food, locally grown and raised, from our prairie soil to our tables.

Campus events and opportunities

Morris's Pride of the Prairie Fall Feast and Spring Local Foods Meals feature delicious locally grown foods in a seasonal menu. With great food, music, and more, these tasty dinners highlight the abundance and benefits of locally grown food. Serving 500-700 campus and community diners each semester since Fall 2002, the dinners earn rave reviews – "WOW - deeleeeshus!"

Tuesday, October 1, 2008 and Tuesday, February 17, 2009. Serving 4:45 – 7:00 p.m., Food Services Building

Morris's Pride of the Prairie Farmers Market – Growing from a 1998 Rural Sociology project, area farmers provide meats, cheeses, vegetables, flours, flax, lentils, honey, and more for purchase.

Tuesday, October 14, 2008 and Tuesday, February 17, 2009. 1:00 – 4:30 p.m., Oyate Hall, Student Center.

Dining every day - Turtle Mountain Café and Dining Services include local and regional foods on their menus regularly - maybe not every day depending on the season, but as close as we can get.

Service Learning: Regional/Sustainable Agriculture Initiative matches academic course goals with community needs. Student teams from Photography, Writing and Sociology courses travel to area farms, interview farmers and take photos. Photos (like those below) and stories are given to farmers for their use, displayed at the local foods dinner and on permanent display in the local community.

Student opportunities - internships, fellowships, directed studies, organization projects, volunteering.

Local Food Guides - Find 100 area farms through the Pride of the Prairie local food guide.



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MORRIS

A renewable, sustainable education.

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