

Eye on the Environment: Organic Meal Day at UPEI

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Contributor

Are you looking for something a little healthier in your diet? Are the fries and pizza starting to get to you (and your waist line)? Want to help support "Farmer Joe" down the road? Well maybe it's time you tried a little organic.

This Thursday, March the 3rd, the PEI Certified Organic Producers Coop, Chartwells and the Energy Awareness Committee have combined their efforts to present students and staff with a mouth watering meal of Organic Vegetable Stew served with a biscuit. Mmmmm, just like your Mom used to make. The organic meal will be served during lunch at both the AVC cafeteria and the Student Union cafeteria and will be available at \$4 a bowl, including taxes.

Over the last decade or so, people have started to make organic food a bigger part of their lifestyle. For food to be certified as organic, it must have been produced in accordance with specific organic standards, like no synthetic fertilizers or growth hormones, as established by a certifying agency. Organic food is not just veggies and tofu, you can also get organic chicken, pasta, milk, cheese and a growing number of other foods.

Chartwells' Food Director, Andy Murray, didn't hesitate to support

the idea of preparing an organic meal for the UPEI campus, "We as a food service provider are aware that the interest in organic foods is growing, so I think this would be a great test project. We, at Chartwells, are always interested in supporting local suppliers."

So why should you try to eat local organic food more often? Not only are you eating food which is healthier, but you will help reduce green house gas emissions since the Island organic food does not have to travel here from California via a transport truck. You can find it in your local grocery store or the Farmer's Market. You will also be helping to support local farmers and their families. Island organic farmers must also perform sustainable farming practices which makes organic food healthier for the environment. These practices help to keep our soil healthier to grow food, our water cleaner to drink and our air fresher to breath.

If you haven't tried organic food before, come out this Thursday and give it a shot. And if you already make organic food a part of your lifestyle, make sure you come out and show Chartwells that you want healthier food in our campus cafeterias. By choosing locally produced organic

UPEI Researchers Address Gender Issues at International Fisheries Conference

Researchers from the University of Prince Edward Island (UPEI), together with colleagues and students from the University of the South Pacific (USP), were prominent participants in The Global Symposium on Gender and Fisheries which took place in Penang, Malaysia, recently. UPEI and USP have been working together to train South Pacific fisheries researchers and support their research on gender issues in small-scale fisheries.

"Women are actively engaged in harvesting, processing and selling fish, both for family food and domestic markets, plus they are integral supports for men's commercial and export oriented fisheries," notes Dr. Irene Novaczek, Director of the Institute of Island Studies at UPEI, "yet women's work, although critical to food security and community well-being, is rarely acknowledged or documented."

Under the direction of Dr. Jean Mitchell and Dr. Novaczek of UPEI, and Dr Joeli Veitayaki of USP, Pacific researchers from Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu documented the critical roles women have in modern fisheries, and how gender roles have changed over time. Several of these studies were showcased in the Global Gender and Fisheries Symposium. Novaczek

presented three papers. One told the story of Lelepa Island in Vanuatu. On this island, fisheries are severely depleted. Efforts to manage and conserve marine resources have met with limited success, in part because women and youth, who are active fishers, have no role in public decision-making. A second paper, co-authored by Novaczek and Mitchell, discussed how important it is to reject stereotypes and analytical processes that reinforce discrimination against women and perpetuate the view that women's work is unimportant. In a third paper, Novaczek looked at edible and medicinal marine plants as resources for rural women's small business development in the Pacific.

Novaczek reports that academics from all over Asia and the Pacific have shown interest in UPEI's unique Master of Arts in Island Studies Program. "I hope that international exposure such as this will lead to exciting new collaborations with island researchers in Asia and the South Pacific," she notes. "In the recent tsunami, at least one university marine station in that region was heavily damaged. Tragically, a bright young marine researcher from the Andaman Islands is among the dead. The Institute of Island Studies will be looking for



Tip of the Week

Saving a Watt... Means a Lot

> When buying a new appliance, choose an energy-efficient one. A 2002 model EnergyStar qualified refrigerator uses less than half the electricity of a unit built ten years ago, and can reduce your greenhouse gas emissions by 220 pounds each year.

Check us out at www.upei.ca/energyawareness