

Addressing the interests of a growing student food movement, Sodexo provides a larger window on the sources of the foods they provide on campus



Gaithersburg, Md. April 4, 2013 — Amidst growing demands from college students for university leadership in sustainable, local food systems, today [Sodexo](#), a leader in Quality of Life Services, and the [Real Food Challenge](#), the largest student food justice organization in the nation, jointly announced an agreement that advances supply chain transparency on Sodexo-contracted campuses.

The agreement puts in place a rigorous and comprehensive set of standards, defined by the [Real Food Calculator](#), for judging the social responsibility and sustainability of Sodexo’s vendors and food producers. The assessment tool, developed by Real Food Challenge student researchers and associated food experts, lays out four key criteria areas for evaluating ‘real food’ – local & community-based, fair, ecologically sound and humane. By using the Real Food Calculator standards, Sodexo aligns itself with the most progressive metric for institutional food service.

The agreement further sets up a process for students to collaborate with Sodexo managers, collecting and analyzing purchasing data using the Real Food Calculator’s web-based application and tracking tool. The resulting statistics will be used to demonstrate actual purchases of ‘real food’ and new opportunities for increasing them.

With the Real Food Calculator, Sodexo will provide an unprecedented level of access and information for students and universities—allowing them to better advance their real food goals. It also demonstrates Sodexo’s collaborative approach in addressing the interests of a growing student food movement and supporting academic inquiry into institutional food systems.

“Transparency and sustainability go hand-in-hand. Increasing transparency is something we want to model for this generation of interested consumers and for our industry. Working with the Real Food Challenge is great way to do just that,” said Sodexo spokesperson, Stephen Cox.

After three years of pilot testing, the release of the Real Food Calculator represents an exciting innovation in the field of institutional food systems and sustainability. Food service professionals and interested consumers—be they in the higher education, healthcare or the corporate sector—now have the ability to perform detailed assessments of the food in their cafeterias and see their ‘real food’ purchasing grow over time.

Determined to positively impact local communities and protect the environment, Sodexo and Real Food Challenge are fully committed to promoting and advancing a more sustainable and transparent food system. One of the ways that Sodexo meets its sustainability is through purchasing commitments toward sustainable seafood, cage free eggs, and through broader partnerships with organizations like Real Food Challenge. For its part, Real Food Challenge is campaigning to see more college presidents sign its [Real Food Campus Commitment](#) – a pledge to meet ambitious real food purchasing targets. Ten university leaders, including Macalester College, Oberlin College and University of Vermont, have recently signed on.

“We are happy to work with Sodexo to increase transparency and accountability in our food system,” said Anim Steel, Executive Director of Real Food Challenge. “Building a truly just and sustainable food system requires a real respect for the rights and needs of this younger generation and a real commitment to transparency all along the supply chain – from seed to plate. Together, we can lead the food industry away from a model driven exclusively by profit, secrecy and the factory farm, and towards a one based on respect for human rights, the environment, and the health of our children for generations to come.”

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Visit Real Food Challenge on [Facebook](#) and follow on [Twitter](#)

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Sodexo in North America

Sodexo, Inc. (www.sodexoUSA.com), leading Quality of Life Services company in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, delivers On-site Services in Corporate, Education, Health Care, Government, and Remote Site segments, as well as Benefits and Rewards Services and Personal and Home Services. Sodexo, Inc., headquartered in Gaithersburg, Md., funds all administrative costs for the Sodexo Foundation (www.SodexoFoundation.org), an independent charitable organization that, since its founding in 1999, has made more than \$17 million in grants to end childhood hunger in America. Visit the corporate blog at blogs.sodexousa.com.

Real Food Challenge

Real Food Challenge (www.realfoodchallenge.org) is a national student organization dedicated to building a just and sustainable food system. The Real Food Challenge networks spans 300+ college and university campus across the United States. Since its founding in 2008, the campaign’s primary goal has been to shift \$1 billion in existing food spending by college and universities away from industrial agriculture and junk food and towards local, fair, ecologically sound, and humanely produced food – ‘real food.’ To date, Real Food Challenge campaigns have won over \$50 million in real food purchasing commitments from leading colleges and universities. More on the Real Food Calculator can be found [here](#).

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