Real Food ChallengeUniversity of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Introduction

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UNC's campus food system allows us to better understand the connections between production, distribution, consumption and sustainability. The Real Food Challenge is a national organization that provides institutions with tools and strategies that support and promote the development of real food systems. Our campus has made the commitment to purchasing 20% of the already existing food budget go toward local & community based, fair, ecologically sound, and humane food sources -- what real food is. Real food has a concern for producers, consumers, communities, and the earth.

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I. Executive Summary

The purpose of the Real Food Calculator (RFC) is to increase the percentage of "real food" in Carolina Dining Halls. Real Food, according to RFC is defined as: local and community based, fair, ecologically sound, and humane. After our semester long audit, we found that UNC has exceeded their goal and purchased 21.65% real food for the month of February 2019.

II. Real Food Challenge (RFC) and Internship Overview

The Real Food Calculator Challenge was created in 2008 when they launched their first campaign. It set out to build a fair and sustainable food systems in universities. Their goal was to end higher education's support for Big Food corporations and white supremacy in the food system and to direct efforts and energy towards food sovereignty. RFC trains and supports students across campuses to make this shift to create a healthy, fair, and green food system. Below we have defined each of the categories based on RFC standards. Please refer to the appendix for more details.

- 1) Local and Community based foods can be traced back to nearby farms, raches, boats, and businesses that are locally-owned and operated.
- 2) Fair foods ensure that individuals involved in the production work in safe and fair conditions, receive fair compensation, are ensured the right to organize and the right to a grievance process while having an equal opportunity for employment.
- 3) Ecologically sound foods ensure that farms, ranches, boats and other operations involved with food production practice environmental stewardship that conserves biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. This will preserve natural resources, including energy, wildlife, water, air, and soil. Production practices should minimize toxic substances, greenhouse gas emissions, natural resource depletion and environmental degradation.
- 4) Humane foods make sure that animals have their mental, physical and behavioral needs met in a low-stress environment and throughout their lives are only administered drugs for treatment of diagnosed illness or disease.

There are many immediate disqualifiers to real food and a few are listed below:

- 1) Human rights violations such as forced labor
- 2) Labor violations such that the producer has been found guilty or has been cited for three or more cases relating to serious, repeat, or willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), or Fair Labor Standards (FLSA) violations within the last three years.
- 3) Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) with an exception
- 4) Genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
- 5) Ultra-processed

This past semester, we have researched extensively, each and every vendors' websites and personally reached out to farmers and owners via email and phone. In the end, we concluded that CDS purchased 21.65% real food for the month of February 2019. This percentage may not be entirely accurate due to sources of error that we will later describe as well as difficulties and challenges that we faced with gathering the information.

III. Importance of RFC in Carolina Dining

The Real Food Calculator Internship is used to verify that Carolina Dining Services (CDS) meets its commitment of purchasing 20% real food. Every semester, CDS completes their own real food audit for every month so the interns serve to verify their audit to ensure that CDS is meeting that percentage. Given an entire semester, interns are able to research information that may be difficult and more time consuming. The interns coordinate between the national Real Food Challenge organization along with CDS.

This internship sees to it that that university campus actually commits to purchasing a substantial percentage of real food. The challenge, as a whole, strives to push university spending to food that is more equitable and sustainable. Being such a large university, UNC can influence the food system with their purchases. RFC is student-driven as students are increasingly becoming more aware of what they are eating and are demanding that dining halls serve more real food.

IV. Calculator Methodology

Our research this semester took place beginning from the last week of August up until November of 2019. CDS provided us with all the information of food purchases from February 2019. They gave us redacted invoices of every purchase made during the month of February via digital files and physical receipts.

To begin our research, we uploaded all of the purchases into one spreadsheet. Each food was described into one row while each row contained headers for the following categories: item name, category, product code, product code type, label/brand, vendor, calculator rating version, along with columns that indicate whether or not they were local, ecologically sound, humane, fair or automatically disqualified. Once we had all of our data into one spreadsheet, we began going through each product to see if it met any of the real food categories as to constitute as real food, it needed to meet one of the four categories. For some purchases, we could immediately tell that some food items were not real because they would be ultra-processed so those purchases could be disqualified. Some purchases were not so easy to determine. Information for many of the purchases were hard to find. Foods that had no label/brand were especially hard to research as we had to personally reach out to the vendors to see if they could provide us with the information we needed.

To determine if the product qualified as real food, we had to research each of the real food categories (local, ecologically sound, humane and fair). We looked at ingredient lists and vendor and company websites. Understanding the origin of some products proved to be very difficult as vendors had to research their own supply chain.

One of the major parts of our methodology included a computer program that Katelyn Cline, a previous RFC intern, coded that helped us calculate our percentage of real food. The program was especially useful because it broke down the percentage by categories and showed us which areas that CDS could focus on increasing.

V. Final Results

Figure 1

Type of Food	Amount Spent		Percentage of Total Food Purchased	
Conventional	\$	511,648.41	78.35%	
Real Food A	\$	31,866.17	4.88%	
Real Food B	\$	109,746.17	16.81%	
Total	\$	653,036.95	100%	

Figure 1. Total amount spent and percentage of the total for each type of food (conventional, Real Food A, and Real Food B).

Figure 2

Food Type	Total Spent	% of Total	\$ Spent on RF	% of RF Total	
Eggs	\$ 31,790.37	4.87%	\$ 31,059.00	21.97%	
Baked	\$ 16,366.91	2.51%	\$ -	0%	
Dairy	\$ 76,500.44	11.71%	\$ -	0%	
Meat	\$ 101,512.65	15.54%	\$ 16,563.77	11.72	
Poultry	\$ 54,689.70	8.37%	\$ 27,205.78	19.24%	
Fish	\$ 48,395.49	7.41%	\$ 35,509.53	25.11%	
Produce	\$ 130,874.35	20.04%	\$ 21,779.13	15.40%	
Tea and Coffee	\$ 3,917.56	0.60%	\$ 368,994.00	2.61%	
Grocery	\$ 184,201.69	28.21%	\$ 5,581.14	3.95%	
Beverages	\$ 22,813.67	3.49%	\$ -	0.00%	

Figure 2. Total amount of food type purchased compared to amount of real food purchased per food type.

Figure 3

Type of Food	Percentage of Total Real Food
Eggs	21.97%
Baked	0%
Dairy	0%
Meat	11.72%
Poultry	19.24%
Fish	25.11%
Produce	15.40%
Tea Coffee	2.61%
Grocery	3.95%
beverages	0%

Figure 3. The percentage of each type of real food that was purchased (no conventional food purchases included). The percentage is calculated from the total amount of real food purchased.

Figure 4

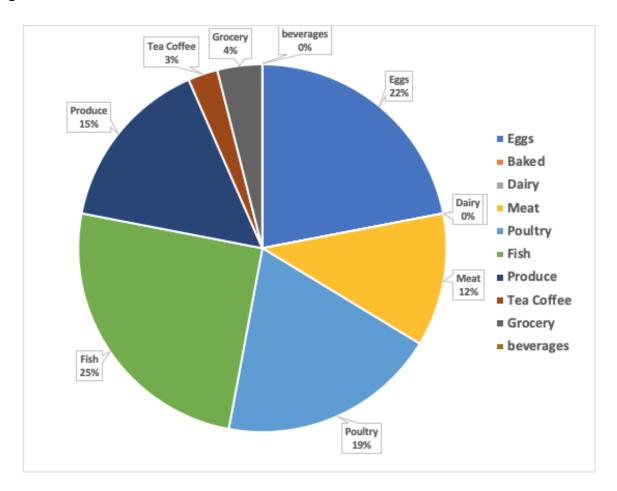


Figure 4. Graphical representation of real food purchases. The percentage of each type of food is based on the total amount of real food purchased, no conventional food is included.

VI. Comparison to Previous Years

Figure 5

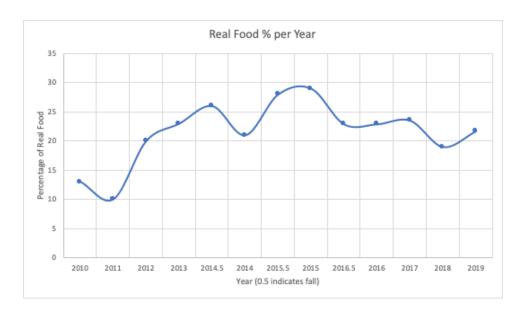


Figure 5. Percentage of Real Food purchased by Carolina Dining Services. A year with "0.5" indicates the fall audit, a year without "0.5" indicates the spring audit.

The percentage of Real Food purchased by Carolina Dining Services has fluctuated throughout the years. A large reason for this fluctuation, particularly the decrease after 2015, is a result of the change in RFC Standards from 1.0 to 2.1/2. In changing the criteria for "local" food to include a gross revenue of less than \$50 million, several large previously real food suppliers were disqualified.

VII. What Changed?

Within the past year CDS has saw significant changes in dollars spent on real food; including in egg purchases, tea/ coffee, cheese/ diary, and pork. The audit that took place in the spring showed CDS purchasing eggs from Sysco's Abbotsford Farms, EGGAMEP, Eggs America, and Wholesome Farms totaling about \$34,379. Of that amount, about \$15,780 of it was counted as real food. Thus, roughly 46% of all egg purchases were real food. Similarly, CDS purchased eggs from Sysco's Abbotsford Farms, Davidson, Eggs America, PAPETTI, Wholesome Farms, and Cheney totaling about \$31,791. Of that amount, about \$30,039 of it was counted as real food. Thus, roughly 95% of all egg purchases count as real food. This exemplifies a significant area of growth for CDS, in which they increased by 49 percentage points. Egg purchases demonstrate a critical area for CDS, and they should continue trying to increase this to 100%. Continuing to increase real food for eggs should be easy for CDS because most of the items that were not considered real are similar products that were counted as real when purchased by other Sysco brands i.e. liquid egg. One thing that should be noted is that Cheney was recommended by last year's RFC group, but the current group did not consider it as real— due to the researchers' inability to obtain information from appropriate Cheney staff.

In comparison to this audit and the previous audit, tea/coffee purchases saw a significant decrease. Specifically, for the Fall 2018, CDS purchased tea/coffee from Larry's Beans and Sysco's Folgers and Lipton totaling about \$14, 546. Of that amount, about \$2, 297 of it counting as real food, which generated about 18% of tea/coffee to the real food calculation. Again, in the spring of 2019 CDS purchased tea/coffee from Larry's and Sysco's Bigelow and Lipton totaling about \$4,380, with \$3,690 of it counting as real food. Thus, tea/ coffee purchased dropped by 70%. If CDS would have purchased the same amount of tea/ coffee as they did in the fall, they would have seen a greater real food percentage.

Additionally, CDS saw major declines in the real food for meat. In Fall 2018, CDS purchased \$22,275 in pork products, and of that amount about \$1,942, relatively 9%, was considered real food. This spring, \$13,646 was spent on pork products and of that amount, about \$463, relative 3.4% was real food. This was a significant decrease in amount purchased, however the data shows that all pork classified as real food comes from Lady Edison Pork. CDS uses Cheney's Lady Edison for their sausage patties needs, while also buying sausage patties

from Aramark. In efforts to increase real food percentages, CDS should purchase all of their sausage patties from Lady Edison Pork.

VIII. Sources of Error

There were only a few sources of errors that we encountered. The first and main one was having to count some farms/vendors as "no" because they never responded to our questions and we couldn't find a lot of information on the company or its products. Although this does not mean they aren't Real Food, we just didn't have enough data to be 100 percent sure, so we thought the best answer in this situation was labeling them as no. Going off of that, we did have a lot of difficulty finding some brand/vendors of certain products. Many of the companies weren't very transparent with their products, certifications, size or amount of capital, etc. Aside from that, we found out that several "small farms" were actually outsourced from other farms. This led to a lot of ambiguity and again made it difficult to be 100 percent sure that this farms meet the Real Food Standard.

IX. Challenges

In addition to the sources of error, we also had some challenges concerning communication, lack of transparency, and checking our work. There was some miscommunication between all parties involved in this process. For instance, we all communicated through email and sometimes it would take a bit longer than expected for everyone to get back to us. Aside from that, we would have a lot of detail/questions in our emails and only a few of those questions would get answered and the rest would be ignored or missed, some emails would even be ignored altogether. As a result, we had to send multiple emails with the same information, until finally we got an answer, or we would have to try to talk to that individual in person. Another issue was the lack of information on multiple companies/farms websites. A lot of them did not list their certifications, or how much money they made, etc. We had to do a lot of research and sometimes we came up empty, so we also tried sending emails, but those would be ignored as well. Lastly, was the dilemma of not knowing how to fully check our work. However, we did use prior semesters' work to compare numbers and make estimates. We also checked to see who was considered Real Food or not in prior years, which helped tremendously.

X. Recommendations

In efforts to provide a holistic recommendation we prepared 3 sets of recommendations including for RFC, CDS, and future interns.

Real Food Calculator

- **Define categories:** To eliminate potential confusion and error, RFC should define what constitutes a product to fall under the different categories. Defining each category will assist researchers in categorizing products and this task is significant because it determines the analyzations and recommendations. For example, the researchers' ability to identify positive changes in egg purchases and key changes in diary allows them to see where improvements can be made, and where attention should be focused. However, if the researchers were unsure if liquid eggs belong in dairy or egg category and they wrongly inputted that data, the recommendations and analyzations would be false.
- Reevaluate criteria for "local" food: To encourage institutions and organizations
 to pursue the real food challenge, RFC should reevaluate their current criteria for
 "local" food. Currently, the revenue cap excludes and victimizes companies that are
 large, successful, and sustainable companies.
- Grant researchers more liberty in researching different certifications: Today, several companies/ farmers are pursuing practices that would allow them to qualify as real food. For some of these farmers, they cannot afford USDA Organic certifications, or they do not meet the particular qualifications. However, they do have the \$1000 for Global GAP (Good Agricultural Practices), FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management), or B Corp Certification. A great example of a company doing great things and not being real food is Manhattan Bakery. Last year's group researched Manhattan Bakery as a potential vendor, but it did not count as real because it purchases its flour from King Arthur Flour, which was not local. Yet, King Arthur Flour is a certified B Corporation and they practice fair labor practices. Thus, to expand and become more inclusive, RFC should increase the liberty in researching different certifications that can count for real food.
 - GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) is a voluntary audit that farmers and producers can pay for to verify that fruits and vegetables are produced,

packed, handled, and stored as safely as possible to minimize risks of microbial food safety hazards. The audits are done by the USDA and is often more affordable for farmers who can not afford other certifications. The GAP certifications will further empower farmers and producers who produce locally, but do not meet local parameters (Good). For example, if CDS needed a product out of season that was being produced in another country and the producer was GAP certified; the product would still be considered as real food.

- FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Management) is a program that works with dairy farmers, their communities, and industry partners, in the United States, to show customers and consumers that the dairy industry is taking the very best care of cows and the environment, producing safe, wholesome milk and adhering to the highest standards of workforce development. FARM is open to all U.S. dairy farmers, co-ops, and processors (What). FARM is a great opportunity for RFC to empower small and large dairy producers who are doing great that (What).
- o B Corp Certification evaluates a products an services, assesses the overall positive impact of the company that stands behind it (About). "Certified B Corporations achieve a minimum verified score on the B Impact Assessment—a rigorous assessment of a company's impact on its workers, customers, community, and environment—and make their B Impact Report transparent on bcorporation.net" (About). Additionally, includes a combination of third-party validation, public transparency, and legal accountability help Certified B Corps build trust and value (About). Examples of companies who are B Corp Certified are Ben & Jerrys, Patagonia, and Manhattan Bakery.

Carolina Dining Services

• **Purchase more USDA Organic**: CDS should purchase more products that are USDA organic certified because it is an easily certifiable Real Food approved benchmark that is well advertised and well known.

- Fair Trade Spices: Currently we purchase most spices from the generic Sysco brand, purchasing Fair Trade spices would be easy to do and increase our real food percentage by almost 1%
- **CIW Tomatoes:** Coalition of Immokalee Workers certified tomatoes are the gold standard. The setback in purchasing them is they are often seasonal, and last year hurricanes in Florida destroyed most of the crop. However, purchasing more when available could greatly increase the produce percentage.
- Purchase from Homeland Creamery: Homeland Creamery is based out of Julian,
 NC and has been confirmed this semester to meet the "local" criteria for real food.
 CDS currently does not purchase any "real" dairy after Maola was disqualified, this
 would help increase the diary percentage and get more real dairy in the dining hall
 while supporting North Carolinians.

<u>Future Interns</u>

- Maintain database: There are two separate spreadsheets being operated on currently, one with brand/code abbreviated and one with updates on the common vendor state. Maintaining this database will help future interns and keep up to date on "real" vendors.
- **Social Media Campaign**: Few students around campus are aware of RFC in the dining halls. A social media campaign could help inform students and encourage involvement in what food they are eating and supporting.

XI. Conclusions and Take Away

Since UNC is such a large campus, it along with RFC has the potential to create a significant market demand for "real" food and transform the food system. The Real Food Challenge is effective in increasing universities accessibility by providing great tools. With the tools that RFC provides, through the challenge, food workers on college campuses can continue to work toward a more just and sustainable source. Although most of our food on campus comes from large corporations like Sysco, CDS continues to pursue healthy alternatives to highly processed foods. CDS is looking for more local based produce. Through this audit process, we have learned that if we want to have a better system that promotes better food and nutrition in our schools, we need a major shift in food sources. Often times, it can be difficult to convince big operations to provide "real food" but the commitment to RFC is

promoting local the nation.	businesses by cre	ating an aware	ness and a mov	ement on campı	uses across

References

"About B Corps." *About B Corps* | *Certified B Corporation*, https://bcorporation.net/about-b-corps.

"Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) & Good Handling Practices (GHP)." Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) & Good Handling Practices (GHP) | Agricultural Marketing Service, https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/auditing/gap-ghp.

What Is FARM?, https://nationaldairyfarm.com/what-is-farm/.

XII. Appendix

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The Real Food Guide					
Local & Community Based	Fair	Ecologically Sound	Humane		
These foods can be traced to nearby farms, ranches, boats, and businesses that are locally owned and operated. Supporting small and mid-size food businesses challenges trends towards consolidation in the food industry and supports local economies.	Individuals involved in food production work in safe and fair conditions, receive fair compensation, are ensured the right to organize and the right to a grievance process, and have equal opportunity for employment. Forms, ranches, boats, and other operations involved with food production practice emironmental stewardship that conserves process, and have equal opportunity for employment. Forms, ranches, boats, and other operations involved with food production practices emirormental stewardship that conserves wild five entry for emiror statural resources, including energy wildlife, water, air, and soil. Production practices minimize toxic substances, greenhouse gas emissions, natural resource depletion, and environmental degradation.		Animals have their mental, physical, and behavioral needs met in a low-stress environment and throughout their life are only administered drugs for treatment of diagnosed illness or disease.		
GREEN LIGHT: Products	meeting these criteria or certification	ns qualify as Real Food and best rep	esent the standard		
Sinale-ingredient products: A product must meet ALL the following criteria: A. Ownership: Producer must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise: Wild-caught seafood must come from owner-operated boats. B. Size: • Produce: Individual farms must gross \$5 millionlyear or less • Baked goods, beverages, dairy, eggs, grocery, meat, poultry, seafood: Company or cooperative must gross \$50 millionlyear or less C. Distance: All production, processing, and distribution facilities must be within a 250 mile radius of the institution. [This radius is extended to 500 miles for Meat, Poultry, and Seafood. Single-ingredient products (aggregated): 100% of the products must meet the criteria for Ownership, Size, and Distance Multi-ingredient product: The company and at least 95% of the ingredients by volume must meet the criteria for Ownership, Size, and Distance	A single-ingredient product must be certified by ONE of the following approved certified by ONE of the following approved certified to see the following approved certified to the following approved to	A product must be certified by ONE of the following approved certifications: Single-Ingredient products: Biodynamic Certified by Demeter FairWild Food Alliance Certified (produce and grocery only) Rainforest Alliance Certified Regenerative Organic Certified Salmon Safe USDA Organic and approved certifiers Coffee only: Bird Friendly by Smithsonian Produce only: Produce grown in a farm or garden at the institution, in which the researcher can confirm the use of organic practices	A product must be certified by ONE of the following approved certifications**: All products: • Animal Welfare Approved/Certified (AWA) by A Greener World • AWA Grassfed by A Greener World • Biodynamic Certified by Demeter • Global Animal Partnership Steps 4-5+		



YELLOW LIGHT: Products meeting these criteria or certifications qualify as Real Food but do not represent the fullest expression of the standard

Multi-ingredient products:
Company must meet ALL the following criteria:

Ownership: Company must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise
Size: Company or cooperative must gross \$50 million/year or less

Distance: All processing and distribution facilities mus. the institution. facilities must be within a 250 mile radius of

At least half (50%) of the ingredients by volume must come from farms meeting ALL the following criteria:

A. Ownership: Company must be a privately or cooperatively owned enterprise

B. Size:

Produce: Individual farms must gross \$5 million/year or less Baked goods, beverages, dairy, eggs. grocery, meat, poultry, seafood: Company or cooperative must gross \$50 million/year or less

Distance: All production facilities must be within a 250 mile radius of the institution

Single-ingredient products (aggregated):
At least three-quarters (75%) of the product (by volume) must meet the criteria for Ownership, Size, and Distance

A product must meet ONE of the following

All products:

Fair Trade USA

Multi-ingredient products:

At least one of the primary ingredients (20% by volume) meets the Green Light criteria

A product must meet ONE of the following

Single-ingredient products:

Be certified by one of the following approved certifications:

- ANSI/LEO-4000 (gold- or platinumcertified) by Leonardo Academy Bee Better Certified Certified Sustainably Grown

- Fair Trade USA LEAF Marque (Linking Environment
- and Farming)
 USDA Transitional Organic

Multi-ingredient products:

• At least half (50% by volume) of the ingredients meet the Green Light criteria

Seafood (wild-caught only):

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)
Blue Eco Label paired with the MSC Chain of Custody Certification

Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide "Best Choices" and "Good Alternatives"

A product must be certified by ONE of the

- Certified Humane Free
 Range/Pasture Raised
 - Global Animal Partnership Step 3

- American Humane Certified Free
 American Humane Certified Free
 - Range / Pasture Raised
 Certified Humane Free Range /
 Pasture Raised
 Global Animal Partnership Step 3

Swine: Global Animal Partnership Step 3

DISQUALIFICATIONS: Products containing disqualifying characteristics cannot count as Real Food in any category

- Egregious human rights violations

 Forced labor (including Prison labor): Producers have been found guilty of criminal charges of forced labor within the previous 10 years OR products that have been produced in prisons or using prison labor (through state or county correctional industries or through lease to, or partnership with, private agricultural or food processing companies).

 Labor violations: Producer has been found guilty of or has been cited for three or more cases relating to serious, repeat, or willful Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), or Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) violations within the last three years (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO); Producer is a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) [Except for dairy that has been aggregated from multiple farms if the average farm size is less than 200 cows

 Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs): Products made with genetically engineered ingredients (including corn, soy, rapeseed, beet sugar, papayas and summer squash) and their lighter three incordinate are sorted in the support of the support o

- - Unless these ingredients are used in trace amounts or the product carries a certification that precludes the presence of GMOs (Non-GMO Project Verified or any of the certifications
- that qualify as Ecologically Sound)

 Ultra-processed foods: Products made with the following ingredients: Aspartame; Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT); Caramel coloring; Partially hydrogenated oil (trans-fats); Potassium bromate; Propty gallate; #BGHt/fbST; Saccharine; Sodium nitrate added; Sodium nitrite added; Dyes: Red #3, Red #40, Yellow #5, Yellow #6.

Worker-Driven Social Responsibility Programs are exempt from Disqualifiers and can count as Real Food even if they have a disqualifying characteristic.
**Animal products that meet the certifications in the "Green Light" Humane category are exempt from the CAFO disqualifier. All other animal products should be researched for the CAFO