



[Eckerd College's Eat Local Challenge](#)

09/25/07 Seán Kinane

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Instead of the usual lunchtime fare today at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg students were able to eat meals made from locally grown food.

Almost all of the meats, seafood, vegetables and fruit served at today's Third Annual Eat Local Challenge were grown or harvested within a 150-mile radius of St. Pete.

David Bateman is general manager of Food Services with the Bon Appetit at Eckerd College and described two of the reasons why he is providing students the opportunity to eat locally.

As cook Corey chopped local vegetables, students lined up to sample locally produced vegan tofu chili, alligator sautéed with mango wine, Gulf seafood and local watermelon and cantaloupe.

Bateman told WMNF that buying local produce also helps the local economy.

One of those local businesses is Marjon Specialty Foods of Plant City. Marcia Miller served students tofu chili, sprouts, and other locally produced dishes.

Some of the students told WMNF the types of local foods they had for lunch.

Most of the students said there was a diverse enough selection and that they appreciated that the Eckerd food services was giving them opportunities to eat locally.

Dierdra Keelan, chef manager with Bon Appetit said this time of year was chosen because in most regions it is a harvest time. But, she added, it was somewhat difficult finding local food in Florida in late September.

David Bateman said it can be slightly more expensive to buy locally, but not always.

Learn More:

[Eckerd College](#)

[Marjon Specialty Foods Inc.](#)