OP 7: Low Impact Dining

3 points available

A. Credit Rationale
This credit recognizes institutions that minimize the purchase of conventionally produced animal products and that offer vegan options in their dining services operations. Conventionally produced animal products are the most significant contributor to the environmental impacts of food purchases, are often produced using inhumane methods, and have a higher per-calorie environmental intensity than products that are not animal-derived. Institutions can lessen these impacts by minimizing their purchase of animal-derived products and by purchasing more sustainably produced foods. Offering vegan options meets the needs of the diverse diets of community members. In addition, meat-based diets generally require more energy, land, and water resources and have a higher carbon footprint than plant-based diets, often making vegan options a more sustainable alternative.

B. Criteria
Part 1
Conventionally produced animal products comprise less than 30 percent of the institution’s total dining services food purchases.

Conventionally produced animal products include all food products that contain animal derived (i.e. meat, fish, egg, dairy) ingredients that have not been verified to be sustainably produced. Sustainably produced animal products have been either:

- Third party verified to be ecologically sound and/or humane (see OP 6: Food and Beverage Purchasing)
  Or
- Verified by the institution to be both ecologically sound and humane (e.g. “Pasture Raised”, “Grass Fed” or “Humanely Raised”) through a relationship with a local producer

Part 2
Institution:

- Offers diverse, complete-protein vegan options at all meals in at least one dining facility on campus
  And
- Provides labels and/or signage that distinguishes between vegan, vegetarian (not vegan), and other items
This credit includes on-campus dining services operated by the institution or the institution’s primary dining services contractor. On-site franchises, convenience stores, vending machines, and concessions are excluded from this credit.

C. Applicability
This credit applies to all institutions that have on-campus dining services operated by the institution or the institution’s primary on-site contractor.

D. Scoring
Each part is scored independently.

Part 1
Institutions earn the maximum of 2 points available for Part 1 of this credit by purchasing no conventionally produced animal products. Incremental points are available based on the percentage of dining services food purchases made up of conventionally produced animal products. For example, an institution for which conventional animal products comprise 15 percent of its total food purchases would earn 1 point (half of the points available for Part 2).

Points earned for Part 1 of this credit are calculated according to the formula below. STARS awards only positive points; points will not be deducted if purchases of conventionally produced animal products exceed 30 percent of the institution’s total food purchases.

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\text{Points Earned} = 2 \times \left\{ \frac{100 - A - 70}{30} \right\}
\]

A = Percentage of total dining services food purchases comprised of conventionally produced animal products (0-100)

Scoring Example: Low Impact Dining (Part 1)
Example College spent $9 million on food during the past year. Of those purchases, $2.25 million was spent on conventionally produced animal products. Therefore, the percentage of total dining services food purchases comprised of conventionally produced animal products = $2.25 million ÷ $9 million = 25 percent.

A. Percentage of total dining services food purchases comprised of conventionally produced animal products = 25 percent

Points Earned = 2 × \left\{ \frac{(100 - A) - 70}{30} \right\}
= 2 \times \left\{ \frac{(100 - 25) - 70}{30} \right\}
= 2 \times \left\{ \frac{75 - 70}{30} \right\}
= 2 \times \left\{ \frac{5}{30} \right\}
= 2 \times .167
= 0.33 points
**Part 2**
Institutions earn the maximum of 1 point available for Part 2 of this credit by offering complete-protein vegan options and providing appropriate labels/signage at all meals and by ensuring that those options are accessible to all members of the campus community. Partial points are available based on whether or not the vegan options are accessible to all members of the campus community. For example, an institution that offers complete-protein vegan options and provides appropriate labels/signage at all meals in a dining facility that is accessible to some but not all members of the campus community would earn 0.5 points (half of the points available for Part 2).

**E. Reporting Fields**

**Required**
- Percentage of total dining services food purchases comprised of conventionally produced animal products (beverage purchases are excluded) (0-100)
- An indication of whether the institution offers complete-protein vegan options at all meals in at least one dining facility on campus
- An affirmation that the submitted information is accurate to the best of a responsible party’s knowledge and contact information for the responsible party. The responsible party should be a staff member, faculty member, or administrator who can respond to questions regarding the data once it is submitted and available to the public.

**Conditional**
Required if the institution is reporting offering vegan options:
- An indication of whether the institution provides labels and/or signage that distinguishes between vegan, vegetarian (not vegan), and other items
- An indication of whether the vegan options are accessible to all members of the campus community
- A brief description of the vegan dining program, including availability, sample menus, signage and any promotional activities (e.g. “Meatless Mondays”)

**Optional**
- A brief description of other efforts the institution has made to reduce the impact of its animal-derived food purchases
- The website URL where information about the vegan dining program is available
- Notes about the submission
F. Measurement

Timeframe

Part 1
Report the most recent data available.

Part 2
Report on current policies or programs.

Sampling and Data Standards
Beverage purchases are excluded from this credit. Institutions may choose to track food purchases for a 12-month consecutive period or use representative samples. When using samples, institutions should accommodate seasonal and other variations in sustainable food availability and purchasing.