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The webinar featured three speakers, Scot Case, VP of Tera Choice Environmental Marketing; Holly Freshtat, Sustainable Food Specialist for Cultivate Health, and LLC; Diane Imrie, MBA, RD: Director of Nutrition Services. Each of these speakers had experience in regards to “going green” in the foodservice industry. Going green is a far reaching concept that can involve all aspects of daily life. This includes encouraging the use of sustainable and environmental aware policy, and increasing the use and purchase of these “green” products. There is significant national attention related to going green. According to Scot Case, the first speaker, approximately 75% of industries expect to “green” their industry within the next two years. Every choice that is made, whether it is a purchase, procedure, or distribution of goods, is linked to the environment. A foodservice manager can green their operation in all of these areas through written policies, labels and education, cooperative efforts, vendor outreach, employee training, and simply looking at what other similar organizations are doing.

All of the speakers noted the importance and strength of the consumer dollar. The size and financial clout of the food service industry makes their demands even stronger. Changes in industry do not occur until there is enough of demand to change. Consumer demand can affect industry through government legislation, such as the most recent trans fat regulations. Financial support of companies willing to change is equally as effective.

The idea of “green washing” is a common concern. Green washing is simply false or misleading claims related to the “green” concept. This spawned from consumer attention and financial support of green products. Companies may fib on claims, provide no proof, display vague claims and make irrelevant claims (by advertising “CFC-free” even though it is law). To prevent green washing, business managers should ensure the quality of the products through validation and verification of standards and standard setting processes.

Healthy food systems take all parts of the system and make it greener. The food system includes growing, distributing, processing, retailing, preparing, and selling food.

**Growing:** Current industrial farming practice focus on yield enhancing methods of agriculture. It is proven that as crop yield increases nutrient density of food decreases. Industrial agriculture utilizes large amounts of antibiotics which can cause antibiotic resistance, a particular concern in health care. Industrial farms contribute to water pollution, and increased use of hormones.

Methods of change:

- purchase organically
- increase the use/purchasing of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and other nutrient dense foods
- question and research farms that practice more green habits of raising animals (including free range, rBST free, and animals fed natural foods)
- purchase fair-trade and shade grown coffee (minimizes use of chemicals and environmental damage)



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**Distributing:** The number of food miles traveled is a critical CO<sub>2</sub> footprint on the environment. Awareness of where the food is coming from as well as the amount of cultivation procedures (such as the amount of carbon from tractors) is crucial for greening a facility

Methods of change:

- develop seasonal menus based on local climate
- buy local
- try to set up a farmers market at the hospital encourage its use through employee discounts
- have on-site farms or “healing gardens” with herbs or other products
- promote local farmers and produce by sponsoring “local growers’ lunch” featuring locally grown produce.
- join a CSA (community sponsored agriculture)

**Food Processing:** A significant amount of energy is used in the processing industry. Processing includes the transport of all ingredients to the plant, the development of the product and then the transport of the final product throughout the country. Food processing often eliminates essential nutrients and is often an unnecessary “middle step”

Methods of change:

- purchase whole foods that are not processed
- restrict the amount of processed trans fat in a facility
- decrease the amount of packaging used in purchased/received food

**Marketing Trends/Retailing:** It is important to market the use of green products. Educating consumers of the greening efforts of a facility along with the benefits of the changes is important as consumers will emulate these practices. This will encourage change and purchasing of the green products.

Methods of change:

- share pledge and letter of intent to go green with both consumers and distributors
- join local networks that encourage fresh and green policies
- distribute and post initiatives on website and as hard copies
- advertise food as local or where it is from

**Food Preparation:** A significant amount of waste is produced in food preparation. Increased waste is a strain on energy from producing the product as well as the strain on landfill sites. The trend of compositing is increasing due to environmental concerns and savings for organizations. When buying from local farmers it is important to match the size of the farm with the size of the institution.

Methods of change:

- utilize accurate prediction methods to decrease overproduction of food
- initiate room service instead of buffet style in hospitals as it is proven more effective in decreasing waste
- develop compositing procedures for any waste
- purchase packaging that can also be composted



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**Selling:** The primary opportunity to educate consumers is in the selling of products. The distribution and displaying of products is a key component of staying green in the selling of products.

Methods of change:

- make green foods cheaper and processed foods more expensive
- purchase equipment and design kitchen to decrease energy use
- advertise where the food came from and the practices that made it green

The methods of achieving a green food industry are far reaching. Improvement of any area of food service is a positive step. To encourage the long-lasting focus of change make the Healthy Food Pledge as well as write policies into the institutions protocol. The best method of change is simply to pick a topic and work to make it the most “green” choice available and to constantly demand further green processes.

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