

Coffee House expands menu of organic offerings

Organic white rice grown locally by UC Davis graduates

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The brown rice offered at the ASUCD Coffee House is organic, and now students can purchase hot entrées served over a bed of organic white rice, too.

On Monday, the Coffee House phased out its use of the conventional white rice in favor of an organic version harvested and delivered from Rue and Forsman Ranch Inc. in Marysville, Calif. The organic brown rice comes from Lundberg Farms in Richvale, Calif.

Prices will not increase as a result of this change despite notions that organic products are typically marketed to the upper-middle class and are thus more expensive, said Tom Jobst, ASUCD Coffee House marketing and training manager.

The switch to organic white rice is the latest example of the Coffee House's commitment to purchasing locally grown organic foods.

"We've always been focused on supporting the local economy and small local businesses," Jobst said. "This is another opportunity to highlight another local farm and bring in their product."

In this case, the ranch providing the organic white rice is run by three generations of UC Davis graduates.

Michael Bosworth, who is finishing his master's degree in agricultural economics at UC Davis and works as sales manager for Rue and Forsman Ranch, said Coffee House Director Sharon Coulson had spoken during one of his marketing classes last year and mentioned the unit's efforts to work with local farmers.

After hearing from Coulson, he approached her about selling his family's rice.

"I decided to set up a meeting with her and discussed the product we have and how I thought it would be a very good fit," Bosworth said. "It's a good way to connect with the campus

and community."

In the rice industry, the product is typically harvested and sold without the farm's knowledge of where it ends up, Bosworth said.

Bosworth added that there is a level of satisfaction in knowing that his friends and fellow classmates are consuming rice from his farm. The Coffee House is now the company's biggest client. Rue and Forsman Ranch also sells organic rice to the Farmer's Kitchen Café and Seasons restaurant in Davis, as well as the Tapa the World and Lucca restaurants in Sacramento.

"It was my idea to market to local restaurants," he said. "Now we know where [the rice] goes, and we can talk to chefs and people in the Coffee House and find out if there are other types of rice they are interested in."

Since the Coffee House opened in 1967, the ASUCD unit has been committed to purchas-

ing locally grown and organic foods and recently launched its Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign in April to accomplish this goal.

The Coffee House offers other organic items to its customers such as sliced bread, tofu and fresh fruits and vegetables depending on seasonal availability. Jobst said he anticipates that during the summer, the Coffee House will incorporate organic tomatoes, bell peppers and jalapeños.

Junior Christina Sheh said she does not have a preference for organic or conventional rice, but thinks the change is positive for students who would like to purchase it.

"On my behalf, I don't have a preference, but if it benefits other students then it's a good thing," she said.



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Senior Kim Bowles prepares the Coffee House's new organic rice, which is available at the grill and the hot-food line.