

PH Food Service Compass Group/Morrison Expresses Commitment to Earth/Body Friendly Food Preparation

adapted by Sister Mary Rose Noonan and Abra Marion

The food-service industry is facing a rapid demand for services that have a meaningful sense of environmental and social responsibility. Study after study consistently reinforces that the American consumer is engaging “sustainability” values into his/her daily lifestyle. The origin of food and how and where that food is produced is of interest to many. Morrison Senior Dining, a member of the Compass Group, provides the meals at the Provincial House and has expressed its commitment to preparing and serving foods that are Earth, body and community friendly.

According to Abra Marion, director of food services at the Provincial House, Morrison states its commitment in the following words: “We believe that the health of our ecosystem is directly connected to the health of our communities and the people who live in them. Acting responsibly is part of our company’s DNA, and we are committed to offering policies and solutions that are both immediately visible and sustainable over the long term.”

In expressing its goal in concrete terms, the company is committed to the following:

- Buying local products to support family farms
- Serving seafood that comes from sustainable sources
- Promoting certified, humane, cage-free eggs
- Purchasing poultry produced without the routine use of human antibiotics
- Providing milk that is free of artificial-growth hormones
- Implementing waste-reduction practices to minimize environmental impact
- Featuring ecologically certified coffee.

Compass Group/Morrison has many examples of how the company is becoming more *sustainable conscious*.

Buying Local Products

In support of its company-wide commitment to sustainability and wellness, Compass Group/Morrison has been making strides to establish relationships with local farmers and produce distributors to encourage local buying and promote seasonally available produce. Compass Group defines “local” as typically within a 150-mile radius from the producing facility. A “local farmer” farms as an occupation, not a hobby. Our own Morrison Staff purchases from such local farms as Bowman’s Orchards in Clifton Park and Wertman’s Farm in Melrose.

The company encourages its managers and chefs to build relationships with local farmers and produce distributors. To ensure food safety and traceability of local produce, purchasing is most often done through the approved produce distributor. Their “Buy Local Program” supports a variety of environmental and socioeconomic issues. The preservation of the American family farm, landscape, open space and wildlife habitat are among the priorities. According to Morrison, a series of academic studies have indicated that American farms, owned and operated by family members as a primary income, are disappearing at a fast rate and that a majority of these farms will be gone by 2020. These farms also help keep the countryside open and undeveloped. In addition, economic experts advise that the health of our communities is dependent on maintaining a viable local food supply. Compass Group/Morrison is deeply committed to the protection of a biodiverse food system. Today’s industrial system focuses on varieties of produce for their ability to harvest well,

to pack well, to ship well. They have long shelf life in the stores. Typically this means just a handful of rigorous hybrid varieties with very little genetic diversity. This is limiting our food supply to much fewer varieties and some are concerned that this increases our exposure to common plagues.

Seafood from Sustainable Sources

In serving seafood that comes from sustainable sources, company leaders are committed to removing 500,000 pounds of unsustainable farmed seafood over a period of three years, ending in 2013. The company has implemented a sustainable seafood policy in partnership with Seafood Watch Compass Group which has replaced Atlantic cod, a species which leading conservationists have recommended consumers to avoid, with the more environmentally sound Pacific cod, pollock and other alternatives. In addition, Compass Group/Morrison plans to seek ways to decrease its use of shrimp and salmon that are farmed in an unsustainable manner. These two species are extremely popular with consumers but are of concern to environmentalists. The company has eliminated all other “Avoid” species from the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch list, and has increased its use of “Best Choices.”

Using Cage-Free Eggs

In December 2007, Compass Group/Morrison implemented a cage-free shell egg policy. All units are required to offer only shell eggs that are certified by the Humane Farm Animal Care Program in partnership with the Humane Society of America. U.S. factory farms confine about 280 million hens in barren battery cages that are so small, they can’t walk, spread their wings or lay eggs in nests. Each bird has less space than a single sheet of paper on which to live. According to the Compass Group/Morrison, several countries have banned the confinement of laying hens in battery cages. The European Union has started a phase-out of conventional cages. The U.S. has seen a national movement against battery cages.

Wolfgang Puck and *Ben & Jerry's* are ending their use of cage eggs. *Burger King*, *Carl's Jr.* and *Hardees* have also begun using cage-free eggs. Several grocery chains, including *Whole Foods Market* and *Wild Oats Natural Marketplace*, have stopped selling cage eggs. Cage-free hens generally have 250-300 percent more space per bird and are able to engage in more of their natural behaviors than are caged hens.

Purchasing Antibiotic-Free Poultry

Compass Group/Morrison is also committed to purchasing poultry produced without the use of human antibiotics. The non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animal production is a growing public-health concern because it decreases the effectiveness of antibiotics to treat diseases in humans. Animals bred in concentrated farming operations are highly susceptible to disease due to overcrowded and stressful growing conditions. Antibiotics that were developed for human medicine are routinely fed to animals in their diet as a preventative measure for disease and also as a growth promoter. Therefore, the company only serves chicken and turkey that has been produced with restricted use of these drugs, especially as a growth additive in feed. The company's contracted suppliers are required to provide products which adhere to specific criteria developed in partnership with The Environmental Defense Fund.

Providing Milk Free of Artificial Hormones

Compass Group/Morrison believes that science and experience have clearly demonstrated that the use of artificial bovine-growth hormones in dairy cows is detrimental to the well-being of the animal. The medical community has expressed apprehension that the use of these hormones may also be harmful to human health. Because of these concerns, the company serves only fresh fluid milk from cows that have been certified to be free of the artificial growth hormones, RBGH and RBST. Bovine-growth hormones occur naturally in dairy cows and is present in

all raw milk. The two artificial hormones are genetically engineered and injected in to cows to increase milk production.

Implementing Effective Waste-Reduction Practices

Food waste throughout the food system is responsible for an enormous amount of greenhouse-gas emissions. Organic matter, especially food scraps, is a big contributor to methane gas formation in landfills, a greenhouse gas 23 times more potent than carbon dioxide in trapping heat close to the Earth's surface. Compass Group/Morrison is working extensively to reduce food-waste matter by implementing a proprietary waste-reduction program. They have developed *Trim Trax*, a food waste-reduction program and green initiative which will noticeably cut operating costs as well as reduce the carbon footprint in landfills. The program will track and measure food-waste costs in the following categories: production waste (food thrown out prior to cooking/service such as vegetable peelings); over-produced (unusable food that has already gone through production and must be disposed of; unused/out-of-date inventory (expired, spoiled or overcooked); and open category (a product or station category identified by the food-service director or chef that could benefit from improvement). "Our associates," says Abra, "have really embraced this program, and we are always looking for creative ways to reduce our waste."

Serving Ecologically Certified Coffee

Coffee production may have a tremendous impact on the social and environmental well-being of the countries where it is produced. Responsible production methods are certified in a variety of ways including *Fair Trade*, *Rainforest Alliance*, *Shade Grown*, *Bird Friendly Coffee*, *Farmer Equity (C.A.F.E.) Practices*, *Utz Kapeh* and *Organic*. Compass Group/Morrison encourage their units to offer a responsible choice, based on client and guest preference and availability from the coffee partner. Due to the wide range of economic, social and environmental concerns within the diverse coffee growing regions, there are many certifications available that address the different needs of the coffee industry. As part of Compass Group/Morrison's commitment to sustainable farming practices, they have developed relationships with the top retail-coffee brands in America. Each of the coffee partners have the ability to purchase from these sustainable resources, including Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance, organic farms and many other progressive coffee estates throughout the world.

We congratulate Abra Marion and staff, Morrison Senior Dining and its parent company, The Compass Group, for their commitment to environmental sustainability and for helping us as Sisters of St. Joseph and CSJ Associates to deepen our communion with Planet Earth and with all God's creation.



Abra Marion (lt.), director of Food Services at the Provincial House, with Sister Mary Rose Noonan and Susan Szczerbacki, PH Administrator