

Idaho's Bounty Wholesale Business: The logic in local food

Idaho's Bounty wrap: 0111GH_IdahosBounty.wav Wrap 2:40 01/11/10 GH/ed

[HOST INTRO] Last Monday, producer Guy Hand brought us a story on Idaho's Bounty Co-op, a group bringing sustainably raised, local food to individual consumers. Today Hand reports on Idaho's Bounty's attempt to provide large institutions like hospitals, universities and restaurants with local food. (2:40 to soc out; ambient sound to 3:00; fade at will)

[SCRIPT]

1. (Sounds in restaurant) (Adams) We've got focaccia bread that uses Canyon Bounty's ground whole wheat flour. We use Cloverleaf Creamery butter.
2. (Hand) Jami Adams is walking me through the kitchen at Bittercreek Ale House in downtown Boise. She points to the locally produced foods she and partner David Krick use in their Bittercreek and Red Feather restaurants.
3. (Adams) We've got some Ballard cheese over here.
4. (Hand) They've have been working to increase the percentage of local food they purchase by 10% a year.
5. (Adams) Last year we made it to 30% and this this year we should hit about 50%.
6. (Hand) Adams attributes that jump to Idaho's Bounty, a local foods distribution system that she says makes it easier for restaurants and institutions to buy local foods from one source. Before, she had to contact farmers individually.
7. (Adams) Sometimes it would be one or two calls a day, sometimes its ten to fifteen. Also emailing.
8. (Hand) Through Idaho's Bounty, a company can go online, pick products from over a hundred local farmers and get them delivered on a single truck.

9. (Adams) So for us it's been a wonderful advance in local production.
10. (Hand) Idaho's Bounty is catering to companies that were once too big or too busy to bother with buying food locally. Jeannie Wall is Idaho's Bounty director.
11. (Wall) We are starting to work with accounts like St. Lukes in Wood River Valley and in Boise. We're working with Boise State University. We're working with College of Idaho and we're actually talking to Sun Valley Company about whether we can get them locally grown Idaho potatoes because they've been getting potatoes from out of state.
12. (Hand) Wall says many local crops are routinely shipped out of state on the commodity market, then shipped back in. By cultivating local wholesale customers, Wall hopes big producers can start selling closer to home.
13. (Wall) So we're hoping that it sets off a domino affect to grow food in a sustainable way and sell it locally.
14. (Hand) Back at Bittercreek Ale House, Jami Adams says institutional buyers still face hurdles. They have to pay more and accommodate the seasonal variability in local food. Still, Adams says a willingness to leap those hurdles will create a healthier, tastier and more secure food system.
15. (Wall) Anyone who is socially and sustainably minded, I think sees that this is the wave of the future. We don't have a choice but to convert our purchasing to local. A global food economy is not a sustainable one and it's not a safe one.
16. (Hand) Still, it's too early to tell how sustainable Idaho's Bounty's wholesale business will be. As long as food shipped from far away is cheap and convenient, many companies will likely find it difficult to see the logic in local food.
17. (Hand) In Boise, Idaho, I'm Guy Hand.