Abstract: People have become so detached to their food that they rarely know where anything they eat comes from. This has caused food miles to become a large problem for the current century. Food travels hundreds of thousands of miles to reach grocery stores near you, when they could simply be grown by farmers in your area. Food that has not traveled far has more nutritional value and supports your town's local farmers to stimulate your local economy.

Furman University is a very health conscious school. Our students prefer locally grown and fresh produce than mass produced and transported foods. My research is aimed at finding out where the food sources in the dining hall come from and how far they have traveled to reach us.

### Background:

The food from the Furman University dining hall is provided by an admirable company called Sysco. They provide food for many colleges around the country. Unfortunately, they mass produce food which must be transported for many more miles than necessary (Figure 3).

The 37.5 billion dollar companies' headquarters are located in Houston, Texas, with many different distribution centers around the country. Furman University gets its food from the distribution center located in Columbia, South Carolina. Address:131 Sysco Court, Columbia, SC 29209

This company has been features in the following magazines: -Fortune Worlds Most Admired Companies,

Fortune 500, Forbes, Businessweek, Financial Times, and Barron's 500.

In Companies Surveyed, Sysco received:

#4 for quality of products/services

#3 for use of corporation assets

#9 for financial soundness

#8 for long-tern investment value

#4 for quality of management

But this company is not all sugar and spice. Sysco's founde John Baugh, founded the company on the principle of this belief that "Frozen foods taste better than anything I could grow in my garden." However, after the death of the founder, the company is said to be doing a "damned good job of nurturing regional and local food hubs." (Figure 2). "Local" foods do not travel more than 400 miles to reach Furman. (http://thefastertimes.com/foodpolitics/2009/04/01/bigbusiness-anwser-to=10cavore%E2%80%99s-prayers/) CEO Rick Schieder makes a good point when he said, "Sysco logs less 'food miles,' driving 1700 cases of organic greens from California to New York per case, than a farmer who drives 8 cases 40 miles to a farmer's market and back However, the Sysco organic greens will have less nutritional value than the ones from the local farmer, and the local farmer helps to support the local economy of your town. Freshpoint is an excellent service which is linked to Sysco. They have 35 hubs in the United States, and they train local farmers on good agriculture practices and advise them on what to grow, based on what regional chefs are demanding. Freshpoint provides Furman with as much local produce and fruits as possible given the demand and the season (Table

Objectives: My goal for this project is to find out how far the food in the Dining Hall travels in order to reach us here at Furman. I will research the companies which Furman uses to supply its food and discover how far the food travels overall and if the distance is necessary to supply the dining hall.

# Food Miles to the Dining Hall

## Julia Trone, Introduction to GIS, Fall 2009 Earth and Environmental Sciences Department, Furman University, Greenville, SC 29613





Figure 1: This image represents all of the farms which Furman gets its produce from. It includes the combined information from both of the other maps.

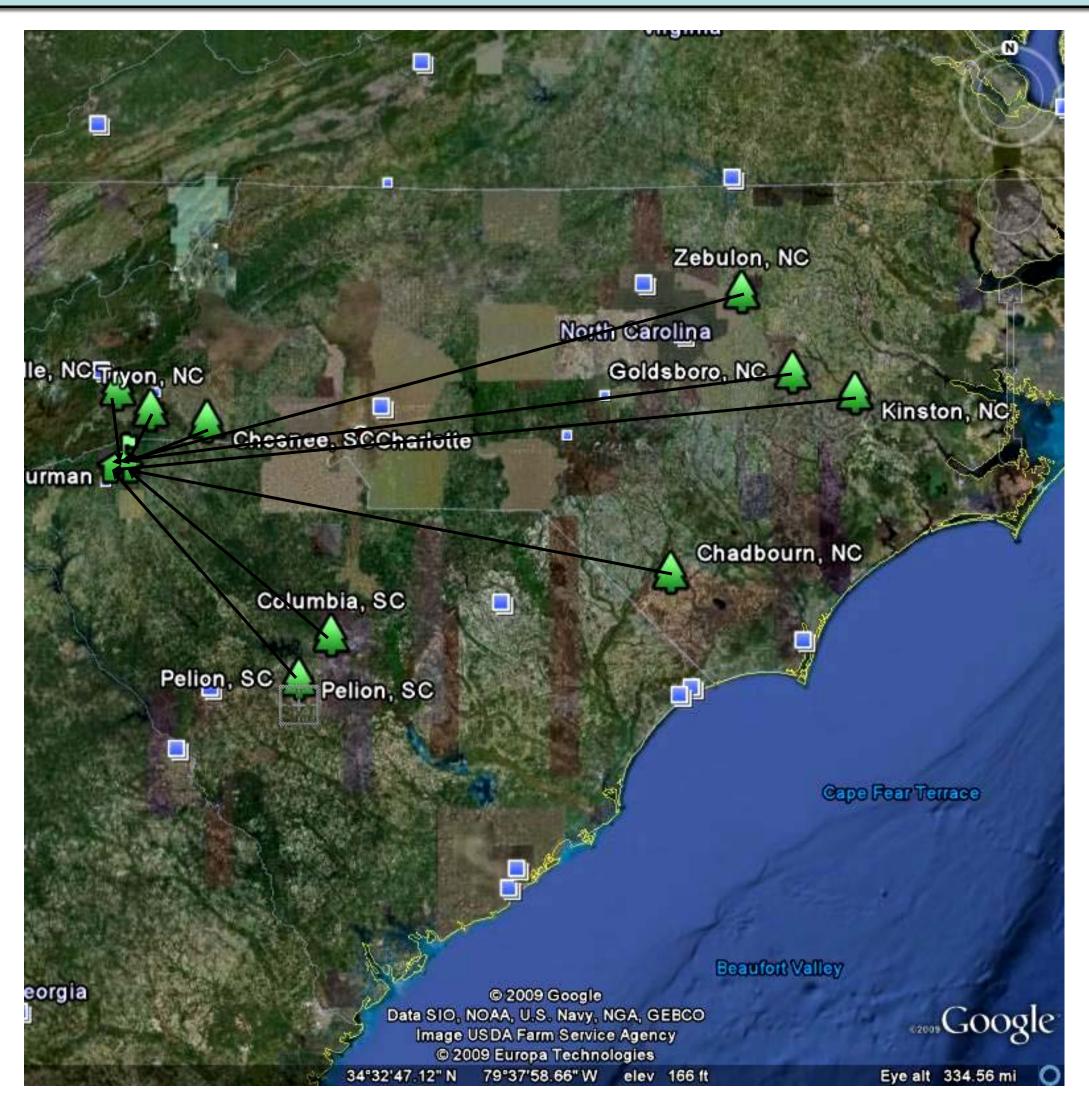
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Figure 2: This is an image from Google Earth which represents the closest food sources that the Furman Dining Hall uses. Furman is the house and the local farms are depicted as trees.

Figure 3: This map represents all of the non-local food sources and how far the produce must travel to reach Furman. The motorcycles represent the farms which are not located near Furman.

I contacted the director of dining services, Adam Summer, to get the information necessary for my research. He sent me the necessary information to find the sources of fresh produce and vegetables in the dining hall.

I then spent a lot of time on the internet. Using only reliable sources listed under my data sources, I found the necessary information to find out about the companies which provide Furman with food and how far the food travels to reach Furman.

Local Farms and their foods that we eat! Sunnycreek Farms, Tryon, NC: 37 miles Alfalfa Sprouts, Bean Sprouts. Columbia Farmer's Market, Columbia, SC: 109 miles Collard Greens. Various, Hendersonville, NC, NC/GA, Goldsboro, NC: 37 miles, 218 miles, 335 miles. Apples, Green Bell Peppers, Cucumbers, Green Beans (Trimmed). Cooley Farms, Chesnee, SC: 50 miles Peaches. FreshPik Produce, Kinston, NC: 364 miles Romaine Lettuce. Bailey Farms, Oxford, NC: 115 miles Squash Zucchini, Y Wayne Bailey Produ Chadbourn, NC: 25 Sweet Potatoes. Barham Farm, Zebulon, NC: 292 n **Heirloom Tomatoes** Cottle's Organics, E NC: 270 miles Organic Salad Mix. Walter P Rawl, Peli 127 miles Broccoli Florets. Table 1 Foods Grown and Bought From Afar with the Potential to Be Local: Mann Produce, Salinas, CA: 2,573 miles Snap Peas. Various, Immokalee, FL, USA: 699 miles 6x6 Tomatoes, Red Onions, Yellow Onions, Red Bell Peppers. Desert Glory, CA, FL, and Mexico: 2,511 miles, 561 miles, 1,574 miles Cherry Tomatoes. Bolthouse, California: 2,511 miles. Carrots.

Church Brothers, San Juan Bautista, CA: 2,581 miles . Baby Spinach. Sunkist, California: 2,511 miles. Oranges, Grapefruits. Various, Central America, Guatemala/Honduras: Cantaloupe, Pineapple, Honeydew, Bananas.

Most of the produce which the dining hall provides is available during the growing season in large enough quantities by Sysco and Freshpoint to sustain the dining hall. However, most of these foods are imported (Figure 3) in order for the produce companies to make them cheaper.

There are less carbon emissions when moving produce in bulk one time rather than moving a small amount a short distance many times. Gardens near Furman, such as the Happy Cow Creamery and Furman's own garden, do not produce nearly enough produce to supply the dining hall, even during the peak season (Table 1). However, their products are available to anyone who would like to purchase them for their better taste, quality, and nutritional value.

Food miles are not a good thing, but when mass quantities of produce are needed, they are necessary.

## Methodology:

**Results**:

• •	
t is Grown	
Mid April- December	
Mid August- February	
Mid June- September	
June- October	
Mid June- Early September	
t	
d October-	

Conclusion: