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March 24, 2008

Contact:

Haven Bourque, Straus Communications
(415) 777-1170 x303, Haven@StrausCom.com

When Eco-burger is not an oxymoron: the Low Carbon Diet takes a bite out of climate change at Bon Appétit Management Company restaurants.

Palo Alto, CA (March 24, 2008) – Climate change has risen to the top of the worry list for Americans. Driving less and swapping light bulbs can help the environment, but did you know that your lunch has the power to raise or lower the temperature of the planet?

It's true: our food system is responsible for 1/3 of global greenhouse gas emissions. The energy used to grow, store, transport and process food is heating the planet. Waste from half-eaten meals that rot in the garbage generates significant gasses too. Worse yet, according to food service provider Bon Appétit Management Company, global warming warnings focus on carbon dioxide, but two other greenhouse gases common in food production – methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) – aren't even considered in most carbon footprint evaluations. And both are rising at unprecedented rates.

Take a common lunch favorite, the burger: beef is a carbon-intensive food, as is cheese. Even lettuce and tomato, if plopped on a burger when tomatoes and lettuce aren't in season, have a real impact. As does bacon. And French fries.

So what lunch can you munch with a clear conscience? Food service provider Bon Appétit Management Company is making it easy to enjoy a planet-friendly lunch. On Earth Day, April 22nd, the chefs at your local Bon Appétit café will unveil the Low Carbon Diet, a program that shows you how to make food choices that slow climate change while savoring a bounty of delicious low-carbon meals.

Bon Appétit chefs will transform each food station to highlight low carbon food choices and answer all the tough questions: does my sushi have more frequent flier miles than I do? Do cow burps really harm the planet more than my car?

Starting on Low Carbon Diet Day, menu options will be designed so that you don't have to give up your favorites entirely. For diners who accept that beef is high carbon but still want to eat the occasional burger, the Low Carbon Diet will demonstrate how to make it more eco-friendly: skip the cheese, the bacon, and swap out-of-season lettuce and tomato for a tasty lower-carbon alternative like grilled onions. Then for tomorrow's lunch, opt for a Chicken Caesar salad or better yet, a vegetarian dish. And consider eating up everything you put on your plate, or taking home the leftovers.

Each café will be stocked with educational materials and information about what diners can do to lower the carbon footprint of their food while shopping, at home and when eating out. Also available is an online personal calculator to tally your meal's carbon score: www.eatlowcarbon.org, or text **LCD** and the name of the food item you're considering to '69866' to get a total for your lunch (standard text messaging rates apply).

“As a chef, the last thing I'd ever want to do is harm the environment, as nature provides the abundance that inspires me in the kitchen. Connecting food with global warming has made me aware of how I can tread lightly on the planet by offering low carbon menu choices. And I still enjoy the occasional burger; I know it is high carbon, so I make appropriate adjustments to allow myself the treat,” said Paul Lieggi, Executive Chef at Willamette University in Salem, OR.

Nationally, the goal of Bon Appétit Management Company's Low Carbon Diet is to reduce by 25% emissions from the foods that have the highest impact on climate change. To reach that goal, Bon Appétit is purchasing all meats and vegetables from North America, reducing the amount of beef and cheese served, eliminating air-freighted seafood, and decreasing purchases of tropical fruits. Reducing packaging, limiting use of disposable containers and minimizing food waste are also part of the Low Carbon Diet. And local, seasonal foods remain the focus of the menu.

Rather than simply giving burgers a bad rap, The Low Carbon Diet demonstrates how an ecologically responsible person can still satisfy their craving for high-carbon food favorites. Diners can make their own choices, enjoy their food and take individual action to stop global warming. For more about the Low Carbon Diet, visit: www.CircleofResponsibility.com.

About Bon Appétit Management Company

Bon Appétit Management Co. is an onsite restaurant company offering full food service management to corporations, universities and specialty venues. Bon Appétit is committed to sourcing sustainable, local foods for all its cafés throughout the country. A pioneer in environmentally sound sourcing policies, Bon Appétit has developed programs with Environmental Defense, the Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch, the Humane Society of the United States, and other leading conservation organizations. Based in Palo Alto, CA, Bon Appétit has more than 400 cafés in 28 states, including Oracle Corporation, American University and the Getty Center. (www.bamco.com)