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Beginning in September, Duke employees can have fresh seafood delivered to them on campus. Pictured, fish from Beaufort and Core Sound. | Joshua Stoll

marketing manager for the Duke University Health System, strives to eat regionally raised foods.

She will start adding a little protein to her locally made plate by participating in a new pilot program that offers faculty and staff a chance to order and pick-up fresh fish on campus.

"I'm excited at the prospect of getting access to fresh seafood, and trying different species I've never tried before because they're not available here," Koepke said.

The newly formed Walking Fish Community-Supported Fishery at Duke is launching the 12-week program in September to bring employees bundles of fresh flounder, shrimp, clams and other seafood caught right off the Carolina coast. The initiative is a pilot project of Duke's student chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

"We were looking for a project that was connected to fisheries and conservation, but also would give us the opportunity to engage the community more," said Joshua Stoll, a graduate student at the Nicholas School of the Environment and member of the fisheries society.

Stoll and fellow students got started by locating a seafood distributor in Beaufort, N.C. with a track record of working only with fishermen who abide by legal and sustainable commercial fishing practices.

Duke's program works like the Mobile Farmers Market: participants buy shares of a weekly catch brought in by fishermen from the Pamlico Sound, Core Sound and Atlantic Ocean off the Carteret County coast, about three and a half hours from Durham.

The mix will include seven types of seafood, including regional species such as spot, black drum, mullet and triggerfish for \$7.50 a pound.

Each week, a fisherman will drive a refrigerated truck to a parking lot at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens to hand out two- to four-pound packages of fish, whole or filleted – whatever the buyer's preference. The packages will come wrapped in plastic and ice, and participants will also receive insulated bags to keep their catch cold on the ride home.

Faculty and staff may sign up for the program this month but space is limited to 200 to 250 on a first-come, first-serve basis. The first truckload arrives Sept. 17. For more about signing up, go to www.walking-fish.org or e-mail info@walking-fish.org.

Many employees said they wanted to try the program because it offered heart-healthy, freshly caught seafood at better prices than they could find locally. Others were encouraged by the relatively short trip of the food, compared with seafood that might be processed overseas and then shipped to the U.S., leaving a larger carbon footprint. Those with adventurous palettes also were eager to find new favorites.

"One of the benefits is the process of experimentation," said Koepke, the health system marketing manager. "Whatever they provide in my share I will find a way to cook with it."

A central theme, Stoll said, is really to educate the community and support local fishermen, specifically those who are using more environmentally sound practices for their work.

"We see this as a wonderful opportunity to start a dialogue with people about sustainability, local food and health," he said. "I think there are a lot of misperceptions, and we want to move that conversation forward."

Employees can order, pick up fish on campus

Walking Fish Community-Supported Fishery launches in September

By Samiha Khanna

Wednesday, August 26, 2009

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DURHAM, NC -- Most restaurant servers can recite daily specials and name favorite dishes. But there's one question, Tracey Koepke says, that often stumps even the savvy waiters: Where does the food come from?

As someone committed to reducing her impact on the environment, Koepke, a

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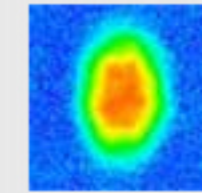
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