

Eat organic, eat smart 食得有機，食得聰明

By Eva Choy 文：蔡卓慧

Crowds gathered at the covered terrace to join the Organic Food Carnival on an early April afternoon. Students shared delicious food such as beetroot soup, carrot juice and molecular ice-cream made on the spot. Stalls displaying a variety of organic vegetables produced locally were surrounded by interested staff and students.

The Carnival was showcasing coursework by students who took the Gateway Education (GE) course "GE2239 Food: Culture, Science & Society". The course stresses the important relationships between food and health as well as food and environment, according to Dr Chan Yuk-wah, Associate Professor in the Department of Asian and International Studies, who has taught the course for three years.

Food culture and safety

Other highlights of the event included a hotel chef who transformed self-grown organic products into 5-star cuisine and visits to organic farms in the New Territories.

One of the group projects last year involved designing a poster for Go.Asia, a charity platform that has brought UK celebrity chef Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution to Hong Kong, Dr Chan recalls.

The impact of the carnival was felt around campus. "Quite a few of my colleagues have asked me to save some organic vegetables for them, while some have asked for contacts for the organic farmers who joined the carnival. This reflects the high demand for clean and safe food," she says.



Myths and misconception

As the saying goes, "you are what you eat". Food safety is a major concern, and the trend for organic food in Hong Kong dates back more than ten years.

But misconceptions persist. In March, a report on organic products by the Consumer Council stated that 37% of vegetable samples that had been marketed as organic actually contained pesticide residue and heavy metals. The report caused some concern in the city, prompting a talk at the carnival titled "Misconceptions about Organic Food and Agriculture" by Professor Jonathan Wong Woon-chung from the Department of Biology at Hong Kong Baptist University, and the Director of the Hong Kong Organic Resources Centre.

Myths about organic food continue, Dr Chan says. "For instance, some people think pesticides and chemicals can never be found in organic plants, but that may not be the case as pollution may occur."

She added that a good way to identify good organic food is to know the food producers and visit their farms. Moreover, to eat local food can help reduce "food miles" and enhance sustainability. "What is essential for your health is to know what you eat," Dr Chan stresses.



Action plans

Dr Chan is planning to further promote organic farming and food on campus by organising a "Good Food Club", which will include staff gatherings, sessions on how to grow plants organically and making the products into delicious and healthy meals.

Ideally, the club will work like a social enterprise that is beneficial to all parties. Providing access to organic farm products, reducing food waste, supporting sustainable development of local organic agriculture and farmer's training will also be included.

So the message is: eat organic, eat smart, and be healthy. ●

四月初一個下午，人群齊集在校園的有蓋平台處，參加「本地有機農產品嘉年華」。學生分享各類美食，包括現場即製的紅菜頭湯、甘筍汁和分子雪糕；攤位擺放了本地生產的各式有機蔬菜，琳瑯滿目，引來不少師生、職員觀賞、品嚐。

嘉年華展示了修讀精進課程「GE2239 食物：文化、科學與社會」的學生的習作。亞洲及國際學系副教授陳玉華博士講授該課程已有三年。她說，課程的重點是介紹食物與健康，以及食物與環境的重要關係。

食物文化與安全

這個嘉年華的其他重點活動包括：請來一位酒店大廚，以師生栽種的有機蔬菜為食材，烹調出五星級美食；以及參觀新界的有機農場。

陳博士提及去年一次小組專題研習中，學生為慈善機構Go.Asia設計海報。英國名廚Jamie Oliver發起的「為食起革命」理念，正是由該機構引入香港的。

校園內處處都可感受到嘉年華的氣氛。陳博士說：「好幾位同事都叫我幫他們留一些有機蔬菜；有些同事則向我查詢如何聯繫參與嘉年華的有機農場主。這多少反映了對清潔而又安全的食物的需求。」

迷思與誤解

英諺云：「You are what you eat.」（人如其食）食物安全一向廣受關注，而香港的有機食物潮流，可追溯到十多年前。

但是誤解依然存在。今年3月，香港消委會發佈一份關於有機食物的報告，指出經檢測發現，在市面發售的有機蔬菜中，37%的樣本含有殘餘農藥或重金屬。這份報告引起市民的關注和擔憂。陳博士特意請來浸會大學生物系黃煥忠教授為嘉年華主持一場講座，題為「對有機食物及農業的誤解」。黃教授亦是香港有機資源中心的主任。

陳博士認為，關於有機食物的迷思仍然常見：「例如，有人以為有機農業是絕不使用殺蟲劑和化學物的，但事實並非如此，污染仍有可能發生。」

她指出，認識食物來源，並到農場參觀，是辨別優質有機食物的好方法。進食本地食材，更有助減少「食物里程」，推動可持續發展。陳博士強調：「健康飲食的要訣，是要弄清楚自己吃的是甚麼。」

行動綱領

陳博士打算組織一個「美食俱樂部」，以求在校內加強推廣有機種植與食物。安排的活動將包括教職員聚會、開設課程介紹有機種植方法，以及把有機食物烹製成健康可口的菜餚。

她期望俱樂部能以社會企業的模式營運，造福各方。俱樂部的發展方向還包括提供認識有機農產品的渠道、推動減少廚餘、支持本地有機農業的可持續發展、培訓農夫等。●

Dr Chan (second from left, back row) is joined by organic food fans at the carnival.
陳博士（後排左二）與有機食物愛好者參與有機農產品嘉年華。



希望各位都能夠食得有機、食得聰明、食出健康！