

Tarleton Dining Partners with Tarleton Meat Lab to Benefit Students

Tarleton State University's Meat Lab serves a critical role in Stephenville, Texas. Not only does it immerse students in all segments of the meat processing operation - including the judgement of various cuts of meat and carcasses, it is also a source of quality meat for local businesses and grocery stores at a low price and a large derivation of jobs for the Stephenville community. In addition, it now aids Sodexo in providing locally sourced, healthy foods to its students and clients.

The partnership that evolved during 2018's spring semester between Sodexo and the Meat Lab was a perfect fit due to its colossal impact on the residents of Stephenville and the student body as a whole. The need to fulfill our client's desired menu on a capped budget during their Athletic Hall of Fame event sparked the conversation between Dr. Sawyer, who oversees the Meat Lab operations, and Tanner Smith, Director of Operations at Sodexo.

It was realized that there was a deficiency amongst the Lab and Sodexo in which the other could solve. Due to the education feature of the Meat Lab, Dr. Sawyer found himself with a large bulk of product clogging up room in the freezers, because meat sales were not meeting the consistent flow of meat processed by students. This excess stock was comprised of meat cuts that Sodexo often uses. A deal was struck up, not only to get the client black angus prime new york strips for their Athletic Hall of Fame dinner within budget, but also for Sodexo to buy hamburger meat in bulk at a low rate in the future.

This partnership has evolved since spring. Not only is Tarleton Dining Services buying hamburger meat in bulk from the students it serves, Dr. Sawyer has offered to provide Sodexo with one cow per month to help advance the goal of serving healthy beef with no preservatives or additives. Starting fall 2018, quarter-pound hamburgers will be served on a daily basis in the dining hall from the cows provided. Taste of Tarleton, Sodexo's catering service, now also has the ability to cut costs for clients on other high quality cuts of beef.

Through this flourishing partnership, not only are the students/ clients getting better meat and saving money, but classes are now able to learn how to process a cow without any product going to waste!