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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WNC Restaurants Well-Positioned  
to Lead the Way in National Trend**

**ASHEVILLE, NC (December 30, 2009)** The National Restaurant Association has released the study *Chef Survey: What's Hot in 2009*. The number one food trend identified is "locally grown produce." No place is better suited to serve those in-demand local foods than Western North Carolina, with its combination of a vibrant restaurant scene and a wealth of family farms.

The Buncombe County Tourism Authority is promoting the Asheville area as "the world's first Foodtopian Society" ([www.FoodtopianSociety.com](http://www.FoodtopianSociety.com)) with good reason. Western North Carolina is home to 12,000 family farms, almost every county has at least one tailgate market, and the downtown Asheville area alone has dozens of independent restaurants.

For the National Restaurant Association's survey, more than 1,600 chefs ranked over 200 choices by the how trendy they thought the items would be in 2009. Here, chefs are well ahead of the curve and have been serving local foods for years. And they know local foods are more than trendy.

Local food has clear and lasting culinary advantages. Fresher foods that haven't traveled as far to the table are better tasting, and the heritage and heirloom varieties often cultivated on family farms offer distinctive flavors. Furthermore, as more and more conscientious consumers are learning, local foods have ethical advantages too. Charlie Jackson, Executive Director of the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP), says buying local, "helps family farms stay in business, in turn preserving the heritage of rural communities, and protecting farmland and the natural beauty of our mountains."

Restaurateurs seeking local ingredients are invited to contact ASAP at 828-236-1282, or through the website [www.appalachiangrown.org](http://www.appalachiangrown.org). The nonprofit organization produces *The Mixing Bowl*, a publication that helps to match chefs and the farmers who can meet their needs.

For consumers, there's the *Local Food Guide*, one of the largest and most comprehensive guides to local food available anywhere in the United States. It's available for free in print around the region and online at [www.buyappalachian.org](http://www.buyappalachian.org). Find out where to buy products from hundreds of local farms, as well as restaurants committed to serving local food.

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**ABOUT APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT**

ASAP helps create and expand local food markets that will preserve our agricultural heritage, give everyone access to fresh, healthy food, and keep our farmers farming. Our mission is to collaboratively create and expand regional community based and integrated food systems that

are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound, economically viable, and health-promoting.