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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Get Local With ASAP: Stock up on Squash This November

ASHEVILLE, NC (November 7, 2011)—Halloween and its pumpkins may have come and gone, but there are still plenty more varieties of local winter squash to be found—think Acorn, Butternut, Delicata, and Kabocha. In fact, these cold-hardy veggies are the stars of area restaurant menus this month, thanks to ASAP's Get Local initiative.

The exact roles they'll play at Laughing Seed Cafe and Jack of the Wood are a mystery, however. "They're surprises," says Laughing Seed chef Sandy Krebs of the winter squash specials they plan to run on November 19. Local Americana band Red June plays Jack of the Wood that evening at 9:30 pm. Because Red June's 2011 Homegrown Tour is dedicated to local food, and proceeds benefit ASAP, the restaurants and chefs want to do something special. The only available clue? Krebs shares that her favorite variety is Long of Naples, a buttery Italian heirloom squash.

Of course, nearly all varieties can be found at area groceries and farmers tailgate markets now. While some area tailgates have closed for the season, many remain open and will continue offering winter squash and other veggies, along with baked goods and handcrafted gift items, for the holidays. Winter squash, particularly Butternut, stores well for the winter. Stock up and store in a cool, dry place (that doesn't freeze); it will sweeten with the cold weather. Try incorporating different varieties into your Thanksgiving meal this year. Butternuts even shine as a pumpkin alternative in classic pumpkin pie.

For a list of participating restaurants, visit the Get Local page of asapconnections.org. There, you'll also find the 2011 calendar of featured foods and a Get Local school calendar; participating schools are serving local potatoes this month. Visit ASAP's *Local Food Guide* online at buyappalachian.org to search by your favorite winter squash variety, and find a listing of winter/holiday farmers tailgate markets at ASAP's new community website, fromhere.org.

[High-resolution photos available. To connect with local producers/chefs in your community for stories, contact Communications Coordinator Maggie Cramer at maggie@asapconnections.org.]

ABOUT APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT (ASAP)

ASAP's mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To learn more about ASAP's work, visit asapconnections.org, or call (828) 236-1282.

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