Food Procurement Policy for the University City and the Central Restaurant

Assiut University

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Assiut University purchases food for the University City (student housing dining halls) and the University Central Restaurant. Its aim is to give priority to local farmers, local producers and sustainable sources, to support regional food security and rural livelihoods in Assiut Governorate, and to serve students, staff and visitors fresh, safe and nutritious food.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All food and beverage purchases made for the University City dining halls.
- All food and beverage purchases made for the University Central Restaurant.
- All suppliers, contractors and tender committees involved in these purchases.

3. Policy Statement

Assiut University commits to prioritizing the purchase of food products from local farmers, local cooperatives, small and medium-sized producers and sustainable sources, wherever quality, safety, availability and price comply with the requirements of the applicable public procurement regulations.

4. Definitions

- **Local sources:** Farmers, cooperatives, producers and suppliers based in Assiut Governorate first, then neighboring Upper Egypt governorates, then other Egyptian governorates.
- **Sustainable sources:** Producers who use responsible practices such as efficient water use, reduced chemical inputs, seasonal production, humane animal husbandry, and minimal packaging and food miles.
- **Seasonal products:** Fruits, vegetables and other produce purchased during their natural harvest season.

5. Procurement Priorities

When preparing tender specifications and evaluating offers, the University applies the following order of preference, subject to food safety and legal requirements:

1. Fresh produce (vegetables, fruits, dairy, eggs, poultry, meat, fish) from farmers and producers in Assiut Governorate.
2. Products from neighboring Upper Egypt governorates when local supply is insufficient.
3. Products from other Egyptian producers.
4. Imported products, only when no suitable national alternative exists.

In addition, the University gives preference to:

- Small and medium-sized enterprises, farmer cooperatives and women-led producers.
- Seasonal items in menu planning to reduce cost, transport emissions and storage losses.
- Suppliers who use recyclable or reduced packaging.

6. Procedures

1. **Tender specifications:** Tender documents for fresh produce and staple foods include a clause stating the University's preference for local and sustainable sources.
2. **Supplier registration:** A register of approved local farmers, cooperatives and producers is maintained and updated each academic year.
3. **Evaluation:** Offers are evaluated on quality, freshness, safety, price and source. Local origin is recorded as an evaluation criterion.
4. **Menu planning:** The nutrition and catering committee prepares menus around seasonal and locally available produce.
5. **Quality and safety control:** All deliveries are inspected against national food safety standards before acceptance. Suppliers must hold valid health and commercial licenses.
6. **Records:** Purchase records identify the origin of each major food category so that the local share of spending can be measured.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- **University Vice President for Community Service and Environmental Affairs:** Oversees implementation and annual reporting.
- **Director of University Housing and Food Services:** Applies the policy in daily operations and maintains the supplier register.
- **Tender and Purchasing Committees:** Include the local and sustainable sourcing clause in all relevant tenders.
- **Nutrition and Catering Committee:** Plans seasonal, balanced menus and verifies food quality.
- **Internal Audit Unit:** Reviews compliance with this policy once a year.

8. Monitoring and Key Performance Indicators

The University monitors the following indicators each academic year:

- Percentage of total food spending paid to suppliers from Assiut Governorate.
- Percentage of total food spending paid to local farmers, cooperatives and SMEs.
- Number of registered local suppliers.
- Share of seasonal produce in monthly menus.
- Results of food quality and safety inspections.

Results are reported annually to the University leadership and published in the University sustainability report.

9. Links with Other University Commitments

This policy supports the University's wider sustainability goals, including reducing food waste in dining halls, promoting healthy eating among students, and strengthening cooperation between the Faculty of Agriculture and local farming communities.

10. Review

This policy is reviewed every year, or sooner if regulations change, and updated according to monitoring results.