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The James Beard Foundation Presents  
**The System on Our Plates:**

*A National Dialogue on Sustainability, Public Health, and the Foodservice Industry*

New York, NY (October 18, 2010) – The [James Beard Foundation](#) will launch the first annual national food conference, The System on Our Plates, in collaboration with the [Sustainable Food Laboratory](#), this fall. The invitation-only conference to be held October 21 in Washington, D.C., will focus on public health and sustainability through the lens of the foodservice industry. Participants include chefs, restaurateurs, government officials, philanthropists, and business leaders who will address major challenges and solutions in the culinary world.

“More people than ever before in our nation’s history are interested in and passionate about the healthfulness of their food and the health of their food system,” said Susan Ungaro, President of the James Beard Foundation. “Our goal is to engage the entire culinary community to identify ways to improve food safety, nutrition and sustainability in the foodservice industry.”

The agenda of the national gathering is based on a series of regional meetings hosted by the James Beard Foundation and the Sustainable Food Laboratory in Portland, Ore., Portland, Maine, Kansas City, Mo., Long Island, N.Y. and New York City. Through various presentations, panels, group discussions, and other guided conversations, the conference will address many of the common themes discussed by chefs, farmers, sustainability experts and other stakeholders in the food system who attended the regional meetings.

“James Beard himself was a strong proponent of locally grown, conscientiously sourced foods,” said Mitchell Davis, Vice President of the James Beard Foundation. “As a continuation of his legacy, this conference will deliver fresh ideas about how we can address the most important issues facing our food system today.”

Topics that will be addressed during the food conference are:

- What can large foodservice operations learn from the experiences of chefs in small, independent restaurants and vice versa?
- Beyond the sourcing of ingredients, how should restaurants best address sustainability issues such as water and energy consumption, waste, and labor?
- How can we better inform and educate consumers about the best choices to make?

Guest speakers and panelists include Sam Kass, White House Chef and Senior Policy Advisor for Healthy Food Initiatives; Mike Strain, Commissioner of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry; Chef Nora Pouillon; and sustainable food pioneer Chef Michel Nischan.

This conference was made possible with funding from [Sodexo](#) and [Edens & Avant](#), founding partners of The System on Our Plates, and support from the Sustainable Food Laboratory members [Ruby Tuesdays](#) and [Sysco](#).

**About the James Beard Foundation**

Founded in 1986, the James Beard Foundation is dedicated to celebrating, nurturing, and preserving America's diverse culinary heritage and future. A cookbook author and teacher with an encyclopedic knowledge about food, James Beard,

who died in 1985, was a champion of American cuisine. He helped educate and mentor generations of professional chefs and food enthusiasts. Today, the Beard Foundation continues in the same spirit by administering a number of diverse programs that include educational initiatives, food industry awards, scholarships to culinary schools, and publications, and by maintaining the historic James Beard House in New York City's Greenwich Village as a "performance space" for visiting chefs. For more information, please visit [www.jamesbeard.org](http://www.jamesbeard.org). Find insights on food at the James Beard Foundation's blog [Delights & Prejudices](#). Join the James Beard Foundation on [Facebook](#). Follow the James Beard Foundation on [Twitter](#).

### **About the Sustainable Food Laboratory**

The Sustainable Food Lab is a consortium of business, non profit and public organizations working together to accelerate the shift toward sustainability. The Sustainable Food Lab facilitates market-based solutions to the key issues—including climate, soil, poverty, and water—that are necessary for a healthy and sustainable food system to feed a growing world. The Sustainable Food Lab uses collaborative learning to incubate innovation at every stage along the supply chain from producing to distributing and selling food.

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