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Contacts: Suzette Riley, sriley@cplusc.com, 206-409-1960 (m)

Jackie Wei, jwei@nrdc.org, 310-434-2325 or 347-874-8305 (m)

Report: U.S. Pro Sports Shifting to More Sustainable Game Day Food

Green Sports Alliance and NRDC release first-of-its-kind study on concessionaires and venues providing fans with local, healthy fare

CHICAGO (June 30, 2015) – Leading professional sports venues that serve all major leagues are now promoting more sustainable food options to fans, according to a <u>new report</u> by the Green Sports Alliance (GSA) and Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). "<u>Champions of Game Day Food</u>" features 20 venues spanning North America that are serving healthier food choices and adopting more sustainable food practices behind the scenes to help advance smarter environmental practices throughout our food system.

"Prioritizing sustainability in sports stadiums and arenas can have ripple effects well beyond the venue gates," said Gabriel Krenza, NRDC Strategic Food Advisor and report co-author. "By modeling smart food practices, these iconic sports teams are showing real leadership that is influencing their millions of fans as well as the important food providers that supply their concession stands."

The report highlights a broad set of more sustainable activities across sports venue food practices, including planning menus with seasonal and local fare, sourcing third-party certified sustainable food and beverage, using energy- and water-efficient kitchen equipment, donating unsold food, and diverting waste from landfills through composting. The results include more local, organic, antibiotic-free, vegetarian and vegan menu options; more recyclable and compostable utensils and packaging; and reduced waste by feeding those in need and producing valuable compost, among other enhancements.

"We are seeing the start of a significant cultural and marketplace shift towards environmentally intelligent food at sports venues," said Dr. Allen Hershkowitz, co-founder and president of the Green Sports Alliance. "Greener food service programs have helped venues improve operational efficiency, feed those in need, and better cater to varied dietary preferences. The game day fan experience is changing for the better as a result."

Key findings from the 20 professional sports venues featured in the report include:

- 17 venues provide organic food options.
- 18 venues source food from local farms.
- Five venues have on-site gardens.
- 14 venues serve antibiotic-free meats.
- 14 venues compost food waste.
- Seven venues use compostable serviceware.

Report highlights include:

- **St. Louis Rams**: 100 percent antibiotic-free, humanely raised, and grass-fed beef hot dogs and burgers are served at Edward Jones Dome to Rams fans.
- Florida Marlins: Approximately 10,000 pounds of unused prepared food at Marlins Park is donated to local senior homes annually to feed those in need.
- **New York Yankees**: 278 compost bins at Yankees Stadium help fans compost ballpark-wide, advancing the Yankees' zero waste goals.
- **Dallas Cowboys**: AT&T Stadium sources its USDA-certified organic produce from nearby Paul Quinn College's student-run farm.
- **Seattle Mariners**: 100 percent of all beef and pork served at Safeco Field is raised without antibiotics or hormones.
- San Francisco Giants: AT&T Park features vegetarian and vegan meal options in every concession area, earning the ballpark first place in PETA's 2014 Vegetarian Friendly MLB Stadium Rankings.
- *Philadelphia 76ers/Flyers*: Nearly 100 percent of serviceware at Wells Fargo Center is compostable.
- **Sonoma Raceway, Host of NASCAR**: The raceway was the first North American racetrack to plant a two-acre organic garden onsite and uses a herd of nearly 3,500 milking sheep to mow the raceway lawns without any industrial equipment.
- Tampa Bay Lightning: 125 hydroponic garden towers grow one acre of organic food onsite at Amalie Arena to feed Lightning players and fans.
- San Francisco 49ers: 30 percent of all Levi's Stadium produce is USDA-certified organic and more than 20 percent of the menu is vegetarian.
- San Diego Padres: 100 percent of used cooking oil at Petco Park is recycled and donated as biodiesel to support local public transportation and school buses.

The social and environmental benefits of these practices are wide-ranging, including improving water quality, reducing chemical use, protecting soil health, and cutting carbon pollution. Additionally, 40 percent of the food in the U.S. is wasted, while one in six Americans do not know where they will acquire their next meal. Sports teams' efforts to cut waste and donate unsold food are helping to tackle this critical problem.

"Changing the menus at sports venues, which collectively serve hundreds of millions of people each year, offers an influential platform that can educate consumers and the

marketplace about healthier food and stronger food systems," said report co-author Alice Henly, Director of Programs at the Green Sports Alliance and Resource Specialist at NRDC. "There is a growing trend towards more efficient and environmentally intelligent practices across the supply chain of game day food. The powerful examples in this report provide successful models that all food providers should emulate."

To read the report go to: www.greensportsalliance.org/foodreport

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About Green Sports Alliance

The Green Sports Alliance leverages the cultural and market influence of sports to promote healthy, sustainable communities where we live and play. The nonprofit does so by inspiring sports leagues, teams, venues, their partners, and millions of fans to embrace renewable energy, healthy food, recycling, water efficiency, species preservation, safer chemicals, and other environmentally preferable practices. Alliance members represent nearly 300 sports teams and venues from 20 different sports leagues and 14 countries. Visit www.greensportsalliance.org, follow us on Twitter at @SportsAlliance and join the global conversation at #GreenSports.

About NRDC

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 2 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, and Beijing. Visit www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC for more information.