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## Dalhousie goes 'trayless' to save on water costs

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**HALIFAX** — Dining trays are going the way of the dinosaur at Dalhousie University.

Students stopped using the trays to carry plates of food last Monday, a move designed to conserve water required to wash them and keep detergents out of the harbour.

"A year and a half ago, we started introducing bamboo and reed plates, which are 100-per-cent biodegradable and compostable, and getting rid of Styrofoam on campus where we can," Derrick Hines, Dalhousie food service director, said yesterday.

The environmentally friendly initiative will save about 3,000 litres of dishwashing water every day, "not to mention the chemicals," he said.

Mr. Hines said the university went through roughly 4,100 trays daily, or about 900,000 trays annually.

Not only will "going trayless" reduce water use, he said, but it also means less electricity to run dishwashers and less uneaten food dumped into garbage and green bins.

"Students come along and scrape their dishes and it makes them realize how much food they're wasting as well," he said.

Mr. Hines, who works for food service provider Aramark, said Dalhousie University is the second school in the country to take away dining trays.

The University of Manitoba in Winnipeg was the first to set the green standard for cafeterias in Canada, with a handful of U.S. colleges also taking up the challenge.

Besides giving dining trays the boot, Mr. Hines said, Dalhousie started selling fair-trade coffee a couple of years ago, is trying to buy more products from local food suppliers and is planning to switch its food service truck over to biodiesel.

"We would use the leftover deep-fryer oil to run our diesel truck."

Dalhousie students have also been debating dining trays, mostly via Facebook, a social networking website.