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Farm 255 names Whitney Otawka as Head Chef

Hopeful Top Chef contestant will begin late November

Athens, Georgia (October 20, 2011) – [Farm 255](#), the restaurant and farm operation located in Athens, Georgia, has named Whitney Otawka as its incoming Head Chef beginning late November. Recently revealed as a hopeful contestant in the upcoming Season 9 of Top Chef, to air on November 2nd on Bravo, Otawka will take the helm of Farm 255's kitchen after a year of culinary accomplishment at Cumberland Island's prestigious Greyfield Inn.

Farm 255 is a local, seasonal, and sustainable restaurant renowned as an early vanguard of the farm-to-table movement, as its concept can be more accurately thought of as "farm-and-table." The restaurant owns and operates its own vegetable operation, [Full Moon Farms](#) & its own producer cooperative of pasture-based pork and beef ranchers, [Moonshine Meats](#). Farm 255 is the flagship restaurant of an enterprise that also includes Atlanta's [Farm Burger](#), serving 100% local grassfed burgers sourced from the same farms.

Opened in 2005 and characterized by its alternative business model, Farm 255 is recognized as one of the first restaurants of its kind in the country to source its ingredients almost exclusively from its own farms and other small-scale sustainable farms in the area. Farm 255 is a tireless contributor to the local food community, and has been honored with recognition by leading organizations such as Slow Food International, the Glynwood Institute, and Chefs Collaborative. Farm 255 and its partner operations have received national attention from outlets such as CNN, The James Beard Foundation, *Food & Wine Magazine*, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* and *Southern Living*, and are featured in the recently released documentary film "[The Greenhorns](#)".

Prior to Greyfield Inn, Otawka served as Sous Chef of 5&10 in Athens, and simultaneously as Chef de Partie of Restaurant Eugene in Atlanta. She has held numerous stages in New York's finest restaurants such as Per Se and Le Bernardin, and worked with chefs and winemakers across Europe. "Farm 255 is a seasonally-driven restaurant no matter who is at the helm, extending far beyond today's farm-to-table trend by sourcing from its own farms," says Otawka. "At the heart of my approach is the idea of comfort food. I am influenced by the old world, traditional country dishes of France, Italy, and Spain and, of course, the south. I will focus my attention on technique and craftsmanship while bringing new flavors to rustic cuisine." Otawka plans to change the menu considerably with these inspirations in mind, and will reveal her ideas later in the season.

Chef Matt Palmerlee, who has been with the operation since its opening, will be moving on to develop his own artisanal charcuterie and sausage business and focus on his activities with [The Four Coursemen](#). Hired as a prep cook, Matt's rapid ascension in the Farm 255 kitchen highlights his natural prowess as a chef, and showcases Farm 255's dedication to cultivating strong professionals from the ground up with a team-oriented collaborative management structure.

Farm 255 and Farm Burger provide a community-based example for the new era of conscientious eating across the country, and the addition of Whitney Otawka to its prestigious team of chefs, restaurateurs, farmers and butchers will continue the enterprise's notable contribution to the movement. News of Otawka's arrival and new menu can be followed via Farm 255's newsletter and blog at www.farm255.com.

For media inquiries, contact:

Olivia Sargeant olivia@farm255.com (m) 415.812.5166

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255 w. washington street • athens • georgia • 30601
phone 706.549.4660 facsimile 706.549.4659 • www.farm255.com

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