**Butternut Squash Bean Soup with Sage** 

1 (2- to 2 1/2 pound) butternut squash

2 - 3 tablespoons olive oil

7 cups reduced sodium chicken broth (or homemade)

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon pepper

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 pound of leeks (around 3 large)

1 tablespoon tomato paste

2 garlic cloves, minced

2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini beans (white kidney beans), drained

12 ounces cooked and shredded chicken (rotisserie or leftover works well)

2 tablespoons minced fresh sage, or 2 teaspoons dried

2 teaspoons white wine vinegar

Parmesan cheese for serving

1. Using sharp vegetable peeler, remove skin from the squash. Cut round bulb section off squash and cut in half lengthwise. Scoop out seeds and cut each half into cubes.
2. Add 2 – 3 tablespoons olive oil to a Dutch oven and place over medium heat. Add cubes from the bulb section and cook until golden, stirring frequently. Add broth and soy sauce, bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Partially cover, and simmer until squash is very tender and starting to fall apart, about 20 minutes. Take off of heat and then use an emersion blender or potato masher to make a smooth, thick broth and set aside.
3. Cut neck of squash into 1/3-inch pieces. Add the squash pieces and pepper to the thickened broth.
4. Wash the leeks, including in-between the layers to remove any soil. Slice the white and light green parts lengthwise, slice again lengthwise, then thinly slice across.
5. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in a large skillet over medium low heat. Add leeks and cook for a couple of minutes, then add tomato paste and cook, stirring occasionally, until leeks have softened, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add this combination to the squash broth and bring to simmer. Partially cover and cook for 10 minutes.
6. Add beans, shredded chicken and sage and simmer until squash is just tender, around 10 more minutes. Stir in vinegar at end. Top individual bowls with Parmesan cheese as desired.

Serves 6 – 8 Recipe by Margie Mansure, margie\_mansure@ncsu.edu