

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION



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For Immediate Release

Sodexo Supports Community Food Security Coalition in Building Healthier Communities Through Increasing Access to Healthy Food

Des Moines, IA – From October 10-13, 2009, 650 people from across the Midwest region, the U.S. and beyond will gather at the Polk County Convention Center in Des Moines, IA for “*From Commodity to Community: Food Politics and Projects in the Heartland*,” the 13th annual conference of the national *Community Food Security Coalition*.

Leading food security advocates from throughout the US and Canada will meet to discuss strategies for taking advantage of the current surge in interest among policymakers and the public for healthy and local foods. The role of health care reform in driving change in the food system is just one example of a topic to be discussed at the conference.

“Sodexo is pleased to continue its sponsorship of the Community Food Security Coalition's annual conference,” said Arlin Wasserman, Sodexo’s vice president for sustainability & corporate social responsibility. “We are committed to fostering a more sustainable food system and this conference is an important source of dialogue on how to promote healthy and sustainable food choices.”

From Commodity to Community is the 13th annual meeting of the Portland, Oregon based *Community Food Security Coalition*. CFSC catalyzes food systems that are healthy, sustainable, just, and democratic by building community voice and capacity for change. It is an alliance of groups working on anti-hunger, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture issues. CFSC has 300 organizational members in 41 states, 4 Canadian provinces and the District of Columbia.

Other features of the event include plenaries on transforming a commodity-based food system to one grounded in communities; presentation of the First Annual Food Sovereignty Prize to Via Campesina; a reception with World Food Prize recipient Hans Herren entitled, “What Will the World Eat;” the first national gathering of food policy council leaders; field trips to prominent farms, gardens, grocery stores, schools, and restaurants using locally grown products; and 50 workshops on a wide variety of topics related to farming and food.

"Obesity costs our country \$147 billion per year," said Andy Fisher, executive director of the Community Food Security Coalition. "Increasing access to healthy affordable food is an important strategy to reducing obesity and its costs to the nation. CFSC sponsors annual conferences as a tool for sharing information among community leaders who helping to build healthy farms, communities, landscapes and individuals."

In addition to the numerous panels and workshops, the conference seeks to “walk the talk” by minimizing food waste and serving Iowa-grown or raised products. Organizers see celebration of the gift of food—an expression of relationships between people, land, and animals – as an important element of food security.

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The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a North American organization of social and economic justice, environmental, nutrition, sustainable agriculture, community development, labor, anti-poverty, anti-hunger, and other groups. CFSC has 325 organizational members in 41 states, 4 Canadian provinces and the District of Columbia. It is dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food to all people at all times. It seeks to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining food and creating a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability.

CFSC achieves its goals through a blend of training, networking, and advocacy with grassroots groups to create effective solutions from the ground up. It provides a variety of training and technical assistance programs for community food projects; supports the development of farm-to-school and farm-to-college initiatives; advocates for federal policies to support community food security initiatives; and provides networking and educational resources.

For more information:

Sodexo: www.sodexousa.com

Conference website: www.communityfoodconference.org

Community Food Security Coalition: www.foodsecurity.org