



COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY *news*

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Farm to Cafeteria Policy Breaks New Ground in Washington

—Sarah Borron,
CFSC Policy Associate

As we emerge from the aftermath of Hurricane Isabel here in DC, the CFSC policy staff are preparing for the storm of Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Our Farm to Cafeteria proposal remains strong.

In the spring issue of CFS News, we announced the introduction of “Assistance to Farm to Cafeteria Projects” in S. 995, Sen. Leahy’s “Child Nutrition Initiatives” Act. This legislation creates a \$10 million competitive grant fund for schools to develop Farm to Cafeteria projects. Schools can use the money, up to \$100,000 over three years, for a variety of start-up costs: updating school kitchens, training staff to handle fresh food, providing staff time to develop food procurement arrangements with farmers, and creating seasonal menus and nutrition education.

In the House, Representatives Fred Upton (R-MI) and Ron Kind (D-WI) have since introduced nearly identical legislation: House Resolution 2626, the “Farm to Cafeteria Projects” Act. Bipartisan support for the measure grows daily, as now 24 representatives have co-sponsored H.R. 2626. This group includes nine Republicans,

(See *FARM TO CAFETERIA* on pg. 5)

Growing the Movement: An Introduction to the Issue

This issue of CFS News is the first part of a two part series focusing on growing the movement- the theme of our annual conference, held in Boston on November 1-5. Over the past few years, the community food security movement has expanded significantly. Funding has expanded for on-the ground projects, from augmented federal sources and new funders. Large foundations are broadening their program areas to focus on community food security. Food policy councils are sprouting up across the country- at both the state and municipal levels. In diverse fields, such as public health, new linkages are being built to food and farming advocates. More students are studying community food security at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Interest in local foods has increased dramatically among consumers and the media.

Community food security is entering a new phase- a phase of growth, of transition from a young and exciting movement to a more established and recognized field. As the movement- and individual projects mature, we are faced with the challenges of scaling up our successes to gain a greater impact on the food system. What are our models for growth? What are the best strategies for making change in the food system?

How can we support grassroots groups in making their local food systems more sustainable, healthy, and just?

This issue will examine these challenges from the perspective of our existing programs. How is the work of the Community Food Security Coalition helping to foster a more sustainable and community-based food system? What are the lessons that we have learned from our experiences? What impact will our work have on the broader movement?

This issue is released as we complete our strategic plan. It is posted on the CFSC website at www.foodsecurity.org to allow for your comments on its implementation.

The next issue of the newsletter will focus on future directions for the movement. We'll hear from CFSC members, conference speakers, and more. We hope that these two issues will be thought provoking on how we move forward collectively. You're welcome to drop me a line on your thoughts on any of the topics brought up in these two issues.

—Andy Fisher is the executive director of the Community Food Security Coalition and can be reached at andy@foodsecurity.org

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Summer-Fall 2003

CFS News is a quarterly publication of the Community Food Security Coalition. The CFS Coalition's mission is to promote comprehensive systems-oriented solutions to the nation's food and farming problems. It conducts policy advocacy; provides technical assistance to organizations implementing food security related programs; organizes regional coalitions; maintains a clearinghouse and database; conducts research and publishes reports; and educates the public and professionals through the media, conferences, and newsletters.

Community food security (CFS) is defined as "all persons obtaining at all times a culturally acceptable nutritionally adequate diet through local non-emergency sources." A CFS approach emphasizes the need to build community institutions to ensure access and availability for community residents. Thus, food security must be seen as a question of community development and empowerment which complements and extends the traditional view of addressing hunger issues at the individual level.

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New Directions for Technical Assistance Program

by Kai Siedenburg

In 2002, CFSC created two significant new training and technical assistance programs that provide a good lens for viewing the growth of the CFS movement. They reflect an evolution toward more integrated and collaborative approaches to addressing food system issues; as well as growing interest in understanding what works and applying that information to strengthen CFS programs. This article focuses on the evaluation program, with a subsequent article in the next issue of *CFS News* to explore the community food assessment program.

CFSC's Evaluation Program also reflects the growth of the CFS movement. Since its inception, CFSC has provided forums for practitioners to share information and learn from each others' experiences. Now, investing in a more structured evaluation program and working with a team of professional evaluation consultants is enabling us to do this in a more thorough and rigorous manner.

After years of running programs, more CFS practitioners are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of these programs. The growing body of CFS work across the country makes it more possible to explore what is and isn't working across various projects. The first two years of the Evaluation Program have focused on working with Community Food Project Grantees to gather baseline information

about current evaluation practices and to develop simple evaluation methods and specific evaluation tools for examining CFS work at a program level. (The program is funded by USDA to provide assistance to Community Food Projects grantees, but the materials developed will be made available to other organizations.)

Currently, many CFS practitioners are working hard to create lasting change in their food systems and communities, but have limited capacity to rigorously evaluate whether and how that change is taking place. Once a significant number of programs conduct thorough evaluations, we can begin to develop a foundation of knowledge about which aspects of CFS programs are successful and why. This foundation will allow us to explore much more complex questions about how this work is impacting individuals and communities, and how it is influencing community food security. This information will be an important resource for building a more effective movement, and should help build the case for additional funding and support for CFS work.

To make this level of evaluation possible will require further development of a fundamental aspect of the CFS movement: how we define and understand various terms (such as healthy, local, sustainable). Working toward broader consensus on these terms will in turn help build the movement in other ways, by clarifying our thinking and helping ensure that we are speaking the same (or at least similar) languages.

—Kai Siedenburg is the T&TA Program Director and can be reached at kai@foodsecurity.org, or 831-429-8202

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Bringing Together a Movement in California

by Heather Fenney

The work of farmers and community food activists in California has inspired and helped build the Community Food Security Coalition since its creation. From the promotion of farm to school programs and organic and sustainable agriculture, to the banning soda in public schools and the ever growing number of farmers' markets and other direct market opportunities for producers and consumers, CFSC's California members are doing groundbreaking work that has national recognition and importance.

While farm, anti-hunger, environment and public health policy campaigns in CA have had many accomplishments at the state level, they have had limited coordination among their leaders, campaigns and activist networks. Looking at these successful campaigns, and at the energy of our members working in their own communities, CFSC saw an opportunity to help bring together food security interests in the state in order to have a greater impact on policy. And so, in 2001 CFSC took on its first regional organizing effort in California, with the purpose of building a diverse community food security movement in the state that would promote and support our members' local work by influencing change in state and national policy.

Following a year of outreach and research with leaders and organizations to identify key CFS issues in California, CFSC, along with our CA member organizations, hosted the first

ever California Community Food Security Summit, "Organizing for Action," in Oakland in June 2002. More than 200 people attended and by the summit's end the California Food and Justice Coalition (CFJC) was born.

Over the last year, with the support of the CFSC, a 15-person steering committee has been formed, representing grassroots organizations, public agencies and statewide coalitions. Mission and vision statements and a membership pledge have been adopted, with a policy platform recently released. The state coalition already has more than 60 organizational members who have come together to address community concerns related to food access, nutrition, public health and the production and distribution of food.

The CFJC policy platform includes recommendations supporting farmers' markets, CSA's and farm to school projects, in order to address independent farmers' need for markets, and the food access and nutrition needs of children and socially disadvantaged communities. The platform also includes recommendations to form a state food policy council, and for the Governor and Department of Education to make statements supporting food security and local food purchasing.

In the coming years the CFJC will continue to undertake issue campaigns aimed at increasing community food security awareness in the state and changing policy. The CFJC seeks to

build the CFS movement in California with each campaign action, while preparing California's food activists, state decision makers and the public at large to create a food system that is just, sustainable, locally owned and feeds Californians.

Sustaining long and challenging policy campaigns in the state will require that the coalition has a strong organizational foundation that engages all of its members and potential allies in the state. CFSC is working with the state steering committee to secure funding and create the leadership and decision making infrastructures necessary to support this long-term effort.

The California coalition is just the first of CFSC's regional organizing efforts. In upcoming years, we hope to be partnering with groups in other parts of the country on similar efforts. Contact the CFSC office for more information if you're interested in developing a partnership in your region.

You can learn more about the CFJC at www.foodsecurity.org/california.html or by calling CFSC's California Organizer, Heather Fenney at 310-822-5410.

Richard McCarthy— The New South Meets the Old Cuisine Profiles in Leadership

by Mark Winne

Spend a couple of hours with Richard McCarthy at Loyola University's Twomey Center, and you sense both the stern presence of the Jesuit teacher, with an unremitting commitment to social justice, and the sophisticated gourmand whose love of food is no less intense. But on the streets of New Orleans, seeming contradictions such as these dissolve quickly into a kind of jazz-fusion.

McCarthy, 38, is wise beyond his years. His perfectly formed sentences evolve into eloquent paragraphs delicately seasoned with the vocabulary of New Left politics (to which he has subscribed), the London School of Economics (where he says he studied "world revolution"), and the community organizer (which he is). While he has formed a theory of change that surgically dissects the failures of globalism and free market capitalism, he's scraped his knees on the rough ground of Old South politics, racism, and a place struggling to escape its image as the Murder Capitol of the World (a recent past that included 300 to 400 gunshot murders per year). Though he can hold forth with ease on the tenets of Marxism and the Mondragon Manifesto, his passion for community-scale economic development has led him to restoring the pride of people in their place, their heritage, and most precisely, their food.

As a New Orleans native, McCarthy knows intimately the failures of the South, but has been an active participant in its rising. He's been involved in many coalitions



Richard McCarthy

and campaigns including one that vigorously opposed the various escapades of David Duke. He's experienced Louisiana's failure of confidence as the state crawled out of its petrochemical swamp and soaring cancer rates into the light of its musical revival and renowned cuisine. The failures of the past were nothing more than fertile ground for the creation of the vibrant future that Richard saw. Adopting the slogan of the early 20th century Industrial Workers of the World labor movement, "Building a New World in the Shell of the Old," McCarthy has used the region's dilapidated past to lay a new foundation for community economic revival.

What keeps McCarthy moving is a strong moral compass that's powered

in part by his association with the Twomey Center whose core values are embedded in the principles Catholic Jesuit social justice. His vision for economic revival builds on a community's assets, no matter how dented and rusted they may be, and marries them to an aggressive form of social entrepreneurship that recognizes the economic necessity of running projects as businesses. But it's the social benefit to a widest possible swath of his region and its many food system stakeholders that connects Richard's twin personas of economist and social justice warrior. By creating a mutually supportive economic system, which he has done between rural Louisiana and urban New Orleans, he can link the destiny and viability of each to the other. In other words, urban constituents begin to recognize that both their food security and food culture are dependent on the success of rural agriculture in the same way that farmers came to see how their livelihoods are linked to the survival and stability of New Orleans.

Through the Twomey Center, Richard initiates and promotes ecologically sound economic development in New Orleans and its surrounding region. In 1995 he led the way in the establishment of the Crescent City Farmers' Market, a 60 farmer market that annually grosses \$2 million. Through the technical assistance that Richard dearly loves to provide, 12 more markets have sprouted in the region including three that his group manages. Through these markets Richard has incubated new ventures such as Riverside Pasta as

RICHARD McCARTHY (continued from page 4)

well as new product diversification schemes for farmers. Dairy farmers, for instance, who just weren't making it in the commodity milk market, turned to an old time Louisiana favorite called creole cream cheese, the fond remembrance of which brings tears to the eyes of its devotees.

What comes across most strongly in talking with Richard and reviewing his list of accomplishments is his singular commitment to "passing the gift."

Though he modestly recognizes the role he plays as charismatic leader who inspires others to do extraordinary things, his greatest leadership quality is encouraging others to take acceptable risks and in so doing, push the outer limits of their comfort zone. Whether it's a farmer who believes it's too dangerous to come to New Orleans unless he's armed, or a welfare mother who doesn't believe she can start and run her own business, or a community that resists the introduction of an innovation like the Senior Farmers'

Market Nutrition Program that brought \$100,000 of new sales to the market, Richard selflessly passes on his knowledge to folks while building a framework and support network to ensure their success.

The elements of this framework include the financial and business assistance resources that people need to develop new ventures. But such a framework is not the usual "survival of the fittest" approach that prevails in standard business models. Instead, it's one that depends on a network of community support that assembles people and sectors with complementary skills and interests. Again, its chefs working with farmers to mutually satisfy each other's needs. It's community activists linking arms with downtown development interests to create neighborhood-scale business opportunities. And it's the larger community that stands up for someone in need as it did when one of the market's farmers nearly lost his leg in a farm accident. The uninsured man had \$80,000 in medical bills that farmers,

restauranters, consumers and the local newspaper substantially reduced with a fundraiser. As Richard said about this episode, "it made us realize that the boundaries of our community are larger than we think."

McCarthy's ethic of empowerment combined with a compelling and clearly articulated vision of a healthy and nurturing community elevates him to the higher rungs of the leadership ladder. His vision incorporates a larger world-view that places the economic strengths of the community at its center. He believes in creating "social space", which becomes a launching pad for new ideas and ventures with social and economic benefits to their participants. Like all great visionaries, his imagination is a veritable jambalaya of rich, spicy ingredients capable of creating an endlessly exciting menu of options.

FARM TO CAFETERIA (continued from page 1)

fourteen Democrats, and one Independent.

Member and partner organization support has contributed to this widespread backing. Over 175 organizations in 33 states endorsed the Farm to Cafeteria legislation and joined a sign-on letter in support. We hand-delivered this letter to every member of the House of Representatives, and we continue to use this list to demonstrate to lawmakers the support for this initiative. Your organization can still sign on at http://www.foodsecurity.org/f2s_endorse.html.

If this legislation passes, it could result in an exponential increase in

the number of farm to school projects happening across the country. Through building this critical mass of projects and the increased legitimacy provided by federal legislation, additional funding from localities, states, and foundations may also result.

Within the confines of the Beltway, the passage of Farm to Cafeteria legislation would create a model (along with the Community Food Projects, and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs) for federal policy that is good for family farmers and good for low income communities. It could pave the way for future policy in the next Farm

Bill and beyond for additional gains that support community food systems.

Your support of this groundbreaking legislation is vital! Your calls do make a difference! Let your Congresspeople know that you want them to invest in healthy children and healthy farms. You can reach your Representatives and Senators through the Capitol Switchboard (202 224-3121).

(See RICHARD McCARTHY on page 5)

Farm to Cafeteria— At a Crossroads

by Marion Kalb

The statistics are becoming all too familiar—61% of the U.S. population, and 25% of children ages 19 and under are overweight. The topic is so hot, that recently, a news item appeared concerning overweight pets. As the attention around the “epidemic of obesity” increases, school food has come under the intense scrutiny of parents, health professionals, school boards and legislators. The shocking state of our children’s health has spurred concerned parents and communities into banning sodas and junk food from schools, demanding healthy options in vending machines, and engaging in fund-raising activities that do not rely on selling candy. Elected officials are also moving to limit or eliminate unhealthy foods in schools, creating city and statewide policies.

With this momentum building to improve food in schools, food security advocates have a tremendous opportunity—perhaps unprecedented—to make the connection between healthy eating and healthy farms. There are many voices clamoring to include more fruits and vegetables in school meals, and now is the time to move community food security to the forefront of the obesity debate.

One avenue to achieve this is to develop ties and increase collaborations with the nutrition and health community. To do this, we need to begin documenting our successes and developing research projects that look at the connection between experiential agriculture education and the food choices that

kids make. Research—including pre and post surveys to document changes in fruit and vegetable consumption—is needed to gain credibility with nutrition professionals. The nutrition community has been requesting studies of this kind, as it uses research to develop programs and policy recommendations. Without this research, we miss a timely opportunity to strengthen ties with nutrition and health professionals.

Another avenue for broadening support for food security within farm to cafeteria work is to work closely with schools—food service directors, school board members, teachers, nurses and administrators. The financial constraints faced by schools are very real, with food service expected to cover food *and labor* costs for approximately \$2.16 per meal. As organizers, we need to understand their constraints and work with them to address the issues they face. This kind of collaboration helps to gain the credibility that can open to doors to experiential agriculture education, such as farm tours and school gardens, and the incorporation of agriculture into school curricula.

Third, we need to broaden the debate on child nutrition by focusing on the win-win-win result of incorporating farmers into the school food system. Children clearly benefit from farm to school programs, and experience is showing that the more children are involved in growing, cooking, and understanding where their food comes from, the more likely they are

to adopt healthy eating habits. Farmers in the region also benefit, by diversifying their marketing opportunities and selling to a market that will have a steady demand for products. Communities benefit from farm to school programs, as farms stay in the region, they create jobs and help to keep agricultural land undeveloped. Cross-pollination occurs as kids eat local produce at school, and dad buys from the farmer who supplied the school at the local farmers’ market. Children visit farms and not only meet the farmer, but they experience the wonder of a carrot pulled from the ground, or an apple picked off a tree.

Food security advocates are uniquely positioned to move beyond the goal of increasing produce consumption, to helping students, parents, school personnel and communities, become an integral part of the agriculture that surrounds them. The development of healthy, life-long eating habits, can also produce a healthy region, where farms are economically viable, open space is abundant, and parents determine where food is grown before buying it for their families. It is up to us to use this historic opportunity towards these ends.

—Marion Kalb, is the Farm to Cafeteria Program director for the CFSC and can be reached at marion@foodsecurity.org

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION?

The CFSC is a national network of organizations forging new ground in developing innovative approaches to food and farm needs for communities across America. Started in 1994, it is at the forefront of building a national movement around community food security.

WHY SHOULD I BECOME A MEMBER?

Becoming a member is a way to strengthen your connection to the Coalition and other related organizations and individuals across the country. Your membership helps build a dynamic national movement, and provides important support for innovative CFS initiatives. Membership also comes with certain benefits: a subscription to the quarterly CFS News newsletter, voting privileges (for organizations), and discounts on Coalition publications.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Please join at the organization member level. By doing so, it demonstrates your organization’s commitment and lends us greater political strength.

- \$35 Individuals
- \$50 Small organizations, with less than \$100,000 budget
- \$100 Large organizations, with more than \$100,000 budget
- \$500 Individual life time membership
- \$_____ Low income individuals, students, or seniors (sliding scale—\$1-\$25)

PUBLICATIONS AND OTHER MERCHANDISE:

- \$12 Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids: Evaluating the Barriers and Opportunities, for Farm to School Programs 2001
- \$15 Full Color, original artwork, T-shirts. (100% organic cotton shirt) -- Circle one: S, M, L, XL
- \$10 Getting Food on the Table: An Action Guide to Local Food Policy. 1999.
- \$10 Hot Peppers and Parking Lot Peaches: Evaluating Farmers’ Markets in Low Income Communities. 1999.
- \$30 Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security for the Inner City. 1993.
- \$10 Community Food Security: A Guide to Concept, Design, and Implementation. 1996.
- \$18 What’s Cooking: A Guide to Community Food Assessments. 2002

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WHY Launches Food Security Learning Center

Are you looking for an electronic learning center that pulls together in one place information on community food security, nutrition, domestic hunger and poverty, federal food programs, rural poverty, the family farm crisis, and migrant workers? WHY (World Hunger Year) has launched a new web initiative, located at www.reinvestinginamerica.org on these and other common community problems.

The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) is a proud partner in this initiative and provided the expertise necessary to explore community food security in depth, with information and action resources on Farm to Cafeteria, Community Supported Agriculture, Community Gardens, Farmers' Markets, Local and Regional Food Systems, Food Policy Councils, and Community Food Assessment.

Each category in the learning center provides an introduction, program profiles, policy initiatives, and ways to get involved. Links to web and print resources, related articles, connections to government programs, a glossary and frequently asked questions are included. A prominent feature of the site is a searchable directory of more than 400 organizations that work for food security, jobs, and justice and includes more than 6,000 referrals to published resources. But this Learning Center is not just for information. It is there to expand the food security movement, build alliances, and create more self-reliant communities. The future work of the Learning Center will be about that task.

Check the Learning Center out. We need your input. Let us know how we can help. Contact: Peter Mann at WHY (peter@worldhungeryear.org).