

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY *news*

A COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY COALITION PUBLICATION ■ WINTER 2002

Food security after 911: An Introduction to the Issue

We have all been told that September 11th changed everything. One clear change has been that the word “security” has newfound resonance. The security of airports, power plants, ports, and our food supply is at the forefront of policy debates nationally. Thirty eight billion dollars for “homeland security” has been requested by the president, with millions dedicated to protect our food supply from bioterrorism.

It is in this context that the meaning of food security has taken on a revitalized importance, and its focus shifted slightly. At the international level, an examination of the root causes of the World Trade Center tragedy has led to a growing call for new investments in the eradication of hunger and poverty as a longer term more civilized approach to eliminating the conditions for terrorism. In the domestic arena, advocates contend that the short-term police-based approach of homeland security needs to be complemented by efforts to address the systemic problems that plague the nation’s inner cities, rural

(See *SECURITY AFTER 911* on pg. 7)

Washington D.C. Hosts Community Food Security Conference

By James Hong

The 5th annual Community Food Security conference almost didn’t happen. Scheduled just three weeks after the tragic events of September 11th, it was almost cancelled. At the CFSC, we decided that it was important to persevere and



Phoenix, poet from Spoken Resistance, a DC-based arts and activism organization, shares her poem on food security.

reaffirm the importance of working toward community food security. This reaffirmation was confirmed by the 300 participants- a record number- who signed up for the conference. The mood of the conference was very powerful and positive even as reports of bombs dropping in Afghanistan filtered in, reinforcing the attendees’ commitment to a peaceful and just society.

Located in Washington, DC, the theme of the conference was Taking Back the Food System, with a focus on federal policy and its implications for local food system efforts. The main plenaries employed the metaphor of “warriors, builders, and weavers.” As Steve

Stevenson of the University of Wisconsin (moderator for the plenaries) describes, the term “warriors” refers to those who contest the corporate model of the food system primarily in the political arena. “Builders” are those who seek to create alternative food enterprises and operate in the economic sector. “Weavers” focus on building connections among warriors and builders, such as creating conceptual frameworks.

The plenaries featured activists who integrated warrior, builder, and weaver activities in their work. In the opening plenary, speakers discussed their experience in building on-the-ground projects and how they created social change through community organizing, coalition building, and policy advocacy. The closing plenary focused on the importance of federal policy in scaling up grassroots efforts to create fundamental change in the food system.

Other elements of the conference included field trips to highlights of the local DC food system, including Amish farms, a seafood processing plant, organic vegetable farms, and community gardens. Workshop topics included building a CFS national media campaign, how-to-lobby effectively, institutional buying of local foods, the seniors farmers’ market nutrition program, and transportation policy for a sustainable food system. Two half day short courses focused on increasing participants’ familiarity and skills in advocating and developing public food policy at the local, state and national levels; and developing regional food

(See *FOOD SECURITY CONF.* on page 12)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Winter 2002

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.

Board of Directors: Alison Cohen, *Heifer Project International, Brooklyn, NY*; Georgia Good, *Rural Advancement Fund, Orangeburg, SC*; Mary Hendrickson, *University of Missouri, Columbia, MO*; Hank Herrera, *NENA, Rochester, NY*; Peter Mann, *World Hunger Year, NY, NY*; Leslie Mikkelsen, *Prevention Institute, Berkeley, CA*; Mohammed Nuru, *City of San Francisco Department of Public Works, S.F., CA*; Kathy Ozer, *National Family Farm Coalition, Washington, DC*; Kami Pothukuchi, *Wayne State University, Detroit, MI*; Pam Roy, *Friends of the Farmers' Markets Santa Fe, NM*; Sharon Thornberry, *Oregon Food Bank, Tangent, OR*; Gary Valen, *Glynwood Center, Cold Springs, NY*; Lydia Villanueva, *La Casa del Llano, Hereford, TX*; Connie Whitehead, *Farmer, Strawberry Plains, TN*; Mark Winne, *Hartford Food System, Hartford, CT*

CFS Coalition
PO Box 209, Venice, CA 90294
Phone: 310-822-5410
E-mail: cfsc@foodsecurity.org
Web: www.foodsecurity.org

Editor: Andy Fisher
Guest Editor: James Hong

Letter from the President:

This issue of Community Food Security News is dedicated to food security post 9-11. Indeed, the tragic events of 9-11 made all of us reevaluate our lives and communities in many different ways, as Peter Mann points out in his excellent essay (see page 3).

In this light, our advocacy of community food security grows ever more important. We have a unique and comprehensive approach to the problems created by our present food and farming system—hunger, rural poverty, environmental degradation, poor nutrition, corporate control. Our organization is extremely valuable in creating just, sustainable local and regional food systems with partners from localities and organizations across the country. Few other approaches wrestle with the whole system from soil to table (and beyond), and still fewer come away with hope that things can change! Food is emerging as a central and linking theme for the work of many at the grassroots. Much of our uniqueness stems from the fact that we focus on the quality and availability of food to all people—not just those who can afford it.

Obviously community food security is having enough good, safe food on *all* our tables to satisfy us physically, socially and emotionally. But community food security might also play a role in food safety. Through our movement we try to create interdependent regional food systems that



bring food from the region to the people who live there—rather than from thousands of miles away. This is a far cry from the global system from which we in the United States get much of our food.

The 1990s saw the creation of HACCP—Hazardous Analysis at Critical Control Points—as a new approach to food safety on the state and national levels. While anticipating and solving problems before they exist is always a good thing, HACCP potentially removes many inspectors from the food manufacturing process. HACCP has its strengths, but the process has already shown itself too limited to contain bacterial outbreaks that can occur with the kind of global food systems we have now.

Regional food systems, on the other hand, mean there are fewer *critical control points* where our food is vulnerable to blunders—intended or not. Moreover, the mistakes that do occur are more easily contained, and do not bring the national widespread concern that we saw with the relatively recent *E-coli* and listeria outbreaks. Nor do regional food systems lend themselves to the angst that many now feel about possible terrorism in the food system.

Community-centered, interdependent, just, sustainable food systems—how can anyone say no?

— Mary Hendrickson
January 2002

Community Food Security Coalition Staff

Andy Fisher
Executive Director
andy@foodsecurity.org

Tom Forster
Policy Director
thomas@foodsecurity.org

James Hong
Policy Associate
james@foodsecurity.org

Marion Kalb
Farm to School Program
Director
marion@foodsecurity.org

Tori Kjer
Field Organizer
tori@foodsecurity.org

Kristen Markley
Farm to College Program Mgr.
kristen@foodsecurity.org

Maria McGrath
Administrative Assistant
Maria@foodsecurity.org

Thomas Nelson
California Organizer
tnelson@foodsecurity.org

Jeanie Abi-Nader Pitre
Evaluation Program Manager
jeanette@foodsecurity.org

Kai Siedenburg
T&TA Program Director
kai@foodsecurity.org

Maya Tauber
Farm to College/Farm to
School Program Associate
maya@foodsecurity.org

Why Homeland Security Must Include Food Security

Official Policy Statement of the CFSC

Since the horrific September 11 attack on the World Trade Center, Americans have become aware in a new way of “homeland security.” For most of us, that means security from terror, improving airline safety, renewed military defense.

I think we now need make sure that homeland security also includes food security. We must ensure a secure and safe and regional food supply. We have to think in a new way about where our food comes from, and how we can ensure that everyone in a large yet vulnerable city like New York, or in smaller suburban or rural communities, has enough to eat, and access to their own cultural foods.

Americans take for granted a global food system that brings all kinds of food from all over the world to anyone who can afford them. Yet the real threat to U.S. food security is the inability to produce our own food, close to our homes. Military terrorism is in all our minds, but what happens when terrorists are able to corrupt large food and water systems, or destroy bridges and transportation systems on which our present globalized and vulnerable food security depends?

We must begin thinking seriously about “food miles.” In our present food system, the food we eat travels on average about 1200 miles. This makes our food system tremendously vulnerable in the field, in storage, or in transit. We get a foretaste of this threat when an area is afflicted by natural disasters such as floods, droughts, or hurricanes. In the changed world after September 11, that kind of threat can touch all of us.

How can we make effective changes? Every community should be able to produce at least a third of the food required by its residents. At present, in many cases, less than five percent is produced. Every community should have a food system that

connects producers, processors, distributors and eaters. This would demand a rethinking of agriculture, from industrial farming and large-scale production, to a multiplicity of small-scale farms, with vegetables and animals, and a revitalized marketing system.

The good news is that the seeds of this new food system are already present. Farmers markets where citizens have access to regional food are springing up all across the country. There are now around 1000 CSAs (Community-Supported Agriculture) initiatives in the U.S., reaching 100,000 people. The Farm to School movement connects schools and colleges to local farmers and brings fresh food to student cafeterias. Urban agriculture—growing food in and around cities—is spreading. Consumers are using their food dollars to support organic production and the humane treatment of livestock, not factory farms.

Food Security and World Peace

Just before her untimely death, I interviewed Robyn Van En, one of the pioneers of community-supported agriculture in the United States. “Eating from a regional food supply,” she said, “would be a real step toward world peace...Growing food is the common thread throughout the world, in that everybody eats. It connects everyone across all party lines, all ethnic and religious differences.”

Robyn spoke of the multinational food companies who control so much of the food and extract it from starving countries to stockpile it somewhere else until the market changes. “If every place in the whole wide world had its own regional food supply and its own regional food security, the world would be a very different place. It would be different if people just did not have power over others to manipulate them with food.”

I have been thinking of these words since the terror attack of September 11. The breeding ground of terrorism is poverty, hunger and hopelessness. More than one billion people live on less than one dollar a day. Nearly two billion more survive on less than two dollars a day. They are outside the market. Biotechnology companies claim they can feed the hungry, and ADM calls itself “Supermarket to the World.” Yet these are empty words for the billions of poor people in the world outside the corporate market.

A hungry world is indeed a dangerous place. Only when our food policies begin with the hopes and dreams - as well as the knowledge and skills - of the urban and rural poor of the world, will we build true food security and this will be a huge step toward homeland security and world peace. One of the hopeful reactions to the horrific events of September 11 has been an awakening to our common humanity, a new solidarity, and a longing for justice and peace. This gives me a sense of hope that real food security and world peace may one day be possible.



Peter Mann

Peter Mann is international coordinator for WHY (World Hunger Year) and a CFSC board member

Food Irradiation: Can We Zap Our Way to a Safe Food Supply?

by Patty Lovera



The radura symbol is used to label foods that have been irradiated.

In the wake of September 11th, all aspects of our society have been discussed as the point where terrorists could strike next. The food system has not escaped such scrutiny, and lots of ideas are popping up about how to safeguard our food supply. To really address these issues we should talk about government inspection of food, the impacts of huge factory farms and the trend of consolidation in food production, and other critical issues about where and how we produce our food. Instead, the meat and food processing industries and their allies in the federal government are taking advantage of the public's concern about security to push a bad idea—food irradiation.

Food irradiation is the process of exposing foods to high doses of ionizing radiation to kill bacteria and increase shelf life. Those pushing the technology promote it as a way to virtually sterilize food and protect the public against *E. coli*, *salmonella*, and other bacteria.

But food irradiation is really a technological quick fix for problems that can be traced back to industrialized farming and unsanitary food processing practices. Irradiation allows corporations to increase their profits at the expense of small farmers and consumers who have fewer options for wholesome, nutritious food.

Irradiation has gotten quite a bit of attention lately because two of the biggest irradiation companies are now in the business of “sanitizing” mail. SureBeam and Ion Beam Applications have contracts with the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to irradiate anthrax-contaminated mail from New Jersey and Washington DC and the USPS plans to use irradiation on mail coming into

federal government offices in DC. But the irradiation of mail has not gone entirely smoothly, with reports of workers being made ill and mail being destroyed, and even the USPS is backing off their earlier plans to use it throughout the country. But that hasn't stopped some in the food industry from claiming that the public is now more willing to accept the irradiation of their food. If there has been any increase in the public's comfort level with this technology, it is surely because people aren't aware of what irradiation involves.

How Food Irradiation Works

Irradiation exposes food to a dose of ionizing radiation that is equivalent to millions of chest x-rays. This energy kills bacteria in food, but that's not all. It also disrupts the chemical composition of food, creating new chemicals called “unique radiolytic products.” These chemicals do not naturally occur in the foods before they are irradiated, and many of them have not been studied for safety. One byproduct, which is so unique it is used as a “marker” to show that food has been irradiated, has been found to cause genetic damage in human cells.

Irradiation can also destroy vitamins and other nutrients in food. Studies have found that irradiated eggs suffered an 80 percent loss in vitamin A and irradiated orange juice lost 48 percent of its beta carotene. There is also evidence that irradiation increases the amount of nutrient loss that occurs from cooking.

Is It Safe?

Despite government approval and assurances from the food industry, there is lots of evidence that we should be concerned about irradiating our food. Research dating to the 1950's has revealed a wide range of problems in animals that ate irradiated food, including cancer, reproductive dysfunction, chromosomal abnormalities, liver damage, low weight gain and vitamin deficiencies. In legalizing food irradiation, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) did not determine a level of radiation to which food can be exposed and still be safe for human consumption. The agency also relied on laboratory research that did not meet modern scientific protocols.

(See **IRRADIATED FOOD** on page 14)

What Can You Do About Food Irradiation?

The first thing we can do to stop food irradiation is to not buy it. Ask your grocery store if they sell irradiated food and tell them that you don't want it. And let your elected officials know that you want them to strengthen consumers' right to know by protecting labeling requirements.

Public Citizen has a campaign to stop food irradiation. If you would like to get involved or learn more about the issue, please contact us:

Critical Mass Energy and Environment Program
Public Citizen
215 Pennsylvania Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 546-4996
cmep@citizen.org
www.citizen.org/cmep

The Significance of Security

Or, A Peripatetic Reflection on the Meaning of Our Movement

by Hank Herrera

**To paraphrase the 60's anthem:
Make security, not war.**

The purpose of this essay is to reflect on the meanings of security, prompted by the sudden pressing attention to food security in the war against bioterrorism. The Community Food Security Coalition defines community food security as ready access to culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate food through local non-emergency sources at all times. This definition implicitly refers to security as a state of "...freedom from want or deprivation," specifically, in this instance, freedom from the deprivation of food. But after September 11, food security gained urgency associated with food safety, the security that refers to "protection against attack," i.e., bio-terrorist attack on the food supply.

In this terrifying time after September 11, we relentlessly seek security—which seems even more relentlessly elusive. In so many ways, we need the terror to stop, to go away. If it did, would we not then have security? Yes, actually, we would have a very significant form of security, "freedom from fear or anxiety." Fundamentally we experience security as a relaxation of the tension associated with anxiety and other signals of danger, such as pain and hunger.

We have mounted a massive global effort to stop terrorism. Military, intelligence and diplomatic forces do this work abroad, and now the Office of Homeland Security does this work in the US. Hopefully we are winning the war on terrorism. Yet many of us still feel terror, thus demonstrating that protection against attack does not automatically yield freedom from fear or anxiety. This dilemma begs the question, how do we stop terror as well as terrorism?

The various uses of the word, security, have shadings, gradations and distinctions in significance. In the pressure of the post-911 world, we amplify and intensify the differences. In an environment of scarce resources, we amplify and intensify our rhetoric to maintain position in relation to competing interests. As we respond to the immediate call to protect ourselves, we risk losing focus on our own mission. By ignoring the multiple meanings of security, we risk losing momentum in the slow, steady work required for rebuilding community food systems and community food security.

Recent exchanges on the Coalition's list serve (November 28 – December 2, 2001) reflect these various uses and meanings of security, and the problems of communicating about community food security, problems now more complex after September 11.

Steve Garrett: I just noticed that various "Food Security" bills have been introduced in Congress...meant to better protect our food supply against terrorists. I have noticed how difficult it is to get people in my community to use the term "food security," let alone "community food security" because many people say that the word "security" sounds like a police action. Now it is. I think that these bills and subsequent media coverage will make it even more difficult to get people to use the words "food security" within the context that we are promoting nationally and especially in our communities."

Hank Herrera: I learned somewhere along the way that "security" refers to a state of minimal anxiety...in the sense that secure and anxious are two ends of a continuum. If so, then food security can refer to minimal anxiety from the threat or actuality of hunger in the community (i.e., community food security as we use the term) and/or minimal anxiety from the threat or actuality of damage inflicted on the food supply by terrorists. Maybe we need to find a way to accept these two kinds of food security and find ways to both distinguish between the two and demonstrate their complementarity.

Gail Harris: When we talk about food security...we are talking about freedom from worry about having enough to eat, freedom from worry about where our food comes from or what chemicals might be contaminating it, etc. This is perfectly consistent with the "new" food security efforts to protect against terrorism. We might use this opportunity to emphasize that threats to food can come from many sources, terrorism being only one. The greatest threats have been growing for a long time and I think we should highlight this.

Robert Stern: This will lead to some confusion but there's not much we can do to control how words are used. I think the best approach is to accept the different meanings and find ways to bring the different interests together. Protecting the food supply from bioterrorism fits in well with eating local, knowing your food sources, i.e., local farms, and not over relying on distant sources that can be disrupted.

Pat Ladipo: Discussing the problems and inappropriate images that "Community Food Security" evoke, some community stakeholders...suggested that terms leading in the direction of "self-sufficiency" or "assurance" might be better. These by themselves might underplay the safety concerns that terrorists and industrial agriculture make so salient, but there might be a way of combining community self-sufficiency with the safety angle. As it is, the converted find they lack the language needed to communicate with others.

(See *THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SECURITY* on page 12)

This Organic Life: Confessions of a Suburban Homesteader

by Joan Dye Gussow (Chelsea Green Publishing Co, White River Junction, VT; Hardcover: \$22.95).

Reviewed by: Kami Potbukuchi*

Reviewers ought to start their review by highlighting the key message of a book: I will start by urging all to rush to your local bookstores or libraries, get a copy, and read this particular one!

Joan Dye Gussow's latest book is a marvelous journal of her household's experiment to subsist almost entirely out of their backyard garden, documenting the intense joys and many travails of the process. Along the way, it also ruminates about the important questions about our food, ecology, society, and life itself. In a way, this book is really the continuation of a set of arguments laid out in her previous book: "Chicken Little, Tomato Sauce, and Agriculture," (1991, The Bootstrap Press, New York). In that, Gussow frankly discussed all that was wrong with our globally-transported, heavily-subsidized, fossil-fuel-dependent, unjust, and tasteless food. Here, she shares the teachings of an alternative, lovingly crafted with her late husband and fellow experimenter, Alan Gussow.

Tender, wise, funny, sad, and with characteristic outrage at how Americans typically eat, the book shows us how to think about the larger questions related to eating locally (and seasonally): Why should we do it? Is it even possible? Is it worth "the sacrifice"? (of course, it isn't one to her; in fact, she spends much ink documenting how it is both a privilege and a pleasure to eat home-grown vegetables.) Can there be a place for meat in a sustainable diet? (Yes.) How can one educate a diverse community of eaters about the politics of food? What are the barriers to developing more sustainable, responsible food systems? (Mainly, people know very little about their food; more

importantly, many resist knowing more. Knowledge entails taking responsibility for changing practices that would not pass the moral muster of most reasonable people.)

The book also tells us how to do a lot of things in fascinating details that I, a new gardener, would not have known (and would not have known to ask about, either). Techniques and tips for growing, picking, storing, preserving, and cooking a variety of vegetables; organizing vegetable beds; wintering fig trees! (page 124-5); dealing with pests; building soil, among other things, abound and are generously shared from several decades worth of experience. Delightful recipes are interspersed within the text—often anticipating thoughts of "how do you eat *that*?" relative to some of the vegetables she mentions.

Tantalizing glimpses of life around the garden make the reader share, for example, her frustration with their experiences of having to gut, then raze, then rebuild a new house on the Hudson River and the joys of living and gardening at her new home and community there. We despair with her as she copes with droughts and floods and pests (even if this feeling is unfamiliar to some of us, even if the experiences are not), and applaud as a community garden she helped create gets going on what could have been a parking lot next door. We grieve as we read about the death of her partner and follow her through intimate decisions about his ashes (part scattered in the Hudson River, part at Moneghan Island, and the rest, as one might expect from Gussow by now, in the vegetable garden, p 141-2).

That the sub-title has the word, "confessions" is not accidental. In an era dominated by the propaganda that we can consume anything we want, anytime, and in whatever quantities we can pay for, her garden and her effort to rely entirely on it are not merely

unconventional, they also go against the grain of how we are told to live and behave. When I moved from India to the US a little over a decade ago, I remember being confused and overwhelmed by the supermarkets and their infinite varieties of products. I have gotten over this experience, even if food shopping is still something of a chore! Gussow, an American, who has lived long enough to see food distribution change over the decades, however, continues to feel profoundly dislocated in these stores. She peers into other people's carts and wonders how, in the absence of the opportunity and restrictions of time and place, "they decided which of the sizes, flavors, and shapes of things they chose" (p 175).

The book weaves back and forth in time, with reminiscences and journal entries from the past, sketching an intimate image of a little ecosystem on the Hudson river. As the inter-connections between the land and its infinite particularities, the seasons (of the earth and the humans), the river, and the will to know and cooperate with Nature (and the consequences of not doing so) slowly unfold, we begin to understand why Gussow chose the title, "This Organic Life." The book is a feast for the community food security activist's mind! Nonetheless, I have one small complaint. The only picture of the Gussow garden is on the cover jacket; my eyes were left hankering for more images of this piece of Eden and its many faces. Perhaps a future book will contain more of them, even perhaps of some paintings of Alan Gussow that were inspired by the garden! To recap the message early on: this book is a must read!

*Kami Potbukuchi, CFSC board member, teaches urban planning at Wayne State University.

Is There Any Community Food Security in the Farm Bill?

By Thomas Forster

There is not much that truly protects and increases communities' own efforts to build secure local food systems in the US Code. The Farm Bill and other federal legislation make rhetorical hay over protecting and building national and global food security—and yep, family farms. But true community food security? Where local and regional food from independent family farms are the staples of nutritional and culturally appropriate diets for local populations, especially low income women, children and seniors? Hardly.

So it is worth paying attention to the few places in the Farm Bill that do reflect the goals of community food security, programs that support independent family farm access to local markets and supply affordable, nutritious and good-for-the-land food.

- The “Assistance to Community Food Projects” section of the Nutrition Title is one of these. It is renewed in both House and Senate

Farm Bills. While the House tripled the program to \$7.5 million per year, the Senate at this writing level funds the program at \$2.5 million per year. The Senate language does accommodate mini-grants and planning grants for community food security projects. The campaign to increase the funding level will continue.

- There is hope yet for language in the Senate Farm Bill supporting farm-to-school seed grants and local purchase bonus accounts for schools and institutions. The USDA has just terminated the pilot farm to school project, despite its success and popularity. Debate over the Senate Bill will include efforts to bring local food purchase by schools into the Bill.

- Farmers market coupon programs (WIC and Senior FMNP) are both in the Farm Bill, but need stronger language to ensure full funding. FMNPs are providing increased

receipts at farmers markets across the country. Some farmers markets would probably not survive if the programs disappeared, especially those serving food-insecure low income communities.

Your continued advocacy has been effective so far and continues to be important with your federal and state representative on these programs. They are among the few that are successful linkages between urban and rural areas, between farmers and the most vulnerable consumers, between food and agriculture policy. For more information contact the Community Food Security Coalition 310-822-5410 or email thomas@foodsecurity.org. Check out the Coalition's full policy proposals for “Healthy Farms, Food, and Communities” at www.foodsecurity.org.

SECURITY AFTER 911 (continued from pg. 1)

areas, and the environment. True national security includes the right to a clean and safe environment; the right to food and a decent livelihood; and access to quality and affordable health care.

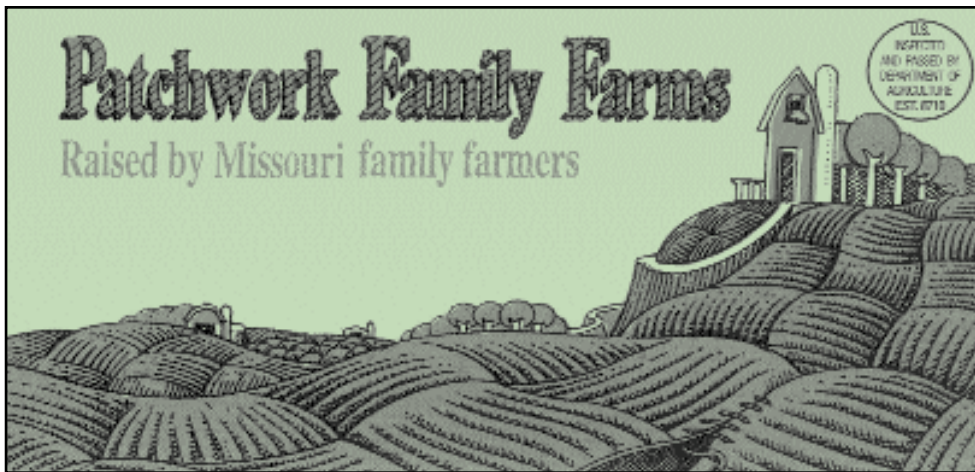
This systemic analysis extends to our food chain. The protection of our food supply extends beyond guarding livestock from contamination by nasty biological agents. Ecology teaches us that diversity is stability. A stable food system, less vulnerable to disruption, is one with a more decentralized production, processing, and distribution base than currently

exists. Conversely, the more centralized our food system is, and the longer the distance between producer and consumer, the more vulnerable it is to disruption. As Patty Lovera points out in her article, “Food Irradiation,” proposed technical fixes, such as irradiation, do little to address the underlying concerns of consumers about their food's safety.

Food safety and food security have merged in the post 911 environment. As Hank Herrera points out in his article “The Significance of Security,” food insecurity has crept into the middle

classes, as a manifestation of their anxiety about their food's safety. The time has come to examine these concerns together, through a prism that joins all consumers, regardless of their economic status, as beholden to an unsafe, far-flung and dangerously concentrated food system. The solution lies in economic reform, and building an alternative community-based food supply that enables us to know how, who, and where our food is produced. Food security is knowing your farmer.

Patchwork Family Farms: A Model Community Food Security Project



The Coalition has published a booklet profiling seven “Community Food Projects” (CFP) funded with USDA grant money from the 1996 Farm Bill. The CFP program supports projects that target the needs of low-income communities: increasing their access to nutritious foods, with an emphasis on self-reliance and local food system development. Over 100 diverse and innovative projects have been funded since 1996, focusing on nutrition and business education, community supported agriculture, market gardening, micro-enterprise development, and linking farms with local institutions. **The free booklet is available through our website or can be ordered by calling our office.** A description of one of the profiled projects is included below.

In 1992, a handful of Missouri hog farmers formed an “economic development committee” in response to the tremendous obstacles that independent family farmers faced in trying to earn a living. Most of the small hog farmers in the state were threatened with bankruptcy, due to a lack of access to markets and extremely low hog prices. In 1998, prices dropped to an all time low of 7.5 cents per pound, well below the production costs.

By 1994, a group of farmers founded the Patchwork Family Farms cooperative to provide independent

producers with a viable alternative to the corporate-controlled livestock system, which was not providing them with fair prices. Patchwork seeks to “recapture the middle” by doing their own processing, marketing and selling of pork products rather than just selling whole hog. This strategy of adding value to the raw commodity is increasingly common among farmers striving to make a living—but it is only viable if farmers can get access to markets, which is often difficult in today’s highly consolidated agricultural economy.

Patchwork provides a quality product and better income

Patchwork started small, using a family-owned processing plant in Hale, Missouri, and an old pick-up truck with an icebox. The storage site doubled as their office. In 1998, the Missouri Rural Crisis Center received a USDA Community Food Project grant for \$195,000 for three years to help expand Patchwork Family Farms. The CFP grant enabled Patchwork to increase annual sales by allowing them to purchase more equipment and hire several additional employees.

Today, Patchwork buys 20 to 30 hogs per week from fifteen independently operated Missouri family farmers for 43 cents per pound (or 15% above the market price, whichever is higher). Patchwork increases the farmers’ incomes from their hog operations by 25-50% above what they would receive from average market prices. The proximity and reliability of Patchwork eliminates the farmers’ worry about long transports to auction houses or processing plants and the fluctuating prices these places offer.



(See **PATCHWORK** on page 9)

PATCHWORK (continued from page 8)

Patchwork farmers adhere to strict standards that result in clean, high quality meat products: no continuous use of antibiotics, no growth hormones, and no complete confinement. Patchwork also seeks to increase food security for communities that do not have access to quality meat by marketing and selling their products to local and low-income areas.

Local markets benefit farmers and low-income communities

As Patchwork Family Farms was getting established, three churches in economically depressed African American communities in Kansas City were particularly helpful in marketing their products. Connections had been established between the farmers and the churches during the 1980's, when the churches joined forces with the Missouri Rural Crisis Center to help fight against record low farm prices and unfair farm foreclosures. So the organization once again turned to these communities for support.

On Sundays the farmers took turns driving to church to attend the service, socialize, sell their products, and ask for advice on the cuts and labels. The church trips provided the farmers with income and a test market for their products, while supplying access to quality meat for the Kansas City customers. In addition, these Sunday visits offered an opportunity for cultural exchanges between rural and urban communities.

In 2001, Patchwork farmers continue to sell at church events, as well as to food co-ops that sell locally grown products and restaurants that feature free-range meat and local produce. According to Rhonda Perry, Executive Director of Missouri Rural Crisis Center, more than 60% of the retail sales come from limited-resource populations, primarily in the neighborhood surrounding the Columbia office. She notes that Patchwork is special because it is



based on personal ties to their consumer market, which foster communication and caring between local farmers and low-income consumers. According to Perry, food is a tool for building community.

The impact of USDA support

The CFP grant funds have enabled Patchwork to expand and to move toward financial viability much more quickly, by hiring a full-time marketing project coordinator and purchasing additional processing equipment. Originally, Patchwork had one processor that created main cuts, bacon, pork chops and loins. The shoulder and other parts were made into ground pork, a low-demand and inexpensive product. To decrease waste, two additional processing plants have been added: one to make specialty products, and a second that can do either basic or specialty cuts. Patchwork also has purchased another freezer truck that transports meat from the lockers to the warehouse, which contains freezers and coolers for storage.

The future

For 2001, Patchwork's sales goal is \$300,000. Their future plans include further expansion of the storage area and freezer space, and influencing government policies that would encourage schools to go outside of the procurement program and buy local products like Patchwork Family Farms pork.

In other states and other livestock sectors, farmers are examining the viability of replicating the Patchwork model. It has created an important example of a successful marketing cooperative program that provides farmers with a good price, community support, and more control over their livelihoods. Reproduced across the country, such marketing cooperatives may enable many more family farmers to stay on their land and continuing farming, as it has done for the 15 Patchwork members.

Contact Information: (573) 449-1336
morural@coin.org

Warriors, Builders & Weavers: An Excerpt

Mark Ritchie, *Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy*

Policy and the Democratic Process

While we're there advocating for the specific policies that we know we need we also have to simultaneously fight for democracy itself. It's not just an ideology; a flag waving thing; a democracy is great and all that thing. The democratic process is absolutely critical because number one: it's the only way that we can actually have the expertise of real people brought to bear to the policy process. If policy is just being made by a few staffers and a few people in Washington it will be wrong because it will be absent the actual experience of people. This is especially true at the international level which is where I primarily work. People in Geneva who are trade negotiators are making very specific rules about how food stamps can in fact be counted and be fit into a policy system and they have no idea on what's going on at the ground level.

The democratic process is critical both for coming up with the right solutions and approaches but second for the purposes of buy in. We can dream up all kinds of great policies, environmental policies, food security policies you name it but if there isn't a democratic process so that the people feel brought into the policy making process it will not be possible to either get the kind of the political support necessary to put some of these into law or the practical day to day support to put these policies into practice at the ground level.

Scaling Up Efforts for Food System Change

Until the society really has a connection back to our food supply, the fact that somebody else doesn't have food may not strike us as wrong. In fact the fundamental agreement in this country is that economic insecurity is the driving force of our economy. The idea that a little of unemployment, harassment, and pressure on people is a way to keep people focused and motivated and coming back to their terrible jobs day after day. So hunger is basic to the system and until we begin to tackle some of those things that are basic to the system, they will be very happy to have us out feeding people to some minimal level. Just like the current Farm Policy is a policy of keeping a few

family farmers on their land while we're devastating the whole system. We lost, as Rhonda (Rhonda Perry, Missouri Rural Crisis Center, fellow panelist) pointed out, more farms in the last tens years than we've lost in a long time. The underlying logic of this whole system is so dependent on deprivation and injustice, we have to be thinking long term about changing some of those fundamental values.

When we are confronted with the question of ramping up, I always think of ramping up as an opportunistic thing. Food security has suddenly become a national and middle class issue. It's not just bio-terrorism and anthrax but when we have mad cow this next year we going to have everybody talking about food security and food safety. When an issue stops being a marginalized issue and becomes a middle class issue, we have an opportunity there. We can blow it because it could become focused on something else or we can seize the time and say yes there have been a lot of people hungry and a lot people food insecure for a long time; what kind system can we have that deals with all the issues?

Food security is becoming an international issue. They didn't care about hungry people in Afghanistan until this week and now they're dropping food not because they want to feed people but because they want to deal with it as a part of the military strategy. That's too bad that's the way we're going, but it's an opportunity to say that there's lots of other hungry people, lots of other people suffering injustice and intolerance all over the planet. Are we going to do something about that or are we going to wait until we fall off another cliff and then address the issues? We have a chance to ramp up food security as a bigger issue. Food safety will continue to be an issue and if there is a way to bridge and marry the concerns of food security and food safety it will be very important. We could go down the wrong road so that food security becomes an issue of food having to be highly packaged, highly processed, and a lot more expensive because we are worried about food safety or food safety can be an issue of examining our whole food supply.



Mark Ritchie

Conference Collage



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SECURITY (continued from pg. 5)

On January 10, 2002, an article appeared in the Rochester, New York, *Democrat and Chronicle*, entitled, "Area joins in battle to keep food safe." The article stated, "Local farmers, grocers and processors are taking steps to assure enhanced safety of the food supply in a post-Sept. 11 world. Sharpened cooperation has brought 'a renewed sense of community' to the food industry...." The article describes "food security threats;" "agricultural biosecurity;" "anti-terror security in restaurants;" draft FDA guidelines "...to ramp up food security systems;" and, at one supermarket chain, "background checks [as a possible] part of an aggressive new food security plan...." The article associates food security and community with protection of the food supply—"...light it, lock it, alarm it, report it."

These words convey a compelling sense of excitement and urgency to the task of protecting the food supply—an emotional resonance rarely associated with community food security. We do not strongly respond in a visceral way to community food security like we do when we hear "agricultural biosecurity" or "terrorism security guidelines for farmers." Curiously, the highly desirable state of security seems much more ambiguous and inaccessible than the emotionally galvanizing, highly undesirable states of danger, fear, anxiety, want and deprivation. Perhaps as human beings we know our fears much more intensely than we know real security.

Like terror, hunger is such a powerful rallying cry because the word brings up intense responses in people. No one wants anyone to experience hunger, especially children. Like terror, we want to make hunger go away. Like terror, we want to spring into action to eliminate hunger, to do whatever it takes to bring about a state of freedom from it. Terror, hunger, pain, danger—all of these undesirable conditions are like an infant's cry, slamming directly into our limbic systems and alarming us to act at once to relieve the distress.

Perhaps we should reframe our definition of community food security in terms of the relief it provides from fears, deprivations, and dangers associated with an unrestrained,

globalized, consolidated food industry. We can express this relief through statements of freedoms, protections, and the actions we propose for bringing relief. Thus, community food security can be

- freedom from the fear of the lack of access to food through the re-building of local and regional food systems
- freedom from the deprivation of hunger through local self-reliance for food production and exchange
- freedom from wasteful, harmful, unsustainable production and environmental degradation through organic and sustainable farming practices
- freedom from unjust labor and trade practices through equitable participation in ownership of the means of food production and exchange
- freedom from the cultural tyranny of a monolithic food system through local food sovereignty
- protection of small family farms through re-building regional food production for regional food consumption, the substitution of regionally produced food for imported food and farmland preservation
- protection against economic exploitation and injustice through critical analysis of wage and price structures in regional food trading systems
- protection of the food supply by localizing food production in multiple redundant regional food systems, especially now, in the post-911 era

However we define community food security, we face the challenge of deeply imbedded biological, social and cultural practices. By exploring the various uses and meanings of security, we can discover shared significance and common understanding. We can find useful frames of reference for strengthening our collaborations. And so we shall. Make community food security, not war.

FOOD SECURITY CONF. (continued from pg. 1)

systems. An evening reception at a local community center had attendees dancing to the grooves of a local funk band; eating locally grown food; and enjoying the food-security related poetry of DC youth.

On the final day of the conference, many participants attended the Capitol Hill Reception where they joined Congressional and USDA staff for lunch featuring locally grown food, catered

by DC Central Kitchen's job training Fresh Start enterprise. Key legislative leaders spoke about this year's Farm Bill. The Coalition honored House members John Baldacci, Eva Clayton, Jo Ann Emerson, and Marcy Kaptur; and Senator Patrick Leahy and his staff Ed Barron for making a difference in helping create healthier farms, food, and communities. Many participants followed up the reception with visits to

their Congressional representatives to educate them about the importance of their work and the pending legislation.

Special thanks to Thomas Forster, John Friedrich, Matt Hora, Valeska Populoh, the co-sponsors, planning committees and our funders for their contributions and hard work. We hope to see you at the next conference in Seattle.

Program Updates

Policy

In the coming year the national policy work of the Coalition, coordinated by policy director, Thomas Forster, will include finalizing of the Farm Bill which contain measures the Coalition has worked hard to support. The reauthorization of child nutrition programs and transportation legislation also slated for 2003 will provide other opportunities to advance community food security interests, such as farm-to-school and local food purchase by institutions. The Community Food Project Competitive Grant program reauthorized in the Farm Bill has some changes that will require attention, as will other USDA programs related to community food. No less important for the long term, coalition bridges between anti-hunger, social justice and sustainable agriculture communities must be built even stronger. For more information, contact Thomas at thomas@foodsecurity.org or 202-234-1175.

Training and Technical Assistance Program

The Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Program provides educational workshops, publications, and consultations to support the development of effective community food security initiatives. Program director, Kai Siedenburg, is working to assess capacity-building needs and developing programs to meet them, coordinating and supporting a team of CFSC trainers to deliver workshops, developing curriculum for workshops, responding to requests for information and assistance, editing T&TA guidebooks, and fundraising. She welcomes comments from CFSC members about current T&TA programs and future needs. She can be reached at kai@foodsecurity.org or 831-429-8202.

California Organizing Initiative

CFSC's recently launched California Organizing Initiative is coordinating a plan of action for state policy change. California Organizer, Thomas Nelson, is coordinating this initiative and working with an advisory committee to explore

CFS policy issues and accomplish the following objectives. In California in 2002: host an education and policy summit, ratify a state level policy platform and publish an introductory guidebook to CFS. For more information, contact Thomas at tnelson@foodsecurity.org or 530-796-4160.

Farm to College

The Farm to College Program works with numerous partner organizations, colleges and universities, students, farmers, and food service staff to conduct workshops and conferences, compile and distribute resources, and provide technical assistance on the practicalities of colleges purchasing products from local farmers. Contact Program Manager, Kristen Markley, at kristen@foodsecurity.org or 410-268-5123 if you have questions about starting a farm to college project. We can refer you to resources and contacts that may be helpful for getting your project started. We are also compiling a database of farm to college projects around the country so new and existing projects can learn from each others' efforts.

Farm to School

The Farm to School Program is helping to spur the development of new farm to school projects. A key component of the program is organizing regional workshops for farmers, school food service staff, and community groups to foster direct purchasing of farm products by schools. Written materials are also available through the program, including an information packet, case studies of existing programs, and the publication, "Healthy Farms, Healthy Kids." The Farm to School Program director, Marion Kalb, is working towards forming alliances with the American School Food Service Association and their state counterparts, and has participated in their conferences. A database is also being developed for farm to school projects. For more information, contact Marion at marion@foodsecurity.org or 310-822-5410.

Field Organizing Project

At its October meeting, the CFSC Board approved the creation of a Field Organizing Program. This program will create new staff positions in four targeted regions of the country: California, Upper Midwest, Northeast, and the Deep South. Other regions of the country may be added after an initial pilot phase. The goals of the program are to increase the diversity of the membership; better meet the needs of our members; increase our organizing capacity and improve the delivery of our programs; and to gain community feedback on food-related issues.

We are actively seeking funding to implement a year long planning process, which will start with the hiring of a full time program director at the national level. In the interim, we have begun this program on a trial basis in California. Funding from the California Nutrition Network has enabled us to undertake a program to train community groups in conducting food system assessments. Our new staff person Tori Kjer will be managing this project. Similarly, with support from the California Wellness Foundation, Thomas Nelson is spearheading an effort to organize a state CFS summit in June as part of a larger effort to gain support for food security related policy changes. He is also coordinating the creation of educational materials for the purpose of communicating to the general public about community food security.

This program has the potential to transform the Coalition's relationship with its members and other grassroots groups. We look forward to your support as it unfolds.

New Board Members



Lydia Villanueva

Lydia Villanueva is the executive director of C.A.S.A. del Llano (Communities Approaching Sustainable Agriculture) a community based organization since 1994, which works with two unincorporated colonias in Hereford, TX on sustainable agriculture methods with Hispanic small land owners. C.A.S.A. del Llano unites the regional education and training interests of other groups with the development goals of a community-based, grassroots group of small land holders.



Pam Roy

Pam Roy is Executive Director of Friends of the Farmers' Markets (Friends), a non-profit organization whose mission is to enhance the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers in New Mexico while encouraging communities to participate in "buying local" at their farmers' markets and stores. Friends provides innovative education programs for farmers, consumers and children to help improve our understanding of farming, eating locally, and increasing regional sustainability



Sharon Thornberry

Sharon is the Community Food Programs Advocate for the Oregon Food Bank. She has been involved in coordinating gleaning activities and anti-hunger work in Oregon since 1986. She has in recent years become a trainer and advocate for community food security issues. Her current activities include working with a local food pantry and the United Methodist Church anti-hunger efforts.

IRRADIATED FOOD (continued from page 4)

So Why Would Anyone Irradiate Food?

Irradiation allows food companies to mask the filthy conditions at huge factory farms, slaughterhouses, and food processing plants that contaminate meat with feces and bacteria. It is a technology which allows companies to sell sterilized filth instead of changing their practices to prevent it.

And because irradiation increases shelf life, it allows foods to be shipped farther from where they are grown and to be kept longer on store shelves. This ties nicely into corporate food producers' goal of a consolidated food system that is dependent on large centralized farms and processing plants, as well as imports from countries with lax environmental laws and few labor protections. This means cheaper, less nutritious food for consumers, environmental and social damage in developing countries, further economic damage to family farmers and ranchers, and big profits for multinational food companies. In fact, government officials

have publicly said that the food system envisioned by trade agreements like NAFTA cannot happen without irradiation.

How Can You Tell If Food Has Been Irradiated?

The FDA allows many kinds of food to be irradiated, including fruits, vegetables, beef, poultry, chicken, lamb, pork, flour, sprouting seeds, spices and medicinal herbs. Food that has been irradiated must be labeled with the words "treated with irradiation" and display the radura symbol, although there are some major exceptions, including food that is served at hospitals, schools, nursing homes, or restaurants.

Polls have shown that the public overwhelmingly believes that irradiated food should be labeled. And sales in test marketing efforts by some meat companies have been disappointing. The irradiation industry's response has been to pressure the federal government to change the labeling requirements. Unfortunately, the FDA is considering

weakening the rules to allow euphemisms such as "cold pasteurization" or "electronic pasteurization." This is a blatant attempt to weaken consumers' right to know how their food is produced and to trick people into purchasing irradiated food.

A "Secure" Food System Doesn't Include Irradiation

Instead of becoming just another means for pushing questionable technologies, the debate about the security of our food system could be an opportunity to talk about the food supply we want and deserve. Efforts to secure a safe food supply should focus on maintaining the integrity of regional and local economies, and encourage environmentally, economically and socially sustainable agricultural practices. A "secure" food system doesn't have to rely on technological fixes like irradiation, which may cause as much harm as they are supposed to prevent.

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.
- \$10 Farming Inside Cities, Martin Bailkey and Jerry Kaufman, 2000
- \$10 Homeward Bound: Food Related Transportation Strategies. 1996

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

\$_____ Publication Total
 \$_____ Membership Total
 \$_____ Subtotal
 \$_____ Less 20% member discount
 \$_____ Subtotal
 \$_____ Add S+H →
 \$_____ TOTAL ENCLOSED, or

Shipping Rates:
 \$ 0 - \$ 20 = \$ 4 S/H
 \$ 21 - \$ 40 = \$ 5 S/H
 \$ 41 - \$ 60 = \$ 7 S/H
 \$ 61 & over = Call for rates.

Please make checks payable to: CFS Coalition

Credit Card Information: Visa Mastercard

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please bill my credit card.



CFS Coalition
P. O. Box 209
Venice, CA 90294

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Venice, CA
Permit No. 50

Mark your calendars!

The 2002 Coalition Conference will take place in Seattle, Washington, October 4-7.

We hope to see you there!

CFSC would like to thank the following funders for supporting our work.

California Nutrition Network

California Wellness Foundation

Compton Foundation

Evangelical Lutheran Church
in America

Farm Aid

Foundation for Deep Ecology

Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation

Nathan Cummings Foundation

Presbyterian Hunger Program

United Church of Christ

United Methodist Church

USDA Community Food Projects

USDA IFAFS

USDA SARE
