



An Interactive Educational Tool

Community Food Security is a practical concept that gives a fresh breath of life to the anti-hunger movement. In the face of rising hunger and increasing alienation from our food sources, community food security is gaining momentum as a movement. Conduct a “Community Food Security 101” workshop and catalyze change in your community.

Association of Arizona Food Banks
and
Community Food Bank of Tucson

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Introduction

Community Food Security 101 is an interactive educational tool that walks participants through the food system. Through this “tour” of the food system, participants explore a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues in our current structure. In the second part, they engage in a discussion of possible changes for making the food system more equitable. The goal is to present community food security issues in a way that is understandable and relevant. Participants will be actively engaged in thinking about why community food security is so important and what changes can be made in their community.

Community food security connects the issues of hunger, poverty, sustainable agriculture, the environment, health, and community economic development. Bringing together these related issues, the community food security movement seeks to create a more just food system. Healthy food systems ensure that all people have access to nutritious food at all times through non-emergency means.

Many audiences can benefit from Community Food Security 101. Use it with staff, volunteers, board members, or other interested people at workshops, conferences, trainings, and meetings. Groups of 10 or more participants are ideal. Large groups could also make good use of Community Food Security, as simply observing it will be informative (and entertaining). Allow 30-45 minutes for Part I and at least 20 minutes for Part II. Adding extra pieces based on the group’s interests can extend the workshop.

This tool can be found on the Community Food Security Coalition website under “Resources” at www.foodsecurity.org

The script was developed by Amy Matthews and Bridget Murphy during their time as Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellows. Visit www.hungercenter.org for more information on the program.

Facilitator Checklist

- ___ Sign for Food Bank
- ___ Sign for Food Planet (supermarket)
- ___ Sign for State Office
- ___ Sign for Garland Family Farm
- ___ Sign for Food Galaxy Corporate Center
- ___ Sign for Jolly Fresh Farms, a company of MonCarAgra
- ___ Community Food Security terms, if necessary (either posted on the wall or in a handout)
- ___ Character Cards for every participant, folded on the line so they read one scenario at a time.
- ___ “Money” for the narrator to represent consumer dollar
- ___ “Money” to represent the government dollar (different than the consumer dollar)
- ___ Tomato or representation of a tomato, with the price displayed on it—79 cents/lb.
- ___ Certificate from Food Bank to Food Planet
- ___ Costumes (optional, but fun)
 - Farmer hat for farmworkers and Garland Family Farm
 - Tie, suit coat, and cigar for Food Galaxy CEO and Jolly Fresh Farm Manager
 - Hat, T-shirt, or other paraphernalia from the local food bank
 - T-shirt, apron, big name tag for Food Planet cashier and supervisor

Facilitator Instructions

In preparation for facilitating “Community Food Security 101,” be sure to read over the script several times. Knowing the sequence of events well will enable you to keep the script flowing and the characters engaged. Also read over the character cards. Having a general idea of the information different characters have will help you ask questions to bring out important character information.

Before participants arrive or begin, set up the space.

1. Post the signs for the Food Bank, the State Office, Garland Family Farm, and Food Planet in a semi-circle. This area is the community.
2. Post the signs for Food Galaxy and Jolly Fresh Farms outside the semi-circle. They should be far enough away to make the point that they are not part of the community, but close enough that everyone can hear the participants stationed at these spots.
3. Set chairs at each of the stations for the characters. Make a circle of chairs in the middle of the community for the community members.
4. Arrange necessary props in appropriate places - tomato prop at the Food Planet, and food box and certificate at the Food Bank.

Optional Instructions:

- There are 16 characters and community members scripted (in addition to the narrator). If you have a larger group, you can do the following:
 - a.) Create more community member characters. Base them on what is going on in your area and on the particular interests of the participants.
 - b.) Have multiple people represent Food Bank Volunteers, State Office Employees, Farmworkers, and Food Planet Employees, or
 - c.) Allow people to observe and participate in the discussion in Part II.
- After you interact with a person in the skit, ask the community members if they think that character is food secure or insecure. You could choose to somehow visibly label that person as food secure or insecure.
- Post the definitions of the key terms on the wall before the skit begins or as the group discusses them in the intro.
- Money: You can make a stack of dollars out of paper and use them as needed in the script. Another option is to make a huge dollar out of sheet paper or poster board, representing the money consumers spend on food. Cut off the appropriate percentage at the right time in the script to leave participants with a very visible reminder of where consumer dollars go.

The script provides you with info about what each character’s responses generally should be to your questions throughout the skit. It may not be obvious to the characters what they’re supposed to say, so ask leading questions if necessary. Making sure all of the necessary information comes out will give a clearer picture of community food security and prompt discussion.

Please note, Part I of this skit is scripted and narrator-driven. Part II will be more discussion-oriented and character-driven. Part II will include all community members directly, while Part I focuses on the characters in the food system.

This was designed to be effectively used as is, anywhere, with anyone, and with minimal props or set-up. However the most effective and entertaining use of this interactive skit will include your own touches. Take some time beforehand to customize this for your own use. Gather some costumes or props. Include facts about what is happening in your own community.

For best results, do some homework before leading this. What are the primary concerns and interests of your participants? How can you tailor this activity to them? Where are opportunities to support your local food system? Can you find statistics about food insecurity and food production in your area? If there's a hot issue in your community, create a community member character to bring it up. Keep in mind that every community has different resources – so your community probably has some completely different perspectives and opportunities to add.

Be creative and have fun!

Key Definitions

Food Security:

Food security means “assured access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life, with no need for recourse to emergency food sources or other extraordinary coping behaviors to meet basic food needs” (*Food Research and Action Center, www.frac.org*). In order to be food secure, an individual must be free from worry about their food needs.

Food Insecurity:

When an individual lacks consistent access to nutritious and culturally appropriate foods, s/he is **food insecure**. Factors that may contribute to food insecurity include inadequate income, lack of transportation, and lack of a convenient decent food source.

Community Food Security (CFS):

The community food security approach places the community, rather than individuals or households, as the unit of analysis for food security. According to Andy Fisher, Director of the Community Food Security Coalition, some integral aspects of community food security include:

1. **The Needs of Low-Income People.** Not only is CFS focused on meeting the food needs of low-income communities, but it incorporates much broader goals of job training, business skill development, and community revitalization.
2. **Community Focus.** A CFS approach seeks to build up a community’s food resources to meet its own needs. These resources may include farmers’ markets, gardens, community-based food processing ventures, and urban farms.
3. **Self-Reliance/Empowerment.** CFS projects emphasize building individuals’ abilities to provide for their own food needs rather than encouraging dependence on outside sources, such as food banks or public benefits.
4. **Local Agriculture.** Protecting local agriculture is key to building better links between farmers and consumers, and gaining greater consumer knowledge about their sources of food.
5. **Food Systems.** CFS projects typically involve collaborations between multiple agencies and cross boundaries. Fundamental to this approach is an analysis of a community’s food system and the need to plan for its food security.

(Urban Ecologist, 1997).

Food System:

The **food system** is the way food gets to your plate. An often-complicated process, the food system includes production, distribution, marketing, preparation, consumption, and disposal.

Script

Introduction

Narrator: Welcome to Community Food Security 101. Before we begin, we should make sure everyone is familiar with the term community food security. (*Engage all participants in a brief discussion of the meanings of key terms including community food security, food insecurity, and food system. These definitions are included. Some groups are familiar with these terms, while others are not. Tailor the discussion accordingly.*) **After talking about these terms, do you think your community is food secure or food insecure? Why?**

Give each participant a Character Card.

Narrator: Take a moment to read the “How It Is” section of your Character Card. You’ll be using this information to interact with the other characters and me. Try to understand it well enough that you do not have to read directly from it. Consider whether your character is likely to be food insecure, and what contributes to your food security or insecurity.

Part I

Instruct everyone to go to work, i.e. go to their stations. “Community Members” should sit together in the middle of the community.

Narrator: It is obvious here who is a part of the community and who is outside of it. (*pointing out places*) Here’s our supermarket, a food bank, a state office, and a farm down the road – they are all in our community. We’re going to first take a few moments to try to understand how people in the community get their food. Hey _____ (Food Bank Volunteer), where do you think your family would typically get food? (*Wait for response.*) How would you get there? How would you pay? (*Wait for responses.*) Great! Can you show us?

The Food Bank Volunteer walks over to Food Planet and exchanges money for a tomato. He/she should mention that they drive there, choose food, and drive home.

N: That was easy enough. (*To community*) **Do you think that this consumer is food secure or insecure? Community answers—food secure.**

N: (*to volunteer*) **Now, I’m curious, do you know exactly where it was grown?**

The FB Volunteer shouldn’t have any idea.

N: **Ok, can you tell me how fresh it is? Can you tell me how it was grown? What kinds of chemicals went into its production? Do you know how much your local economy is profiting from your purchase?**

The FB Volunteer shouldn’t know the answers to any of these questions.

N: No problem. Maybe we'll find out more later. Hey _____ (Food Planet Employee), you are a cashier at Food Planet. How much do you get paid?

Food Planet Employee: \$6.00/hr

N: What's your food budget this month?

Food Planet Employee: *Looks at his/her character card for the answer.* \$100.

N: Where do you usually get food when you've got money?

Food Planet Employee: *At Food Planet after work. The store in his/her neighborhood is smaller and more expensive. It has less selection of fresh food.*

N: Great, but let's say it's the end of the month. The \$100 only lasted a couple of weeks. How else might you pay for groceries?

Food Planet Employee: Food Stamps.

N: Perfect. So why don't you go over to the state office and pick some up? *(As Food Planet Employee goes to the State Office, ask how they are traveling there.)*

At the State Office, the FP Employee is only able to sign up for an interview. The State Office Employee tells the FP Employee the maximum amount for which s/he is eligible and then informs him or her that it will take at least 4 weeks to fill out an application and go through the food stamp process. These directions for the state Government Employee are found on the Government Employee character sheet.

N: So it will take at least 4 weeks! Where are you going to get food in the meantime?

Food Planet Employee: The Food Bank.

N: Ok – show us.

At the Food Bank, the Volunteer gives him or her a food box, reminding the Food Planet Employee that s/he can only receive 6 boxes in 1 year (or whatever is a common policy in your area.) These directions for the Volunteer(s) are found on the Food Bank volunteer character sheet.

N: (to community) Now is this consumer food secure or insecure? *Community answers—food insecure. What factors played into the person being food insecure?* *The community may mention the low-income, the lack of a good store in his/her neighborhood, or the lack of good transportation.*

Part I, Scene II

N: So we can see how some consumers get their food. We see how many people, even working people, are often food insecure. [Insert some statistic here about food insecurity in your

area.] [Here in Arizona we have the 6th highest rate of food insecurity in the country—13 % of our population is food insecure. In the past 4 years, Arizona food banks have seen a 44% increase in people who need food assistance.] **In the United States, 11 percent of the population is food insecure.** (1) **At the same time, however, places like Food Planet are selling food for cheap.** _____ (to *Food Bank Volunteer*), **how much did that tomato cost?**

FB Volunteer: *says amount—79 cents/lb.*

N: Wow! That’s cheap! Groceries are relatively inexpensive, yet such a large percentage of our nation struggles to get food on the table. Falling food prices and rising food insecurity – how can that be? Let’s start to tackle that question by getting back to the beginning, the farm where the tomato was grown.

Narrator gives tomato to the Farmworker at Garland Family Farms.

N: Tomatoes cost 79 cents/lb. at the store. (To the Farmworker) You’re the one doing most of the work to get that tomato. How much money will you get for that one tomato?

Garland Family Farm’s Farmworker: *Looks at his or her character card for the answer: about 5 cents.*

N: So by some accounts, the average farm worker wage can be up to \$7/hour (2), but sometimes can be as low as \$2.50/hour. Can you tell us anything about your working conditions?

Garland Family Farm’s Farmworker: *Reads or sums up working conditions from card. S/he should mention the long hours, handpicking the produce, being in contact with chemicals, and working for low pay and no benefits.*

N: Why do you still work on the farm then?

Garland Family Farm’s Farmworker: *S/he came from a family of farmworkers. S/he grew up picking produce, migrating with the seasons, and missing large portions of the school year. Eventually, s/he had to drop out of high school to help support the family. Without an education, s/he has faced limited career options in life.*

N: (To the Farmer) Why do you pay your workers so little and expose them to such hard conditions?

Farmer: *Explains situation from card. Farmer should mention encroaching development, his farm is too small to get subsidies from the government, and it is difficult/impossible now to sell his products to the grocery stores.*

N: What other options do you have for your farm?

Farmer: *S/he feels pressured to contract out to an agribusiness farmer called Jolly Fresh Farms. S/he wants to remain independent, though, for fear of losing control. If he/she contracts with this company, the Jolly Fresh Farms will be in charge of what grows and how much to sell it for.*

N: The grocery stores won't buy what you grow? Will you do us a favor and go to the Food Planet supermarket in your community and try to sell your tomato crop so we can see what happens?

Farmer: Goes to Food Planet and tries to sell his tomato crop.

Food Planet Supervisor: *Food Planet supervisor refuses. This supervisor does not buy the food—their regional buyer in the office does all the buying for the stores. The buyer only deals with the biggest farms because they grow a lot of food and at low prices. Besides, Food Planet was bought by a national chain, Food Galaxy, a few months ago and now Food Galaxy will control the buying.*

N: Well, let's go ask Food Galaxy what is going on. Maybe they would buy from the local farmers if they knew they were in trouble.

Narrator walks from the community over to the Food Galaxy HQ.

N: Why doesn't your company buy from local farms to supply to stores near it?

Food Galaxy CEO: *FG CEO boasts of the efficiency of his company. They have only one buyer in the corporate office (not even near the community) who can buy tomatoes for all of the country. It is much more efficient for him to just buy from bigger growers. They do own 15 chains (which includes 716 stores) they have to buy for, you know. They have to be efficient. Then they can bring lower prices to consumers.*

N: Then where does most of your food come from?

Food Galaxy CEO: *FG CEO is proud to state that the food for their stores comes from all around the world. We own processing plants that use food grown in many countries. We are able to get it cheaper and give it to consumers cheaper that way!*

N: What if a customer wants to buy food that's really fresh? What if they want to support their local economy?

Food Galaxy CEO: *Nothing related to this question is on his or her card. S/he may say "I don't know" or make up something.*

N: We better go talk to someone at a farm that grows and sells to these stores. We will find out where this tomato came from eventually.

Narrator walks over to the Jolly Fresh Farms.

N: *(points to the farmworker at Jolly Fresh and talks to community)* **This is one of the people whose job it is to apply the chemicals and pick the tomatoes. S/he does not have any say in this process. Farmworkers are not always well protected by law. (to the farmworker) Would you tell us a bit about your situation?**

Farmworker: *Farmworker summarizes from the character sheet. S/he comes from Mexico every season to work and send money back home. S/he used to have land, but big agribusiness moved in and squeezed out small farmers. S/he has low wages and no benefits at this job.*

N: *(to the agribusiness manager at the Jolly Fresh Farms)* **You manage farm operations here at Jolly Fresh Farms and other farms. Just how *do* you grow tomatoes all year ‘round that can be driven all around the country (or world)?**

Jolly Fresh Farms, Corporate Agribusiness Manager: *He’s proud to talk about the latest technology in seeds and chemicals they use. They can grow tomatoes that can be picked and transported anywhere! They only a few certain types of genes that produce plants that are able to be transported long distances.*

N: *(to Agribusiness manager at Jolly Fresh Farms)* **Where do the tomatoes go when they leave the farm?**

Jolly Fresh Farms, Agribusiness Manager: *We sell to the Food Galaxy and others. It goes to their distribution center. From there, they are sent to stores all over the country. We also sell to processors who process food into brand name foods. Also, their corporation sells food to countries overseas.*

N: *(in a “whisper” to the community)* **What s/he doesn’t say is that when the corporation floods other markets with inexpensive exports, it often interferes with their markets and then farmers in that country cannot sell their products. *(to Agribusiness Farm Manager)* How is it possible to do so much?**

The agribusiness manager talks about how they sell to processors that are subsidiaries of its parent company—MonCarAgra. Also, they buy chemicals and seeds from firms that are owned by MonCarAgra. The corporation owns or controls many parts of the food chain.

N: **That all sounds complicated. Then how do consumers know about what they are buying and eating?**

There is no answer on the Agribusiness farm manager’s sheet. He/she will likely say they do not know.

N: **And the tomato finally reaches Food Planet, where customers can cash in on the great deal of tomatoes for 79 cents a pound. What most customers aren’t aware of are the great social, economic, and environmental costs of that tomato.**

(To the Food Planet Supervisor) **What happens to the tomatoes that don’t get sold? Food Planet’s dumping fees must be tremendous! Hmmm... what did _____ *(the Food Planet Supervisor)* say in a recent speech?**

FP Supervisor: *(Reading speech)* **At Food Planet, we don’t always throw away our trash, we give back to the community! Food Planet has a long tradition of giving to charities like the Food Bank. We are proud to be part of the War on Hunger in America.**

FB Volunteer gives Food Planet the Certificate. Everybody applauds.

Narrator then begins the recap of where the tomato has traveled. S/he talks out loud while carrying the tomato to each place.

N: Now let's recap. This tomato started here at this large farm with some farm workers picking it, then it travels on to the distribution center, sometimes to a processor, then to the store in your community, then to the consumer or sometimes to a food bank.

Wow, that's quite a food chain—that must take awhile and cover a lot of ground. Can anyone guess how far an average meal travels before it hits an American's plate? *Narrator can take guesses from the community.* 1,500 to 2,500 miles is the average (3), which means that everyone relies heavily on fossil fuel to eat. *(To the community)* Does this heavy reliance on fuel make us more food secure or insecure?

N: Now let's do the same thing, but this time we'll follow the consumer dollar through the food system.

Narrator takes out some bills and gives them to a community member (if the group is small and there are no community members, any character who is in the community can do this part).

N: You're a community member and you buy food, right? Well, let's see where the consumer dollar goes.

Narrator directs the community member to walk around to the different places, passing out money along the way.

N: We'll use these characters to represent different parts of the food system.

- About 6% of money spent on food goes to the people who are doing most of the physical labor to bring us the food (5). Please go to the Garland Family Farms and the Jolly Fresh Farms and give each farmworker a share of this 6%.
- About 20% of the consumer's money makes it to the farmer (5). Please give the farmers at Garland Family Farm and the "farmer" at Jolly Fresh Farm his/her share. *(to Garland Family Farmer)* You're an independent farmer. With all the expenses of farming and the falling prices, is this amount always enough to get by on? *(farmer answers no or sometimes).*
- Now the rest of the consumer dollar—over 70%—goes to marketing costs (5). Marketing is all the business activity involving taking agricultural products and getting it into consumers' hands. This includes processing and manufacturing food, packaging, transportation, advertising, and labor. This sector has a small number of very large firms. *(to community member)* Please give some of this 70% to the Food Galaxy CEO. They do, after all, own Food Planet and hundreds of other grocery stores and food processors. *(to community)* We'll leave the rest of the money—the largest portion—for our representative firm here. *(to community member)* Give all the rest *(the largest amount)* to MonCarAgra. After all, MonCarAgra here controls the Jolly Fresh Farms and many others. This food corporation and the other big ones do have control of hundreds of farms all over the world. Often a corporation will strive to have a hand in food production "from seed to shelf," "from farm gate to dinner plate" (6). The few huge agribusiness corporations own or have joint ventures with links in many parts of the food chain—seed production, biotechnology, chemical production, livestock ownership, meat processing, product input, transportation, and brand name food production. This concentration in a few firms in the food system means that only a few firms exercise control over the whole food system. That means that they push out smaller producers who don't have their size and power, eliminate competition, take profits from local communities, and give consumers fewer choices about who to buy their food from.

That helps us see how much money leaves the local economy. That is a lot when you consider that each person spends over \$2,000 a year on food on average (4). In an area that has a locally based food system, the money re-circulates throughout the community 3 to 4 times before leaving it (6). In the current system, as you all can see, most of the profit leaves the community to go to the corporations that control different parts of the food production.

Also, fossil fuel is a key ingredient to food production these days. All that traveling, processing, and chemical usage uses a lot of fossil fuel. Using local foods that were grown with sustainable methods for your meals takes anywhere from 4 to 17 times less petroleum than the same meal bought in the conventional chain (3).

Keeping that in mind, *(to community)*, can you guess what percent of all global warming emissions comes from the food cycle? *(community guesses)* About one-third, or 33%, of global warming emissions come from the food cycle. This includes emissions from waste, packaging, traveling, and on-farm operating (7).

We aren't finished giving out money though. *Narrator pulls out the "government money."* *Narrator gives the money to the State Employee and instructs him/her as to where to go and how much to give.*

_____(State Employee), we want you to represent the government.

- _____(Food Planet Cashier and farmworkers) **We would like you to represent low-wage workers in the food system.** *(to community)* **We are going to give government dollars to the low-wage workers in the food system.** *(to state employee)* **Please go give a few government dollars to the Food Planet Cashier and the farm workers.** *Community member gives money.* This money is really an indirect subsidy to the companies for the expenses they do not have to incur—like livable wages and benefits. Many cashiers, farmworkers, and restaurant employees can't make ends meet on the wages and they turn to government programs like WIC or Food Stamps and to the government to pay for medical expenses. Last year the federal government spent a total of 34 billion dollars on food and nutrition assistance programs for people in poverty (8).
- **Now please go give a few government dollars to the food bank.** Food banks receive \$100 million in government commodities every year (9). *Community member gives money to the food bank volunteer.* Often food banks and non-profits receive government commodities and grants to help people in the community who can't get food with their own means. People who work to bring us our food often have to turn to these charity measures for food.
- **Now please go to the Jolly Fresh Farm. Give them the rest of the government dollars.** *Community member gives money to the Agribusiness farmer.* The government will spend 171 billion dollars on farm subsidies in the next 10 years (10). However, 80% of farm payments are currently going to 10% of the largest producers in the country. Subsidies are often tied to the acreage of a farm. In other words, many small farmers go bankrupt while a small group of largely corporate producers are receiving government payments (11).

Part II

N: You can see how the food system in Part I worked in some ways for some people, but didn't work well for many. The food industry emphasizes the efficiency and cheapness of the current system. But seeing where the money goes helps us see that it isn't really that efficient at all—the cost is externalized into government farm payments, government aide programs subsidizing low-wage worker incomes, private charities, and in environmental costs.

Let's take a moment and think about what changes could be made to improve the food system. If you have a folded sheet, flip it over and read the section entitled, "What It May Be..."

Envision the future. Pretend five years have passed and you are in charge and could make the food system better. What would you (your character) do? What is your biggest concern and what would you do about it? In the future, where would people in your community get their food? What about people who are food insecure? Where would food be produced?

Now it is time for all participants to get involved. You have some options for how to handle Part II.

If the group has some background in Community Food Security, you might want to start an open-ended discussion at this point based on the characters and on your actual community.

*For a group new to Community Food Security ideas, have participants read their Part II card and put it down. The ideas on these cards will hopefully give some good starting points for discussion. Ask people how their character's lives have changed and why. **You may need to get the discussion going and ask specific people specific questions.** They will most likely build off of what one person says and describe the characters without much narrator involvement. Encourage participants to consider other ideas as well. What other changes would their characters like to see?*

Conclusion

N: Please take note that Community Food Security 101 has just scratched the surface on the issues and the possible solutions. Today in Part I, you have explored some of the most common themes in the food system today, not necessarily how it works in every instance. In Part II the cards represent just a few of the many ideas for ways to achieve Community Food Security. *(to group)* Where did all of the ideas come from in Part II? *(group answers, from the community)* Each community is unique; the best ideas come from within each individual community.

When the participants have discussed what changes their characters have made, you can transition into talking about your lives and community. The discussion questions can be used as a guide.

Discussion Questions

- ◆ What would it take for all members of your community to have access to safe and nutritious food at all times? ◆
 1. What was the last thing you ate? Do you know where it came from? Or how far it traveled?
 2. From what you just heard, do you think buying food that is locally grown is important? Why?
 3. What are some of the barriers faced by you or your character to accessing safe and healthy food?
 4. What other ideas should the community in the skit consider or implement?
 5. What are some of the limitations of the current emergency food system? (food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, etc.) What are some of the benefits of the current emergency food system?
 6. From what you just heard, what are the barriers and challenges to promoting community food security? Barriers and challenges to developing a more local food system?
 7. What are the opportunities for promoting community food security in your community?
 8. What are some action steps that you can take?

Works Cited

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- (9) "State Government Responses to the Food Assistance Gap 2000: The Emergency Food Assistance Program and State Commodity Programs," America's Second Harvest, www.secondharvest.org/policy/gap_2000
- (10) "The New Continental Divide," Michael Lind, The Atlantic, January/February 2003
- (11) "2002 Farm Bill Report", Rural Coalition; found at www.ruralco.org

Web Resources

Community Food Security Coalition, www.foodsecurity.org

Food Policy Council information, Food for Lane County, www.lanefood.org/foodpolicycouncils

Wisconsin Foodshed Research Project, www.foodshed.wisc.edu

Oxfam America, www.oxfamamerica.org

Foodcircles Networking Project: Connecting Farmers, Consumers and Communities,
<http://www.foodcircles.missouri.edu>

National Family Farmers Coalition, www.nffc.net

International Society for Ecology and Culture, <http://www.isec.org.uk/ustoolkit.html>

Corporate Agribusiness Farm Manager— Jolly Fresh Farms, MonCarAgra

How it is...

You manage the farming operations for Jolly Fresh Farms and other farms. Your corporation, MonCarAgra, owns or controls farms in many different parts of the world.

How your tomatoes are grown: Jolly Fresh Farms grows food that can be **picked and transported anywhere**. You are proud to use the **latest technology in seeds and chemicals** to make this possible. You only use a few types of genes that produce tomatoes that are transportable. Isn't it great—people in New York can have tomatoes in winter from your farm in California!

Where your tomatoes go: After the tomatoes are grown, you sell to Food Galaxy and other corporations. They go to the **distribution centers**, then to stores around the country to be sold and eaten. Also you provide food to **processors** who process food into brand names to be sold. Also, the MonCarAgra Corporation sells tons of food to **other countries**.

How you do so much: Both your farms and the processors are subsidiaries of the parent—**MonCarAgra**. Plus you get your seeds and chemicals from other firms that are owned by MonCarAgra. Efficient isn't it? You think it is a good idea for a corporation to control so many parts of the food system.

You're not just agriCULTURE—you're agriBUSINESS!

Instructions: You'll be asked three different questions from the narrator in the above three categories. Reveal the appropriate information at the appropriate time.

Farmworker, Jolly Fresh Farms

How it is...

You are a farmworker on a large farm owned by Jolly Fresh Farms. You are from Mexico and come up every season to work and send money home. While working, you have long hours and live in cramped conditions with other workers. You also have to work with the chemical fertilizers and pesticides every season, making your job more dangerous.

You used to have some land back home, but international trade agreements have made it impossible for farmers in your country to make a profit. Mexico now imports lots of American food. Because the US government pays subsidies to US farms, US agricultural products are sold for cheaper prices than you could sell your crops for.

You couldn't make money in Mexico, so you came to work in the US. The wages are not good, but at least it is some money and good work. You don't receive any benefits and don't qualify for many government programs.

Instructions: When asked about your situation, summarize the above information.

Farmworker, Garland Family Farm

How it is...

Working conditions: These days you work hard on this small farm, often from sunrise to sunset. Day to day, you often are involved in handpicking the harvest or applying the chemicals to the crops to make them grow or to kill pests. Despite this hard work, you make very little pay and get no benefits. For instance, you receive **5 cents for a pound** for tomatoes that cost 79 cents in the store.

Why you work on this farm: You grew up in a family of farmworkers. From a young age, you were picking produce, migrating with the seasons, and subsequently missing large portions of the school year. Eventually, you had to drop out of high school to help support your family. Without much of a formal education, your career options have always been limited. Because farm work is what you know, that is what you do.

Your food needs: Because of your low pay, your children might have to start contributing to the family income by working on the farm. Your family turns to government programs like Food Stamps and WIC to make ends meet. When those aren't enough, the food bank usually helps you out with a food box.

How it may be...

Now that the farm is more profitable, things are better for your family. You get paid a livable wage so the family doesn't have to turn to food banks, government food programs, or your kids for additional income.

Now you have a bit more responsibility on the job too. You staff one of the stands at the farmer's market once a week. You like doing that and getting out into the community. In the long term, you are hoping to save enough to eventually get some of your own land. You have heard of a community program that can help you with that goal.

Farmer, Garland Family Farm

How it is...

You are a farmer with a farm of less than 100 acres right outside of a medium-sized city. You have been farming as long as you can remember and it is what you love to do. You grow a variety of crops and have a long harvest season.

Business conditions: For several years now, each farming season has been more difficult than the last. You have a hard time making money for yourself and for your workers. Numerous threats to your land and livelihood emerged:

- You feel pressure to sell to **developers** who want the land for new neighborhoods and retail stores.
- It is no longer possible to sell your produce to the **large grocery stores** or food processors.
- Because **prices** are going down, your finances are in bad shape.
- Your farm does not have enough acres to receive government **subsidies**.

Because of low prices and the need to increase the amount of output on your farm, you have turned to chemicals for help. You **apply pesticide and fertilizer** each season. However, these have become more and more expensive and you don't know if you can afford these chemicals.

Your other options: You are feeling pressure to **contract with large agribusinesses** such as Jolly Fresh Farms. A contract could keep your farm going, but you're afraid you'd lose all your control because they call the shots about what you grow and what the prices are.

How it may be...

You participate in **farmer's markets** in two neighborhoods in the city, one of which is low-income. This fills a need for fresh produce in that neighborhood and also brings money to you. People can use their WIC and Food Stamps money, giving low-income people the opportunity to contribute to the local economy.

You began a **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)** program on your farm. People in your area pay for a share of your crop at the beginning of the season. Then as the harvest starts coming in, participants get a bag of fresh produce every week for several months. It's good business for the farm and good value for nutritious food for all community members. With these new profitable business ventures, you can afford to **pay your workers better**.

Citizens concerned with sustainable agriculture have created a demand for organic local food. **Growing organically** saves you money and meets their demand.

Food Bank Volunteer

How it is...

You began volunteering at the food bank six years ago and you enjoy helping your community in this way. It is rewarding to feed those who do not have enough. You think the food bank makes sense—some people have plenty of food and some do not have enough. The food bank is a great bridge between the two.

However, you are concerned sometimes. It seems that every year you work there, more and more people come for food, even the elderly and working families with children. You are giving out more emergency food boxes on a regular basis. But what can you do? Hungry people are there and need food—it takes up enough time just to find enough food and money to keep the food bank going.

Your own food needs: You wouldn't say your family is rich, but you have enough money to go to the Food Planet store every month and buy whatever you need. When you need any groceries, you drive your car to Food Planet, choose what you want, pay for it, and drive home. You are concerned for your family's health and are glad to have large supermarkets nearby with huge selections of fresh food. Food for you is relatively inexpensive – for example, **tomatoes now only cost 79 cents/lb.**

Instructions:

1. When the Food Planet employee comes for food box, give them a box. Tell them it is enough food for 3 days and they are allowed to get 6 boxes per year.
2. Later... When the Food Planet supervisor donates to the food bank, thank him/her and present the supervisor with the "certificate."

How it may be...

You continue working at the food bank to provide food to people in emergency situations—job loss, fire, etc. You've been glad to see some major changes at the food bank.

You've helped convince the food bank to get actively involved in advocacy. They've joined in coalitions with other non-profits to pressure state and federal government to strengthen the safety net programs and increase access to them.

On a local level, the food bank has supported and initiated a number of community food security projects, such as community gardens and a Food Policy Council.

Food Galaxy CEO

How it is...

You are the CEO of the Food Galaxy Corporation. You have hundreds of Food Galaxy supermarkets across the country, and also own 15 regional grocery store chains, including Food Planet. All in all, Food Galaxy controls 716 supermarkets. You are very proud of your company's "efficient" operations.

Why you don't buy locally: Your corporation does not have a policy to encourage buying from growers who are located near a specific store or region. It is more efficient to have **buyers at the headquarters** that are responsible for buying for a whole region. When buyers deal with the biggest growers, they can get the **cheapest prices** and **pass those great deals on to the customers**.

Where your stores get food: You're proud to say that the food sold in the stores comes from **all around the world!** Food Galaxy **owns processing plants** that get food that is grown in many countries and then processed to sell in our stores. We can sell food more cheaply to customers then!

Food Planet Employee

How it is...

You work full-time as a cashier at a large grocery store chain, Food Planet. You get \$6.00/hour without benefits. You and your two children live month to month, with some months better than others.

Your food budget: After rent, utilities, school fees, doctor visits, and transportation costs, you usually have about \$100 this month to spend on food for you and your family. Sometimes that stretches until the end of the month; often it does not. It helps when the kids are at school because they get a free lunch there. **You usually do your shopping at Food Planet after work because the small grocery store in your neighborhood is more expensive and has a limited selection of fresh foods.**

When you run out of money for food: You may have to turn to the government programs like **Food Stamps**. When even the Food Stamp program cannot meet your needs, you are forced to turn to the **food bank** for a food box. Unfortunately, you have to take several hours off of work to access these programs. Time off affects your pay and does not make your boss happy. It is a huge hassle to **get the bus** to the state office and then wait there, but sometimes you have to make the sacrifice.

How it may be...

Some changes have happened in your life that make getting quality food a bit easier. Most importantly, you now receive a livable wage at work, in part due to union activity.

Also, a **farmer's market** has come into your neighborhood. Now you can buy fresh food for your family at a good price. You can walk to this market rather than spending time and money on the inconvenient bus. The market is also good because you can use WIC money or Food Stamps there. You feel good about contributing money to local farmers.

Also, now you **grow some of your own produce**. A local program helped you with start your backyard garden by giving you some supplies and training. You bought seeds with your Food Stamps. You eventually hope to grow more and sell the extra in the weekly farmer's market for a little extra money.

Your kids' school has seen some changes too. Your kids learn gardening skills at the **school garden** and are now more excited about eating fresh food.

Food Planet Supervisor

How it is...

You are a supervisor at the supermarket chain Food Planet. Your company has many stores in a 6-state region. You are proud to work for this company that brings every type of high quality food AND low food prices to consumers. You have been in the business for many years and have seen lots of changes in the industry.

You *used to* buy a lot of product from small or medium sized local growers and from processors in your region. But now **you aren't personally in charge of buying the food**. Now the **Regional Buyer** for your supermarkets buys for the whole region and does not buy from smaller growers. It is **more time efficient to deal with the large growers** who can supply huge amounts of product to the company's distribution center for shipping to all the stores. Also, the bigger corporate growers can grow such a large amount of food that they can sell it at an **extremely low price**. Many small farmers can't sell at a price you can take, even if they are closer to the store's community.

Besides, Food Planet was just bought by a bigger national company—**Food Galaxy**. You'll keep your name, "Food Planet," but they'll have the final say now.

Instructions:

1. When the local farmer comes to sell to you, refuse and explain the above reasons why you cannot buy from him or her.
2. When the time comes, you will donate to the food bank rather than paying dumping fees. Give the following speech, give food to the food bank, and accept your certificate.

Your **speech** at the Food Bank donation:

"At Food Planet, we don't always throw our trash away, we give back to the community! Food Planet has a long tradition of giving to charities like the Food Bank. We are proud to be part of the War on Hunger in America."

How it may be...

You now have more control over what goes on in your store. You convinced your company that if you were to be successful, you would have to be able to adjust to what the community wants. Now you **buy more food from local growers** and use their labels advertising that it is grown locally. You've realized that local food is higher quality because it has not been sitting in a distribution center and on a truck for days/weeks.

Also, you sell food that has **complete labels** on it. People want to know where food is grown and processed, what chemicals are used and if any genetically modified products are used. People sure are picky about what they eat these days.

State Office Employee

How it is...

You are an employee of the state. You interview people to determine their eligibility for government programs. Often times your job is really frustrating because you have so many people on your caseload and they are often upset if they do not qualify or if they only get a small amount of help from the government.

You yourself do not get paid much. **You receive about \$60 of food stamps every month to help you and your family.** Usually you shop at the grocery store, but when you are short on time, you go to the convenience store in your neighborhood even though it is more expensive. Last year, when your spouse was laid off, you had to turn to the food bank for food boxes two months in a row. You were glad the food boxes were there, but you weren't particularly thrilled with the selection of food you received. You didn't want to tell your family where the food came from because they feel proud of their self-sufficiency and would be ashamed of taking charity.

Instructions: When the Food Planet employee comes, you are stressed and in a hurry. Because of that, you are rude to this customer. Quickly tell him or her to fill out an application and turn it in. S/he may get food stamps, but **the interview and decision process will take at least 4 weeks.** If s/he needs food now, you inform him/her that **they'll have to go to a food bank.**

How it may be...

Changes in your life: You still work for the state, but you get paid a livable wage. Money is still tight sometimes, but you manage. You participate in a co-op program where you pay for the food and vote with the other members to determine what you want each month. You like the program because it is a smart way to use your money. By buying collectively, you can get more food for your money.

Changes in government programs: In addition to changes in your own life, you have seen the government programs change over time. You think that some community groups have joined together to make these changes happen.

- It is now possible for the programs to provide more money, making it a more adequate safety net.
- Your office is no longer so under-staffed. You are able to spend enough time with customers and services are provided in a timely manner.
- You've noticed less of a stigma attached to these programs. People recognize they are important to livelihoods and are economic stimulus for communities.

For use during Part II

Community Member
Principal, Casey Woods Middle School

You are a very dedicated school principal who grew frustrated over the years with the school meal programs. The quality of the food had been relatively poor and you saw more and more children eating candy bars from the vending machine for lunch. In addition, the stigma attached to students who received free lunch made some kids skip lunch all together. As someone who is very concerned with the well being of your students, you recognize that learning just doesn't happen very well when stomachs are empty. You also recognize that eating habits are formed at a young age.

You decided to take action and get more fresh fruits and vegetables in the school. Not only are they more nutritious, but also kids actually like them. Then you decided you wanted to get the freshest produce available and also support local farmers. You worked with the director of the school district's School Food Service Program to buy from local farmers.

In addition, you decided to plant a school garden so that children can learn to grow their own food. The garden fit well into the science and math curriculum. You enjoyed watching the kids learn important lessons of sustainability and nutrition. Plus, students love to eat what they grow.

You've heard about the Food Policy Council pushing for a school breakfast to be available to all kids, and you support them however you can.

For use during Part II

Community Member
Restaurant Owner

As a food expert, you know that fresh foods taste best. You got sick of getting produce that was weeks old. You were also looking for ways to make your dishes unique. Buying from local farms has made it possible for you to get fresh and regionally distinctive food for your restaurant. Food is picked and delivered the next day.

Your customers have taken a liking to menus that change due to what's in season. Plus, as a local business owner, you like to support other local businesses as much as you can. You've noticed that other local restaurant owners are also catching on to the beauty of buying local. This increased demand has been met by an increased supply, making it easier to get the food you want when you need it. Now you're trying to get other restaurants together in a collaborative with local farmers. If you can coordinate buying, transportation from the farms will be easier and more economical.

For Part II only

Community Member
Senior Citizen

You grew up on a farm and so have always been familiar with agriculture. Watching food grow has always been a thrill for you. Now that a community garden has opened in your neighborhood, you get to garden every day. Your grocery bill has gone down because you grow your own fresh fruits and vegetables. Sharing your expertise with your fellow gardeners makes you feel good.

For Part II only

Community Member
High School Student, Urban Agriculture Program

You never thought you'd be into farming, but the announcement of the summer urban agriculture program caught your eye. It paid OK, and definitely sounded better than McDonald's. In this program, teenagers intern with local farmers and learn entrepreneurial skills at a farmers' market. You learned about food production, nutrition, ecology, and direct marketing. Your eating habits have become much healthier. You're not sure that you want to be a farmer for life, but you think it would be cool to run a farmers' market or a restaurant. You've learned that there could be a lot of job opportunities for you within the local food system.

For Part II only

Community Member
Concerned Parent

All the media coverage on childhood obesity has really struck a chord with you. You had felt for a while that children were not learning good eating habits these days. You feel strongly that fast food and candy bars should not be so prominent in schools. You became very excited when you heard that your child's school was considering planting a garden. You called the school board, the principal, the superintendent – anyone you could think of – to show your support for this idea. When it came time for groundbreaking, you gladly lent a hand to get this project started. It was fun to see the community get involved in the project, and it's even more fun to hear your son and his friends get excited about vegetables.

For use in Part II

Community Member
Concerned Parent

Maybe the quality of school meals isn't that great, but having the kids eat at least one meal a day at school eases your food budget. The problem comes during the summer, when your kids aren't in school. There had been a few places in the city that have USDA-sponsored Summer Food programs, but none close to you. You talked to your school principal about getting summer food programs in your neighborhood, and then you two worked out a plan together. You all got other concerned parents in your neighborhood to petition for a Summer Food Program at the nearby Parks and Recreation facility.

Now your food budget isn't so tight in the summer. Having food served at Parks and Rec every day provides a fun opportunity for the kids to get together and run around.

Community Member
Food Policy Council Member

For years, you have worked for a non-profit that is a network of sites that distribute food boxes, clothes, and used medical equipment to needy families. Working so hard for these band-aid solutions has worn you out over the years, and so you jumped at the chance to do some advocacy work. You joined the Food Policy Council so that you could work for ways to make it possible for people to take care of their own food needs.

Some of the things the Food Policy Council has advocated for include:

- Reduced water rates for people who grow their own food
- Schools and Nursing Homes buying locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables for their meals
- Universal school breakfast, where all children eat breakfast together at school, no matter what their income
- More nutritional education
- Farmland preservation
- Community garden development
- More gardening outreach through cooperative extension
- City composting sites that provide compost for gardens and farms

You are filled with lots of ideas and truly enjoy working with others who are concerned about the local food system. The Council is made up of a truly diverse group of people – farmers, restaurant owners, produce distributors, grocers, city planners, school food program staff, cooperative extension staff, solid waste management staff, and more.

Community Member
Local Entrepreneur—owner of “Get Saucy”

Your family has prided itself for generations on its special spaghetti sauce. You decided to turn this passion into a business. You knew sauce, but you didn't really know business strategy. A local credit union gave you a small loan and some business training. You used the community kitchen at the local food bank to make your first products. Your business started slowly and grew with the help of these organizations. As you learned better marketing skills, your business expanded into its own location. All the local supermarkets carry your sauce and some local restaurants use it too. Now you employ six people.

Because you take pride in your sauce, you only want the best ingredients and that means buying fresh local food. You buy tomatoes and other ingredients from farmers in your area.

Jolly Fresh Farms,

a company of

MonCarAgra

Food Bank

Food Planet Supermarket

State Office

Food Galaxy Corporate Center

Garland Family Farm

**THE FOOD BANK
HEREBY RECOGNIZES**

Food Planet

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