

UCLA

Working Paper Series

Title

Community Food Security: Policies for a More Sustainable Food System in the Context of the 1995 Farm Bill and Beyond

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/9nm3c0gk>

Authors

Gottlieb, Robert

Fisher, Andrew

Publication Date

1995-05-01

Community Food Security:
Policies for a More Sustainable Food System
in the Context of the 1995 Farm Bill and Beyond

Andrew Fisher
Robert Gottlieb

The Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies
School of Public Policy and Social Research
University of California, Los Angeles

Working Paper No. 13
March 1995
Price: \$5.00

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
INTRODUCTION	2
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	3
Definitions: Food Security	3
Definitions: Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems	4
Food Security Issues	4
Outcomes of Food Insecurity	6
RECONNECTING GROWER AND RESIDENT: A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK.	7
Background	7
Farmers' Markets	8
Community Food Production	9
Food Processing	9
The Retail Sector: The Community Role	10
The Retail Sector: Transportation Issues	10
FOOD SECURITY PLANNING	11
THE FARM BILL PROCESS	13
POLICY PROPOSALS	16
Community Food Planning and Empowerment	17
1. Background	17
2. Benefits	18
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	19
A. Three Year Food Planning Demonstration Project in Ten-Twenty Cities	19
B. Information Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance	19
C. Food Security, Environment, and Community Development Task Force	19
D. Train Urban Cooperative Extension Agents in Food Security Issues and Food Planning	20
E. Increase Support for Cooperative Extension's Public Issues Education	20
Direct Marketing	20
1. Background	20
2. Benefits	21
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	21
A. Redirection and Increased Support of the Federal State Market Improvement Program	21
B. Expansion of Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	22
C. Increased Support for Wholesale Market Development Division of AMS	22

D. Coordination of use of food stamps at Farmers' Markets	22
E. Encourage Government Purchases of Locally Grown Foods	22
F. Link Local Agriculture with Child Nutrition Program	23
Community Gardening and Urban Food Production	23
1. Background	23
2. Benefits	24
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	24
A. A Competitive Grants Program	24
B. Broaden the Definition of Funding Criteria	25
C. Facilitate the Use of Public Lands for Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets	25
D. Authorize Community Gardening as a Nutrition Education Activity for Food Stamp Grants	25
Food Assistance: WIC and Food Stamps	25
1. Background	25
2. Benefits	27
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	27
A. Expanding WIC's Reach	27
B. Food Stamp	27
C. American Hunger Relief Act Planning Process	27
D. Expand WIC and Food Stamp State Plans of Guidance to Address Food Security	28
Farmland Protection	28
1. Background	28
2. Benefits	28
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	28
A. Farmland Protection Policy Act Provisions	29
B. Farms for the Future Act Provisions	29
Food Retail Strategies	29
1. Background	29
2. Benefits	29
3. Federal Policies: Recommendations	29
A. Establish Inter-Agency Inner City Food Retail Committee	29
B. Conduct a Feasibility Study of Financial Intermediation Strategies	30
C. Monitor Food Prices in Inner Cities	30
D. Identify Food Retail Deficient Areas	30
E. Identify Barriers and Support Mechanisms for Joint Venture	30
Community and Economic Development Initiatives	31
1. Background	31
2. Benefits	31

3. Federal Policies	32
A. Establish a Block Grants Program for Community Food Security	32
B. Incorporate Food Security Programs as part of Empowerment/Enterprise Zone Projects	32
C. Establish a Rural Economic Development Focus of USDA	32
D. Minority Farmer Programs	33
CONCLUSION	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	34
ENDNOTES	41

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the 1970s, communities across the nation have been confronting an increasing number of food-related problems. These include levels of hunger and poor nutrition not seen since the Depression, unprecedented demand on the charitable food sector, and the abandonment of the inner cities by the supermarket industry. Similarly, rural communities and local agriculture have been in decline due to the restructuring of agriculture and the globalization of the food system.

The government response to these problems has lacked an overarching vision and coherence, and has instead been narrowly constituted and fragmented into numerous distinct, albeit related programs. While these efforts individually are important and may mitigate some of the most egregious deficiencies of a globalized food system, their lack of integration presents a major obstacle in the development of long-term solutions toward providing community food security and a sustainable food system.

The concept of community food security provides an integrated framework for developing such a coherent approach. As an effective tool for evaluating and addressing food and agriculture policy, it emphasizes the need to build and coordinate community institutions to ensure access and availability to an acceptable and adequate diet for its residents. It should be seen as a form of community development and empowerment which complements and extends the traditional approach of addressing food and hunger issues at the individual level.

The Farm Bill process offers a critical vehicle for inserting a community food security perspective into the programs and policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and related federal agencies. Employing a comprehensive food systems approach, community food security extends the approach of consumer, rural populist, and environmental advocates by addressing the continuum of food related problems from farmers to urban constituencies, while enhancing the linkages between these groups. Specifically, this approach can be developed in seven critical arenas:

- * Community Food Planning, including the development of stakeholder-based Food Policy Councils and the creation within USDA of a Community Food Security program;
- * Direct Marketing Strategies between farmers and consumers such as farmer's markets;
- * Community Gardening and Urban Food Production, including initiatives that strengthen food production and urban greening in the shadow of the city;
- * Strengthening Food Assistance, including such programs as Food Stamps and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC);
- * Farmland Protection initiatives that would strengthen urban edge farmland;
- * Food Retail Strategies that would redirect and enhance access to higher quality, fresh, and less expensive food sources in urban areas;
- * Community and Economic Development initiatives that could establish links between federal support programs such as Enterprise or Empowerment zones and community food security efforts.

INTRODUCTION

During the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bill debates, a movement emerged that sought to incorporate the goals of sustainable agriculture into legislation. As a consequence of this coalition-building process, important new policy initiatives were introduced. These ranged from sustainable agriculture training for extension agents to the establishment of national standards for organic produce, as provided in the National Organic Products Act. However, the uneven implementation of these initiatives has been underlined in part by the limited nature of the sustainable agriculture coalition itself, which has been situated predominantly in relation to farm-specific issues, and not along all of the multiple pathways of the food system. Thus, notably, there has been a significant absence of urban food agendas within the sustainable agriculture discourse. To address this shortcoming, new efforts have recently emerged to link urban food concerns with sustainable agriculture agendas under the broader framework of food security advocacy. In relation to that effort, this paper lays out the framework and specific policy components of a food security approach, including the design of a "Community Food Security Empowerment Act" which identifies the connections between the sustainable agriculture and urban food agendas.

The paper addresses several related themes. In articulating a common vision for urban food and sustainable agriculture advocates, it elaborates the concept of developing sustainable food systems through community food security planning. As a legislative and policy document, it spells out the specific legislative components to be incorporated into new policies, including a Community Food Security Empowerment Act. And, as a political analysis, it identifies the basis for a strategic alliance between the sustainable agriculture movement, including its environmental components, and urban food advocates.

The first part of the document presents a conceptual framework for food security, including the need for comprehensive food planning efforts. It also includes an analysis of the Farm Bill process and recent organizing efforts to influence it. We argue that an analysis of food security, a need that is particularly crucial, though not limited to, the inner city, is linked to larger food system issues. These include sustainability and equity concerns in food production and distribution and the need for rural economic development associated with the implementation of a community food security agenda. We also argue that community food security creates significant economic, social, and cultural benefits. Further, by understanding the Farm Bill process and previous advocacy efforts, it strengthens the possibility of developing new routes for incorporating urban food agendas into federal legislation or as new policies at the state and regional level. These opportunities for policy innovation, including community empowerment strategies, direct marketing, urban greening and food production, farmland protection, inner city food retail store approaches, and community and economic development, are explored individually and as part of an overall policy framework for community food security. These strategies, based on a food systems approach, enhance and extend and ultimately reconfigure the limited food "safety net" strategies of the past fifty years, while simultaneously contrasting a community food security framework, embedded in part in the language of security as entitlement, with the "anti-welfare"/anti-entitlement concepts of the Republican "Contract with America" which significantly reduce or eliminate any public role in the process of achieving food security.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Definitions: Food Security

First elaborated in the international development literature, the concept of food security is often associated with the phenomenon of hunger. However, food security differs from hunger interventions in certain crucial ways. First, food security represents a community need, rather than an individual's condition, as associated with hunger. In this context, we define food security as "all persons obtaining, at all times, a culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through local, non-emergency sources."¹ Second, whereas hunger defines an existing condition of unfulfilled needs (which might have clinical significance as malnutrition), food security is decidedly prevention-oriented. It evaluates the existence of resources, both community and personal (the "basket of strategies" for sustainable livelihood, as Chambers, 1988, puts it), to provide an individual with adequate, acceptable food. Food security takes into account such factors as income, transportation, storage and cooking facilities, food prices, nutritious and culturally acceptable food choices, food safety and other environmental hazards, questions of ownership, production and processing methods, and the existence of and access to adequate, local, non-emergency food sources (Cohen and Burt 1989; Ashman 1993). As Sen argues, this analysis of food security (and its absence) can be defined as the need "to establish command over an adequate amount of food and other necessities", the equivalent of the need to secure "entitlements" of people and communities (Sen 1993; Dreze and Sen 1989). Food security, particularly in the context of surplus food production but inadequate access and availability and affordability, becomes both an individual's right and a focus for community action.²

A food security analysis imparts a systemic view of the causes of hunger and poor nutrition within a community while identifying the changes necessary to prevent their occurrence. It is an effective tool for planning and evaluating food policy and empowering communities and individuals in need. A food security analysis emphasizes the importance of building community institutions to ensure access and availability to an acceptable and adequate diet for community residents. It should be seen as a form of community development which complements and extends the traditional approach of addressing food and hunger issues at the individual level (Gottlieb and FitzSimmons 1994).

Community food security analysis, however, extends beyond such basic questions as adequacy of personal resources into an examination of the food system itself. Questions of equity and sustainability are vital to the development of food security and hence need to be included in any food system analysis. As Barraclough argues, a food system based on the concept of security should have "sustainability such that the ecological system is protected and improved over time, [with] maximum autonomy and self-determination, and equity, meaning, at a minimum, dependable access for all social groups" (Barraclough 1991).

Definitions: Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable Food Systems

Similar to food security, the definition of sustainable agriculture has been debated extensively throughout the literature. Both resource conservation and environmental protection as well as rural development and local production tend to be cited as crucial attributes of sustainability. These notions, however, need to be expanded to embrace a systemic view not only of the grower side of agriculture but also of the distribution end (e.g., marketing) as well as other aspects of production (e.g., processing). Such an expanded conception of sustainable agriculture provides a direct link to community food security issues, underlining, as one example, the importance of marketing, an issue already recognized as significant by sustainable agriculture advocates (Meister 1994).

Within the context of sustainable agriculture's concerns, expanding opportunities for local agriculture and local food systems can have powerful environmental implications, such as reducing reliance on fossil fuels for transportation, reduced energy use for cold storage, and reduced packaging. More broadly, local agriculture can also provide "maximum autonomy and self-determination." Friedmann characterizes this sustainable alternative in terms of locality and seasonality, or relinking the regional components of agrofood relations. These reconnections have the advantage of creating markets for local farmers for whom geographical centralization and economic concentration in both the farming and processing sectors have presented a barrier. At the same time, they expand opportunities for community food security.

In contrast, the characteristics of distance and durability embedded in today's global food system reinforce food insecurity and the absence of community inputs or control over the quality, access to, and nature of food sources. High value-added products like potato chips not only travel further and have a lengthier life time through the food system than potatoes, but they represent higher costs, a standardized diet, and limited nutritional value to consumers attracted to the product by transnational media messages and highly visible, though scarce retail shelf space (Friedmann 1993). In contrast to the globalizing forces of distance and durability, the concept of reconnection, or "regionalizing" agrofood relationships (what Kloppenburg, Hendrickson, and Stevenson have called the reconstruction of the "regional food shed") becomes central to the argument about the efforts to design a sustainable food system. (Kloppenburg, Hendrickson and Stevenson 1994)

Food Security Issues

Increasingly since the mid 1970s, communities across the nation have been confronting a set of interrelated and often protracted food system problems. These problems have in turn intensified and compounded the issues associated with the unprecedented levels of hunger and poor nutrition in this country, as evidenced by increased demand for emergency food and growth in food assistance caseloads, and documented by local hunger studies.

The most fundamental prerequisite of food security is necessarily adequacy of personal resources. During the past 10-15 years, personal income for low-income residents has significantly declined, due to a number of macro-economic factors as well as reductions in

federal and state safety nets. Today, a stagnating minimum wage no longer lifts a family out of poverty. Indeed, 18 percent of all full time workers are now paid less than the poverty level for a family of four. It is now common to work full time and receive government assistance. Federal cutbacks in the food stamp program, as one crucial example, paralleled the increased rates of hunger throughout the 1980s. Benefits to families under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) were slashed 40 percent in real dollars from 1970 to 1990 (Clancy 1993). In California, AFDC benefits were reduced 15 percent from \$694 for a family of three in 1991 to \$593 in 1994, while in Los Angeles County single indigent adults have seen their monthly benefits drop 38 percent from \$343 to \$212 over roughly the same time period (IHC 1994).

Government cutbacks, increased unemployment, and the restructuring of the economy have disproportionately affected minorities and female headed households. Individuals in female headed households experienced the greatest income loss of any group during the 1980s, while poverty among Latinos increased 20 percent during the 1980s (Bread for the World Institute 1991). With rent and utilities as fixed costs, food becomes one of the first items to be cut for those managing poverty-level budgets. One fundamental outcome of this process has been increased food insecurity (Cohen & Burt 1989).

Food insecurity is not simply a function of low income, but also has a spatial dimension, related to a series of factors that operate at the neighborhood level. Accessing healthy, affordable food on a daily basis has become a complex, often difficult experience for urban, low income residents. The restructuring of the food retail sector from the 1960s through the 1980s substantially narrowed food choices for inner city residents. Of the options available, one involved food buying at more proximate "mom and pop" stores, "convenience markets," or liquor stores. These stores had available a small selection of food items, with characteristic high prices and poor selection. The alternative food buying strategy involved far lengthier trips, either by taking several buses or via congested roadways, to the closest full service supermarket, whose prices were still likely to be higher than those available at suburban counterparts (Ashman 1993; Dohan 1994).

The consolidation of the food retail sector during this period represented a net loss of stores throughout the urban core and a particularly high ratio of customer base to market location in the lowest per capita income areas. The leveraged buyouts of the 1980s also forced supermarkets to shut down or sell off their less profitable inner city operations to reduce their debt load and operating expenses (Ashman 1993). While much of the growth during this period occurred in suburban areas, with the stores following prevailing migration patterns, supermarkets in the inner city remained abandoned. That trend has only recently, but still just minimally, been reversed, as choice suburban sites become increasingly scarce, and supermarket-poor inner city sites, with their high population to market ratios, become more attractive (Dohan 1994; O'Connor and Abell 1992).

Food retail restructuring has thus had significant food security implications, with many inner city residents left without nearby access to full service food markets, which have been the most likely source of less expensive and more nutritious food choices (e.g., fresh produce). Inner

city Los Angeles, for example, lost 30 percent of its supermarkets from 1975 to 1991, with a current ratio of one supermarket per 27,206 persons, as compared to a County average of one supermarket per 16,505 persons. As a consequence, each supermarket in the inner city serves nearly two-thirds more persons than the average supermarket in the County. Roughly one million persons in Los Angeles County reside in supermarket deficient areas (Dohan 1994).

Fewer inner city stores has also resulted in reduced competition, which further reinforces the shift towards higher food prices for those who can least afford to pay more. In Hartford, one local supermarket chain advertises double and triple coupons for its suburban customers, but refuses to reciprocate for its inner city stores, citing a lack of competition (Nauer 1994; Winne 1994). Price comparisons of inner city and suburban supermarkets are numerous. The UCLA study "Seeds of Change" found that the price of a USDA-generated Thrifty Food Plan marketbasket would cost \$285 more per year in an inner city neighborhood than in suburban areas. More striking is the figure that an average household residing in this same inner city community would spend 36 percent of its income on the marketbasket as compared to 12-16 percent in suburban communities (Ashman 1993).

Outcomes of Food Security

The combination of supermarket flight, high prices, and lack of transportation exacerbate the problem of inadequate personal resources in creating conditions of food insecurity in poor and low income communities. Outcomes of this food insecurity include increased hunger, high rates of diet-related disease, as well as absence of community or individual empowerment.

The rise of hunger over the past 10-15 years has been well documented. One commonly used proxy for hunger is demand on the emergency food system. The number of food banks, food pantries, and amount of food distributed has grown exponentially since 1979. In 1979, 25 million lbs. of food were distributed through the emergency food system, as compared to over 450 million lbs. in 1990, even though 60 percent of food assistance sites had to turn people away due to a lack of food (Bread for the World Institute 1991; Clancy 1993). At the same time, donated sources of food have been in decline since the early 1990s, due in part to the restructuring of the food retail sector, which has significantly exacerbated the problems of food assistance sufficiency (Greene and Hall 1994; Nazario 1994). Childhood hunger surveys represent another method of measuring hunger. A series of studies undertaken by the Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project (CCHIP) across the country found that 8 percent of children under the age of twelve go hungry, with another 30 percent of households at risk of hunger (FRAC 1991; Nestle and Guttmacher 1992).

Another significant variable resulting in mortality and other health-related outcomes have been nutritional deficiencies. Diet related diseases rank among the top causes of death in the United States. African Americans and Latinos suffer from disproportionately high rates of such diseases as cancers of the digestive system, cirrhosis, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity and childhood anemia (Kumanyika 1990; Council on Scientific Affairs 1991). Many of these diseases result from a variety of stresses associated with poverty, which in turn are compounded by an overconsumption of fats and sugars and an underconsumption of fiber, fruit,

and vegetables. These consumption patterns can be traced to poor nutritional choices associated with inadequate information and buying patterns influenced by aggressive advertising aimed at low income populations and aggravated by reduced purchasing power and access to healthier foods, notably fresh fruit and produce. Targeted advertising campaigns can also play a key role in dietary choices (Interagency Board 1993; Gussow 1994a).

Without a stake in the production or distribution of their food, many urban residents feel estranged from or marginalized by the food system. The 1992 riots in Los Angeles underlined the representation of inner city neighborhood food stores as hostile forces rather than community resources. Communities have a stake in their neighborhoods, and making them more habitable in physical, functional, and environmental terms with respect to food system relationships can provide significant benefits in the form of community development objectives. One clear community improvement in terms of food security is greater access to food sources. Food access problems in turn spill over into public transportation concerns and opportunities to create more innovative public/private or non-profit transportation strategies (e.g., use of vans, jitneys, taxis, shared delivery services). In this context, the food system itself can be seen as having become a focal point in urban demands for social justice and community development needs.³

RECONNECTING GROWER AND RESIDENT: A REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

Background

Despite the numerous barriers to local agriculture and food security, a number of programs and institutions which forge closer links for residents with their food system have emerged (or reemerged) in recent years, suggesting new opportunities for a regional food policy approach. Farmers' markets, community gardens and localized farming or urban food production projects promote a regional food system, improving access to healthy foods as well as contributing toward the economic sustainability of local agriculture. These programs, in turn, provide a base for creating a regional framework for other dimensions of the food system, including regional opportunities for production or processing as well as distribution and marketing.

Interestingly, the concept of regional food systems can be located in earlier regional planning literature. Benton MacKaye, a founder of the Regional Planning Association of America (RPAA) who maintained a long standing research and advocacy interest in resource conservation, wilderness protection, and urban form as part of the regional planning discourse, argued that grower to consumer connections were essential to healthy environments. MacKaye and RPAA planners pointed to the English "garden city" model of development as reinforcing the links between urban inner cities and surrounding agricultural areas. Making the "connection between farm and table more direct and efficient," MacKaye wrote in 1919, would facilitate "lowering the price to consumer and raising the pay of producer" (MacKaye 1919; Lubove 1963; Howard 1946; Mumford 1925). Such regional arguments resonate today in light of the powerful external influences of the global food system on both urban consumers and rural or "extrarurban" producers.

Farmers' Markets

Farmers' markets are perhaps the most visible current form of direct marketing in the city. When located in inner city neighborhoods, as they have been in Hartford, Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Pittsburgh, and other cities across the country, farmers' markets have provided access to high quality produce at affordable prices where such access may be severely limited.

Farmers' markets introduce a number of educational and community functions apart from their role as food delivery vehicles. As most Americans become increasingly ignorant of the source of their food, farmers' markets personalize the food system, providing direct, or face-to-face selling and buying relationships between farmer and consumer. In contrast to "distance and durability" factors (e.g., imports, or standardized, domestic-produced and long distance delivered products which allow many fruits and vegetables to become available on a continuous year-round basis), farmers' markets reestablish for consumers the seasonal rhythms of local food production. This seasonality factor also enlarges the opportunities for region-specific diets that can establish crucial nutritional benefits lost through the distance and durability features of the food system (Gussow 1994b).

Farmers' markets also establish new kinds of public spaces in highly differentiated and fragmented urban settings. With an increasing privatization of city space, where even supermarkets may be built in high security plazas with ten foot fences and police sub-stations, urban farmers' markets represent a contrasting public environment that fosters social interaction. As such, they become fertile ground for cross-cultural communication and exchange through such activities as swapping recipes and trying new foods.

With the modest growth in direct marketing opportunities in the 1990s (as of 1993, USDA estimated that there were 1,755 farmers' markets in the U.S., USDA 1994), a number of small and medium sized local growers have become significantly dependent on the ability to market their products directly. Farmers' markets allow growers to earn approximately 50 percent more than they would selling wholesale, in addition to reduced packing costs. They also provide an outlet for organic and other environmentally concerned growers: In one survey, 83 percent of growers at farmers' markets in LA County stated they didn't use pesticides (Ashman 1993). Though elaborating upon such survey data requires additional research (e.g., the claims of non-pesticide use by growers differed from the number of growers who were certified organic), it nevertheless underlines the prevailing assumptions about linking reduced pesticide use to grower participation in farmers' markets.

The USDA's Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) also establishes clear connections between the food security of low income residents and the viability of the local farmer. Recognizing the need for improved fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income persons, the FMNP provides pregnant and nursing mothers associated with the WIC program \$10-\$20 worth of coupons redeemable at farmers' markets for produce. The modest sums allocated to the FMNP work double duty: influencing effective nutrition-related food choices for low-income persons, while simultaneously expanding marketing opportunities for local farmers.

Community Food Production

Community gardens represent another important and clearly defined method of reconnecting urban residents with their food system. While inner city community gardens can provide modest amounts of fresh produce to people whose diets, because of income, access or behavioral factors, may be nutritionally inadequate, they also fulfill a number of other purposes. In neighborhoods where parks and recreational opportunities are scarce, community gardening provides inexpensive productive recreation and creates green islands, beautifying neighborhoods. As places where food is grown, they offer opportunities for hands-on nutrition education, both for participants as well as recipients. And as community institutions in which residents need to make place-related collective decisions, they become an important forum for community development and empowerment. The transformation of a blighted empty lot into a flowering productive space, which is nurtured by and in turn nourishes residents, lends communities a sense of ownership and responsibility which otherwise may not be present (Schantz 1994).

In several cities across the country, including Stockton, California, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and Pittsburgh, institutions such as food banks, social service agencies, and individuals have established urban farms, or established relations with nearby working farms. Urban farming projects combine traits from community gardens and local small farms. They usually produce under contract, sell at farmers' markets or through community supported agriculture arrangements. They bolster local agriculture, establishing a further source of locally grown food. At the same time, they fulfill community oriented aims, acting as a form of economic development, and training youth, the homeless, and others for possible food-related employment (Bashore 1992; Knack 1994).

Food Processing

Most food consumed today is processed in one form or another. The trends toward concentration and globalization in the food industry have been significantly influenced by the reconfiguration of food manufacturing and processing (Marion 1986). At the same time, however, food processing represents an important opportunity to embed the community food security concept within a regional context, to become an integral part of what Friedmann characterizes as the locality/seasonality paradigm (Friedmann 1994b). For one, the expansion of local food systems into the food processing arena greatly enlarges markets for locally grown products. Food processing can also enhance the economic viability of local agriculture through the addition of value to local products. While upscale natural/health food items are often produced locally, local food processing enterprises can produce for middle and working class populations as well. Bakeries and tortillerias are two examples.⁴

Located in the inner city, food processing micro-enterprises (i.e., those with less than five employees) represent a way to link rural and urban constituencies as well as to provide economic development opportunities. As with urban farming projects, food processing micro-enterprises lend themselves to community projects, employing gang members, youth, and otherwise disadvantaged persons. At a larger scale, community input into food processing (who is employed, how the food is processed, etc.), represents a major arena for community food security

advocacy, as well as providing potential environmental and sustainable agriculture benefits. The regional opportunities for food processing and manufacturing, however, have remained distinct from sustainable agriculture and urban food agendas.

The Retail Sector: The Community Role

Full service food markets are a key institution not only in the distribution of food, but also as a community development tool. New stores may represent an opportunity for further community investment, revitalizing depressed neighborhoods (Nauer 1994). They can anchor a retail center, generating sufficient traffic to support locally owned businesses. Supermarkets specifically also furnish an important source of low to medium wage, entry-level employment as well as job training (Titus; Nauer).

Partnerships, or joint ventures between full service markets in inner city neighborhoods and community development corporations (CDCs) have the potential to benefit both food stores and communities. They can increase a store's accountability to the community as well as residents' stake in the store's success. When the CDC receives a share of the profits (or rent from the lease if it owns the land), a portion of local dollars can be recycled back into the community for such projects as affordable housing, child care, small business development assistance, and job training. As part of the agreement between food markets and CDCs, the food market can furnish services otherwise lacking. In a model joint venture in Newark, New Jersey, a Pathway supermarket furnished a van shuttle service, provided nutrition education, and undertook health fairs (FMI 1993; Linder 1992; O'Connor & Abell 1992).

The Retail Sector: Transportation Issues

The lack of transportation has also become a critical barrier faced by inner city residents in their efforts to obtain a nutritionally adequate diet through local non-emergency food sources. Transportation strategies aimed at improving access to both traditional and alternative food outlets in inner city areas have been significantly lacking, compounding problems of food insecurity as related to the cost of food as a percentage of income and food quality and nutrition (Yim 1990; Gottlieb and Wachs 1994).

The small number of supermarkets in the inner city limits the opportunities of its residents to shop at large, often less expensive full service markets. South Central Los Angeles, for example, lost 30 percent of its full service chain supermarkets from 1975 to 1991. As a result, stores in South Central serve on average 22 percent more customers than chain supermarkets in Los Angeles County as a whole. According to census information, South Central residents also own fewer automobiles than county-wide averages. Thus, inner city residents must travel farther to reach a full service supermarket than those residing outside inner city areas (Ashman 1993; U.S. Census Bureau 1990).

Supermarkets have traditionally relied on shoppers to provide their own transportation to the store. This practice has required stores to dedicate over half their lot size to parking. It has also hindered the development of inner city stores by making it difficult for supermarkets to acquire lots that can meet the store's large parking requirements, and by increasing the cost of the

store. Furthermore, those supermarkets that rely on customers walking to and from their stores incur substantial costs (up to \$65,000 annually per store in Los Angeles) replacing lost and stolen shopping carts, and retrieving carts that customers take off the lot (Dohan 1994).

Municipalities have also encouraged shoppers to drive to supermarkets. Transit planners have structured inner city bus service for commuters who travel downtown, not for those who utilize neighborhood services. Further, zoning statutes require supermarkets to dedicate substantial areas to parking, over 57 percent of a lot size in Los Angeles, for example (Ashman 1993; Nauer 1994; Dohan 1994). Experiences at other supermarkets, including the Pathmark store in Newark discussed above, indicate that a private van that shuttles customers to and from the supermarket may be a cost effective alternative transportation policy by increasing the number of patrons and boosting the average size purchase. However, there have been no studies to determine the feasibility of such a transportation service as a model program (Ashman 1993).

Other critical transportation needs for inner city residents include traveling to and from alternative food outlets, primarily farmers' markets, which could become an important source for meeting core dietary needs, such as fresh produce. The transportation problems at farmers' markets are similar to those at supermarkets, since residents might need to carry large numbers of bulky bags and packages home. However, while supermarkets are capable of capitalizing a private transportation system and recovering costs, farmers' markets cannot incur that expense. Moreover, there is no existing research which examines the difficulties of establishing a reliable transportation source to and from these alternative sources of food (Gottlieb and Wachs 1994).

Ultimately, a food security perspective requires a transportation component that addresses the need for both transportation planning innovations and changes in services, permitting, and new partnerships at the food retail level.

FOOD SECURITY PLANNING

As described above, the food system, as experienced both upstream in terms of farming and downstream in urban areas and through its multiple manufacturing, processing, and distribution pathways, has created a wide range of impacts. These impacts are felt throughout the system, with some of the most extended and compelling issues spatially constructed at the urban core where the distance and durability factors create and/or reinforce multiple problems of urban daily life. These include high rates of hunger and diet-related disease, supermarket flight from inner cities, and a marginal relationship of urban residents to the food system itself. Upstream from the urban core, today's food system also reveals a widely documented range of unsustainable agricultural practices (e.g., pesticide use impacts, soil erosion), loss of local farming, highly segmented and dispersed food manufacturing and processing activities, and a squeeze on locally grown and produced foods at the retail level where distance and durability prevail. Given its enormous impacts on communities, and conditions of human and environmental health, the food system has become subject to increasing criticism and efforts to reform or transform its various parts. However, existing programs to address food system impacts have been fragmented and narrow in scope. Because each part of the food system tends

to be compartmentalized, solutions focus on isolated parts. As an urban issue, for example, food system advocacy might address as separate, discrete items the following: more funding for federal food and nutrition programs; increased donations to food banks; better tax breaks for inner city supermarkets; nutrition education programs to create healthier diets; and so forth. While these efforts individually are important and may mitigate some of the more egregious deficiencies of the food system at its end point in the urban core, their lack of integration presents a major obstacle in the development of long-term solutions toward providing community food security and a sustainable food system.

The limited focus of food system advocacy underlines the problem that without some restructuring of current food production and distribution, there will remain a disjuncture between hunger intervention, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable food system objectives. Community food security represents the linkages between disparate food system issues, requiring by definition a holistic, comprehensive approach based on input from each of the food system's stakeholders, whether community resident, local grower or farmworker, or those involved in marketing or processing food. At the same time, such an approach can be located within the traditions of planning. Similar to other related and often protracted social and economic problems (housing, employment, pollution) where market failures have rooted such problems, planning for and developing a healthy and equitable food system requires new forms of public intervention that can be at once pro-active, system-related, regionally-based, and engaging government, community, and the private sector at all levels.

Community food security planning is an emerging field. It requires community, municipal, and regional attention to the structure and operations of the food system, from grower to consumer. It involves both the private-for-profit sector as well as the public and private not-for-profit sectors. It is a process that is by definition comprehensive, inclusive, and future-oriented. It seeks to go beyond short term solutions and has been grounded in coalitions between anti-hunger advocates, emergency food providers, nutritionists, health providers, local agriculture supporters, and community development institutions (Winne 1994).

The most visible, contemporary forms of food security planning involve the development of Food Policy Councils (FPCs) or Commissions that have been established in several different communities and regions (Hartford, Knoxville, St. Paul and Toronto, most notably). Most FPCs emerged during the 1980s, primarily to address rapid increases in food insecurity indicators, such as the increasing demand by orders of magnitude on the charitable food sector. FPC structures and activities have varied, with the two most prevalent models involving those functioning within municipal governments and others operating as non-profit organizations. Their roles also vary, whether in terms of policy development or program implementation, or whether they serve as catalyst or facilitator. All, however, have sought to construct what they consider to be a comprehensive approach to agriculture and food related problems (Dahlberg 1994).

The FPC focus on the multiple pathways of the food system can be seen from this sample of goals from FPC mission statements:

- * Guaranteeing the right to affordable and nutritious food;
- * Exploring the economic development potential of the food industry;
- * Educating consumers on the nutritional and environmental implications of their food choices;
- * Minimizing the negative environmental consequences of agriculture and food production, transportation, and disposal;
- * Increasing urban agriculture to enhance the urban environment and to provide additional sources of food and/or employment;
- * Reducing the reliance on the emergency food system;
- * Strengthening the links between urban and rural areas;
- * Preserving farmland and promoting sustainable agricultural practices (Ashman 1993).

Despite their system-wide focus, Food Policy Councils and community food planning efforts have tended to remain marginalized efforts at advocacy and intervention due to a lack of funds and institutional support (Clancy 1994). However, increased recognition of the need for greater coordination between the diverse sectors of the food system, due in part to diminished resources and the need to maximize benefits from minimal dollars, has significantly expanded the interest in community food planning.⁵ While food security and community food planning may be new concepts for policymakers at local, state, and national levels,⁶ the growing and now possibly endemic features of domestic food insecurity have increased interest in new forms of planning and food system intervention. In key areas like nutrition education and the importance of access to fresh produce or their connection to school breakfast and lunch programs, a food security planning approach can play a direct role in establishing specific kinds of linkages, while analyzing and highlighting the nature of the benefits associated with innovative approaches designed to assure healthier diets. Community or regional food security planning, directly linked to the reconnecting or regionalizing of agro-food relations, can, especially with federal resources available (as spelled out later in this paper), provide the crucial institutional mechanism for furthering a community food security agenda. The food system itself, rather than its constituent parts, remains the key to this process of policy -- and market -- reform.

THE FARM BILL PROCESS

Within the confines of the public policy process, the breadth and significance of the Farm Bill has clearly transcended traditional agricultural and food assistance agendas in recent years. Reauthorized every five years, the Farm Bill has proven to be an important vehicle, not only for

agriculture and hunger policy, but also environmental and consumer policy as well. These new dimensions to the Farm Bill process can be attributed to the changing political landscape of the 1980s and 1990s, which has seen a relative decline of farmers as a political force at the same time that consumer and environmental agendas have been on the ascendant. That trend has been compounded by the anti-government, anti-regulatory ideology that also developed in this period, culminating in the 1994 Republican takeover of Congress and the promotion of its "Contract with America."

Farm Bill-related coalition building is, of course, not a new phenomenon, and can be traced to the political alliances formed around the development of the food assistance programs of the 1930s. The rise of the sustainable agriculture movement's environmental and consumer-based alliances in the debates over the 1985 and 1990 Farm Bills extended that coalition building process, though it fell short of establishing crucial links between sustainable agriculture and advocates for the urban poor. If a visionary, sustainable agriculture is to focus on the development of sustainable food systems, then this more expansive coalition needs to emerge, with the concept of community food security providing the necessary link to unite farmer, environmental, and urban middle class and low income consumer agendas. At the same time, such a coalition requires a perspective on the role of government, whether federal or local, in the process of establishing new political and community intersections.

Food assistance programs (food stamps, child nutrition, school lunch programs, etc.) were initially developed as a complement to income support programs for farmers. They were perceived as a morally preferable way of unloading food surpluses to be purchased by the government as a form of supply management, which in turn protected farmers' incomes. New Deal programs, such as the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation and the original Food Stamp Plan, were two examples of this relationship. Such programs, however, emphasized disposal of surpluses rather than "adequate and suitable diets for the undernourished," as Benedict argued more than forty years ago, given the explicit requirements of such programs to use only surplus foods (Benedict 1953). Today, many food assistance programs remain in place as downstream byproducts of commodity surplus programs -- witness the debate over the fat content of school lunch program meals, or TEFAP, originally designed to reduce the level of government held dairy surplus. However, their purpose has largely been perceived as support programs for the poor. In this context, their inclusion in the Farm Bill (food stamps and commodity distribution), has reflected the political strategy of creating temporary coalitions between rural and urban legislators for the passage of both agriculture and hunger relief programs. At the same time, conservative, anti-government attacks on the "social welfare" aspect of such programs have continued to disguise their historical origins and their continuing, overriding objective as food system programs. Similarly, international food aid programs, such as Public Law 480 first developed in the 1950s, have also had direct reference to surplus disposal and domestic agriculture support programs (Dearden and Ackroyd 1989).

By the 1980s, the decline in numbers and importance of farmers as their own distinctive political force (as opposed to global food industry operators such as Cargill and ConAgra) had also resulted in the ability of new constituencies, broadly linked to what came to be called the

sustainable agriculture movement, to emerge as significant new players in the Farm Bill process. Within that new strategic bloc, consumer and environmental organizations especially became powerful players in the Farm Bill debates. Their alliance with progressive or populist small farm or family farm interests, primarily from the Midwest, further advanced the sustainable agriculture agenda in the 1981 and, more notably, in the 1985 and 1990 legislative debates over agriculture policy.

In the 1985 bill, for example, a Conservation Reserve Program was established to promote soil conservation techniques for such highly erosive row crops as corn, soybeans and cotton. It also established "sodbuster" and "swampbuster" provisions to ensure compliance by farmers with approved soil conservation plans in converted range and wetlands areas. The 1990 bill extended the focus on "sustainability" practices by providing for research support for reducing the use of toxic chemicals in production, improving low input farm management and promoting crop diversification. It also established national standards for "organically grown" food and developed a program designed to tie commodity price supports to crop rotation and other farm resource management approaches. Many of these programs testified to the growing strength of this new complex of interests, and meant that the new consumer and environmental agendas would undoubtedly continue to be considered in the numerous trade-offs and deals that constituted future Farm Bill processes (Youngberg 1993; Cook 1986; Zinn and Carr 1988).

However, the rise of consumer and environmental agendas has also been accompanied by disagreements that have emerged between progressive farming factions and representatives of the urban poor. During the 1985 and 1990 debates, the sustainable agriculture coalition was most directly concerned with issues of food safety and resource conservation rather than hunger and poverty. Clancy argues that a number of factors have prevented this coalition building, including reduced returns from food programs to farmers, and the threat of higher food prices for consumers, while farmers, many at the margin economically as well as increasingly marginalized by the restructuring of global agrofood relations, strive to become more profitable (Clancy).

As these factors continue to pose real barriers for coalitions between farming and anti-hunger constituencies, there also exists at this time an opportunity for reconstituting a more expansive coalition through the framework of community food security and sustainable food systems. Interest has been expressed by groups and individuals within the sustainable agriculture movement in stronger rural-urban links, especially as tied to marketing opportunities. This interest has been manifested by the inclusion of an "urban agriculture" section in the policy options document of The Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture (formerly the National Sustainable Agriculture Dialogue), as well as the vote by delegates at the Dialogue's National Meeting in 1994 which placed the Sustainable Producer and Community Controlled Development and Marketing option (encompassing urban issues) as its second highest priority (National Dialogue 1993).

A renewed coalition between anti-hunger and sustainable agriculture interests cannot continue to envision food policy as a "downstream by-product" of agriculture policy. Despite narrow "interest group" interpretations of their particular agendas, both sustainable farmers and

urban low income residents can identify common objectives, based significantly on their occupying marginal positions in an increasingly capital intensive, globalized food system. The linkages between food security and sustainable agriculture are most explicit when rural or grower-related sustainability factors (e.g., increased direct marketing, diversified crop rotation and improved soil management, and reduced capital inputs such as chemical fertilizers and pesticides) influence and abet urban food security and sustainability indicators (e.g., greater access to healthy, fresh, locally-produced foods).

Much of the analysis of this paper has focused on how the concept of food security can widen the horizons of the hunger debate into food system issues and ultimately into agricultural practices and structures. Likewise, an expanded definition of sustainable agriculture beyond strict, farm-specific producer issues is necessary. Patricia Allen argues for this more proactive and visionary sustainable agriculture:

Sustainable agriculture advocates must recognize common foundations of their particular interests, become more aware of the broader contradictions among sustainability groups, seek common interests and increase the participation of underrepresented groups in order to develop politically powerful coalitions for transforming the global food system" (Allen 1993).

A coalition between sustainable agriculture and urban food security advocates to promote a Community Food Security Empowerment Act, whether in conjunction with, or independent from the 1995 Farm Bill, represents one type of opportunity for establishing a broader, more inclusive direction for both of these sets of groups. Such a coalition would necessarily include other important players in the farm bill process, such as environmental groups, especially urban, community-based environmental constituencies. This environmental justice movement, having emerged since the last farm bill with its focus on urban and minority environmental issues, would constitute a potential new ally in the struggle for a more equitable and sustainable food system (Gottlieb and Fisher). Ultimately, the farm bill process creates an opportunity to define a food systems approach in political terms, laying the groundwork not simply for legislative coalitions, but a new social movement linking crucial issues of everyday life.

POLICY PROPOSALS

A community food security initiative at the federal level can be introduced as a single legislative bill (a Community Food Security Empowerment Act), either as a section of or as independent legislation within the Farm Bill, or as stand alone legislation through other legislative entry points. There are also opportunities for agency-related action, either within USDA or involving inter-agency activities. New policy initiatives at the federal level can, at the same time, parallel or complement initiatives at the regional and state levels, as well as those initiated independently from government (e.g., through the non-profit sector, stakeholder associations, joint ventures, or community development activities).

In recognition of these possibilities, a number of policy proposals are introduced here. These policy proposals are organized into broad policy topics (Community Food Planning and Empowerment; Direct Marketing; Community Gardening and Urban Food Production; Food Assistance; Farmland Protection; Food Retail Strategies; and Community and Economic Development Initiatives). Each of these constitute specific policy arenas, and could conceivably represent stand-alone policies. However, the governing metaphor of food security within the context of food system issues seeks to provide an integrated approach to policy, as represented at the regional level by the Food Policy Council concept, and, at the national level, by a Community Food Security Empowerment Act, as well as by administrative changes within USDA and between USDA and other agencies such as HUD and EPA.

Community Food Planning and Empowerment

1. Background

Food insecurity among low income residents requires a more complex federal response than income supports and feeding programs. The effectiveness of existing anti-hunger programs has been eroded by food system deficiencies, such as high prices in inner city food stores. A whole-systems approach, or community food security planning, provides a framework for integrated action and advocacy in restructuring the food system at the regional level as well as through federal initiatives. This approach is also fundamentally shaped by empowerment objectives, by bringing underrepresented players or marginalized stakeholders into both a planning process and participation in influencing how the food system operates. Regionally-based Food Policy Councils now exist at nearly a dozen sites around the country, but vary in terms of resources, institutional support, and capacity to initiate programs and policies. Some programs have found it difficult to survive in a climate of scarce resources and lack of political support or direction. Thus, any food planning initiative would begin with a focus on how to increase the capacity of FPCs to survive and expand their functions.

Food security planning is a relatively new concept with little legislative history at the federal level. There are, however, legislative precedents for the development of local planning mechanisms in relation to other resource-related issues such as solid or hazardous waste management or transportation programs. The 1976 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, for example, mandates that states develop statewide management planning tools to accomplish RCRA objectives. What is most striking in the food policy arena is the near total absence of local, regional, or statewide planning mechanisms for a crucial local resource that has powerful community and economic development implications. Although FPCs have been established in a few communities, there do not exist, in any existing metropolitan area, Food Departments housed within either city or county government, as there are in relation to housing, transportation, environment, or community development issues. At the same time, it is clear that the federal government can play a role, potentially even a lead role, in promoting and developing food planning at local and regional levels, where much of this type of planning needs to occur.

To begin with, the concept of community food security should become a core mission and stated objective throughout the different levels of USDA. The adoption of such an overriding

mission can provide a number of interrelated outcomes. These could include the coordination of a variety of new and existing food security related programs within the USDA (the establishment at the deputy secretary level of an Office of Food Security as well as an Intraagency Task Force that could be empowered to ensure such coordination); the establishment of a planning function for both inter-governmental and extra-governmental food programs (either through a new grants program for such food security-based activities as Food Policy Councils and/or the adoption of food security planning requirements as part of existing USDA functions such as price support programs); and providing a framework for linkages between the USDA and other federal agency activities as they relate to community food security issues (through outside agency representation on the Food Security Intraagency Task Force or through a Task Force consisting of both USDA and other agency representatives, designed to coordinate and initiate food security-type programs).

The adoption of pollution prevention as a defining objective at U.S. EPA (and at a number of state environmental agencies) provides an uneven and incomplete, yet still instructive example of how implementing a new agency mission could begin to be accomplished. Since the passage of the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 and the earlier 1989 publication of a Pollution Prevention Statement guiding agency activities, EPA has sought to incorporate pollution prevention objectives into the culture and operating programs of the Agency. This has included a 2 percent set aside grants program (i.e., 2 percent of EPA's operating budget is set aside for grants for pollution prevention made at the EPA Region level); an Intraagency "Source Reduction Review Project" linking EPA deputy administrators at the program office level in targeting different industrial sectors; and a series of (largely voluntary) program initiatives, seeking to establish pollution prevention objectives. While the media-specific nature of EPA regulatory actions based on separate legislative authority continues to prevail at EPA (and resembles the range of farm-specific support programs that have become embedded at USDA), these new pollution prevention initiatives have, at the least, established new resources and a process in shifting the discourse at both the agency, industry, and community levels (Gottlieb 1995).

2. Benefits

The promotion of an integrated approach to food security will result in numerous benefits. Existing program dollars will be of greater benefit to households as access and transportation improve through local planning initiatives. On a community level, local food security planning efforts will result in healthier, more empowered communities with expanded economic development opportunities in food related activities. On an individual level, food security planning, through improving access and affordability of fresh produce as well as coordinating local nutrition education programs, provides a health and nutrition dimension to food security activities. One key function of a USDA Intraagency Task Force on Community Food Security, then, might be to undertake or contract for a study quantifying those benefits in relation to future program expenditures as part of the establishment of a new Office of Food Security.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

Specifically, the activities of such an Office of Food Security could include such projects as:

A. Three Year Food Planning Demonstration Project in Ten-Twenty Cities.

A two-part demonstration project to be established to encourage communities to undertake a food security planning process as well as strengthen existing food planning processes. The first phase would provide support for communities to conduct food security self-assessments, and create plans to address deficiencies. These studies should extend beyond traditional hunger studies, and examine food insecurity from a food systems approach. A second phase would provide funding for the implementation of such plans, as well as the establishment of a coordinating body. Existing food policy councils should serve as role models for these bodies, although the name and structure of each organization need to be determined by the communities involved.

These demonstration projects should be supported through existing USDA entities, such as the Food and Nutrition Service (given the elevation of food security as a Departmental mission), and should be initiated at a minimum of 10 cities simultaneously to ensure regional representation.

B. Information Clearinghouse and Technical Assistance

Establish, through existing USDA entities, a clearinghouse for information on diverse food security related activities across the country as well as in federal programs at USDA and elsewhere. This "information transfer" objective should be linked to technical assistance in food security planning to municipalities and non-profit organizations.

C. Food Security, Environment, and Community Development Task Force

Federal policies have recognized the importance of basic needs, such as housing in sustainable urban development and environmental factors in agricultural production, but have largely failed to address the potential of food production and distribution for justice-oriented economic and community development. Two examples of community development programs which could integrate food security concepts are the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program and "EZ/EC" or "empowerment zone/enterprise community".

A Task Force consisting of representation from USDA, EPA, HUD, the Food and Drug Administration, and potentially other agencies with input on food policy, should help stimulate a process, linking the use of CDBG funds, EZ/EC programs and other federal mechanisms available, to community food security objectives. For example, empowerment zone criteria could mandate food security programs (farmers' markets, community gardens, community-based food processing and production enterprises) that are both job creating and have community empowerment outcomes. A Task Force which includes both food and environmental representation could also focus on stimulating food security programs (notably direct marketing

and other local agriculture support initiatives) that also have significant potential environmental benefits (e.g., reduced pesticide use).

D. Train Urban Cooperative Extension Agents in Food Security Issues and Food Planning

USDA's Cooperative Extension program could serve as an important vehicle for promoting and coordinating food security planning in cities across the country. As a first step, cooperative extension agents should be provided with training in understanding and developing approaches to food system and food security issues. Such a program would represent the urban equivalent of the sustainable agriculture training program established by the 1990 Farm Bill. Local anti-hunger and social services non-profit organizations could be enlisted for specific training and follow-through activities.

E. Increase Support for Cooperative Extension's Public Issues Education

Cooperative Extension is undertaking a process to set up study groups which would examine their community's food system, with the participation of stakeholders from all sectors of the food system. It is developing guidebooks to educate Extension agents on food security issues as well as on methods of conducting a food system analysis. Additional support for this purpose would encourage the expansion of Extension study groups and create a direct linkage to USDA's adoption of a food security mission.

Direct Marketing

1. Background

A major initiative to support direct marketing, including, but not limited to, farmers' markets, needs to be established as part of a community food security approach. In the past decade, farmers' markets have become one of the most popular urban institutions, growing at a rapid rate despite few resources and limited state or federal support. At the same time, farmers markets and other direct marketing initiatives such as community supported agriculture (CSA) represent the clearest link between farmers and consumers in inner cities and throughout the urban core. That link, in turn, represents an effort to reconnect, at the regional level, a set of relationships whose absence has been a powerful reminder of the "distance" variable in food system restructuring, and a significant contributor to several food insecurity indicators.

Federal direct marketing legislation was initially adopted in 1976 with the establishment of the Federal Direct Marketing Program as authorized by the Farmer to Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976 (PL 94-463). Previously, the 1946 Agricultural Marketing Act had established the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), which was now given the task of administering direct marketing programs. The 1946 Act also established the Federal State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) for market improvement purposes, and which now has the task of granting funds for direct marketing, among other programs. The Farmer to Consumer Act authorized \$3 million in matching grants to state agricultural departments to "initiate, encourage, develop, or coordinate methods of direct marketing from farmers to consumers" (GAO 1980). In 1978, \$1.5 million was appropriated to the AMS and the Science and Education

Administration-Extension to administer these programs. In addition, the USDA's Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service received funding for an on-going survey of direct marketing methods. As a pilot program, it ended after the 1980 growing season, but had been instrumental in developing many state direct marketing initiatives. These included:

- * market research for farmers with regards to crops grown;
- * helping farmers select appropriate direct marketing outlets;
- * helping establish, maintain, and improve direct marketing outlets;
- * helping consumers locate direct marketing outlets through hotlines or directories;
- * conducting conferences on direct marketing.

(GAO 1980)

2. Benefits

A revitalized direct marketing campaign will lead to numerous benefits for both growers and consumers. Growers will see an immediate expansion of marketing opportunities and clientele with funds from the Food Marketing Nutrition Program (FMNP) and a removal of barriers to food stamp usage. Likewise, new and expanded farmers' markets in low income neighborhoods will increase access and affordability of fresh produce for urban residents, a form of preventive health care. Over the medium and long term, this program may plant the seeds for a significant revitalization of regional agriculture by providing improved infrastructure and marketing opportunities.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

As part of a food security approach, the Agricultural Marketing Service and the Food and Nutrition Service should undertake a coordinated direct marketing initiative to expand and strengthen the role of direct marketing (and especially farmers' markets) in ensuring community food security. This initiative would focus on redirecting and expanding existing programs and institutions rather than creating new ones. Its components would include the following:

A. Redirection and Increased Support of the Federal State Market Improvement Program

The Federal State Market Improvement Program (FSMIP) provides, under the Agricultural Marketing Service, grants to state Departments of Agriculture for a variety of projects such as agricultural diversification, value-added processing, and direct marketing. It is one of the few remaining sources of federal monies available to state Agriculture Departments for direct marketing activities. As an existing program with an established structure and bureaucracy, FSMIP can play a key role in renewing the interest in direct marketing stimulated by the Farmer to Consumer Direct Marketing Act of 1976. While FSMIP funds a variety of projects, only 4 of its 25 grants for 1993 funded direct marketing projects (Meister 1994).

FSMIP can be reinvigorated by changes in its grant guidelines to earmark funds for direct marketing, especially as targeted to communities with a high percentage of persons at risk of hunger, (as a proxy measurement for communities with deficient food access and/or related conditions of food insecurity). Market development should also be given priority in funding

guidelines. Additional support for FSMIP, beyond its current \$1.2 million budget, needs to be earmarked for such projects, in order to avoid a competitive situation with other FSMIP projects. USDA's IntraAgency Task Force could also explore avenues for support for direct marketing through other agency programs that have grower support objectives.

B. Expansion of Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The FMNP furnishes low income pregnant or nursing women with \$10 -\$20 worth of coupons redeemable at farmers' markets. Funding is currently made available through the WIC program, creating the potential for conflict between WIC and FMNP programs. This program has been extremely popular both in Congress and among nutrition advocates. In order to meet increased demand within states with existing programs and to enable new states to join the program, support for FMNP needs to be increased substantially. At a minimum, appropriation levels should be brought up to authorization levels. Funding should also be provided separately from WIC. Existing WIC/Farmers Market coupon programs should be evaluated in terms of nutritional outcomes as well as in relation to grower revenue streams.

C. Increased Support for Wholesale Market Development Division of AMS

The Wholesale Market Development Division of the Transportation and Marketing Division of the Agricultural Marketing Service conducts market feasibility studies for farmers' markets and public markets as well as assists in the construction of farmers' market buildings (Burns 1994). This program facilitates economic and community development for local farmers and food related micro-enterprises. This AMS program should be directed to give priority to projects in inner city or urban core communities. Support for the program should be increased substantially from its current budget of \$2.3 million to enable a significant expansion of its activities.

D. Coordination of Use of Food Stamps at Farmers' Markets

The acceptance of food stamps at farmers' markets is a vital component of ensuring markets' responsiveness to the food security needs of low income persons. The increasing employment of debit cards, or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) in the food stamp program, has presented an additional technological barrier to the use of food stamps at farmers' markets (Lezberg 1994).

The Food and Nutrition Service, as the implementing arm of USDA, should develop a plan to encourage the more widespread use of food stamps at farmers' markets, especially as related to EBT.

E. Encourage Government Purchases of Locally Grown Foods

A study to identify the barriers to purchasing locally grown food by the various government institutions and food assistance programs should be conducted by the Agricultural Marketing Service in conjunction with the Food and Nutrition Service. Subsequent to this study, a demonstration project should be initiated in which government institutions at the federal, state, or local level, or food assistance programs purchase a portion of their food from local sources.

Government purchasing or procurement programs provide significant opportunities for expanding markets for preferred products. By adopting a community food security mission and through the proposed Office of Food Security, USDA could encourage various government agencies to enhance a regional food shed approach by identifying local agriculture sources for food purchases.

F. Link Local Agriculture with Child Nutrition Programs

The Better Nutrition and Health for Children Act, introduced into Congress in 1994 by Senator Leahy (D.-Vt.), provides a number of ways to integrate child nutrition programs through the public schools and local agriculture. This act facilitates the purchase of certified organic produce by schools and creates a pilot project to integrate food related curricula into the classroom. These efforts should be supported and expanded upon to include greater connections between local small-scale agriculture, schools, and communities. A series of demonstration projects, conducted by the Food and Nutrition Service, could explore the possibilities of schools purchasing more locally (and organically) grown food, involving farmers in the building of school gardens and food-related curricula, creating food processing micro-enterprises as economic development strategies, and coordinating directly with farmers' markets and community supported agriculture projects for particular food services, such as a healthy snacks program.

Community Gardening and Urban Food Production

1. Background

Community gardens fulfill a number of objectives for which the federal government allocates funding, including food assistance, recreation, nutrition education, and community beautification and development. (Knack 1994; Landman 1993) In light of their versatility and cost-effectiveness, community gardens could play an important role in any coordinated governmental effort to insure urban residents' food security. Their versatility also presents an important opportunity to create bridges across different agencies within the USDA and with other agencies, such as HUD and the EPA, in the development of a comprehensive national food security policy.

Federal support for community gardening programs can be elaborated in a number of ways. First, Cooperative Extension's Urban Gardening Program could be reestablished or reconfigured into a more extensive grants program for non-profit community gardening organizations. Next, the federal government could make unused lands in urban areas available for community gardening. Also, community gardening could be encouraged as a form of nutrition education under the food stamp program. Coordination with environmental agencies could also focus on the hazards of proposed urban garden sites (e.g., proximity to freeways, problems of heavy metal contamination, trace elements of volatile organics, etc.) and the development of mechanisms for either mitigating problems (e.g., soil removal) or establishing alternative approaches (e.g., restrictions on what to grow).

Cooperative Extension's Urban Gardening Program was authorized in the 1977 Food and Agriculture Act as an amendment to the 1914 Smith Lever Act. Programs were established in twenty three cities across the country, with funding earmarked in Title 3D of the Smith-Lever Act. Appropriations have typically occurred through actions by the House Appropriations Committee instead of by administration request. Funding had been frozen at \$3.5 million since 1985, until last year when the House Appropriations Committee placed the funding for this program in Title 3C, a formula driven fund for all fifty states. The funding for the programs in twenty three cities was then spread out to fifty states, with the states provided the decision-making power as to allocation. As a consequence, budgets for a number of existing programs have been reduced by as much as 80 percent (Malakoff 1994).

2. Benefits

A Community Food Security Empowerment Act could incorporate approaches designed to initially stabilize existing community gardening programs in the former 23 city UGP, many of which are faced with dismantlement. New funding mechanisms at the local, regional, state, and federal levels could be explored (e.g., a pesticide mill tax) as well as technical assistance in establishing self-reliance in the operation and maintenance of the programs (e.g., securing longer term site contracts). In the medium and long term, food security policies need to help expand the reach of community gardening programs to meet increased demand, especially in those communities of greatest need (e.g., through the link to empowerment zones). A community garden program, particularly as a form of urban food production) should be viewed as prevention-based health care, providing significant diet improvement opportunities for many low-income Americans. It also provides a source of effective, low-cost community development, job training, and empowerment programs, and, as such, should be integrated into the range of community and economic development urban core initiatives.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

Interest in community gardening has significantly increased in recent years, as many community organizations have recognized their versatility and multiple outcomes. Cooperative Extension's Urban Gardening Program should be revived, reoriented, and expanded with certain modifications to make it a more effective, accountable, and responsive program. This could be accomplished in part through the following:

A. A Competitive Grants Program

Extension's Urban Gardening Program (UGP) could establish a competitive grants program to provide funding for non-profit and public organizations to develop, promote, maintain, and provide technical assistance for community gardens. The scope of the UGP could also be broadened beyond the original 23 cities to include all interested cities nationwide. Funding could be expanded significantly beyond the original \$3.5 million in order to adequately serve the needs of funded cities. New funding mechanisms could also be explored, including cost sharing arrangements with states and communities, linking funding to benefits (e.g., a pesticide mill tax, to encourage the development of new sources for urban food production that can reduce the use of pesticides), and urban greening sources of support (e.g., urban forestry programs,

EPA's "place-centered" programs, etc.).

B. Broaden the Definition of Funding Criteria

The Urban Gardening Program's funding criteria could be more broadly defined to encompass urban farming or food production projects organized by non-profit or public sector agencies. Examples include food bank farms, community supported agriculture projects, and other projects that link urban residents with food production.

C. Facilitate the Use of Public Lands for Community Gardens and Farmers' Markets

Federal agencies which own lands in or near urban areas (e.g., the U.S. Forest Service) could be required to lease unused lands on a long-term basis for a nominal fee to organizations or groups of individuals interested in forming community gardens or farmers' markets. Likewise, municipalities, counties, and states could be encouraged to make their unused lands available on a long-term basis for community gardening and farmers' market projects.

With land as the primary barrier to the expansion of community gardening in urban areas, making available closed defense bases and other unused federal lands can constitute a low cost way to increase these programs. This program could also be connected to the growing interest among emergency food providers in developing community gardening and farming projects.

At the same time, the majority of unused lands currently available for community gardening tends to be owned by private property owners or, often, by utilities. USDA (and possibly other federal agencies such as EPA or the Army Corps of Engineers) should explore the possibility for municipalities to grant conservation easements and tax breaks to property owners leasing lands to community gardening groups.

D. Authorize Community Gardening as a Nutrition Education Activity for Food Stamp Grants

The Food Stamp Program currently provides a limited number of grants for nutrition education. Community gardening could be authorized as an activity that fits the definition of nutrition education.

Food Assistance: WIC and Food Stamps

1. Background

Federal food assistance programs provide an income supplement important for many low-income persons' food security. Among the most prominent are the Food Stamp and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs. The WIC Program has been continually lauded for its cost effectiveness, with benefits estimated at two dollars to more than three dollars in health care savings for every dollar spent. Despite these numbers, limited appropriations have precluded WIC reaching all eligible persons.

Food stamps, as an entitlement program, reach over 27 million people every month, a figure that has more than doubled in twenty years (from 12.2 million participants in 1973). (Nazario 1994) Numerous studies have shown that food stamp benefits are based on unrealistic

criteria and are inadequate for long-term dietary needs. Likewise, food stamp applications and eligibility requirements have been cited often for their unduly complex and restrictive nature. The Mickey Leland Anti-Hunger Act that was passed in 1993, reduced restrictions on households and increased funding levels, in part as a response to these problems of implementation.

However, the focus of the current Congress has shifted from more effective implementation to substantially lessening and potentially eliminating, in its current state, food stamp programs specifically and food support programs more generically. Deficit reduction efforts combined with the conservative attack on food support programs as providing support for "welfare", threaten rollbacks on funding of entitlement programs and/or eliminating "entitlement" status by transferring funding to the states via block grants. Such criticisms have sought to separate the meaning of "entitlement" as a "human right" (as embedded in food security definitions), with entitlement as a presumed income transfer program (middle class taxes paying for low income food sources). In fact, the food entitlement programs, as described earlier, were primarily conceived and have largely remained as farm income support programs, and have not been evaluated in terms of their food security implications and outcomes. Aside from issues of support mechanisms (including, but not limited to funding) for such programs, a framework for evaluation and thus definition also needs to be established.

Thus, the current debates about food assistance follow two quite different tracks: the Republican Contract With America concepts with both implicit and explicit provisions for reduced funding and elimination of entitlements, in contrast with a food security approach that seeks to strengthen implementation, reach underserved populations, and weave more directly food assistance with parallel "empowerment"-oriented or nutrition-based strategies such as the use of WIC and Food Stamp coupons at farmers' markets.

Beyond the question of funding is the actual discourse concerning food assistance. As Sen has argued, if food security is a basic human right, then entitlement is an essential construct in such a definition (Sen 1993). Explicit in the Contract with America approach, as opposed to this concept of human rights, is the contrasting concept of food assistance as charity. By reducing benefits and eliminating entitlement status, charitable food giving becomes the new safety net, with the charitable sector assuming the functions and status of a modern-day poor house. Linking the concept of food assistance to charity also evokes distinctions between those who "deserve" assistance and the large numbers of the "undeserving poor" (e.g., those on welfare, illegal immigrants, or, for some, any immigrant). At the same time, certain programs, such as WIC, become a separate and yet even more divisive battleground, given the parallel discourse regarding children as "innocent victims" (Gordon 1994; Katz 1989).

A food security agenda must directly address both the policy component as well as the language or discourse aspect of the food assistance debate. In terms of the conceptual framework, the argument needs to be put forth that food assistance benefits need to be adequate or sufficient to establish a food security baseline, as opposed to a minimum baseline position of no reduction in benefits. Such a position, partly defined by the kinds of cost-benefit and health/nutrition research that could establish such a baseline of "adequacy," will likely entail additional costs, but

with significant corresponding benefits. Conversely, reductions in benefits entail significant social costs, ranging from reduced learning capacity for children, additional health care, and the potential for increased homelessness.

2. Benefits

A cutback in food stamps would potentially affect the food security of over 27 million Americans who currently receive them. WIC is well known to be a successful prevention-based program, saving, in the most widely noted estimates, over three dollars in health care for every dollar spent (Ashman 1993). Thus, an immediate task of a food security policy would be to address the issues of adequate support for food assistance.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

A. Expanding WIC's Reach

While authorization for the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is not contained within the 1995 Farm Bill, the program's impact on the food security of low-income women and children is of sufficient importance that it needs to be included as part of any policy initiative (or, at least, as part of the analysis supporting such initiative). The WIC program needs to be fully funded at current levels at a minimum to enable all eligible persons access to its benefits. Beyond the issues of funding, opportunities for expanding WIC's reach (e.g., WIC coupons to be used at farmers' markets) need to be explored. Food security as a human right needs to be identified, as a baseline, in relation to issues of infant and children care, with legislative language developed to codify that relationship.

B. Food Stamps

Any food security initiative needs to highlight the importance of not reducing food stamp benefit levels, nor making more restrictive eligibility criteria. Food security language also needs to be adopted within the framework of the food stamp program. A nutrition education program should also be developed as an integral component of the food stamp program.

C. American Hunger Relief Act Planning Process

The American Hunger Relief Act, introduced as a separate piece of legislation in Congress and supported by a number of emergency food programs, would, if enacted, replace and greatly expand TEFAP, the Food Distribution Program for Charitable Institutions, and the Soup Kitchen/Food Bank Food Distribution Programs.

One less visible component of the legislation is the stipulation that states undertake a planning process to determine the best use of the resources provided to combat hunger. This planning process would be pursued by a statewide Hunger Relief Planning Council, composed of representatives in the social services and public sectors. The Planning Councils could be encouraged to purchase locally as much food as economically feasible. Although not stated directly in the Act, such Planning Councils could be extended to include regional planning functions, similar to those associated with Food Policy Councils. The combination of planning and expanded benefits as expanded rights identified in this Act have direct bearing on a

community food security approach.

D. Expand WIC and Food Stamp State Plans of Guidance to Address Food Security

In order to receive federal funding, each state must develop a yearly plan for the use of their food stamp and WIC monies. These mandated provisions could be expanded to have FNS require states expand their plans of guidance to address food security concerns. These efforts would then be defined as preliminary steps toward establishing statewide food security plans, to include state-based support mechanisms for food security initiatives.

Farmland Protection

1. Background

The protection of farmland for many parts of the country represents a crucial issue for sustaining and expanding local and regional food systems. Around urban areas, increasing sprawl and suburban growth, with its concomitant rise in land values and property taxes, has resulted in the conversion of much farmland into housing developments and industrial parks. Federal policies have addressed the critical issue of protecting farmland from development, although not with specific reference to the importance of local farms to local food systems and food security. These policies should be redirected towards this objective, with support provided for local governments to aggressively pursue farmland protection.

The Farmland Protection Policy was enacted as part of the 1981 Farm Bill. It required all projects obtaining federal funds to analyze the impact of those projects on farmland. It established three types of farmland based on soil types: prime, unique, and other farmland. Regulations written in 1983 and 1984 established that these impacts be listed as part of a project's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In 1994, 13 years after initial rulemaking, these policies have been redrawn under new and more stringent regulations administered through the Soil Conservation Service (Lehman 1990).

In the 1990 FACTA (Farm Bill), a second piece of farmland preservation legislation emerged as the Farms for the Future Act. It provided loans to state programs for farmland preservation, such as easements.

2. Benefits

Protection of urban fringe farmland provides three distinctive, though related benefits. First, it creates greenbelts near or at the edge of urban development. This protected area can help slow down or eliminate conditions of urban sprawl which have their own enormous economic and environmental costs. Second, protection of fringe farmland often helps sustain small-scale agriculture and family farms as well as rural or semi-rural communities dependent on those farming activities. And third, sustaining fringe farmland enhances opportunities for direct marketing between nearby farmers and urban communities, with resulting economic, social, and environmental benefits, as described above.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

A. Farmland Protection Policy Act Provisions

A "strategic farmland" category should be added to the prime and unique categories listed in earlier Farm Bills which would protect urban fringe farming. The definition of this category could include lands that provide crops important for the integrity of local food systems and/or for lands located in or near urban areas (SMSA).

B. Farms for the Future Act Provisions

Funds provided by the Farms for the Future Act should include federal-state matching grant funds rather than loans to state farmland preservation programs that pertain to lands in or close to urban areas. This action would allow states to more aggressively pursue the protection of urban edge farmland, as part of an overall urban food security program.

Food Retail Strategies

1. Background

The dearth of full service food markets, particularly supermarket chains, in inner cities across the country has underlined the problematic nature of a market approach to food distribution without direct public input or the use of public policy instruments. Pro-active measures must be taken at all levels of government to encourage the return of full service markets to low income areas. The formation of a national strategy to promote food retail development should, of necessity, be a multi-agency initiative, as full service markets satisfy a variety of objectives. These include food access, community development, economic development, and jobs. It should also be linked with community development efforts through fostering the establishment of joint venture partnerships between community development corporations and food retail stores.

Federal policy should be oriented towards three major objectives. Baseline research is needed to determine the level of food retail deficiency and its impacts on low income residents and urban core areas. Greater coordination between agencies is also needed to address this complex issue through a more comprehensive approach relying on the unique skills, knowledge, and abilities of each agency involved. Finally, financial incentives to foster food retail development should be tested and their effectiveness evaluated for additional efforts in this area.

2. Benefits

Development of food retail initiatives will establish significant benefits in relation to increased food access, community and economic development, and greater empowerment for communities who have been placed at the margins of the food system.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

A. Establish Inner City Food Retail Committee of Federal Agency Representatives

The authorization of an Inner City Food Retail Committee, consisting of representatives from USDA, HUD, HHS, Commerce, Labor, and Treasury (either as part of or independent of the multiple agency Task Force described earlier), to review food retail-related food security

concerns, could develop strategies and resources to enhance retail food access. Such an interagency effort could extend the opportunities for integrating community food security into multiple policy arenas where food issues have either been ignored or been situated at the margins of existing policy.

B. Conduct a Feasibility Study of Financial Intermediation Strategies

A feasibility study of strategies for financial intermediation, such as tax incentives, loan guarantees, or possible permitting relief, could provide municipalities and the federal government with the information necessary to develop a comprehensive financial strategy for attracting full service food markets into the inner city. The study could be initiated within USDA, although efforts to integrate other agency perspectives (e.g., Department of Transportation, HUD, etc.) should also be made.

C. Monitor Food Prices in Inner Cities

A more comprehensive monitoring of food prices in inner city areas, including geographical and other demographic comparisons, should be undertaken through the Food and Nutrition Service to provide baseline data for understanding the magnitude of the effects of deficient food access on low-income consumers' budgets. This data could be utilized in the Food Stamp Program, for example, to render benefits in line with food prices.

D. Identify Food Retail Deficient Areas

The Food and Nutrition Service should be authorized to establish a research project to map the variety of full service food markets (both independents and chains) in a number of metropolitan areas in order to identify those areas where access to full service retail food outlets is deficient. This project would enable the FNS as well as municipalities to target future retail enhancement programs by identifying areas where retail access is most lacking.

E. Identify Barriers and Support Mechanisms for Joint Ventures

The Food and Nutrition Service should be authorized to conduct research regarding barriers to the establishment of joint ventures between CDCs and food retailers. Joint ventures provide communities with a number of services and benefits beyond food access through increased community control and recycling of local dollars. FNS and other USDA entities could also explore support mechanisms (demonstration grants, technical assistance, etc.) that would facilitate the process of establishing joint venture arrangements. As part of this effort, the FNS, in conjunction with the Department of Transportation, could be authorized to provide a demonstration project to provide grants to joint ventures and other community development corporations for the establishment of food retail shopper transit service in inner city areas. Shopper shuttles can significantly facilitate food retail or farmers' market access in underserved neighborhoods. This program should primarily be developed in areas where high percentages of the population do not have access to cars, as defined by the Census Bureau (e.g., >75th percentile). Additional programs to provide support for small food stores (including but not limited to cooperative ownership or partnership approaches) should also be explored.

Community and Economic Development Initiatives

1. Background

Food security is a basic component of sustainable urban development, especially in relation to issues of social justice, health, and the environment. While federal policies recognize the importance of other basic needs, such as housing or community development, they have largely failed to address the potential of food production and distribution for justice-oriented economic and community development. This type of initiative, if enacted, would provide cities with the means as well as the flexibility to develop specifically tailored food-oriented community and economic development programs. Sustainable food projects, as a form of community and economic development, also provide an "environmental justice" framework above and beyond the existing environmental arguments regarding a sustainable agriculture agenda.

Urban areas are not alone in their need for economic development. Only 10 percent of all farmers currently derive their income from work from farming alone, while 20 percent earn incomes below the poverty level. Poverty issues in rural areas may be even more deeply embedded among certain groups (e.g., farmworkers) and more extensive in certain rural counties, due to fewer employment opportunities and the stigmas attached to participation in federal food assistance programs. In California, for example, the highest unemployment levels and lowest per capita income levels were found, not in Los Angeles County, but in such rural counties as Imperial and Tulare (Center for Continuing Study 1988) This situation especially affects minority farmers who are losing their land at more than three times the rates of other farmers (Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, 1994). On a community level, the loss of family farms and of the farmers' ability to support themselves as a self-reliant economic unit has significant consequence in terms of the vulnerability of rural economies and their dependence on single industries.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program was established through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. It provides funding to city governments to "develop and maintain viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low and moderate income." Funding allocation is determined by each municipality within certain guidelines, with citizen involvement in the planning process mandatory. More recently, the Clinton Administration has provided for an empowerment/enterprise zone approach to focus community development strategies.

In terms of rural development programs, USDA has yet to develop any targeted programs defined specifically for rural economic development purposes. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (formerly the Soil Conservation Service) has established programs at more than a half dozen county areas through its Resource and Conservation Districts (RCDs) to foster rural development initiatives.

2. Benefits

The association of community and economic development initiatives with food security

programs would create important new linkages between urban constituencies, government agencies, and local food system-related industries. These linkages, in turn, would enhance the empowerment framework for new approaches to community food security, as described in this document.

3. Federal Policies: Recommendations

A. Establish a Block Grants Program for Community Food Security

The establishment of a block grant program similar to CDBG and based on food security objectives, with funding distributed to local food policy councils and/or city governments to improve community food security, should be enacted. This process recognizes food security as a basic community concern, and as an important component of the community development process. Like CDBG, it allows localities to tailor programs to their specific needs.

Program guidelines should refer to activities at each of the multiple pathways of the food system, as well as activities that build bridges between constituencies and sectors, such as increasing rural-urban, producer-consumer links. Activities could include municipal food policy development, enhancing retail access in inner cities, support for small and ethnic grocery stores, economic development and job training, microenterprise development, local food processing development, nutrition education and outreach, community gardening, direct marketing, and providing transportation for food retail outlets and farmers' markets.

This program could be funded through "new money," or alternately as a sub-section of the CDBG program, with a certain earmarked percentage for projects qualifying as community food security programs.

B. Incorporate Food Security Programs as part of Empowerment/ Enterprise Zone Projects

Similar to efforts to expand the CDBG process, qualifying areas should be encouraged to incorporate food security programs (e.g., community gardens, farmers' markets, and/or microenterprise developments) into the empowerment/enterprise zone process.

C. Establish a Rural Economic Development Focus for USDA

Innovative and flexible economic development strategies that allow farmers to diversify while continuing to farm, and which assist communities in efforts to broaden their manufacturing base should be aggressively promoted within USDA. Public-private partnerships in new technologies and new uses of existing farm crops should be explored within the context of locally-owned small businesses. Grain-based fuels are one example of a product that could be produced. Direct marketing programs, such as the Missouri Rural Crisis Center's "Patchwork Farm" initiative (Ozer 1993), are another form of economic development, and should be supported through technical assistance grants. Other types of strategies include:

- * On-farm food processing and value-added activities.
- * Producer cooperatives.
- * Crop diversification into high value products.

- * Niche marketing, such as CSAs.
- * Favorable farm credit policies that facilitate entrepreneurial activities.

D. Minority Farmer Programs

Specific USDA policies should be implemented to promote the protection and restoration of the land farmed by minorities. Such policies could include:

- * Developing a minority farm land registry as an assessment tool.
- * Applying the Equal Opportunity Act to farm credit to protect against discrimination in lending.
- * Implementing affirmative action programs and policies to increase minority farmer access to and participation in all USDA programs.
- * Developing direct marketing programs linking minority farmers with minority consumers in urban areas.

CONCLUSION

The policy proposals and overall policy analysis outlined above represent an effort to broaden and integrate the distinctive sustainable agriculture, environmental, community development, and urban food/anti-hunger discourses. It has sought to do this in part by identifying the links between constituencies, issues, and policies through a common framework based on food security concepts. In doing so, it also identifies the potential for a new type of political force linking urban and rural, environmental justice and resource conservation, populist and social justice agendas. The time is ripe, if not for adoption of these policies in the immediate term, at least for initiating a longer term process for establishing a sustainable food system based on the principles of community food security and the regional planning and community empowerment principles associated with them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allen, Patricia. 1994. "The Human Face of Sustainable Agriculture: Adding People to the Environmental Agenda, Sustainability in the Balance Series." Issue Paper #4, Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, University of California, Santa Cruz, November.
- Allen, Patricia. 1993. "Connecting the Social and the Ecological in Sustainable Agriculture." In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* ed. Patricia Allen. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Allen, Patricia and Carolyn Sachs. 1993. "Sustainable Agriculture in the United States: Engagements, Silences, and Possibilities for Transformation." In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* ed. Patricia Allen. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Ashman, Linda. 1993. Linda Ashman, Jaime de la Vega, Marc Dohan, Andy Fisher, Rosa Hippler, Billi Romain. *Seeds of Change: Strategies for Food Security for the Inner City*. Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles, June.
- Barracough, Solon. 1991. *An End to Hunger?: The Social Origins of Food Strategies*. London: 2nd ed.
- Bashore, Lynne 1992. "The Santa Cruz Homeless Garden Project." *Urban Ecology*, Summer.
- Benedict, Murray R. 1953. *Farm Policies of the United States, 1790-1950: A Study of their Origins and Development*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Bread for the World Institute. 1991. "Hunger 1992: Second Annual Report on the State of World Hunger." Washington D.C.: Bread for the World Institute on Hunger and Development.
- Burns, Arthur. 1994. Personal Communication with Arthur Burns, Wholesale Market Development Division, U.S.D.A., July.
- Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture. 1994. *Minority Farmers and Farmworkers' Rights: Summary Points*, Goshen, New York, November 1.
- Center for Continuing Study. 1988. *California County Rankings*. Center for Continuing Study of the California Economy, Palo Alto, California.
- Center for Resource Economics. 1990. *1990 Farm Bill: Environmental and Consumer*

Provisions. Washington D.C.: Island Press.

- Chambers, Robert. 1988. *Sustainable Livelihoods: Environment and Development: Putting Poor Rural People First*, IDS Discussion Bulletin No. 240, Brighton: Institute for Development Studies.
- Chatterjee, Pratap and Matthias Finger. 1994. *The Earth Brokers: Power, Politics, and World Development*. London: Routledge.
- Clancy, Katherine. 1993. "Sustainable Agriculture and Domestic Hunger: Rethinking a Link Between Production and Consumption." In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* ed. Patricia Allen. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Clancy, Katherine. 1994. "Who's Going to Save Farmers and Farmland?" Presented at the Cuisine Agriculture and Social Change Conference, Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, Tucson, Arizona, June 11.
- Cohen, Barbara and Martha Burt. 1989. *Eliminating Hunger: Food Security Policy for the 1990s*. Urban Institute, Washington D.C.
- Community Food Security Coalition 1994. "A Community Food Security Act: A Proposal for New Food System Legislation as Part of the 1995 Farm Bill." Department of Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles and the Hartford Food System, Hartford, CT.: October.
- Cook, John and J. Larry Brown. 1992. "30 Million Hungry Americans." Analysis Prepared for the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, Medford, MA: Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, Tufts University.
- Cook, Ken. 1986. "'Pinch Me. I Must be Dreaming'." *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, 41, March-April.
- Council on Scientific Affairs (CSA) 1991. "Hispanic Health in the United States." *JAMA*, 265(2).
- Dahlberg, Kenneth. 1994. "Food Policy Councils: The Experience of Five Cities and One County." Paper presented at the Joint Meeting of the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society and the Society for the Study of Food and Society, Tucson, Arizona, June 11.
- Davis, Allen F. 1984. *Spearheads for Reform: The Social Settlements and the Progressive Movement, 1890-1914*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

- Dearden, P.J. & P.J. Ackroyd. 1989. "Reassessing the Role of Food Aid." *Food Policy*, 14(3): 218-231.
- Dohan, Marc. 1994. "An Analysis of Supermarkets in Los Angeles County." Department of Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Dreze, Jean and Amartya Sen. 1989. *Hunger and Public Action*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Food Marketing Institute (FMI). 1993. "Pathmark and New Community Corporation -- Joint Venture Helps Revitalize Newark." *FMI Issues Bulletin*, January.
- Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). 1991. *Community Childhood Hunger Identification Project: A Survey of Childhood Hunger in the United States*. Washington D.C.: Food Research and Action Center.
- Friedmann, Harriet. 1993. "After Midas's Feast: Alternative Food Regimes for the Future." In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* ed. Patricia Allen. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Friedmann, Harrie. 1994. "Distance and Durability: Shaky Foundations of the World Food Economy." In *The Globalization of Agro-Food Systems* ed. Philip McMichael. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Funches, Brenda. 1992. Presentation, Advanced Seminar on Environment and Economic Development, Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles, November 15.
- General Accounting Office (GAO). 1980. *Direct Farmer to Consumer Marketing Program Should Be Continued and Improved*. Washington D.C.
- Gordon, Linda. 1994. *Pitied but not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare 1890-1935*. New York: Free Press.
- Gottlieb, Robert. 1995. *Reducing Toxics: A New Approach to Policy and Industry Decision-Making*, edited by Robert Gottlieb. Washington D.C.: Island Press.
- Gottlieb, Robert and Andrew Fisher. "Community Food Security: From Environmental Protection to Environmental Justice." *Agriculture and Human Values*. Forthcoming.
- Gottlieb, Robert and Margaret FitzSimmons. 1994. "Community Food Planning: A Perspective for Los Angeles." Department of Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles.

- Gottlieb, Robert and Martin Wachs. 1994. "Van Services for Inner City Food Security Needs." Department of Urban Planning, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Greene, Elizabeth and Holly Hall. 1994. "Charities that Aid Poor Shift Strategies." *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* VII(3), November 15.
- Gussow, Joan Dye. 1994a. Paper on nutrition and food choices presented at the "Seeds of Change: Toward Food Security for All" Conference, California Anti-Hunger Coalition, Sacramento, California, May.
- Gussow, Joan Dye. 1994b. "Banking on Others' Soils." in *Why?* (World Hunger Year), Special Issue on "The World Bank on Trial." Summer, No. 16.
- Heiman, Michael K. 1990. "From 'Not in My Backyard!' to 'Not in Anyone's Backyard!': Grassroots Challenge to Hazardous Waste Facility Siting." *American Planning Association Journal* 56(3): 359-362.
- Hiemlich, R. 1989. "Metropolitan Agriculture: Farming in the City's Shadow." *American Planning Association Journal* Autumn: 457-464.
- Howard, Ebenezer. 1946. *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Interagency Board. 1993. *Nutrition Monitoring in the United States: Chartbook I: Selected Findings for Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research, Interagency Board for Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research*. Eds. B. Ervin and D. Reed. Hyattsville, Maryland: Public Health Service (PHS), 93-1255-2, September.
- Interfaith Hunger Coalition (IHC). 1994. "Evaluation of AFDC Benefits in California." Prepared by Andrew Fisher for the Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition, Los Angeles.
- Katz, Michael B. 1989. *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Kloppenburg, Jack Jr., John Hendrickson and G.W. Stevenson. 1994. "Coming into the Foodshed: Making Food and Community Issues Walk Not Just Talk." Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Knack, Ruth E. 1994. "Dig These Gardens." *Journal of the American Planning Association* July.
- Kumanyika, Shiriki. 1990. "Diet and Chronic Disease for Minority Populations." *Journal of Nutrition Education* 22(2).

- Landman, Ruth H. 1993. *Creating Community in the City: Cooperatives and Community Gardens in Washington D.C.* Westport, CT.: Bergin and Garvey.
- Lehman, Tim. 1990. "Failed Land Reform: The Politics of the 1981 National Agricultural Lands Study." *Environmental History Review* pp. 129-149.
- Lezberg, Sharon. 1994. "Addressing Equity Issues in the Emerging Food Shed." Department of Rural Sociology, University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Linder, Rev. Msgr. William J. 1992. Testimony of William J. Linder, Founder, New Communities Corporation, Before the Select Committee on Hunger, U.S. House of Representatives, September 30.
- Lubove, Roy. 1963. "Community Planning in the 1920s: The Contribution of the Regional Planning Association of America." Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- MacKaye, Benton. 1919. "Employment and Natural Resources." Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor.
- Malakoff, David. 1994. "Final Harvest." *Community Greening Review* Vol. 4.
- Marion, Bruce. 1986. *The Organization and Performance of the U.S. Food System.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Meister, Barbara. 1994. "Analysis of Policy Options for Promoting Sustainable Rural Development in the 1995 Farm Bill." Unpublished Master's thesis, JFK School of Government, Harvard University.
- Merchant, Caroline. 1981. "Earthcare: Women and the Environmental Movement." *Environment* 23(5), June.
- Miller, Donald L. 1989. *Lewis Mumford: A Life.* New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Mumford, Lewis. 1925. "Regions -- To Live In." *The Survey* 54(3), May 3.
- National Sustainable Agriculture Coordinating Council (National Dialogue). 1993. Policy Options for the 1995 Farm Bill, Goshen, NY.
- Nauer, Kim. 1994. "Food Flight: The Loss of the Neighborhood Grocer." *Neighborhood Works* February-March.

- Nazario, Sonia. 1994. "USDA Tries to Serve Up Food Stamps to the Hungry." *Los Angeles Times*, November 22.
- Nelson, A. 1992. "Preserving Prime Farmland in the Face of Urbanization: Lessons from Oregon." *American Planning Association Journal* Autumn, 467-484.
- Nestle, Marion and Sally Guttmacher. 1992. "Hunger in the United States: Rationale, Methods and Policy Implications of State Hunger Surveys." *Journal of Nutrition Education* 24(1), January-February Supplement.
- O'Connor, James J. and Barbara Abell. 1992. *Successful Supermarkets in Low Income Inner Cities*. O'Connor Abell Inc., Arlington, VA.
- Ozer, Katherine. 1993. Testimony of Katherine Ozer, National Family Farm Coalition, Hearing on Alternative Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, Before the Subcommittee on Rural Economy and Family Farming, Committee on Small Business, United States Senate, 103rd Congress, July 14.
- Richards, Ellen H. and Alpheus G. Woodman. 1901. *Air, Water, and Food: From a Sanitary Standpoint*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Schantz, Faith. 1994. "Grass Roots: A Sense of Community Grows with Collective Gardening." *Neighborhood Works* February/March.
- Sen, Amartya. 1993. "The Political Economy of Hunger: On Reasoning and Participation." Paper presented at the conference on "Overcoming Global Hunger," at the World Bank, December 1.
- Smith, Thomas B. and Pat Brown Kelly. 1993. "Food Marketing Alternatives for the Inner City." Consumer Division, Community Nutrition Institute.
- Sommer, Robert. 1989. "Farmers Markets as Community Events." in *Public Places and Open Spaces*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Spirn, Anne Whiston. 1984. *The Granite Garden: Urban Nature and Human Design*. New York: Basic Books.
- Strauss, Valerie. 1994. "The Farm Crisis of the 1980s and the Neopopulist Political Response." Unpublished Master's Thesis. UCLA.
- Titus, Richard M. 1990. "Security Works: Shopping Enclaves Bring Hope, Investment to Blighted Inner-City Neighborhoods." *Urban Land* January.

- U.S. Census Bureau. 1990. Summary File 3A, United States Bureau of the Census.
- United States Congress. 1993. Hearing on Alternative Agriculture and Rural Economic Development, Subcommittee on Rural Economy and Family Farming, Committee on Small Business, United States Senate, 103rd Congress, 1st Session, July 14.
- United States Congress. 1994. "Better Nutrition and Health for Children Act of 1994." US Senate Report, No. 103-300.
- United States Department of Agriculture. 1994. "1994 National Farmers' Market Directory." Washington D.C.: USDA Agricultural Marketing Service and Transportation and Marketing Division, March.
- Winne, Mark. 1994. "Food Security Planning: Toward a Federal Policy." Hartford Food System.
- World Commission. 1987. *Our Common Future, World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yim, Youngbim Lee. 1990. "The Relationship Between Transportation Services and Urban Activities: The Food Retail Distribution Case." Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA: Institute of Transportation Services, June.
- Youngberg, Garth, Neill Scaller, and Kathleen Merrigan. 1993. "The Sustainable Agriculture Policy Agenda in the United States: Politics and Prospects." In *Food for the Future: Conditions and Contradictions of Sustainability* ed. Patricia Allen. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Zinn, Jeffrey A. and A. Berry Carr. 1988. "The 1985 Farm Act: Hitting a Moving Target." Forum for Applied Research and Public Policy, Summer, pp. 17-18.

ENDNOTES

1. The definition of food security by the World Bank -- "access by all people at all times to enough food for an active and healthy life" -- is similar in some respects to our definition, but differs in two key respects: The absence of "culture"- specific criteria, and the failure to explicitly specify food security as a "non-emergency" form of access. The World Bank definition can be found in their publication, *The Challenge of Hunger in Africa* Washington D.C.: World Bank, December 1988); See also, "Overcoming Global Hunger: A Conference on Action to Reduce Hunger World-Wide," An Issues Paper, prepared by Harry Walters for the World Bank for the Conference to Overcome Global Hunger, Washington D.C., November 30-December 1, 1993.
2. The Center for Human Rights of the United Nations, in *Right to Adequate Food as Human Right* (1989) discusses the legal framework for the consideration of food security as a human right.
3. The "Seeds of Change" study included an initial needs assessment to help define the topic of research, broadly defined at the outset as community development and urban environment issues. As a result of the assessment, which included interviews and surveys of community organizations, churches, and residents within South Central Los Angeles, the "Seeds of Change" group identified food system issues as the most common source of community concern.
4. Home Boy Tortillas and Bakery, located in East Los Angeles, represents an example where such a micro-enterprise has also functioned as job training for ex-gang members.
5. For example, the Kellogg Foundation's Local Food Systems Project, established to provide technical assistance to develop local food policy councils, received in its first RFP process, inquiries from more than 40 communities interested in developing food policies and/or a food planning framework for their communities.
6. The concepts of food security and community food planning have, for more than two decades, been prominently discussed in international development debates, including those in and around the World Bank (See, World Commission 1987; Chatterjee and Finger 1994).