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Good Food, Good Jobs:

Turning Food Deserts into Jobs Oases

by Joel Berg

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policy report

Good Food, Good Jobs: Turning Food Deserts into Jobs Oases

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Tens of millions of Americans need more nutritious, more affordable food. Tens of millions need better jobs. Just as the Obama administration and Congress have supported a “green jobs” initiative to simultaneously fight unemployment and protect the environment, they should launch a “Good Food, Good Jobs” initiative. Given that large numbers of food jobs could be created rapidly and with relatively limited capital investments, their creation should become a consideration in any jobs bill that Congress and the president enact.

Our hunger, malnutrition, obesity, and poverty problems are closely linked. Low-income areas across America that lack access to nutritious foods at affordable prices -- the so-called “food deserts” -- tend to be the same communities and neighborhoods that, even in better economic times, are also “job deserts” that lack sufficient living-wage employment. A concurrent problem has been the growing concentration of our food supply in a handful of food companies that are now “too big to fail.” A Good Food, Good Jobs program can address these intertwined economic and social problems.

In partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector, the federal initiative would bolster employment, foster economic growth, fight hunger, cut obesity, improve nutrition, and reduce spending on diet-related health problems. By doing so, not only could government help solve a number of very tangible problems, but it could fuse the growing public interest in food issues with the ongoing efforts, usually underfunded and underreported, to fight poverty at the grass-roots level.

A Good Food, Good Jobs program could provide the first serious national test of the effectiveness of such efforts in boosting the economy and improving public health. The new initiative should:

- **Provide more and better-targeted seed money to food jobs projects.** The federal government should expand and more carefully target its existing grants and loans to start new and expand existing community food projects: city and rooftop gardens; urban farms; food co-ops; farm stands; community-supported agriculture (CSA) projects; farmers’ markets; community kitchens; and projects that hire unemployed youth to grow, market, sell, and deliver nutritious foods while teaching them entrepreneurial skills.
- **Bolster food processing.** Since there is far more profit in processing food than in simply growing it (and since farming is only a seasonal occupation), the initiative should focus on supporting food businesses that add value year-round, such as neighborhood food processing/freezing/canning plants; businesses that turn raw produce into ready-to-eat salads, salad dressings, sandwiches, and other products; healthy vending-machine compa-

nies; and affordable and nutritious restaurants and catering businesses.

- **Expand community-based technical assistance.** Federal, state, and local governments should dramatically expand technical assistance to such efforts and support them by buying their products for school meals and other government nutrition assistance programs, as well as for jails, military facilities, hospitals, and concession stands in public parks, among other venues. Additionally, the AmeriCorps program -- significantly increased recently by the bipartisan passage of the Edward Kennedy Serve America Act -- should provide large numbers of national-service participants to implement nonprofit food jobs efforts.
- **Develop a better way of measuring success.** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) should develop a “food access index,” a new measure that would take into account both the physical availability and economic affordability of nutritious foods, and use this measure as another tool to judge the success of food projects. All such efforts should be subject to strict performance-based outcome measures, and programs should not be expanded or re-funded unless they can prove their worth.
- **Invest in urban fish farming.** Given that fish is the category of food most likely to be imported, and given growing environmental concerns over both wild and farm-raised fish, the initiative should provide significant investment into the research and development of environmentally sustainable, urban, fish-production facilities.

- **Implement a focused research agenda.**

The government should enact a focused research agenda to answer the following questions: Can community food enterprises that pay their workers sufficient wages also make products that are affordable? Can these projects become economically self-sufficient over the long run, particularly if they are ramped up to benefit from economies of scale? Could increased government revenues due to economic growth and decreased spending on health care and social services offset long-term subsidies? How would the cost and benefits of government spending on community food security compare to the cost and benefits of the up to \$20 billion that the U.S. government now spends on traditional farm programs, much of which goes to large agribusinesses?

For a community to have good nutrition, three conditions are necessary: food must be affordable; food must be available; and individuals and families must have enough education to know how to eat better. This comprehensive proposal accomplishes those objectives. Moreover, in the best-case scenario, it could create large numbers of living-wage jobs in self-sustaining businesses even as it addresses our food, health, and nutrition problems. But even in a worst-case scenario, the plan would create short-term subsidized jobs that would provide an economic stimulus, and at least give low-income consumers the choice to obtain more nutritious foods -- a choice so often denied to them.

THE NEED: THE CONNECTED POVERTY, HUNGER AND OBESITY CRISES

Poverty and Food Insecurity

President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack have all pledged that the federal government will play a forceful leadership role in not only ending child hunger in the U.S. by 2015, but also in making nutritious food affordable for and available to all Americans. Their leadership is urgently needed because the nation is facing serious poverty, hunger, and nutrition crises.

In 2008, 39.8 million Americans lived below the meager federal poverty line. Some 49 million Americans, nearly 13 million more than in 2007, lived in a condition described by the federal government as “food insecurity,” meaning that their households either suffered from hunger or struggled at the brink of hunger. Most disturbing, 16.7 million children lived in food insecure households.¹

Yet in 2008, Americans spent \$1.165 trillion on food, of which \$600 billion was for food consumed at home and \$565 billion was for food eaten away from home.² That’s more than four times what Americans typically spend on clothing.³ As has been the case throughout U.S. history, the reason people are going hungry has nothing to do with the nation’s lack of food and everything to do with their inability to afford food, particularly the most nutritious food.

In 2006, the wealthiest fifth of U.S. families spent only seven percent of their income on food, compared to the bottom fifth, which spent 32 percent. Also, while the wealthiest Americans spent three times as much money on food as the lowest income Americans, food took up 25 percent less of their total income.⁴

Chart 1

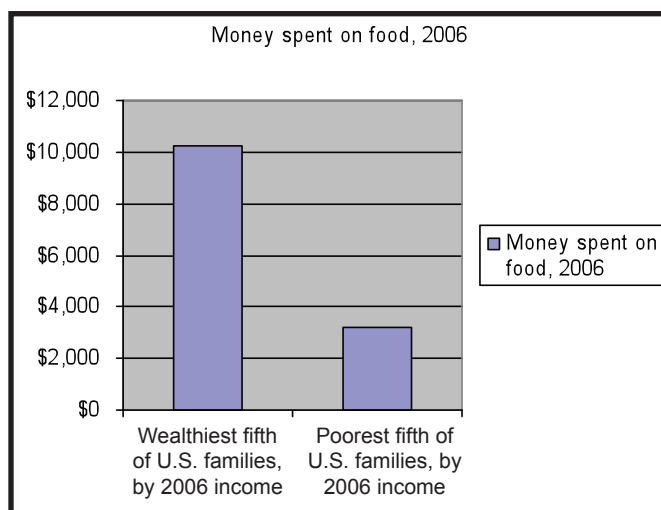
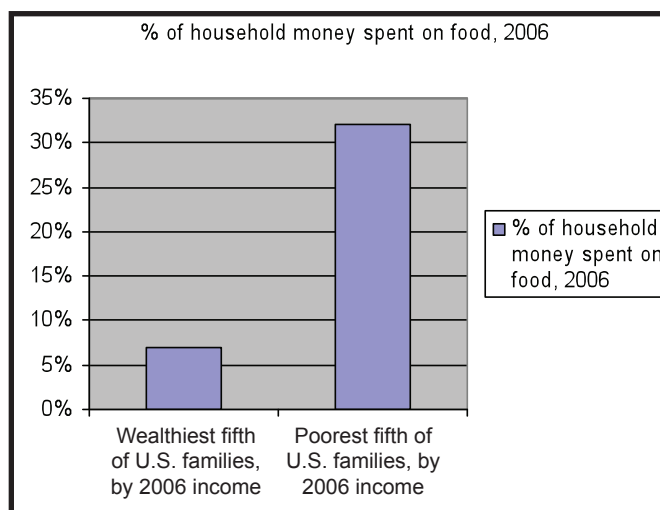


Chart 2



Source: Calculations based on W. Michael Cox and Richard Elm, “You Are What You Spend,” *The New York Times*, February 10, 2008

Hunger and Obesity: Flip Sides of the Same Malnutrition Coin

To make matter worse, even if nutritious food became more affordable for low-income families, it is often simply unavailable in their neighborhoods. Low-income areas where it is difficult to find fresh

and healthy food are increasingly referred to as “food deserts.”

In Los Angeles County in 2002, an average supermarket served 18,649 people, while the average supermarket in a low-income neighborhood served 27,986 people. The higher the concentration of poverty within a neighborhood, the fewer supermarkets there were. In ZIP codes where fewer than 10 percent of households lived below the federal poverty line, there were approximately 2.26 times as many supermarkets per household as there were in ZIP codes where the number of households living below the federal poverty line exceeded 40 percent. In addition, the higher the concentration of white people in a neighborhood, the greater the number of supermarkets.⁵

In neighborhoods without supermarkets, corner stores, bodegas, and convenience stores fill in the gaps. In a study of rural Orangeburg County, South Carolina, researchers identified 77 stores in the county, of which only 16 percent were supermarkets and 10 percent were grocery stores. The remaining 74 percent were convenience stores. Low-fat and nonfat milk, apples, high-fiber bread, eggs, and smoked turkey were available in 75 to 100 percent of supermarkets and grocery stores versus four to 29 percent of convenience stores. Just 28 percent of all stores sold any of the fruits or vegetables included in the survey. Convenience stores also tended to charge more for items than did supermarkets.⁶

A study conducted by the City of New York found, “The city is vastly underserved by local grocery stores.” That dearth has an economic impact. “NYC has the potential to capture approximately \$1 billion in grocery spending lost to suburbs,” according to the city.⁷

The lack of supermarkets makes a real difference. Areas without a full range of markets are “obesogenic” (obesity producing). Four different studies have demonstrated a positive association be-

tween access to food stores and improved dietary choices.⁸ A study in four states found that areas with high numbers of supermarkets had lower rates of obesity, while areas with higher numbers of convenience stores had higher levels of obesity.⁹ Nationwide, for every additional supermarket in a census tract, fruit and vegetable consumption increases by as much as 32 percent.¹⁰

To add insult to injury, low-income Americans often pay more for food, even though they often purchase food of lower quality than that purchased by higher-income Americans. A 2004 USDA study found:

- “Metro (urban) stores with high Food Stamp redemption rates lagged behind other stores in the adoption of progressive supply chain and human resource practices.”
- “Much of the evidence indicates that shopping opportunities for the poor are more limited than they are for higher income consumers and that prices are slightly higher in stores where low-income consumers shop.”
- “Food prices are generally higher in smaller grocery stores than in larger supermarkets and also higher in inner city and rural locations than in suburban locations. Since the poor are more likely to shop in small grocery stores and to live in inner city or rural locations, they often face higher food prices.”¹¹

The Job Desert as Food Desert: The Case of the South Bronx

The nonprofit organization I manage, the New York City Coalition Against Hunger, used computer-mapping technology to demonstrate that, like the rest of the nation, low-income neighborhoods in the city lack access to supermarkets, farmers’ markets, and other sources of fresh produce and nutritious food. Focusing on the high-poverty neighborhoods of the South Bronx, Central Harlem, and Brownsville, Brooklyn, we

found that fresh produce and other nutritious foods are often more difficult to access than junk foods and unhealthy restaurant fare.¹²

The South Bronx has long been a symbol of urban decay and poverty. Even before the collapse of the economy, there was severe unemployment in the South Bronx. From 2005 through 2007, the 16th Congressional District of the South Bronx had an unemployment rate of 13.9 percent. During that same period, fully 35 percent of able-bodied residents between ages 16-65 remained outside of the workforce. Even accounting for parents who voluntarily chose to stay at home to be with young children, the true rate of unemployment and underemployment was massive.¹³

The South Bronx is a perfect example of how the lack of access to affordable, nutritious food has devastating impacts on public health. Community Board District One in the South Bronx has about 90,000 residents, 45 percent of whom are below the poverty line. In 2007, there was not a single supermarket of 2,500 square feet or more (a common minimal square footage to categorize a store as a “supermarket”) in the entire district. Yet convenience stores, bodegas, fast-food restaurants, and low-cost sit-down restaurants with limited (mostly unhealthy) menus were plentiful. In just one part of the district, ZIP code 10451, there were three McDonald’s outlets.

The New York City Department of Health found that in the South Bronx nearly one in three children in Head Start programs is obese, and almost half are overweight or obese; nearly one in four public elementary school children is obese, and nearly four in 10 are overweight or obese; about one in six public high school students is obese, and more than one in three are overweight or obese; and one in four adults is obese, and two in three are overweight or obese.¹⁴ Rates of diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and cancer are all far higher than the citywide averages.

Family Farmers and Mom-and-Pop Food Stores: An Endangered Species

As basic as the food and employment problems of low-income neighborhoods and communities are, they embody only one aspect of the nation’s fundamentally broken food system. There are a shrinking number of multinational corporations controlling ever-increasing shares of the U.S. food supply. This means that farmers and farm workers receive less profit and income and that there is an increasing risk in having the country’s food needs controlled by a handful of companies “too big to fail.”

One of the most pronounced trends in modern America has been the accelerating consolidation and corporate control of the entities that grow, process, transport, and sell our foods. In 1990, 72 percent of all U.S. beef was packed by the top four firms; by 2003, 84 percent of beef was packed by the same four companies. Between 1982 and 2004, the amount of flour milled by the top four companies rose from 40 percent to 63 percent. The percentage of pork packed by the top four firms nearly doubled between 1987 and 2003, raising their control to 63 percent of the market.¹⁵

With smaller competitors shoved out of the way, massive processors and distributors snare an ever-increasing share of the food economy’s dollars, and are free to pay small farmers less and less for their product. In 2007, out of a \$4.00 gallon of milk, dairy farmers received \$1.60; out of a pound of bread that retailed from \$2.49, farmers got 10 cents; out of two pounds of lettuce that retailed for \$1.79, farmers received 28 cents; and out of one pound of sirloin steak that sold for \$7.99, farmers were compensated 94 cents.¹⁶ In 1950, U.S. farmers received 41 percent of the dollars spent on food in the U.S.; by 2006, farmers received only 19 percent of each food dollar.

The future of family farming in America is grim. Average farms were about three times as large in 2002 as in 1835. Small farms tend to make so little income today that these farmers typically receive substantial off-farm income. According to the USDA, American farmers are more than four times as likely to be above the age of 65 as below the age of 34. For households operating limited-resource or retirement farms, more than half of their off-farm income comes from unearned sources – such as Social Security, pensions, dividends, interest, and rent – reflecting the advanced age of those operators.¹⁷

THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY-BASED FOOD PROJECTS

The Community Food Security Movement

In response to the challenges to the U.S. food system, a community food security movement has flourished over the past few decades. The movement is based on the understanding that the fortunes of farmers and producers and the fortunes of consumers are intertwined. Food producers need strong consumers in order to remain economically healthy. Consumers need strong food producers to remain physically healthy – which, of course, is ultimately linked to their economic health. The problem is that these connections are increasingly frayed.

Community food security work has several objectives: bring new supermarkets and establish farmers' markets in low-income neighborhoods; develop and mentor new farmers; promote nutrition education; launch urban farms; and start food-related small businesses. Generally (but not always) such projects use sustainable and organic growing methods.

The community food security movement also seeks ways through which small agricultural producers can market directly to consumers, cutting out profit-sapping intermediaries. One popular way of doing this is by creating community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms that enable consumers to provide up-front cash to purchase shares of that year's output from the farm. The shareholders then receive a portion of the farm's production each week over the growing season. The arrangement reduces the risk for the farmer and provides fresh, healthy and (sometimes) competitively priced food for the shareholders. Other popular methods of direct marketing -- farmers' markets, farm stands, online sales of farm products -- are gaining popularity nationwide. Much work has also gone into helping farmers directly sell their products to school systems and other large institutions.

The New York City Coalition Against Hunger, in conjunction with other nonprofit partners, runs a Family-Share CSA program that brings fresh, organic produce into three low-income neighborhoods: West Harlem, Long Island City in Queens, and Flatbush in Brooklyn. In conjunction with this effort, a program funded by the state government and administered by the United Way of New York City gives out additional produce from the CSA to soup kitchens and food pantries in those same areas. Families who earn more than \$50,000 annually pay a slightly higher price to help subsidize the program. Families earning \$35,000-\$50,000 pay the actual cost of the produce. Families with incomes of \$35,000 or less receive food for sharply reduced rates, and are able to further reduce their costs by using SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamp) benefits and volunteering extra hours with the CSA.²⁰

The community food security movement also seeks ways through which small agricultural producers can market directly to consumers...

The Coalition has estimated that every \$5 spent in the Family Shares program buys three pounds of mixed produce. In terms of stark economics, it may not be the most cost-effective way to buy fresh, even organic, produce. However, not only does the Coalition provide fresh, healthy food in underserved neighborhoods, but the project helps small, environmentally sustainable farmers stay in business, provides nutrition education, and strengthens communities by bringing together neighbors across racial and economic lines. Frankly, more sophisticated evaluation measures are needed to determine the comprehensive social benefits of the project.

FOOD GROWS IN BROOKLYN

Some of the most notable community food projects are based in my hometown of Brooklyn:

- The Park Slope Food Coop, located in the heart of the Park Slope, a famously liberal neighborhood of mostly upper-middle-class and upper-class families, was founded in 1973 by a small group of neighbors who wanted to make healthy, affordable food available to the neighborhood. The coop has more than 12,000 members, most of whom work once every four weeks in exchange for a 20–40 percent savings on groceries.¹⁸ Only members may shop at the Coop, but membership is open to all. Using that model as a springboard, activists have recently opened four other co-ops in New York City, and are planning up to six more, some in very lower-income neighborhoods.
- Five years ago, Brooklyn resident Doug Cullen started an organic snack bar company called Luminous Kitchens. He started selling his bars to a small number of yoga studios and gourmet delis in New York City, but has recently started selling through Whole Food stores and hopes to soon branch out to the rest of the Northeast. Cullen has never taken out a loan and has paid for each expansion solely out of sales. Having recently reached about \$48,000 in annual sales, Cullen finally earns enough money to work at his business as his only job. Even though he's making little money for himself, Cullen pays his few part-time employees \$12 per hour, nearly double the minimum wage, for essentially unskilled work. Explaining his decision to pay more than the market rate, Cullen said, "I'm paying more because, morally, I want this business to do right by everyone involved, including all the workers." He does admit, however, that his snack bars (retailing from \$2.15 to \$3.50) are unaffordable to many people, and that his business model only works because he is able to sell them at high-end establishments.
- In Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, community residents covered a 6,000-square-foot warehouse roof with 200,000 pounds of a soil-and-compost mix specially designed to be light. In order to be more productive, they added 1,000 earthworms to the soil. The roof has 16 four-foot-wide beds, irrigated by rain (which also aids the city by reducing the strain on the city's sewer system). The rooftop plot grows herbs, flowers, and vegetables, including corn, salad greens, radishes, and peppers, which the community has started selling to local restaurants.¹⁹
- Entrepreneurs in Brooklyn have started a concern called BK Farmyards, which asks homeowners to provide backyards and developments to provide undeveloped land, upon which BK Farmyards would set up and maintain gardens that they will then harvest for both home use and commercial sales.

Larger-scale community food projects usually have a mix of government and private funding. One of the largest and most innovative (and probably the most famous) community food security groups in the nation is Growing Power in Milwaukee. The project is led by Will Allen, a charismatic, African-American, former professional basketball player and corporate executive who recently won a \$500,000 MacArthur "genius grant." Growing Power has six greenhouses and eight hoop houses for greens, herbs, and vegetables; pens for goats, ducks, and turkeys; a chicken coop and beehives; and a system for raising tilapia and perch. There is an advanced composting operation -- a virtual worm farm -- and a laboratory experimenting with turning food waste into both fertilizer and methane gas for energy.²¹

The group has a staff of about three dozen full-time workers and an additional 2,000 residents

help out as volunteers. They produce about \$500,000 worth of affordable produce, meat, and fish annually, some of which they give away or sell at a discount to low-income residents, and some of which is sold at a higher mark-up to food co-ops, at an on-site store, and to local restaurants. Funded by sales and grants, Growing Power has expanded its operations in Milwaukee and has also begun work in Chicago.²²

But for all the great work of community projects like Growing Power and the Park Slope Food Co-op (see sidebar), the fact remains that scaling them up to a national level remains a challenge. For the community food security movement to advance, government must become a key player. In the late 1990s, Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman launched the USDA Community Food Security Initiative and placed me in charge of its day-to-day operations. The federal government in 1996 also launched the Community Food Proj-

ect grants program, a \$5 million-a-year initiative that provides federal assistance to multi-purpose community projects. The grant program is so competitive and its funding is so limited that the vast majority of applicants (including the New York City Coalition Against Hunger) have been turned down for funding. (For a comprehensive explanation of the Community Food Project grants program, see the appendix.)

When USDA first got involved in community food security, most activists in the field were highly skeptical, worrying that the feds were simply trying to co-opt the movement for nefarious ends. By the time the Bush administration took office and summarily ended it, the program had won over many doubters by giving out millions of dollars in Community Food Project grants each year to aid food security efforts, naming Coordinators of Community Food Security in all fifty



states, boosting community gardens, and ramping-up technical assistance to existing projects.

The Profitability of Sustainable, Small-Scale Agriculture and Food Distribution

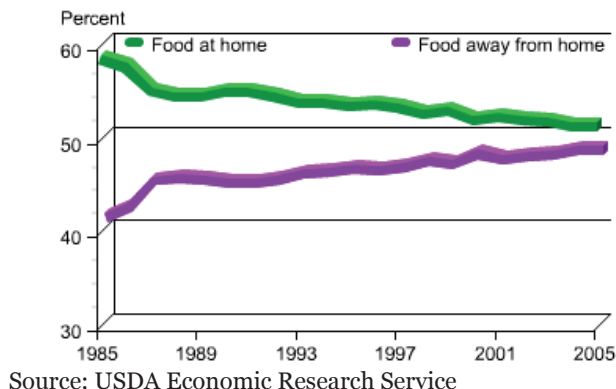
USDA recently funded a major study of sustainable, small-scale agriculture, including for-profit farm activities (beyond the Community Food Project grant program), that concluded the following:

- Sustainable, community-scale food producers have the following characteristics: they are typically small compared to industrial producers; their crops are diversified; they use innovative practices to improve soil quality and plant and animal health; and they are often new to farming.
- A common perception about sustainable crop production is that yields are significantly lower than crops produced with industrial methods. While some research studies confirm this perception, many others show that yields can be the same or higher for a variety of crops under sustainable production.
- While crop production costs are difficult to compare between sustainable and industrial approaches, there is considerable evidence to suggest that sustainable food producers can generate similar and even better financial returns than comparable industrial food producers on a total farm income basis.
- Evidence is growing that pasture-raising of cattle and pigs can result in higher net income to farmers than industrial confinement feeding alternatives.
- For both sustainable crop and animal production, it appears that grower profitability improves the longer that they use sustainable food production practices.

- Direct-to-consumer distribution avenues typically include roadside stands, farmers' markets, direct home delivery, CSAs, and food buying clubs. Roadside stands can be a very profitable direct-to-consumer retail approach because the distribution cost is eliminated by the consumer coming to or near the farm. Moreover, these distribution methods provide not only economic but social benefits as well by enhancing community relationships and educating people about the benefits of buying locally grown, sustainably produced foods.

Chart 3

Food at-home and food away-from-home expenditures as a share of all food expenditures

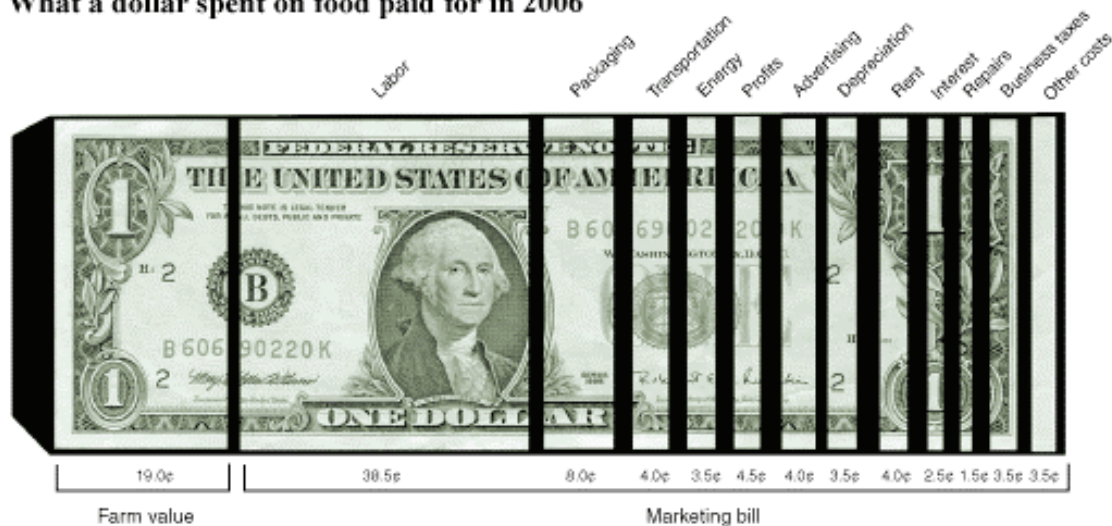


- In general, the fewer middle agents food products pass through on their way to the consumer, the more money the farmers or processors receive. Therefore, farmers and processors maximize revenues -- some 50 to 80 percent more than they would otherwise get -- when they can sell directly to the retail consumer. As with the growers and processors, the economic success of community scale distributors depends on excellent management.²³

The Big Money: Food Processing

Chart 4

What a dollar spent on food paid for in 2006



Source: USDA's Economic Research Service.

Americans are working longer hours than ever and, in many cases, more than one job. With more women joining the workforce and commuting times increasing, people have less time to prepare food. As Chart 3 demonstrates, an ever-greater proportion of food is being consumed away from home. While the “Slow Food Movement” makes inconvenience in food preparation a moral virtue, it’s a hard sell for busy working families. Thus, there is a growing need for businesses that create and sell new kinds of ready-to-eat or easy-to-prepare foods that are nutritious, sustainable, and convenient.

Most of the funding for Community Food Projects has gone to projects that have grown, marketed, or sold food, but relatively few of the grants have been channeled to enterprises that processed food. Yet food processing -- the adding of value to the food -- is where the greatest profits, and often the highest wages, are in the food system.

As Chart 4 demonstrates, while 19 cents of every U.S. food dollar goes to the value of the farm products themselves, 39 cents goes to labor, eight cents to packaging, four cents to transportation, and five cents to profits.

Theoretically, there is a great deal of income to be made from community-based food processing facilities, especially since they can save money on transportation, particularly when fuel costs are high. Although a major USDA-funded study noted that there is “very little published information...on sustainable community food processing,” it did find that:

- A number of processing options have strong applicability to sustainable community scale processors. These include “ready made” (i.e. ready-to-cook or ready-to-eat) processed foods, canning and bottling, and custom-packaging meat processing. Ready-made processed foods typically involve less capital equipment than other processed foods and command

premium prices. On- or off-farm custom processing of small quantities of chickens also has strong potential.

- In general, the profitability of industrial food-processing firms increases in a linear fashion with firm size. Nonetheless, there is evidence that small-quantity, on-farm processing can be economically viable because the processors are able to keep their costs low by using family labor and on-farm kitchen facilities.
- The costs to produce organic and non-organic processed foods are very similar. Nonetheless, organic processed foods are generally much higher priced. It appears that the path to profitability for community-scale processors is to achieve a high margin on small production quantities as opposed to the industrial strategy of producing high quantities of low-margin products.²⁴

The Promise of Fish Farming

In the years 2000-2005, while the U.S. imported only three percent of its dairy products, 10 percent of its red meats, 12 percent of its grain and grain products, 13 percent of its vegetables, and 32 percent of its fruit and nuts, it imported 79 percent of its fish and shellfish.²⁶ Given this fact, and taking into consideration growing environmental concerns over both wild and farm-raised fish, a significant U.S. investment in the research and development of environmentally sustainable, urban, fish-production facilities seems a worthy endeavor.

While most U.S. urban aquaculture ventures have failed, a few persevere. The largest experiment in urban fish farming is being conducted by Professor Martin Schreibman of Brooklyn College, who is cultivating thousands of tilapia in gurgling tubs in the basement of a college building. Schreibman claims that this new application of a 2,500-year-old practice could turn abandoned lots into fish farms, helping to re-

store declining fish populations in the process. “The recirculating technology, which is a water re-use system, enables you to grow fish in large numbers, in a limited area,” Schreibman told an interviewer.²⁷ He thinks urban aquaculture could be a \$1.5 billion a year industry in New York alone.²⁸ He believes the practice could create 14,000 jobs in the state.

But some are skeptical that urban fish farming could ever become economically viable. “Growing our own fish in the city would be a wonderful thing, but is it economically viable, given the city’s competitive disadvantage?” Roger Tollefson, president of the New York Seafood Council, an industry group, told the *New York Times*. “You have higher labor and utility costs than most other areas of the country. Tilapia can be farmed anywhere, and transportation has come down in cost. Why produce it in our own backyard if transportation advances can bring a better product to our front door for cheaper?”²⁹ Only with more funding and research can we determine whether massive urban fish farming is a pipe dream or a viable alternative.

Scaling Up Community Gardens

During my tenure at the USDA, I was briefly the lead staff member for the federal government’s efforts to expand community gardens. The nonprofit organization I now run provides AmeriCorps national-service participants to aid community gardens. Clearly it would be useful for more low-income communities to be able to grow more of their own food. Food-producing community gardens improve diets by increasing fruit and vegetable consumption, reduce crime by turning empty lots into safe spaces, teach people about nutrition in a hands-on manner, and generally improve the community spirit in neighborhoods in which they are located.

But for all their benefits, it is important to keep in mind how difficult it is to scale up community gardens as a mass response to hunger and

poor nutrition. While the grassroots community activists who actually run such efforts are highly aware of their limits, food policy theorists and the general public that reads them often are not. In a 2008 essay, food writer Michael Pollan wrote that everyone should be “growing some -- even just a little -- of your own food. Rip out



your lawn, if you have one, and if you don’t -- if you live in a high-rise, or have a yard shrouded in shade -- look into getting a plot in a community garden.”³⁰

Surely, those who have the ability and desire to do so should grow more of their own food. But the suggestion that everyone should participate in a community garden is more than a little fanciful. Many food theorists place the burden of gardening on individuals, glossing over the reality that most poor people don’t have the time or the land, and that remaining plots of urban garden land are often already fully used. They also tend to overlook the fact that poor people don’t have money for garden tools, seeds, water, and other equipment, and also assume that massive amounts of extra land and supplies will somehow magically appear for anyone who wants to garden.

In a piece on community gardens in Albany, New York, Marlene Kennedy, the business editor for the *Times Union*, wrote, “Rather than working hard to increase participation in food and nutrition assistance programs, why not try to reduce the need for such aid? Instead of spreading the word about food stamps to the urban poor, why not give them a way to grow their own food?” Her article quoted Matthew Schueler, education center planner for the Capital District Community Garden: “Access to food stamps does not imply access to healthy food. What our food programs may need more than expansion is an adaptation to the reality of the movement. Our food policy is killing more people with empty calories than by withholding meals.”³¹

The idea that people should work in a community garden instead of getting food stamps is simply preposterous. SNAP is a vital safety-net program that makes a real difference in the lives of millions of Americans, providing mass sustenance in a way community gardens still have yet to achieve. Albany has a thriving community garden scene. As of 2008, it had 19 community gardens, including 379 plots. Generously assuming that each plot provided enough produce for a family of four, the gardens could (at least during Albany’s short growing season) theoretically help feed up to 1,500 people. Considering that Albany has a population of 89,000, of which 30,000 live in poverty, it means that no more than five percent of the poor, and no more than two percent of the city, could possibly get food from the gardens.³²

Compare that to SNAP, which spent more than \$15 million in Albany in 2008, more than 370 times the value of the garden food. Even if the number and productivity of gardens were dramatically increased, they still would not scratch the surface of the nation’s true food needs. Saying that seasonal gardens can take the place of a year-round government safety net is ridiculous and counterproductive.

Even a larger scale and overwhelmingly successful project like Growing Power underscores the limits of community food projects. While Growing Power provides some food to 10,000 people in Milwaukee every year -- and those 10,000 people will surely lead healthier and happier lives because of it -- the city has a population of about 600,000, which means that one of the largest projects of its kind is feeding less than two percent of its local population. Out of its \$1,610,151 in total revenues, the organization relied on \$754,096 in government funding. Gross sales of goods brought in \$384,146 (24 percent of the total revenues). Given that the cost to produce those goods was \$292,112, Growing Power earned a “profit” of only \$92,000. Its performance certainly raises the question of whether similar projects that serve primarily low-income neighborhoods can ever become economically self-sufficient.

A Good Food, Good Jobs initiative can go a long way toward testing the feasibility of scaling up the community food movement ...

Thus a major challenge facing the community food security movement is that of scale. Many community food security projects are small, boutique efforts through which urban professionals have been able to buy pristine, organic greens at sky-high prices. But they haven’t fed masses of people. Some in the movement even resist ramping up the size and scope of their projects, for fear of going against their “small is beautiful” ethos. However, unless such efforts grow dramatically, the movement won’t come even close to significantly challenging the dominant, corporate-run food system.

But just as I rebuke food security theorists for glossing over the class-insensitive aspects of the movement, I must also chide my colleagues in

traditional hunger organizations for too frequently looking down their noses at the community food security movement just because most of the projects are still small-scale. If anti-hunger advocates agree that such projects are helpful but believe their scale is too small to make a meaningful difference, the most logical response should be to work together to develop public policies to help them expand.

A Good Food, Good Jobs initiative can go a long way toward testing the feasibility of scaling up the community food movement to both fight the hunger problem and create a healthier, more sustainable food system in the U.S.

Are “Organic” and “Local” Panaceas?

While the official USDA distinction between foods that are organic and non-organic is a bit fuzzy, most people take it as an article of faith that organic food is necessarily healthier for humans than its non-organic counterpart. No wonder U.S. sales of organic food and beverages have grown from \$1 billion in 1990 to an estimated \$20 billion in 2007, and are projected to reach nearly \$23.6 billion in 2008.³³

Yet while some studies show that organic food may be marginally healthier, the Mayo Clinic declared: “No conclusive evidence shows that organic food is more nutritious than is conventionally grown food...Some people buy organic food to limit their exposure to [pesticide] residues. Most experts agree, however, that the amount of pesticides found on fruits and vegetables poses a very small health risk.”³⁴ A major study recently published by researchers from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine noted that consumers were paying higher prices for organic food because of its perceived health benefits. Yet the researchers’ review of 162 scientific papers published in the scientific literature over the last 50 years found that there was no significant difference between organic and non-organic foods.³⁵

Key Questions for Further Research

Research conducted by the government, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations is urgently needed to answer the following questions about community food activities funded by the federal government:

- Can food enterprises that pay their workers sufficient wages also make products that are affordable to low-income families?
- Can food-related businesses enable workers to move up to better-paying management positions? What role can worker-owners of businesses play?
- Can community food enterprises become economically self-sufficient over the long-run, particularly if they are ramped-up to benefit from economies of scale?
- Can the savings on transportation and storage compensate for lower economies of scale and smaller marketing areas than those of large agribusinesses? Given that transportation causes 27 percent of the U.S. carbon emissions, what would be the environmental and economic impacts of community food enterprises?
- Even if such projects did need long-term subsidies to survive, could the costs be offset by increased government revenues due to economic growth and decreased spending on health care and social services? How would the economic and health benefits from government spending on these efforts compare to the tens of billions of dollars annually that the U.S. government now spends on traditional farm programs, much of which goes to large agribusinesses?

There are certainly good environmental reasons to buy organic food, and, if grown by small farmers who pay their workers a living wage, also excellent social-justice reasons. My family buys organic food whenever possible (much of it from a farmers' market down the street from our home), but we can afford to do so. Many families

Food should be a
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can't afford to shop that way because organic produce is almost always more expensive than non-organic.

There is also enthusiasm among a growing segment of Americans for food that is locally grown. Certainly, it is better to purchase food grown as close to home as possible because it tends to be fresher and less fuel is used to transport it. But writer Sarah Murray has made the point that some food grown farther away could potentially be more environmentally friendly than food grown far closer, if the farm further away engages in practices that are so energy efficient that they more than compensate for the extra energy that might be used in transporting the food.³⁶

Additionally, the mere fact that food is local provides no guarantee that it was not harvested by exploited immigrant farm workers. Plus, we must remember that the international food distribution system, for all its vast faults, does have certain benefits. It's a good thing when people in frigid northern cities can buy fresh fruit from Florida or Chile. Some of the most extreme food writers forget that good nutrition and sustainable living should be about independent choices and overall balance.

While increasing the consumption of organic and locally grown foods are important goals, they are

not the only goals. Food activists sometimes even scoff at the notion that lower food prices could be a good thing, because they believe that lower prices are achieved at a cost to the environment and small farmers. Even if those assumptions were true, we can't ignore the fact that lower food prices are better for low- and middle-income Americans, and that the most nutritious food is often the most expensive food. As Raj Patel wrote in his book, *Stuffed and Starved*: "To be able to go on a culinary odyssey in the first place, and to be truly at liberty to savor food...the majority of people need that passport to all other freedoms – money."³⁷

The nation should expand community food projects nationwide. But we have to be conscious of the class divide in the local and organic food communities -- and we shouldn't frown upon or discourage people who still must get their food through the dominant food outlets like mainstream supermarkets, restaurants, and convenience stores.

A GOOD FOOD, GOOD JOBS PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

Food as a Centerpiece of Public Policy

The former chair of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Kiki de la Garza (D-TX), used to quiz audiences with a riddle: "When does a nuclear submarine need to rise out of the water?" People would guess that it would rise when it needed air, but he explained that it could turn the water into oxygen. Others would guess that it would rise when it ran out of fuel, but he would then explain that the nuclear fuel would last for years. When no one could guess, he would answer the riddle: "When it ran out of food."

Given that food is a basic human need, it is amazing that people almost always failed to figure out his riddle. More broadly, it is astonishing how often food is overlooked in so many vital policy discussions. (The neglect spills over into pop culture: In the earliest version of the classic computer simulation game SimCity, you could decide

where to put a football stadium or museum but not where food stores or markets should be.) For most of U.S. history, urban planners have usually ignored food issues in their grand schemes.

We need an entirely different mindset. Food should be a central organizing principle for neighborhood development, uniting residents through community gardens, farmers' markets, supermarkets, food cooperatives, and food-related small businesses. Community gardens



can reclaim empty lots from drug pushers. Food businesses can create jobs and raise community income. Farmers' markets can give neighborhoods central gathering spaces and nurture a feeling of the "public commons" that is so often lost in today's society. This new mindset will benefit both our economy and public health.

For a community to have good nutrition, three conditions are necessary: food must be affordable; food must be available; and individuals and families must have enough education to know how to eat better. If you don't have all three legs of this stool, it will collapse. Yet all too often, projects only focus on one of the three. Many provide nutrition education, lecturing people that they should eat better, but make food neither more available nor more affordable. Some-

times, food is brought into low-income neighborhoods, but at prices too high for most people to afford. That won't work either. The only way to truly succeed is to focus on all three aspects of this problem at once.

A Federal Food Jobs Policy Agenda

Of course, a food jobs agenda can only succeed in the broader context of a recovering economy and greater affordability for low-income Americans. The president, Congress, and the private sector must continue to work together to implement serious plans to create living-wage jobs in every low-income neighborhood and community in the nation. The government must also expand and improve federal nutrition safety net programs, such as SNAP and school meals, in order to meet President Obama's goal of ending child hunger by 2015, an objective that is itself a down payment on ending all hunger in America.

Beyond that, a federal Good Food, Good Jobs initiative is sorely needed. Given that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 contained at least \$62.2 billion in direct spending on green initiatives and \$20 billion in green tax incentives, it makes sense to spend a small fraction of that amount -- perhaps \$2 billion dollars in the next fiscal year -- investing in community food jobs.³⁸

The potential for food jobs is vast. Employment in the food industry increased by 14 percent in the 1990s alone. Eating and drinking establishments experienced the largest increase during that decade, with a 21-percent surge in employment between 1990 and 1999. In 1999, there were 14 million food workers overall, with 7.9 million people working at away-from-home eating establishments and 3.5 million working in food stores.³⁹

Now is the right time for the federal government to initiate a large-scale Good Food, Good Jobs program to create food-related jobs in areas of high unemployment, and to seriously examine the

effectiveness of community food security efforts in boosting the economy and improving public health.

In partnership with state, local, and tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and the private sector, the initiative would simultaneously bolster employment, foster economic growth, fight hunger, cut obesity, improve nutrition, and reduce spending on diet-related health problems in low-income urban neighborhoods and rural communities nationwide. By doing so, not only could government help solve a number of very tangible problems, but it could fuse the massive -- and growing -- public interest in food issues with the ongoing efforts, usually underfunded and underreported, to fight poverty at the grass-roots level.

The new initiative should begin by increasing the number and size of food systems projects that have already been proven effective, such as community and rooftop gardens, urban farms, food co-ops, farm stands, CSAs, and farmers' markets. Other important policies should include: expanding community kitchens that combine rescuing excess food with training people for jobs in the food-service industry; helping new supermarkets locate in low-income areas and existing supermarkets thrive; and hiring unemployed youth to grow, market, sell, and deliver nutritious foods, while teaching them skills they could use to eventually start their own businesses.

The Good Food, Good Jobs initiative should also take bold new steps. It should provide wage and even commuting subsidies to help current U.S. residents find living-wage work at regional and local farms, reducing the need for farmers to recruit immigrants for farm labor. Since there is far more profit in processing food than in simply growing it, the initiative should focus on supporting food businesses that add value year-round, such as neighborhood food-processing plants; businesses that turn produce into ready-to-eat salads and sandwiches; healthy vending-machine

companies; and affordable and nutritious restaurants and caterers.

Rather than assuming that "slow food" is always a virtue, the initiative could help working families by creating ready-to-eat or easy-to-prepare foods that are nutritious, sustainable, *and* convenient. It could also support the construction and maintenance of community exercise and nutrition education centers, which would provide free or low-cost services to low-income community members, and subsidize those activities by charging more for higher-income families. And given the growing concerns over the world's fisheries, the initiative should also provide a significant investment into the research and development of environmentally sustainable urban fish-production facilities.

Some specific action steps that the federal government should take include:

- The president and Congress should work together to focus more existing USDA Business and Industry (B&I) funds toward for-profit community food projects. The 2008 Farm Bill set aside five percent of total funds for local and regional food enterprises. The program received a massive increase in funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, with USDA able to provide \$125 million in guaranteed food system loan volume for fiscal years 2009 and 2010, and \$50 million per year in 2011, 2012, and thereafter. Yet USDA has yet to offer the public detailed guidance about how to apply for and use such money. USDA should provide such guidance immediately and Congress should allow USDA to use an appropriate share of the funds to pay for the staff necessary to effectively manage this new fund.
- The president and Congress should authorize \$1 billion in new, special tax credits for food-related businesses, contingent on their paying living-wage salaries to their employees, locating or staying in areas of particularly high unemployment, or providing affordable food to low-income Americans.

- The president and Congress should increase the funding for the USDA Community Food Grant Program to \$50 million, from its current \$5 million level. (See appendix.) Of that total, \$5 million should be set aside for long-term research to answer the questions posed in this paper. For the remaining \$45 million, preference should be given to activities that integrate private food efforts with federal nutrition assistance programs, create jobs, and bolster income. The limit on first-time grants should be increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000. The required ratio of federal to non-federal matching funds should be changed from the current level of one-to-one to a new level of two federal dollars for every non-federal dollar, in order to ensure the availability of projects in the very lowest income areas of the country. The restriction on multiple grants for the same project should be lifted, and particularly effective projects should be able to obtain grants of up to \$1 million to expand or replicate their projects.
- The president should launch an expanded Community Food Security initiative, headed by the Agriculture Secretary, based on a program started during the Clinton years but eliminated by the Bush administration. As part of this initiative, USDA and the Small Business Administration should team up to give food-related small businesses targeted technical assistance related to accounting, raw-material sourcing, food safety marketing, export regulations, and organic certifications, among other operations.
- USDA should develop a “food access index,” a new measure that takes into account both the availability and affordability of nutritious foods, and use this measure as another tool to judge the success of all the efforts it funds.
- The president and Congress should create a pilot program to allow state and local governments to create food-related small business incubator centers.
- Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and then-Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-NY) successfully inserted language into the most recent farm bill to provide up to \$2 million to fund a Healthy Urban Food Enterprise Development Center. The center is intended to increase access to healthy affordable foods, including local agricultural products, to underserved communities. If the program proves a success, Congress should increase its funding.
- The president and Congress should dramatically increase federal funding -- and significantly decrease state matching requirements -- for the WIC Farmers’ Market Program and the Senior Farmers’ Market Program, which currently allow low-income seniors, women, infants, and children to obtain additional fresh produce at farmers markets. These programs should also be expanded to include CSAs, farm stands, and urban produce vendors. USDA should continue to intensify its efforts to ensure that SNAP and WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) benefits can be easily used at CSAs and farmers’ markets, as well as to help start food-producing gardens.
- USDA should increase funding for nutrition education, and boost support for hands-on nutrition classes that allow low-income Americans to prepare food they directly obtain from community food projects.
- The bipartisan passage of the Edward Kennedy Serve America Act authorized the federal Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) to create a \$50 million Social Innovation Fund to support the most promising, results-oriented nonprofit programs. The president’s fiscal year budget requested the full \$50 million for the fund and Congress should appropriate that amount. CNCS should then write the application guidelines for the program in a way that makes it clear that food-related projects are one of the priority areas for funding.
- The AmeriCorps program, significantly increased in funding and scope by the Edward Kennedy Serve America Act, should provide

large numbers of national service participants to implement not-for-profit food jobs programs.

- The president should use his “bully pulpit” to encourage private investments in food-related social innovation projects.
- The federal government could support community food activities by changing procurement rules in order to increase purchases from these enterprises and small farmers for school meals, the USDA Emergency Food Assistance Program (which provides food to food banks, soup kitchens, and food pantries), and other federal nutrition assistance programs, as well as for federal prisons, military facilities, veterans’ hospitals, and concession stands in national parks, among other venues.

A Policy Agenda for State, Local, and Tribal Governments

- State, local, and tribal governments should create community food security initiatives and grant programs modeled on federal ones.
- Leaders at all levels should use their “bully pulpits” to encourage private investments in food-related businesses and projects.
- All levels of government should shift procurement rules to increase the purchase of products from these enterprises and small farmers for school meals and other government nutrition-assistance programs, as well as for jails, military facilities, hospitals, concession stands in public parks, and other venues and programs.
- All levels of government should use a combination of tax breaks, grants, land swaps, and other innovative efforts to preserve farmland. Localities must preserve existing -- and set aside new -- land for urban farms, gardens, and farmers’ markets. Localities should require all large real estate development projects to consider in their planning food production and distribution, including rooftop gardens and greenhouses, af-

fordable supermarkets (staffed by living-wage employees), and farmers’ markets.

- All levels of government should encourage the establishment of new supermarkets in low-income neighborhoods.
- All levels of government should do more to incorporate hands-on nutrition education and school gardening into their school curriculums.
- Recently, New York became the first state to enable coupons for the regular WIC Program (which recently included fresh fruits and vegetables in its food basket for the first time) to be used at farmers’ markets. Other states should adopt this practice.

All such efforts should be subject to strict performance-based outcome measures, and programs should not be expanded or re-funded unless they can prove their worth.



CONCLUSION

In the best-case scenario, this comprehensive plan could create large numbers of living-wage jobs in self-sustaining businesses, while dramatically reducing hunger, malnutrition, and diet-related diseases. But even if we fell short of those ambitions, the effort would still create short-term subsidized jobs that would provide an important economic stimulus, and give low-income people the opportunity to buy more nutritious foods, a choice that is currently often denied to them.

The plan would bolster self-reliance; place the responsibility for most job-creation activities in non-government entities; and, by lessening the incidence of nutrition-related disease, lead to lower health costs and a healthier populace. The plan is based on mainstream values and common-sense goals. While this paper provides food for thought, it will be much more useful if it helps provide fuel for action.

APPENDIX

The USDA Community Food Project Grants Program

One way that the federal government has been involved is through the USDA National Institute for Food and Agriculture (formerly called the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service) Community Food Project Competitive Grants Program. Started in 1996, the program aims to fight food insecurity through developing activities that help promote the self-sufficiency of low-income communities. Grants are intended to help eligible private nonprofit entities that need a one-time infusion of federal assistance to establish and carry out multi-purpose community food projects, which are funded from \$10,000-\$300,000 and from one- to three-year time periods. Total program funding per year is \$5 million. Approximately 18 percent of the submitted proposals have received awards during the history of this program. Since 1996, the program has awarded 243 grants worth more than \$36 million, which has been matched by local resources.

While staff shortages and funding limitations have prevented USDA from making public comprehensive assessments of the effectiveness of these projects every year, the department has published a document giving progress reports for fiscal years 2000-2002, and one report detailing progress for fiscal year 2003. Below are some of the most impressive and quantifiable grantee accomplishments:

- Since 1991, The Food Project in Eastern Massachusetts has built a model of engaging young people in personal and social change through sustainable agriculture. Each year they work with over 100 teens and thousands of volunteers to farm on 37 acres in the towns and cities of Beverly, Boston, Ipswich, Lincoln, and Lynn. USDA grant money helped its CSA garner 100 to 150 shareholders in year one, which

increased to 208 in year two, and to 225 in year three.

- Cultivating Community, in Portland, Maine, used grant funds to combine sustainable agriculture and youth involvement on an existing 12-acre organic farm. In year one, they grew and distributed 14,635 pounds of produce, valued at \$24,148. Most of the food went to emergency agencies serving primarily an immigrant clientele. In addition, youth growers distributed over \$4,000 worth of produce to the homes of 39 low-income elders.
- A USDA grant enabled the “X” Main Street Corporation in Springfield, Massachusetts, to help the community retain a national chain supermarket, their only urban grocery store; increase access to and patronage of a grantee-sponsored farmers’ market; and create a community garden.
- In Goleta, California, the Center for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens used the grant to promote the purchase and cultivation of healthy foods at low prices for a predominantly Hispanic population northeast of Los Angeles. In the first year, 67 families participated in gardening activities and 73 students volunteered for the project. These families saved an estimated \$350 annually in retail food costs.
- A USDA grant funded Red Tomato, Inc. in Canton, Massachusetts, which worked with farmers and a large regional supermarket chain to bring fresh fruits and vegetables into markets that were accessible for low-income residents. Sales were slightly higher than expenses at Stop & Shop supermarkets during the first year, with an average of \$7,000 in sales for each store in a low-income neighborhood and \$35,000 overall. In addition, there were \$137,000 in sales to the supermarket’s warehouse.

For fiscal year 2006, the Community Food Security Coalition and USDA teamed up to collect

more comprehensive performance measurements of the program activities of the grantees. Fifty-one of the 65 organizations participated in the assessment and reported that 47 program activities created 276 jobs, while 36 activities created 163 micro-enterprise opportunities or businesses. An additional 378 micro-enterprises were supported by these program activities. The grants increased sales for 66 percent of the micro-enterprise/business projects. Grantees also reported that 48 percent of these activities were profitable. In addition, over 700 schools and institutions bought produce through 15 programs.

main after the grant runs out. Neither do the data available thus far tell us exactly how revenues compare to expenditures.

It certainly has made sense for a government program as small and new as the Community Food Project Grant Program to limit its initial spending and time spent on evaluation. After all, given that money is limited it's better to spend resources on feeding hungry Americans and creating jobs, rather than measuring the number of people fed or jobs created. (Indeed, in my experience managing a small nonprofit organization, government

Accomplishments of Community Food Project Fiscal Year 2006 Grantees

	Dollar Value	Pounds
FOOD GENERATED	\$5,119,121	3,619,114
Food produced	\$2,261,897	1,605,288
Food gleaned	\$3,503	5,342
Food purchased	\$961,129	1,063,406
Food collected	\$1,942,287	1,312,362
FOOD PROCESSED	\$6,768,693	4,851,137
Food donated	\$129,846	229,126
Food distributed	\$2,986,048	2,051,434
Food sold	\$3,211,134	2,088,928
Food delivered to schools	\$420,340	463,385

Source: "Community Food Project Common Output Tracking Form" Fiscal Year 2006 Results, Final March 18, 2007," Community Food Security Coalition

But for all of the program's successes in bringing fresh, nutritious food into low-income neighborhoods and helping generate revenues for some enterprises, it is difficult to use these assessments to determine the long-term viability of such projects. The three-year study is too limited in scope. Moreover, some of the activities in these projects were intended to make money but others were not, such as nutrition education and food distribution to soup kitchens. The appraisals also don't tell us the amount of wages that were paid in the created jobs or how long -- or if -- the jobs will re-

reporting requirements can often be burdensome and monopolize staff and money resources that could be better used to carry out program objectives.) That said, if the federal government dramatically increases funding for the Community Food Project Grant Program from its current \$5 million, as this paper proposes, additional funding for both USDA and the grantees should be provided to conduct research and perform assessments of the long-term economic sustainability of such programs.

ENDNOTES

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About the Progressive Policy Institute



The Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) is an independent research institution that seeks to define and promote a new progressive politics in the 21st Century. Through research, policy analysis and dialogue, PPI challenges the status quo and advocates for radical policy solutions.

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