



From the President by Ben Burkett



Ben Burkett and John Kinsman in NM chili fields

In June I attended the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, where I had the opportunity to speak on several workshop panels, including one on Food Sovereignty. Several NFFC members, including John Kinsman, Ben Yahola, Bob St. Peter, Annette Hiatt, Chukou Thao, Tim Gibbons and David Goodner, were also present. The meeting was well attended with a blend of different age and ethnic groups. During the first weekend of August I traveled to Seattle, WA, at the invitation of Heather Day of the Community Alliance for Global Justice. On Saturday I was guest speaker at the annual CAGJ conference, which more than 400 people attended. On Sunday I was guest speaker at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church where the main discussion topic was the 2008 and 2012 Farm Bills. While there I visited the farmers market and various community gardens. I appreciate the invitation from Heather and CAGJ, which will soon be an NFFC member.

Between August 19 and 21, I attended the Federation of Southern Cooperatives' annual meeting in Alabama, which more than 300 people attended. Cornelius

Blanding, John Zippert, Kathy Ozer and I participated in a 2012 Farm Bill panel discussion. This endeavor will continue within the Federation's membership as we seek new ideas and input from various small farmers and ranchers on the 2008 and 2012 farm bills. As John Zippert wrote for the Greene County Democrat, an important aspect of the Federation's annual meeting was the presence of Shirley Sherrod, a former Federation staff member and recently dismissed Georgia State Director of USDA Rural Development (RD), and Ben Jealous, Executive Director of the NAACP. Sherrod discussed her work at Georgia RD to target services to the nine poorest counties in the state, which had largely been neglected by USDA RD programs, resources and services, and stressed her efforts to bring together state and Federal agencies in Georgia beyond RD to address persistent rural poverty. Sherrod said, "I do not know where this country is going. There are too many good people in this country. We must build bridges to these people and groups. We need to work together to end racism. People tried to turn me against the NAACP and my President - Barack Obama - (cont. p. 3)

Food Voices from the Farms and the Boats by Andrianna Natsoulas

Since La Via Campesina coined the phrase in 1995, the concept of food sovereignty has grown steadily throughout the world. Food sovereignty recognizes that food is a basic human right of all peoples, and that communities and countries should define their agricultural, fisheries and food policies. Food production and distribution should be under local control to respect and honor the community's cultural and health needs, which supersede trade and other global priorities, and democratic participation should shape policies and programs. This political and economic paradigm offers an alternative to the industrial food production and free-trade models that destroy local communities and compromise the safety of our food.

Since farmers and fishing men and women do not always have time to attend meetings and forums around the country or the world, *Food Voices: Stories of the Food Sovereignty Movement*, offers them a place in the public eye from the seat of their tractor or wheel of their fishing boat. *Food Voices* is a book to introduce the concept of food sovereignty, to tell the stories of people living it and to activate consumers. Images of the individual and his or her farm, boat or community accompany each testimony to bring the story to life. As more people care about where their food comes from, there is a thirst to hear and share personal experiences to further understand the concept. Through storytelling, people can learn from each other while empowering the broader movement. From Canada to Haiti to Brazil, farmer and fishing men and women will illustrate that the movement is global and not confined to one or two nations.

I started the compilation in June with dairy farmers in Wisconsin, grass-fed cattle ranchers in Ohio and New York, and urban farmers of Detroit and Chicago. In July and August I met Venezuelan fishermen, Ecuadorian indigenous farmers and landless workers of Brazil. In the coming weeks, I will listen to farmers in Maine and fishermen in Nova Scotia before heading to the west coast and over to Texas, Louisiana and Florida to document advances towards food sovereignty. Finally, I will set up meetings with Haitians and Cubans to discuss food sovereignty on island nations.

NFFC was among the first organizations in the United States to promote and spread the concept of food sovereignty; the coalition as a whole, as well as individual members, has been very supportive of *Food Voices*. Many NFFC members have already shared their stories, which are posted online. (To read more or arrange an interview, visit <http://foodvoices.org> or email andrianna@foodvoices.org.)



Agroecology student Christina Sales in Venezuela; A. Natsoulas photo

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The Family Farm Agenda is published several times annually by the National Family Farm Coalition, a nonprofit providing a voice for grassroots groups on farm, food, trade and rural economic issues to ensure fair prices for family farmers and fishers, safe and healthy food, and vibrant, environmentally sound rural communities here and around the world.

Voices at the Wisconsin Workshop by Nigel Barella

Two players do not make a market and can not decide all prices. The CME block cheddar price does not correlate with supply and demand.
- Joel Greeno in Madison

The Departments of Justice (DOJ) and Agriculture (USDA) held their third joint agriculture workshop on June 25 in Madison, WI. This one sought to investigate the extent of concentration within the dairy industry and the role that concentration has played in the devastating low prices observed by dairy farmers in recent years. The event drew 500 concerned farmers, advocates and consumers from across the country.

The event opened with keynote remarks by Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture, and Christine Varney, the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division at DOJ. Secretary Vilsack reiterated that, for him, the workshops were fundamentally about the loss of farms and the increase in poverty in rural America. AG Varney began by calling the workshop on dairy a "particular highlight" for DOJ, and emphasized that her agency was keeping a "watchful eye" on the dairy industry. She explained that her focus was on farmer concerns about milk pricing, lack of options for selling their milk and the "dispiriting returns" that have driven many dairy farmers into bankruptcy.

In the roundtable discussion following, Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) urged for strong federal antitrust enforcement with the dairy industry, stating that the system is clearly broken and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange should be investigated. The other federal and state officials from Wisconsin, which included the governor and Senator Feingold (D), generally echoed concerns that the dairy industry had become too concentrated, particularly regarding processing and distribution, and bemoaned the low prices received by farmers.

Farmers and industrial producers then took the stage for a discussion moderated by Vilsack and Varney. Every farmer on the panel stated that the low prices farmers received in recent years was the main concern, though some of the larger producers offered risk-management and increased efficiency through technology as ways to cope with lower prices. This 'big producer perspective' was countered by the many dairy farmers who spoke about the role of Dean Foods, Dairy Farmers of America and other large co-ops in manipulating prices and leaving farmers in financial ruin.

The following two panels included academics, farmers and industry and co-op executives who discussed dairy industry trends and the role of co-ops and processors in limiting farmer choices. Professor Car-

stensen, UW-Madison, argued that large co-ops closely resemble and face problems like those of American corporations, including lack of transparency and responsiveness to member concerns. Peter Kappelman, chairman of the board of Land O' Lakes, contended that large co-ops were an important countervailing power against even larger purchasers like Wal-Mart and Kroger, and that shareholder elections provided enough management oversight. Marc Peperzak, Aurora Organic Dairy CEO, voiced concern that in some areas of the country, there was only one co-op, thus only one choice for selling milk, and that co-ops stifled innovation and markets for new products. These panels revealed the strength of the processors and co-ops in justifying their shameless squeezing of America's dairy farmers as well as the unified voice of academics and producers standing up for a more just dairy pricing system.

The final panel, on the issue of market transparency, included one farmer and government and industry officials who discussed the effects of the commodities markets on milk prices, primarily the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME). Stephen Obie, Director of Enforcement for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, echoed farmer worries that the markets for dairy products were thinly traded and easily manipulated. To allay the concerns that such

The USDA and DOJ heard loud and clear that processors and traders are manipulating dairy prices at the CME, causing the federal pricing system to fail and leaving the family dairy farmer holding the bag with a big hole in the bottom."

- Paul Rozwadowski, WI dairy farmer

market manipulation can cause catastrophic changes in milk prices, some members of the panel reiterated a theme of the day - that federal milk pricing regulations should be readjusted to avoid manipulation and increase price stability.

The day ended with time for public testimony, during which many farmers came forward with stories about their hardships and concerns about the farmgate price squeeze by food processors and retailers. Many consumers from the local community also came to voice their anger over the Wisconsin governor's recent anti-raw milk actions. Though voices disagreed over the solutions, the message of the day was clear: milk prices received by farmers are too low, and immediate action in Washington is necessary to prevent even more dairy farmers from declaring bankruptcy. *(The complete June 25 workshop transcript is posted at: <http://www.justice.gov/atr/public/workshops/ag2010/wisconsin-agworkshop-transcript.txt>)*

And You Thought A Hamburger Was Just Meat On Your Plate

Several national advocacy groups, including NFFC, R-CALF USA (Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America) and WORC (Western Organization of Resource Councils) have long opposed vertical integration within the livestock industry. In vertical integration, behemoth meatpackers like JBS Swift, Tyson and Cargill own the cattle, cattle feed and slaughtering facilities, and lock in prices through long-term contracts, often to the detriment of producers. These three corporations control more than 80% of the meat industry, eliminating fair competition for independent producers, promoting factory farms (and the stronger possibility of E. coli breakouts) while hurting the opportunities for employment and prosperity in rural communities. They decide who has access to the market, the price that producers receive for their products and ultimately what meat consumers purchase from most grocers and restaurants.

In 1994, with nationwide support, WORC provided a solution to USDA by proposing a rule that would reform captive supply (meatpackers controlling cattle through contracts) and ban meatpackers from owning cattle. The rule has never been implemented. In the 2008 farm bill, the USDA was required to interpret what "undue or unreasonable preference" means in the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 (P&S) which forbids "...undue or reasonable preference or advantage..." by meatpackers, swine contractors and live poultry dealers.

Finally, on June 22, 2010, GIPSA (USDA's Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration) published their proposed rules, which would add several new sections to P&S regulations. Proposed regulations describe conduct violating this act, clarify conditions for industry compliance, allow for GIPSA's more effective enforcement and promote a more equitable marketplace. This would be the first opportunity in decades to end market manipulation by big meatpackers and bring fairness to livestock markets.

The USDA and Department of Justice held a workshop to learn about competition (or lack thereof) in the livestock industry on August 27 in Fort Collins, CO. This hearing followed similar ones on seeds (IA), poultry (AL) and dairy (WI). More than 500 family farmers and ranchers attended the town hall meeting the night before and about 2000 attended the hearing. A number of them had the opportunity to testify on the ways in which a few corporations are forcing them out of business and replacing them with confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) which ruin the environment, the livelihoods of family farmers and ranchers and the rural communities in which they live. Its timeliness to the discussion around the GIPSA rules cannot be overlooked, as the rules seek to address the consolidation reviewed in this hearing. The meatpackers and the industry are waging a major campaign to defeat the proposed rules through hearings, the comment process and calls for Congress to intervene, making the upcoming deadlines for public comment even more critical.

Rhonda Perry (MRCC) spoke at the livestock hearing. "Missouri's lost 90 percent of its hog farmers since 1985. They [corporations] came in and said this was the wave of the future...good for consumers, good for the environment and good for family farmers. We saw consumer pork prices go up 71 percent, hog farmers' share of the consumer dollar went down 50 percent, down to 25 cents...The decision was made to not enforce the Packers & Stockyards Act and the government gave millions in conservation funds to factory farms rather than families farmers."

Joel Greeno (ARMPPA) was also allowed to speak in Ft. Collins. He stated, "When milk prices are low, dairy farmers rely on cull cows as a source of income and contribute greatly to the beef market. We also contribute greatly to the beef checkoff because anytime we sell a dairy animal at the market a dollar is collected by the sale barn; up to \$6 could be collected over a cow's lifetime and given to NCBA (National Cattlemen's Beef Association)." As

Joel describes, the power of corporate agribusiness extends beyond just poultry and cattle producers, affecting dairy farmers and negatively impacting consumers.

He continued, "Kenneth E. Douling, an ag economist in the 1960s, stated: 'The only way I know to get toothpaste out of the tube is to squeeze and the only way I know to get people out of agriculture is likewise to squeeze agriculture, and if the toothpaste is thin, you don't have to squeeze very hard...[but] if the toothpaste is thick you have to put real pressure on it.'"

It seems the squeezing has worked. In 1980 there were 1.6 million cattle operations in the U.S., and in 2008 there were 956,000 - 644,000 fewer. This decrease happened despite the jump in U.S. meat and poultry consumption by an average of 17 pounds *per capita* from 1970 to 2005. More meat and poultry are consumed, yet there are fewer ranchers and farmers, fewer ranch and farm jobs and fewer dollars spent in neighboring towns, all leading to deteriorating rural communities as the wealth concentrates in a few hands.

Returning to a more just and balanced food and agriculture system means our environment would be better protected, our food would be more local and safe, and our rural communities would be strengthened, diversified and rejuvenated. Such a system would allow every life to have more equal value, rights, opportunities and treatment, a concept of Food Sovereignty. Instead of Cargill dictating what food can be purchased, there would be more choices. As Dena Hoff (NPRC), a family farmer who feels it's more important to feed her family, her neighbors and herself than to grow big and export, asks, "Aren't we supposed to be a democracy, and isn't democracy about choice?"

If we want to have more choices as consumers and keep family farmers and ranchers in business, we need these proposed rules to become regulations, to be enforced fairly and diligently and to require meatpackers to buy and sell livestock in open public markets. The USDA is accepting comments on these proposed rules until November 22, 2010; you can find more information on submitting comments at: http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5706/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=3622.

(cont. from p. 1) but I accept the apology of the NAACP and I support our President. I love the work that I am doing and I will continue to do it." She thanked the Federation and many others around the U.S. for their expressions of support.

On September 3-5, I was in El Paso for La Via Campesina's meeting to discuss upcoming events around the climate change talks throughout Mexico, Canada and the U.S. Many alliance members and supporters were present and we thank everyone for participating. Among our board present were Dena Hoff, John Kinsman and Bob St. Peter, as well as director Kathy Ozer. The meeting was held at the Border Agricultural Workers Project building, where we received warm hospitality from our host, director Carlos Marentes. We enjoyed a trip he arranged to visit farm workers picking chili peppers in New Mexico, but observed the difficulties they endure, including a daily four-hour roundtrip drive, to work the fields and try to make a living.

I continue to work on the Pigford II lawsuit, aka the Black farmer lawsuit, which is asking for 1.2 billion dollars in compensation. This includes a trip I made to Washington, D.C., on September 14 for an agriculture policy meeting.

The 25th Farm Aid takes place in Milwaukee, WI, on October 2. The Community Food Security Coalition conference will be held in New Orleans later next month, where I will host a tour of local co-operatives and speak on panels in various workshops. I look forward to seeing many of our organizational members soon.

In solidarity: *FAMILY FARMERS COOL THE EARTH!*

Excessive Consolidation Undermines Ecosystems and Cripples Communities

On June 23, the New England Fishery Management Council (the Council) met in Portland, ME. Fishermen's testimony from New York, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island raised concern over the socio-economic shortcomings of Groundfish Amendment 16 (the new sector management plan adopted by the Council) and how those shortcomings could undermine the ecological objectives of the Amendment. The fishermen strongly urged the Council to protect fleet diversity by restricting the accumulation of permit ownership as well as further fleet consolidation.

Catch Share management has been in place in New England for four months and fleet consolidation is taking its toll. Both the Fisheries service and the Council were explicit in their intent to reduce fleet capacity, but, lacking a long-term fleet vision, the Council was not explicit in *how* to reduce fleet capacity. [Fleet capacity is the cumulative capacity of the region's fleet, in this case New England's, and overall capacity to fish. It means reducing the number of boats and the number of fishermen on the water, but in this case not the number of fish being caught.]

On one hand consolidation may lead to a groundfishery controlled by a few absentee owners with limited regard for the long-term health of our fish stocks. On the other hand, consolidation may lead to a future for small boats and big boats, inshore and offshore fishermen, hook fishermen, gillnetters, draggers and - above all - a future for fishing communities. At June's Council meeting fishermen weighed in.

"It is a well known fact that Catch Share systems in almost all other countries have led to fewer, larger boats [which] would only benefit a select few, and I believe that it would lead to more habitat destruction ... If you honestly care about the fish stocks and future of our greatly diverse fishing fleet, please consider some form of safety measures to ensure its survival." - MA Fisherman, June 23 Council Testimony.

Communities caring about "who fishes" emphasize the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA), which calls for protections and safeguards for fishermen and their shoreside communities. They emphasize the goals set forth in Amendment 16, which call for fleet diversity and protections against excessive consolidation. And they emphasize cautionary tales of nearby fisheries that are now consolidated into a few large corporations. Despite all the signs and guiding rules, when it comes down to it, the Council justifies the socio-economic shortcomings with one trump card: they need to prevent overfishing.

We can't argue with the need to prevent overfishing, but find the Council's line of thinking flawed: 'The priority is to prevent overfishing. In order to prevent overfishing the fleet must consolidate. If the fleet self-consolidates we will be left with the most economically efficient boats. Economically efficient boats reap the most fish at the cheapest cost and feed the most people.' Sound good?

But one must ask, why in the name of saving the fish, are we displacing the most environmentally efficient boats - those matching the scale of the ecology - only to be replaced by the largest industrial-scale boats? This couldn't be what the writers of the Magnuson Act had in mind. Is economic efficiency the best way?

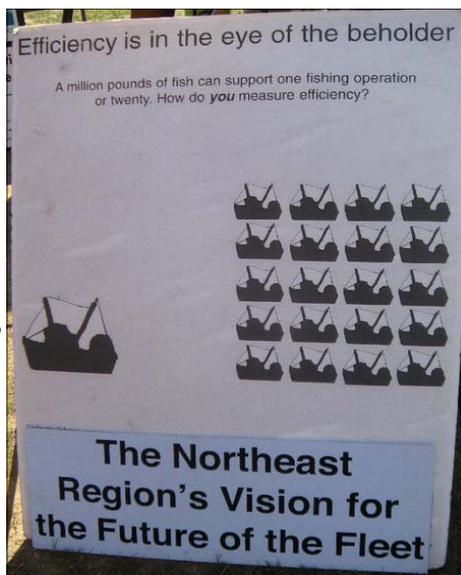
The same argument was made 30 years ago in support of the industrial-scale farming model. For over three decades poor policies forced family farmers off the land in the name of consolidation, industrialization, economic efficiency and global exports. Today, the same poor policies are forcing community-based fishermen out of the sea.

The big time players who advocated for industrialization in the

farm world argued that consolidation would result in the most economically efficient farm operations. Policy makers agreed that business models with the lowest cost of production were good for our economy and good for consumers. Therefore, the argument went, the least efficient small and medium-sized farms had to go because they wouldn't be able to provide the mass quantities of food needed to feed the world. No one asked, 'Cheap food at what cost?'

What we know now, mostly from hindsight, is that advocating the most economically efficient model only makes sense when all other variables are equal. The overall impact of small-scale farms and industrial-scale farms are not equal. We learned that industrial-scale farming came with huge economic, ecological, health and community consequences. Policy makers made the mistake of not recognizing that "who farms matters" and now our communities, health and our land ecology are paying the cost.

Fishermen at June's Council meeting insisted that "who fishes matters" and offered alternative solutions.



Efficiency Poster - Photo by Niaz Dorry

"... If safeguards are not put in place now we will see the quota migrate toward large vessels till there are ten boats catching 90 percent of the fish. I believe an easy way of safeguarding this is to keep our qualifying baseline tied to the catch entitlement... Why were the Baseline requirements eliminated?" - New York fisherman, June 23 Council testimony.

In fact, Baseline leasing was in place for the past 15 years under Days at Sea Management, which preceded the Catch Shares. It existed to control effort capacity and preserve fleet diversity by preventing excessive consolidation. Baseline leasing worked (and still does today for the Common Pool) because boat X could not lease to another boat above 20 percent of boat X's engine horsepower and 10 percent of its length.

This formula also kept costs low for permits and leasing. Under the new Amendment 16 this protection was eliminated. Previously

boats could only buy or lease fishing rights from relatively same sized boats; today a larger boat needing more fish to fill its hull can buy/lease a smaller boat's rights with lots of money.

But that was not the only protection eliminated under the new rules. Previous regulations set a 20% maximum quota share that prevented excessive consolidation in order to comply with a 2006 amendment to the Magnuson Act instructing the Council to ensure no person or entity acquires excessive shares of the quota. Those instructions weren't considered when the new rules were developed and there's no ownership cap for individuals or corporations.

Fishermen from around New England have asserted loud and clear that if we are to protect the ecosystem and fishing communities, then mechanisms must be established to ensure fleet diversity and prevent excessive consolidation. A consolidated fleet of the most economically efficient large-scale boats will undermine conservation goals and the goal of ending overfishing. We know there is a better way forward as farmers have paved the way.

We need food activists, farmers and consumers - all who believe who fishes matters - to add their voice to the fishermen's. Upload your testimony to <http://namanet.org/whofishesmatters>. To hear fishermen, visit <https://namanet.org/who-fishes-matters-video-testimonies>. You can sign our petition at www.change.org/nama.

Brett Tolley is community organizer and policy advocate for Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance. Aaron Dorry is Downeast Groundfish Initiative Project Director for the Penobscot East Resource Center. Phil Karlin is a commercial fisherman based out of Mattituck, NY. Visit www.namanet.org

Call to Action October 10-17

Emerging from the U.S. Social Forum held in Detroit June 22-26, the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance, in solidarity with Indigenous Peoples, Climate Justice activists, Immigrants and Marginalized Peoples, invites participants of the food justice and sovereignty movement, especially members of the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance, to act during the week October 10-17:

October 10: *Global Work Party to Tackle Climate Change*

October 12: *Day of Indigenous Resistance to Conquest*

October 15: *World Rural Women's Day*

October 16: *World Food Day*

October 17: *International Day for the Eradication of Poverty*

October 10: 350.org is calling for actions on 10/10/10

Up to 1/3 of global greenhouse gases come from industrial ag, but small-scale farming can eliminate hunger while cooling the planet. Suggested actions include:

- Throw a work party to support/create community gardens
- Hold 'Farm to School Fresh Food Feasts' or community meal
- Petition local governments to support local agriculture

October 12: Day of Indigenous Resistance to Conquest (formerly Columbus Day) is celebrated across the Americas with actions aimed at recovering lands and watersheds and focusing the support of local and national governments to the needs of family farmers (campesinos), indigenous peoples and their displaced urban allies and families. Suggested actions include:

- Celebrate public parks or protected indigenous lands
- Join existing land campaigns and alliances like Right to the City, Take Back the Land and FIAN International
- Circulate petitions denouncing GE food, fish, trees

October 15: World Rural Women's Day

Rural women make up more than 1/4 of the world population, holding a key role in food production and the wellbeing of families, rural economies and food security. Suggested actions include:

- Write a letter to your editor about the importance of rural women
- Invite women farmers to discuss their lives and struggles
- Link up with sister organizations for a community event
- Inform local media, mayor, city council and local business groups about what you're doing and why

October 16: Ending Poverty by Rebuilding Local Economies/ World Food Day

La Via Campesina calls for actions against transnational corporations responsible for privatizing seeds, promoting chemical-dependent, industrial-scale agriculture and aquabusiness/ industrial fisheries. Suggested actions include:

- Declare Who Fishes Matters at www.change.org/nama
- Support CIW's Campaign against grocers refusing to pay higher wages to farmworkers: www.ciw-online.org/tools.html
- Celebrate and organize Grub Parties with local chefs, gardeners, farmers and eaters at www.bit.ly/GrubParties
- Protest BP in solidarity with fishermen, farmers, restaurant workers and others in the Gulf of Mexico food system

October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

October 10-17, 2010, is also the Churches Week of Action on Food, with praying, studying and actions to take place around the world. More info is available at <http://www.e-alliance.ch/en/s/food/2010-churches-week-of-action-on-food>.

To get involved or inform others of actions you will be planning, contact : Tristan Quinn-Thibodeau, Tristan@whyhunger.org, 212-629-8850, or Stephen Bartlett, Agricultural Missions, sbartlett@ag-missions.org, 502-896-9171. Consider joining this mobilization committee on their periodic conference calls!

Support La Via Campesina in Cancun '10

If you cannot be in Cancun yourself, with your support, WE CAN BE YOUR VOICE at Climate Change Summit (COP-16) in Cancun, Mexico, from November 29 to December 10, 2010.

Farmers are victims of Global Warming and Climate Change:

- Rains come irregularly, altering traditional production cycles.
- There are ever more devastating extreme climate events, like hurricanes, cyclones and monsoons, that destroy our farms, and ever more severe droughts that kill our crops as our animals die.
- In no case have our governments or the corporations responded adequately to the mounting losses we are suffering, nor do they take responsibility for the wounds they are inflicting on the Mother Earth and our climate.

We fight against the False Solutions to climate change promoted by transnational corporations and governments:

- Carbon credits and trading mechanisms that privatize our atmosphere and climate, allow polluters of the atmosphere to keep polluting, and lead to massive land grabs and mass evictions of peasant communities so that giant corporations can "cultivate climate credits" in the form of environmentally disastrous monoculture plantations of Eucalyptus, etc., that are really Green Deserts.
- Agrofuels that allow corporate criminals to hijack public coffers to plant industrial monocultures - many times with GMOs - and evict peasants and family farmers from our lands - while not significantly moderating climate effects.

A primary cause of global warming is the industrial food system:

- In sum, the industrial food system generated is between 44% and 57% of global greenhouse gas emissions
- Industrial agriculture is responsible for 11 to 15%
- Deforestation causes an additional 15 to 18% additionally
- The processing, packaging and transport of food is 15-20%
- The decomposition of organic garbage: 3 to 4%

Sustainable peasant, family farm and indigenous farming actually cools the planet:

- We produce for local food systems, with agroecological methods that avoid fossil fuel consumption
- **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY COOLS THE PLANET!**

We demand the application of thousands of people's solutions:

- At the Climate Summit in Copenhagen our voices were excluded, and we had to take to the streets to be heard.
- The UN has refused to include the results of Cochabamba Forum in the agenda for Cancun.
- We must take to the streets in Cancun in larger numbers with our many allies and friends to ensure that the voices of reason are heard there and around the world.
- We call on social movements and all people of the world to organize on December 7, 2010, to defend land and forest rights.

We need resources so that thousands of peasants and indigenous people earning less than US \$300 a year per family can go to Cancun and be heard. This is a life and death struggle.

- 1) Make a secure on-line credit card donation now by visiting: <https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=4589>
- 2) If you prefer PayPal and/or need no U.S. tax exemption visit: <http://viacampesinanorteamerica.org/en/donate/donate.php>
- 3) If you want to pay by check please write your check to "Via Campesina/CENSA/Cancun", with a note asking for a receipt for tax purposes with your name, address (and email if you have one) and mail it to:
CENSA/Via Campesina/Cancun
2288 Fulton Street, suite 103
Berkeley, CA 94704 USA

Also see: <http://viacampesinanorteamerica.org/en/index.php>

NFFC to Release Mentoring Toolkit

The face of family farming in the United States is aging. As land values, price volatility and the costs of inputs soar, the barriers preventing young farmers from entering agriculture become increasingly insurmountable. In 1970 the average age of a farmer was 50 years old; in 2007, the average farmer age was 57 with 25% of all U.S. farmers older than 65 (per USDA, May 2009). This upward trend reflects the changing nature of agriculture in which farmers are able to continue farming past retirement by renting out land, hiring additional labor, and placing land in conservation programs. These factors, however, do not reflect many of the growing challenges facing beginning farmers, making it more difficult for them to become successful agricultural producers.

Looking at the challenges facing America's agricultural base, NFFC's Local Foods Subcommittee requested the creation of a report focusing on how NFFC members can connect with mentoring opportunities targeted at supporting young farmers. This toolkit is the product of a five-month long research project that included interviewing staff of 21 organizations that coordinate or facilitate mentoring opportunities for beginning farmers across the U.S.

Sustaining Family Farming Through Mentoring: A Toolkit for NFFC Members includes: an introduction to beginning farmer issues; a research project that explored the strategies and challenges of mentoring organizations; a compilation of resources for experienced farmers interested in becoming mentors; and a directory of mentoring organizations by region. It seeks to connect NFFC members with state or regional mentoring organizations as well as to deepen our understanding of the role of mentoring organizations in the local food movement.

A few highlights of the toolkit are:

- Beginning farmers face significant barriers to entering agriculture: access to affordable land; high startup costs; market access; risk management; health insurance; and lack of experience.
- The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grant Program in the 2008 Farm Bill and increased commitment from state governments and funders to beginning farmer issues have led to an upsurge in mentoring programs.
- Surveyed mentoring organizations cited four key successful strategies for managing a successful mentoring program: providing incentives for mentors; a thorough application process; building local networks; and flexibility.
- Surveyed mentoring organizations cited five major challenges confronting their program: funding; making appropriate matches; legal issues; proprietary knowledge; and generational gaps in communication styles.
- Eighteen out of 21 respondents felt that their mentoring program had helped sustain family farming.

Mentoring programs play an important role in strengthening the local foods movement by bringing new, diverse producers into agriculture. These programs help beginning farmers by offering training and support as they begin or consider their own enterprises, but they alone will not reinvigorate U.S. agriculture. The issues of land access, high start-up costs, health insurance, risk management, and market access are not generally addressed by mentoring programs. Some programs provide parallel programs that help beginning farmers build equity through saving match programs and other creative tools. Holistic support for beginning farmers can be provided through partnerships between advocacy groups, mentoring programs, and financial services, strengthening American agriculture.

This toolkit will be available at www.nffc.net beginning November 2010. If you would like to provide feedback before that date or have questions please contact Megan Mills-Novoa at megan@nffc.net or 202.543.5675.

NFFC Members and Allies at USSF

The U.S. Social Forum brought more than 15,000 people to Detroit between June 22 and 25. This convergence of progressive activists and organizations focused on building a multi-racial, multi-sectoral, inter-generational, inclusive, international movement. NFFC and allies were out in force speaking on the necessity for food sovereignty in the U.S. and globally. Representatives from La Via Campesina, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative, National Hmong American Farmers Inc., Food for Maine's Future, Family Farm Defenders, Missouri Rural Crisis Center, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and Northern Plains Resource Council joined NFFC staff to participate in and organize workshops and meetings addressing issues ranging from GMOs to corporate concentration to factory farming and beyond. These discussions created opportunities for dialogue, building networks and momentum behind our struggle for food justice.

One opening event was a meeting of the U.S. Working Group on the Food Crisis - a diverse group of organizations promoting food sovereignty from labor, trade, production and policy perspectives. The Working Group will transition to a new name - the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance - to reflect better their unique work. The Alliance will be officially launched in October 2010.

NFFC prioritized the Social Forum as a space for informing others about the issues facing family farmers and fishers as well as for learning and connecting with others engaged in these issues. NFFC formally organized two workshop panels focused on corpo-



Seafood secured by NAMA and Cedar Grove Cheese (FFD) nourished workshop guests

rate control of our food system on land and on sea. The first panel was titled, 'How Does the Concentration and Control of Capital and Subsidized Loans to Corporate Agribusiness and Aquaculture Threaten Our Food System?' It focused on strategies to redirect credit to ensure that farmers and fishers are not forced out of business as the recession in our rural communities deepen, and featured Ben Burkett (MAC), David Goodner (ICCI), Padi Anderson and Ellen Tyler (NAMA) and Brother Dave Andrews (Food and Water Watch). The crowd of 40-plus attending had the opportunity to share delicious seafare provided courtesy of Capt. Paul Cohan (Sasquatch Smokehouse) and Captain Paul Theriault as well as cheese from Cedar Grove Creamery (WI).

The second workshop panel, 'A Three-Pronged Approach to Fighting Concentration in Fishing and Farming (Dairy/Livestock/Seed)', attempted to debunk the myths of efficiency by uplifting successful locally based, grassroots food systems and strengthening antitrust laws and their enforcement. John Kinsman (FFD), Tim Gibbons (MRCC), Ellen Tyler and Padi Anderson (NAMA), Brother Dave Andrews (FWW) and Taylor Leake (United Food and Commercial Workers) brought diverse perspectives around strategies for fighting corporate control across sectors.

In addition to other workshops, the Food Sovereignty tent offered an invaluable space for international meetings and casual conversations that strengthened and enriched the solidarity work of NFFC, Via Campesina and our allies. The Social Forum provided the opportunity to see Detroit in a new light, to meet the people working to redefine its future and to strengthen the burgeoning food sovereignty movement within the rest of the U.S. and abroad.

A mid-July media disaster exposed a communication failure between the USDA and White House as well as the administration's rush to respond to right-wing racist tactics. Front page and headline news put the spotlight on the USDA and their totally outrageous request for Shirley Sherrod's resignation as the Georgia state director for Rural Development. Their request was based on the release of one segment of a speech she delivered in March 2010 which took out of context a reflection of her experiences during the 1987 farm crisis. Numerous organizations and individuals, including NFFC and a Georgia couple whose farm was saved by Shirley's assistance in 1987, expressed public support for her.

Meanwhile, as the legislators wind down this session of Congress, there is much unfinished business. Before leaving for the August recess the Senate passed the Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR), including the provision to provide mandatory funds for Farm to Cafeteria. Unlike the 2004 CNR, this one includes financial support to implement a good idea. It must still pass the House, be conferenced (reconciled) between the House and Senate then be signed into law by President Obama. If CNR does not pass the House there will be an extension to keep the programs active past October 1, the end of the government's fiscal year.

Much of the debate in Congress revolves around funding - funding for new programs, for existing programs and for less spending in order to shrink the deficit. During July, NFFC intensively urged Senate passage of the \$1.2 billion to make sure that Pigford II - a.k.a. the Black farmer settlement - receives the funds necessary to settle the pending claims. Ben Burkett and other Federation farmers traveled to D.C. for meetings, letters were sent to the Senate and pressure for action continues to build. President Obama included these funds in his budget; it has passed the House but is stalled in the Senate. Another important issue was the need for additional monies to address the unmet needs of the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) direct and guaranteed loan programs. More than \$1 billion in additional loan authority were provided as part of the supplemental passed by Congress to ensure that funds are available to farmers this fall. While it arrived too late for many farmers, it helps to lower some debt load to a more affordable level. The Small Business financing includes farmers in their definition and encourages lenders to provide low interest loans to them.

The House and Senate Agriculture Committees each held oversight hearings with USDA and others to learn how 2008 farm bill policies and programs have or have not been working. These hearings can be used to raise important concerns but can also be used to criticize USDA for doing right, in particular the release of the GIPSA rule on undue preference and the poultry rules. The proposed GIPSA rules, released on June 22, originally had an August 22 comment deadline; based on industry pressure, the deadline was extended to November 22, 2010. (Visit <http://worc.org> under 'WORC seeks livestock market reform' and p. 9 here for comment details.) NFFC calls on Congress to acknowledge that the current farm bill is not working for farmers - dairy farmers face the second year of rock-bottom prices and grain farmers face volatility through a pricing system that does not cover or even consider their costs of production. These issues must receive oversight into 2011.

Since publication of the last newsletter USDA and the Department of Justice have held three workshops focused on concentration in agriculture. The May 21 hearing looked at poultry, the June 25 hearing investigated dairy and the August 27 hearing reviewed livestock. (See pp. 2-3 for more on the workshops.)

Like their livestock counterparts in Ft. Collins, farmers turned out by the hundreds in Madison on June 25 to raise concerns about concentration in the dairy industry. The ongoing consolidation of resources and compensation within a few hands means prices for

the farmer (and fisher) will remain low, choices for consumers will shrink and the rural communities and businesses depending on family farms and fisheries will continue to dwindle and expire.

There is widespread farmer and consumer support for S. 1645; now the list of congressional sponsors must be expanded. There are also efforts underway to get a House version of the legislation. S. 1645, the Federal Milk Marketing Improvement Act of 2009, would require the Secretary of Agriculture - not the Chicago Mercantile Exchange - to determine the price of all milk used for manufactured purposes.

We have an ongoing concern that USDA supports exports at any cost. Their use of recent USDA Economic Research Service projections on farm income as the basis for claiming that the economy is doing well distorts the situation for many farmers on the ground and provides support for pending free trade agreements. For the American Farm Bureau and commodity groups this remains their solution to the ongoing economic situation.

As Ben Burkett noted, NFFC and other allies met with La Via Campesina in early September to plan for the climate change summit (COP 16) to be held in Cancun later this year. Via Campesina's article (p. 5) outlines more detailed plans and efforts.

As harvest and fall approach, we will be participating in the 25th celebration of Farm Aid - Growing Hope for America. It will highlight the importance of family farmers in solving the problems of this country. Milwaukee is the host city, highlighting Wisconsin and Midwestern farmers.

The Wisconsin-based NFFC member organization, Family Farm Defenders, will receive the second annual (and well deserved) Food Sovereignty prize in New Orleans on October 18 during the Community Food Security Coalition conference. Three other organizations will receive honorable mentions, and all have been cited for their leadership in promoting food sovereignty around the world.

There is reason for hope, but cooperation and collaboration - not to mention determination - are essential. Whenever you can, support your local farmers as well as the state and national efforts to change the systems and structures in place so that farmers and fishers, their rural communities and our country can rebuild and thrive.



l-r: Genaro Rendon (Southwest Workers Union), Carlos Marentes (BAPW), Dena Hoff (NFFC) and Alberto Gomez (UNORCA) plan for Oaxaca and Cancun (COP 16) in El Paso.

Globalize the Struggle, Globalize Hope!

To contact your Senator or Representative to support our asks, please call the Capitol Hill switchboard at 202.224.3121. You may also call the White House Comment Line at 202.456.1111 or visit the website at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>.

Close observers agree that the Supreme Court's *Monsanto Company v. Geertson Seed Farms* decision is a big deal, but few of us agree about what it actually means. As a farmer and advocate, I view the ruling as a major victory because it helps determine who controls our seed supplies and our food sovereignty. The ruling declares that it's still illegal to sell or plant Monsanto's GM Roundup Ready alfalfa seed.

Monsanto also claims the Supreme Court's ruling a victory, stating that it "unequivocally overturns the ban on Roundup Ready alfalfa." The Court agreed that the District Court had overstepped its boundaries by implementing the injunction to ban planting of the crop, but it also upheld that USDA must complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) before approving GE alfalfa for planting. A ban on the crop will remain in effect until the USDA prepares a full assessment.

Shortly after this ruling, 56 members of Congress asked Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to provide a comprehensive EIS on GE alfalfa. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a hearing in late July, exposing USDA's role in lax approval processes, setting the stage for vigorous scrutiny in the future. Consumers, Congress, and the courts must monitor USDA's actions on this issue.

The Supreme Court's decision is only the latest in a series of rulings that have kept GE alfalfa out of the U.S. market. In 2006, the Center for Food Safety sued the USDA for approving Monsanto's Roundup Ready alfalfa, which the company genetically engineered to resist glyphosate without first obtaining the legally required EIS. The Center argued that the USDA had violated the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Plant Protection Act. In May 2007, the U.S. District Court in San Francisco found that the USDA had acted unlawfully and issued an injunction to halt planting of this kind of alfalfa until it had completed an EIS. An appeals court upheld this decision last year, so the company brought the case to the Supreme Court.

While the USDA suggests that an EIS could take up to a year to complete, corporations that stand to profit are seeking expediency. Land O' Lakes (which owns Forage Genetics International, a partner in developing GE alfalfa) and Monsanto are pushing the USDA to act quickly so they can unload their seed on farmers for the next crop year.

Alfalfa is the nation's fourth-largest crop, generating \$9.63 billion in annual revenue, including seed sales. As a key feed source for dairy cows, it's vital to a systematic rotation that promotes biodiversity. USDA approval would provoke severe financial losses for alfalfa growers due to the contamination that results from cross-pollinating between traditional and genetically engineered crops. Widespread contamination would also destroy the organic milk industry as we know it, thus taking the decision beyond alfalfa.

Last year the Mexican government permitted Monsanto to conduct open field trials of GE corn; this will eventually lead to the contamination of thousands of corn varieties in the land where the crop was first cultivated nine millennia ago. Soy and corn growers in Brazil, Paraguay, and Canada are also grappling with the economic and environmental damages caused by contamination from Monsanto's GE seeds. Family and peasant farmers across the world, including many in La Via Campesina movement, stand with us in anticipating that the Supreme Court's alfalfa ruling will bolster global efforts to halt the advance of these crops everywhere.

From Maine to Mexico and beyond, Monsanto and other transnational corporations are trying to control seeds, land, water, and other key resources. That kind of corporate control is the single biggest threat to small farmers around the world.

Bob is a farmer in Maine, Director of Food for Maine's Future, board treasurer of NFFC and La Via Campesina member; he can be reached at bob@foodformainesfuture.org.

Executive summary from United Food and Commercial Workers:

The Department of Justice/Department of Agriculture workshops investigating corporate consolidation in agricultural markets represent an enormous opportunity to rebuild and revitalize rural America by ensuring justice and fairness for working men and women across the food industry. Without a doubt, consolidation and concentration in the agricultural economy has caused decreasing incomes for farmers, ranchers, workers and the rural communities that depend on agriculture. Our rural communities, our food supply and the fate of a major portion of the American economy depend on us fixing this problem. However, we can't solve this dilemma unless we are willing to look at the whole picture of the American food chain—from the farm to the grocery store shelf.

Without an adequate investigation into the critical role that consolidation at the retail grocery level—led by the world's largest retailer, Walmart—we can't get an accurate or adequate assessment on how to fix our broken agricultural economy. This report provides strong evidence that Walmart exerts unprecedented influence over the meatpacking industry and other agricultural and food sectors. It also shows that Walmart's relentless quest for lower costs has unfairly squeezed income from meatpacking workers, farmers and ranchers resulting in Walmart receiving a grossly disproportionate share of the retail food dollar at the expense of other stakeholders in the food supply chain. Walmart's size, reach and power are unparalleled:

- The growth of Walmart's share of U.S. grocery sales has been stratospheric: almost quadrupling since 1998 and showing no signs of slowing.
- Walmart has more retail grocery sales than its next three largest competitors (Kroger, Safeway, Supervalu) combined.
- Walmart controls more than a 30% share in 44% of major U.S. grocery markets; while in 29 of those markets, the company controls more than a 50% share.

Walmart's growth has been based, in large part, on using its size and strength to demand lower prices from its suppliers. Walmart's increasing leverage over its suppliers allows it to intrude further into the food supply chain, dictating terms that increase Walmart's bottom line at the expense not of only the company's suppliers, but also of its retail competitors. During the last two decades, Walmart has driven consolidation in the retail grocery sector, which has resulted in retailers seizing an ever-increasing share of the consumer meat dollar:

- In 1990, the retailer took 33 cents out of every dollar spent on beef. In 2009, they took 49 cents.
- In 1990, the retailer took 45 cents of every consumer dollar spent on pork. In 2009, they received 61 cents.

The Justice and Agriculture joint workshops must look at the role Walmart is playing in driving consolidation in the agricultural economy. In order for this assessment to address agricultural market consolidation successfully, the Federal Trade Commission, as the lead retail antitrust cop on the beat, must become more involved in the process and the Obama Administration should take regulatory action to right the ship and rein in the dominant power of Walmart. *(The full report may be downloaded free of charge online:*

<http://www.ufcw.org/docUploads/AG%20Consolidation%20White%20Paper2.pdf?CFID=10082208&CFTOKEN=55376804>)



Separately and unrelated, a new film by Robert Greenwald and Brave New Films, "Walmart - The High Cost of Low Price", is available for screening at: www.walmartmovie.com.

Legislative Briefs and Administrative Actions

Food Safety

S. 510, the Food Safety Modernization Act, is posed to move to the floor of the Senate in late September. The Tester (D-MT)-Hagan (D-NC) amendment would significantly improve the bill by allowing exemptions for small farm and small food processing facilities as well as small and mid-sized farmers who primarily direct market their products to consumers, stores or restaurants within their region. Please call your senators and ask them to support this amendment!

Farm Bill Livestock Title - Proposed GIPSA Rules

The USDA issued new rules that define and prohibit some of the worst corporate practices in the livestock industry and new rules on poultry contracting issues. These proposed rules are under a full-scale attack by multinational packers and poultry processors. The GIPSA Rule deadline is November 22. ***Please send your comments supporting the new GIPSA rules to the USDA before the November 22 deadline.*** More detailed information can be found at www.nffc.net; <http://worc.org> and www.rafiusa.org. Email comments to comments.gipsa@usda.gov or send them to Tess Butler, GIPSA, USDA, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 1643-S, Washington, DC 20250-3604; fax to (202) 690-2173.

DOJ/USDA Competition Workshops

Dec. 8, 2010 - Margins (final in series)

U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1400 Independence Ave., D.C.

Focus: prices paid to farmers vs. prices paid by consumers

The final USDA/DOJ workshop will focus on margins - the gap between farmer and consumer prices - on December 8 in D.C. - and the profit/gouging that is occurring between the two. **The DOJ and USDA are still accepting comments** regarding the workshop topics, and all comments received will be publicly posted. Paper copies should be sent to: Legal Policy Section, Antitrust Division, U.S. Department of Justice, 450 5th Street, NW, Suite 11700, Washington, D.C. 20001. Electronic versions should be sent to: agriculturalworkshops@usdoj.gov. Additional updates, information, agendas and speakers, will be posted on the Antitrust Division's website at: <http://www.justice.gov/atr/public/workshops/ag2010/index.htm>.

GE Salmon Pending Approval

The FDA is in the process of approving the first genetically engineered (GE) animal meant for human consumption: the GE AquAdvantage Atlantic salmon. They held a meeting of their Veterinary Medicine Advisory Committee on September 19-20 and a public hearing September 21. FDA has extended the time required for approval, allowing more research to be conducted and more public input. Thanks to all who submitted opposing comments.

Organic Food Production Act

The Senate Agriculture Committee held a hearing on 9/15/2010 to celebrate the twenty-year anniversary of the National Organic Act. The hearing highlighted not only the growth of organics but also issues related to "natural" labeling, contamination by genetically modified crops, and issues of concentration within organics.

Conservation Reserve Program

The USDA announced that it will enroll 4.3 million acres of farmland in the CRP 39th general sign-up. This is the first general sign-up in four years.

National Animal Identification System

NFFC was part of a meeting with USDA to discuss the current situation and their plans to issue a new program among criticism for national animal ID. NFFC will post updates on these issues at www.nffc.net.

Supreme Court's ruling on APHIS and GE Alfalfa

In consideration of the Supreme Court ruling on GE alfalfa that requires APHIS to conduct an environmental impact statement (EIS) prior to the approval of any genetically engineered crops or livestock, this issue is integral. Land o' Lakes and other investors in GE alfalfa have been pushing Congress to pressure USDA to speed up the process. See Bob St. Peter's article on p.8.

2012 Farm Bill

Both the Senate and House Agriculture Committees held a series of hearings around the 2012 Farm Bill this summer. Hearings touched on the implementation and efficacy of programs included in the 2008 Farm Bill and reviewed priorities heading into the next Farm Bill cycle. These hearings reflect the commitment of both the House and Senate Agriculture Committees to begin Farm Bill discussions early and ramping up for what will be a budget constrained Farm Bill cycle.

Health Care

The health care reform bill signed in March 2010 will provide for small businesses and the self-employed, including farmers and fishermen:

- Lower costs through insurance pools, small business tax credits and cost containment measures
- A wider range of health plan choices
- Reforms to prevent discrimination and to improve access to affordable coverage

It will be implemented over five years (2010 and 2014) to minimize disruption in services. Medicare will continue to cover retirees and Medicaid will continue to cover uninsured children and adults, with flexibility to cover more people overall. There are also more opportunities for rural residents. For more details visit:

www.hrsa.gov/ruralhealth/index.html
www.whitehouse.gov/healthreform
www.healthcare.gov
www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/health_reform_rural_americans.pdf

TRADE Act (H.R. 3012, S. 2821) - Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment

This continues to sit with the House committee on Ways and Means and with the Senate committee on Finance, respectively. H.R. 3012, introduced by Rep. Michael Michaud (ME-2) has 147 co-sponsors and S. 2821, introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) has 9 co-sponsors. Please urge your Representative and Senators to co-sponsor the TRADE Act! For more info visit www.citizenstrade.org.

Upcoming Legislative Dates to Remember

September 14 - mid-October: Congress in session

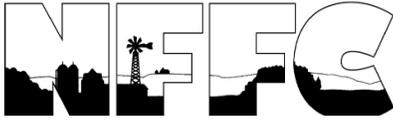
Mid-October: Congress on recess in home districts

November 2: Election Day

December 7: Day of Action[s] on Climate Change in Cancun and throughout the world

December 8: DOJ/USDA Workshop in DC

Early January: Congress reconvenes



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Tea, Whiskey, Now Milk? by Shay Weinblatt

In July, author Barry Lynn joined NFFC and guests for a group discussion around his latest book, Cornered - The New Monopoly Capitalism and the Economics of Destruction. In the book, Lynn, a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation, treats readers to a grand (and sad) tour of the global economy and documents what NFFC members witness firsthand: monopolists are ruling (and ruining) lives. He starts with a plain statement of profound importance: "Markets are made, and markets have masters." He goes on to trace the history of how such now familiar phrases as "free market" and "consumer welfare" were created and used by ravenous financiers and trading firms to beguile us down the road to monopolization. In sectors ranging from medical supplies to auto parts to eyeglasses, monopolization has increased the fragility of all economic systems, not least of which is our food system.

In the section titled "The Politics of Milking," Lynn examines the situation of Ronald Hazelwood in Carter County, TN. Ronny, a "contemporary yeoman", is experiencing the pain of being a small farmer in a monopolized industry. He depends on a single bottler to pick up the milk from his 70 cows, as he is unable to contract with the only local retailer, Walmart. With roughly 80% of the market split between the immense private firm Dean Foods and the financier-controlled cooperative, Dairy Farmers of America, dairy farmers have little choice in deciding where to sell their milk in America. Ronny fears he may soon not have a farm to pass on to his son, Michael.

"The Price of Control" section is of special interest to NFFC and our work in relation to the politics of commodity prices. We "...take a moment to look at what price really means, the laws we use to determine who holds the power to determine a price, and how these people are able to wield that power." He emphasizes the

political nature of price and finds fault in a generation of leaders - Reagan, Clinton and both Bushes - stressing the road to monopolization. The monopolists have "...all but captured the parts of the U.S. government that were supposed to protect Americans from such misuse of economic power." Lynn seems to wonder if we might not need the sort of activism seen in our history, with tea in Boston and whiskey in Pennsylvania, to reverse the work of distant "lords" who have "...transformed [Americans] from independent producers into captive consumers."

Cornered also addresses the genetic monopolization practiced by Monsanto, ADM, Cargill, Smithfield and Tyson. These systems of genetic monopolization serve them in three ways: increasing revenue by automating agricultural activity with one-seed-sows-all-fields corn and cotton and one-size-fits-all-hooks hogs, raising even higher the barriers that prevent other companies from entering the same field, and fortifying their control over the individual farmer. "It is a system...designed to transform free farmers into employees and, hence, into debt peons." Barry Lynn clearly shares the concerns of many of us, but also provides encouragement. Our political tradition naturally provides us the opportunity to "reverse the concentration of power...distribute ownership and voice once again among the many...and simultaneously provides the incentive to raise an alarm and to act."

Upcoming Events:

September 24 - MFSI Grand Opening. See www.mvskokefood.org

October 2 - 25th Farm Aid, Milwaukee, WI. See www.farmaid.org

October 18 - Family Farm Defenders Receives Food Sovereignty Prize in New Orleans at CFSC conference: www.foodsecurity.org