



# Family Farm Agenda

food security • fair prices  
farmer advocacy • heritage  
nutrition • community

**NFFC**  
National Family Farm Coalition

2011 Spring Issue

## From the President by Ben Burkett



Ben Burkett

Once again, I would like to thank the NFFC membership for electing me to serve as President of NFFC for the coming year. This has been a very rewarding experience. The work centered on the Pigford II lawsuit, Department of Justice hearing, Congressional visits, and many USDA visits, so I traveled to Washington D.C. more in 2010 than in any previous years. On the board I represent the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, which continues to support the NFFC's activities.

Our recent winter meeting had lower attendance than usual, but it was an excellent meeting with good discussion on the 2012 Farm Bill, the credit and fundraising committees, and La Via Campesina. We welcomed two new members - the National Young Farmers Coalition and the Community Alliance for Global Justice - and look forward to their participation in board activities. I would like to thank all of those who serve on the executive committee, including our newest EC member, Brad Wilson of Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement. We would also like to thank our guest from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida - Mr. Gerardo Reyes - who described his work both with and for migrant farm workers at our winter meeting.

To make this coalition a great success, we need and embrace the participation of all our members. Their expertise and knowledge will bring tremendous value to the coalition and those who are affected by what we do. I issue this challenge to each coalition member: to persevere and strive to move forward in providing safe and

healthy foods to people all over the world in the survival of family farmers. The earthquake and tsunami in Japan remind us of the importance of food sovereignty and food reserves. We ask that you remember them, as well as the family, friends and colleagues of Jeanne Carter, a long-time activist with Northern Plains Resource Council, killed in a car accident on April 1.

As farmers begin planting crops, organizations are planning April 17 actions in solidarity with La Via Campesina and NFFC is planning the summer meeting for June 16-18 in the Northeast. Food for Maine's Future is hosting a youth camp August 10-16 on Bob St. Peter's farm in Sedgwick, Maine. We look forward to seeing everyone again soon at various events around the country and to having an excellent summer meeting.

## NFFC Hosts D.C. Winter Board Meeting Despite Travel Woes

In spite of nationwide heavy snows and wild winds, NFFC held its winter meeting in Washington, D.C., January 28-February 1. Hosted again at Carlyle Suites and the Mathematical Association of America, the small but focused group reached consensus on several issues. As President Ben Burkett noted, highlights included the acceptance of two new members, election of officers and a presentation by Gerardo Reyes of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers. Members also attended a Friday night Farm Together Now (Daniel Tucker's book featuring farmers growing real food, including ARMPPA's Joel Greeno) event at Busboys & Poets and protested a Giant grocery store with CIW and the D.C. Student Farmworker Alliance. Among other topics, NFFC and allies discussed: advocating for GIPSA rules; opposing free trade agreements (the US-Korea, US-Panama and US-Colombia, most imminently); fighting corporate concentration in several arenas; supporting new and beginning farmers through our new mentoring toolkit; increasing media coverage and consumer awareness of family farm and fishery issues; aligning more closely with Via Campesina food sovereignty efforts; and the potential repercussions of a slashed 2012 federal budget, particularly on food safety and other new legislation. Despite difficult situations at hand, with good food, friends and focused vitality, the meeting was deemed a success, and we look forward to the next one.



Marley Moynahan (SFA), Christina Schiavoni (WHY Hunger), David Battey (NFFC), Margot McMillen (MRCC), Marge Townsend (ALG-OFU), Bob St. Peter (FFMF), Daniel Teague (FSC/MAC), Tristan Quinn-Thibodeau (WHY Hunger), Dena Hoff (NPRC), Alicia Harvie (Farm Aid), Brad Wilson (ICCI) (seated), Gerardo Reyes (CIW), Andre Mathews (FSC/MAC), Kathy Ozer (NFFC) and Ben Burkett (FSC/MAC, not pictured) protest a D.C. Giant store.

## 2011 NFFC Executive Committee

**President:** Ben Burkett, Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

**Vice President:** Dena Hoff, Northern Plains Resource Council/MT

**Secretary:** John Kinsman, Family Farm Defenders/WI

**Treasurer:** Bob St. Peter, Food for Maine's Future

### At Large Members:

**Joel Greeno**, American Raw Milk Producers' Pricing Association/WI; **Brad Wilson**, Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement; **Margot McMillen**, Missouri Rural Crisis Center; **Niaz Dorry**, Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance, MA



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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.*

## NFFC Welcomes Two New Members - NYFC and CAGJ

### National Young Farmers Coalition

The NYFC was unofficially launched at the 2009 Young Farmer Conference at the Stone Barns Center for Agriculture in Tarrytown, NY. At that conference, two young farmers (now board members) presented the idea of creating an organization to support and fight for young farmers in America. The hundred-plus young farmers in attendance embraced the idea and named the organization on the spot.

There are two ideas behind the coalition. First, if America wants active farms and sustainable food production in 50 years, more young farmers are needed. According to USDA, the average age of the American family farmer is 57 and the fastest growing group of American farmers is age 65 and older. Secondly, the many young people who are pursuing farming today need help.

They have big ideas and are ready to work, but most won't be able to create viable long-term businesses without policy change, stronger networks and training. NYFC works for young farmers by strengthening social networks, helping them hone their skills through peer-to-peer learning, and fighting for the policies that will keep them farming for a lifetime. Learn more at [www.youngfarmers.org](http://www.youngfarmers.org).



NYFC meets at Stone Barns Center in NY - L. Shute photo

### Community Alliance for Global Justice

Community Alliance for Global Justice (CAGJ) was founded in Seattle, WA, in 2001 in the wake of the 1999 World Trade Organization protests. Their first five years focused on organizing statewide opposition to all extensions of NAFTA, which culminated in an historic 2005 vote by all of WA State's Democrats against CAFTA. Highlights of this period included a tri-national conference called 'No More NAFTA's!'; 'Race to the Bottom', a fun-run and march organized to coincide with the Miami protests against the FTAA, and a signature-gathering campaign on Seattle's ferries called 'Earth to Inslee!' aimed at building support for our local environmental leader in the House to oppose CAFTA.

In 2006 CAGJ co-founded the WA Fair Trade Coalition, and with strong local leadership for trade justice, looked for a new direction. Under the banner of 'Strengthening Local Economies, Everywhere,' CAGJ is now focused on bringing anti-corporate analysis of the global economy to the burgeoning local foods and sustainability movements. They focus their energies through three primary programs involving dozens of volunteers: **Food Justice Project**, which works to connect local food and sustainable agriculture movements to broader struggles for justice through community education and their publication, "Our Food Our Right: Recipes for Food Justice", a 72-page zine; **AGRA Watch**, a campaign challenging the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's funding of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) while advocating for sustainable, socially responsible and indigenous agricultural solutions in Africa; and **Trade Justice**, carrying on historic work through their Trade Action Network. They received the Honorable Mention Food Sovereignty Prize in 2009 and launched the NW Farm Bill Action Group in 2010 with help from NFFC President Ben Burkett. For more info visit [www.seattleglobaljustice.org](http://www.seattleglobaljustice.org).



CAGJ street theater - April 17, 2010 - H. Day photo



CAGJ members learn to plant at Clean Green Farms in Duvall, WA - H. Day photo

In 2009 La Via Campesina (LVC) published a 25-page report, "Small Scale Sustainable Farmers Are Cooling Down the Earth." At the LVC March Midterm Conference in France, four dynamic international scientists reaffirmed that report, adding: "This is the first time in history that we have a crisis of civilization, survival of the human species and the survival of our planet. We must act immediately to correct the causes of this crisis, as it is now almost too late."

Henry Sarigih, International Coordinator of LVC, welcomed the delegates to the conference and presented the program for the coming year, including directives from the IV conference in Maputo, Mozambique. Priorities are: the violence against women; agro-ecology; agro-fuels; and the food crisis with doubled costs of production. Henry suggested that we expand our efforts regarding the climate crisis, especially on the recommendations from Cochabamba conference, and improve on our communication.

Professor Guitar Massiah of Tunisia described the overthrow of repressive regimes in the Middle East as a rebellion against the transnational corporations (TNCs). Four or five of these TNCs control the food policies of the world, often through policies of aggression by the powerful G7 countries, plus Russia. This is a time of opportunity to implement our common strategy through the seven principles of Food Sovereignty, outlined by LVC. During the comment period, delegates from many countries of the global South described endless acts of agro-terrorism, torture, disappearance of thousands who resisted land grabbing, and violence by TNC police. Most of those committing these acts were trained at the School of the Americas (SOA/WHNSC) in the U.S. Re-colonization by the former colonial powers is happening.

Thomas Sommer-Houdeville commented that Iraq and Afghanistan are first time examples of invading for TNC interests. Increased military budgets of the U.S., U.K. and South Africa have been used to fund armed mercenaries that act also as TNC police. The U.S. military budget is bigger than all the others combined; this poses enormous consequences.

Bob Brac-Bede commented on the end of the fossil fuel era. How industry is now positioning for the control of new and emerging sources to fuel the 'green economy', most of these are regressive and add to climate change. Examples are carbon-trading, genetically engineered trees, aeration of the stratosphere, iron fertilization of the seas, and more. He described the dangers of inserting nano microchips in humans and animals to replicate organs; they enter the nervous system and other parts of the body to cause grave damage. They are already being produced with no regulations and are too small to be traced. Companies patenting these technologies include Chevron, BP, Monsanto, Cargill, Shell and Dupont, among others.

Genevieve Ozam's presentation could best be summarized: Capitalization can no longer present itself as a part of civilization! It is destroying our planet, our people (including indigenous peoples) and our resources. Because of the food crisis 150 million additional people will be forced to migrate in the next few years.

The delegates agreed to address land grabbing, the food crisis, TNC power, the Gates Foundation's plans for a new 'green revolution' in Africa--all of the issues discussed above. The LVC office will be moved to Africa, and the VI conference of the LVC will be held in Indonesia. The delegation also asked for everyone to commit to placing a special emphasis on April 17, Via Campesina's International Day of Peasant Struggles.

*GLOBALIZE THE STRUGGLE, GLOBALIZE HOPE!*



Daffodils - M. McMillen photo

Read about more April 17 actions worldwide at:

[www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org)

Listen to NFFC leaders read the seven principles of food sovereignty as filmed by documentarian Daniel Tucker at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/danieltuckerchicago>

For more updates, information and action alerts, visit

NFFC's new Facebook page at:

[www.Facebook.com/natfamilyfarmcoalition](http://www.Facebook.com/natfamilyfarmcoalition)

### APRIL 17 - DAY of ACTION

On April 17, people worldwide celebrate the struggle of peasants and rural people to survive and to feed the world while commemorating the 1996 death of 19 farmers in Brazil assassinated while struggling for land and dignity. More than 100 events occur each year to defend a food system based on food sovereignty, justice and equality: small-scale farming, agro-ecology and local production. Governments can support this paradigm by giving farmers access to land, water, seeds, credit and education, and by protecting them from cheap imports, creating public or farmer-owned stocks and managing production. Food sovereignty would provide livelihoods to billions of people and reduce poverty, particularly in rural areas where 75 per cent of the 1.4 billion people suffering from extreme poverty reside. Several April 17 events include:

**Friday, April 15, Chicago, IL, Noon** - FFD and ARMPPA will lead food and social activists on a noon rally and protest of the CME/Board of Trade (141 W. Jackson) against corporate speculation of ag commodities; an educational leafleting session at a big-box grocery store, communal potluck and discussion will follow.

**Saturday, April 16, Madison, WI, 8am-12pm** - FFD's Seed Swap and Food Sovereignty Speakout at the first Dane County farmers market this season, held at the state capitol.

**April 15-17, Washington, DC** - Friday: American University forum with DC Friends of the MST on food sovereignty; Saturday: Urban Sustainability Summit: Food Sovereignty, Security and Justice; tabling at Power Shift 2011--a youth-based climate change/green energy conference--with Food Sovereignty Alliance and Student Farmworker Alliance; Sunday: showing of film, "The Economics of Happiness" during DC's Environmental Film Festival; see <http://www.theeconomicsofhappiness.org/>.

**April 17, Seattle, WA** - CAGJ's street theatre will feature actors portraying Bill Gates, Bill Clinton and the World Bank losing to peasant farmers during battle.

**April 17, Portland, ME** - FFMF will collect signatures on a letter to the governor and state legislature seeking protection for small ME farmers against corporate concentration and cheap food imports.

**Thursday, April 28, New York, NY** - Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle of NY will screen the film, "Tierras Libres" ("Free Land") at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center of 1199SEIU in Manhattan. Peasant leaders from Venezuela and Dominican Republic have been invited to discuss the struggle for land in NYC.

## Local Food Ordinance Passes in Maine

Maybe citizens of tiny Sedgwick on the Maine coast were listening to the calls of Dave Milano, Ken Conrad and others for more trust and community, and less rigid one-size-fits-all food regulation.

On the morning of Friday, March 4, Sedgwick became likely the first locale in the country to pass a "Food Sovereignty" law. It's the proposed ordinance described last fall, when I introduced the "Five Musketeers", a group of farmers and consumers intent on opposing overly aggressive state food regulators. The regulators were interfering with farmers who took chickens to a neighbor for slaughtering, or who sold raw milk directly to consumers.

The proposed ordinance was one of 78 being considered at the Sedgwick town meeting, that New England institution that has stood the test of time, allowing all of a town's citizens to vote yea or nay on proposals to spend their tax money and, in this case, enact potentially far-reaching laws with national implications. They've been holding these meetings in the Sedgwick town hall (seen below) since 1794. At Friday's meeting, about 120 citizens raised their hands in unanimous approval of the ordinance.

Citing America's Declaration of Independence and the Maine Constitution, the ordinance proposed that "Sedgwick citizens possess the right to produce, process, sell, purchase, and consume local foods of their choosing." These would include raw milk and other dairy products and locally slaughtered meats, to name some items.

This isn't just a declaration of preference. The proposed warrant added, "It shall be unlawful for any law or regulation adopted by the state or federal government to interfere with the rights recognized by this Ordinance." In other words, no state licensing requirements prohibiting certain farms from selling dairy products or producing their own chickens for sale to other citizens in the town.

What about potential legal liability and state or federal inspections? It's all up to the seller and buyer to negotiate. "Patrons purchasing food for home consumption may enter into private agreements with those producers or processors of local foods to waive any liability for the consumption of that food. Producers or processors of local foods shall be exempt from licensure and inspection requirements for that food as long as those agreements are in effect." Imagine that--buyer and seller can agree to cut out the lawyers. That's almost un-American, isn't it?

This from a press release put out after the vote by supporters:

"This ordinance creates favorable conditions for beginning farmers and cottage-scale food processors to try out new products, and to make the most of each season's bounty," said Bob St. Peter. "My family is already working on some ideas we can do from home to help pay the bills and get our farm going." Mia Strong, Sedgwick resident and local farm patron, was overwhelmed by the support of her town. "Tears of joy welled in my eyes as my town...made a stand for local food and our fundamental rights as citizens to choose that food."

The ordinance comes up for a vote in three other Maine towns.

*(Written by Bob St. Peter, Food for Maine's Future director, with thanks to Deborah Evans, a Sedgwick area farmer, for providing information for this post and the photo above. For more info email bobstpeter@gmail.com or visit <http://savingseeds.wordpress.com/>; a link to the ordinance is there.)*



## Food Sovereignty Voices by Andrianna Natsoulis

*Food Voices: Stories of the Food Sovereignty Movement* is a project introducing food sovereignty and capturing the voices of farmers and fishermen throughout the Americas. It provides a vivid mechanism to convey what those in the fields and on the seas think about food policies, the problems and the solutions.

The first principle of food sovereignty is "Food: A Basic Human Right: Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with *full human dignity*." The desire to live a healthy life with full human dignity is a recurring theme among farmers and fishermen, and many must fight for it. Here are excerpts from people interviewed for *Food Voices* who confront humiliation, criminalization or criminal activity against them and their community.

**Heather Retberg and her husband run Quills End Farm in Penobscot, ME. She is a member of Food for Maine's Future and Maine Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association.**

"A lot of us say fly under the radar, keep a low profile as long as you can. That's certainly what we did for a really long time and I've come to feel like so many of us do that, but if that portion of your income is something you really depend on for your livelihood, where does that leave you if you come up on the radar? What other business has to operate like that? Drug dealers have to operate like that. People who are doing something really unhealthy for society have to operate like that. We should have the rule of law behind what we are doing because what we are doing is really healthy not just for people's bodies, but for creating social networks in a community that binds us together so we can help each other out when hard times come. So much of that fabric of community life that comes from the farm, that gets stripped away and we really shouldn't feel that we need to sneak around to farm."

**Jay Driscoll is a commercial fisherman from Rye Harbor, NH on the fishing vessel Karenlyn. He is a board member of Granite State Fish and President of Sectors 11 and 12 in New Hampshire.**

"I think cameras are the biggest injustice. I don't understand where the fishermen lost their way so much that the government feels we have to be monitored with cameras. It is so anti-American. It is so what this country is not about. With observers today, at least it's a human. At least there is somebody there. But, to have them say to me, I want to fit your boat with cameras to monitor your every move is a huge injustice and we are already being monitored through a satellite so they know where the boats are. But, now they want to put a camera so they can see us too. We have been slanderized [sic] by every environmental group out there to the point where we are a step below pedophiles right now. And that's how we're looked at. It is a huge injustice. We have rights and freedoms that we should try to protect or we are going to lose what the foundation of this country is all about."

**Oscar Otzoy is a farm worker in Immokalee, FL, a member of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, and originally from Guatemala.**

A worker usually has to leave their house to find work at about 3 or 4 in the morning then work for 10 or 12 hours for a total of \$50 or \$60 a day. If a farm worker were to be earning the same that he or she was earning 30 years ago and if it kept right with inflation, it would be \$1.06 per 32-pound bucket. Now it is an average of 50 cents per bucket. Many people feel like they are just a machine in the fields. If you were to get sick, the company, instead of helping with the sickness, will just fire you, let you go. It is like you are an old tool. When you are broken, instead of fixing you, they just let you go. In the past 13 years, there have been nine major slavery operations uncovered in Florida. We began the Campaign for Fair Food with a Code of Conduct with zero tolerance for slavery, a penny more per pound of tomatoes, and the voice of farm workers be included in carrying out these agreements. Nine major companies finally signed agreements with the Coalition. And this is exactly what we want: That workers are recognized and they know their rights and they are respected." (From [www.foodvoices.org](http://www.foodvoices.org))

## NFFC Mentoring Report Distributed

*Sustaining Family Farming Through Mentoring* is a report compiled by NFFC's 2010 Emerson Hunger Fellow, Megan Mills-Novoa. Created at the request of the Local Foods Subcommittee, NFFC hopes the report will be a bridge between young farmers and farmer mentors. NFFC's 2011 Emerson Hunger Fellow, Jessica Luna, will contact members to determine ways that they can benefit most from the toolkit and local mentoring efforts.

*Sustaining Family Farming Through Mentoring* includes:

- an introduction to beginning farmer issues
- a research project exploring 21 mentoring organizations
- a compilation of resources and tools for experienced farmers interested in mentoring
- a directory of mentoring organizations.

Some highlights of the research project:

- Major barriers to beginning farmers entering agriculture include accessing affordable land, high start-up costs, market access, risk management, health insurance and lack of experience;
- An upsurge in mentoring programs due to Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Grants (2008 Farm Bill) and increased commitment by state governments and funding organizations;
- Four key management strategies for successful mentoring programs are: providing incentives for mentors; a thorough application process; building local networks; and flexibility;
- Substantial challenges of mentoring programs are: funding; making appropriate mentor-mentee matches; legal issues; proprietary knowledge; and generational gaps in communication.
- A sense of helping to sustain family farming was found in 18 of 21 mentoring organizations surveyed.

The mentoring report is available at [www.nffc.net](http://www.nffc.net). For more information, contact NFFC at 800.639.3276.

## Credit Reports Released

Just in time for spring planting, NFFC, RAFI-USA, Food and Water Watch and Farm Aid have released a report on the state of credit access for farmers seeking assistance through loan programs. Based on a survey of farm credit counselors and advocates, the report, "Don't Bank On It", found that banks were rejecting farmers for loans more frequently and that demand for government farm loans was rising. Eighty-five per cent reported that farmers have had more difficulty accessing credit since 2009.

In addition, Tim Wise, GDAE researcher with Tufts University, released a report entitled, "Still Waiting for the Farm Boom". Findings include: high prices have been offset by rising expenses; government payments have fallen; and more recently, the recession has significantly decreased the off-farm income that small-to-mid-scale family farmers depend on to make ends meet.

North Carolina farmer advocate Benny Bunting said, "In this economic crisis, bankers are reducing their risks by requiring more collateral and putting more conditions on loans, making it harder for farmers--especially small and mid-scale family farmers--to get the credit they need to farm this spring."

The credit crisis struck at the same time many farmers experienced sharply declining prices, especially hog and dairy producers. Farm households faced layoffs, loss of health care coverage, and rising household debt at the same time that banks were tightening lending conditions. The Federal Reserve Board reports that farm loan delinquency rates tripled between 2007 and the first quarter of 2010. These factors combined to endanger the economic security of many farmers. Ben Burkett noted that these reports arrive as farmers and their families face the challenge of getting their crops in the ground. The shortfall in FSA funds will cost farmers their farms and increase the loss of rural jobs amid the current budget crises.

Access reports at: [www.nffc.net](http://www.nffc.net); [www.farmaid.org/credit](http://www.farmaid.org/credit); and [www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/policy\\_research/FarmIncome.html](http://www.ase.tufts.edu/gdae/policy_research/FarmIncome.html).

## Rural Spring Remembered by Margot McMillen

Twenty-five years ago, in Chillicothe, Missouri, 12,000 pounds of food was distributed to hungry rural families in the Farmers Home Administration parking lot. These families, facing foreclosure by the government, were protesting USDA policies and demanding the removal of David Stollings, the bureaucrat in charge of the Chillicothe office.

The problems of rural America are complex, but it's still true that farmers raising corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, cotton and other commodities on monocultures have only occasionally made money. Their prices are set at boards of trade and they compete with farmers from across the region. In the Reagan era, exports were emphasized to give farmers more markets, but the exports had to be subsidized and we became more dependent on subsidies. Growing commodities instead of diversifying, farms got bigger. University extension services said farmers could do better buying bigger equipment -- using economies of scale. Those guys are supposed to be smart, but they didn't see the next step coming -- industry using Wall Street money moving into the rural economy.

In 1986, MO farmers had struggled under loads of debt with bad weather and low prices for their products. Instead of raising gardens, as they did in the past, they took jobs off the farm to raise cash to pay their loans and to survive. Now they were hungry, and Farm Aid had come to help. Each box of food would feed a family of four for a week. The food was paid for by a donation from Farm Aid, which had kicked off their first concert in 1985. Roger Allison, Director of the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, administered the impromptu food bank. MRCC still runs food co-ops in Missouri, making it possible for families to buy food at reduced prices.

What has changed in 25 years? The good news is that some farms are raising food again and selling to the local community. The other good news is that the community is developing markets. Schools and hospitals are stepping up to buy the local food. The university extension is even helping. The bad news is that consumers have grown accustomed to industrial food--overly sweet fruit juices and microwave soups and stews. People have forgotten how to cook and how to eat.

Farm Aid and the MRCC are still in business, and still distributing food to rural families. Now, however, some of the food is fresh and local, and we see that the best markets are the home folks. (Margot blogs regularly at [www.progressivepopulist.blogspot.com](http://www.progressivepopulist.blogspot.com).)

*NFFC urges you to buy seasonally from your local farmers and fishermen whenever possible, but if you need to send gifts of food to friends or family, please consider these options from organizations skilled in shipping their delicious goods:*

### Family Farm Defenders:

For organic and rBGH-free Cedar Grove cheese; fair trade coffee and chocolates; wild rice, honey and other local treats; visit [www.familyfarmers.org](http://www.familyfarmers.org) or call (608) 260-0900.



### Missouri Rural Crisis Center:

Support family farmers--buy sustainably raised ham solo or in a gift box with family farm cheese and country mustard.

Call (573) 449-1336 or visit <http://patchworkfamilyfarms.org/>.



### Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance:

To learn of a community-supported fishery (CSF) near you or of other direct market opportunities by community-based fishermen, visit <http://namanet.org/> or call (978) 281-6934.



## Director's Take on 2011 by Kathy Ozer

Washington, D.C. is a train headed opposite directions. The House of Representatives is out to cut and derail; the Senate supports some issues and ignores others. The USDA and White House are progressing on the GIPSA rule but taking the wrong stance on GMOs and free trade agreements. There are standing-room only crowds at book readings, films and talks on anything connecting farming, food and justice. The public cares more and more about who raises their food and how, while policymakers remain oblivious and disconnected.

The 112th Congress has been marked by the re-organization of House and Senate Committees and a budget process creating widespread chaos. President Obama's State of the Union in January called for quick approval of the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) based on the false premise that increased exports will bolster the US economy. Congress is now expected to vote in May on KORUS FTA under fast-track rules; this and USDA's approval of GE alfalfa have shifted our focus for 2011. NFFC has joined the Center for Food Safety and other organizations in a lawsuit to halt the planting of GE alfalfa, and hopes that farmers will also decide not to purchase and plant the seed.

The federal government's budget crisis means that short-term funding extensions for FY 2011 (October 2010-September 2011) have translated into cuts and uncertainty throughout government agencies. So far, the House of Representative's budget-cutting proposal (H.R. 1) has not been approved. Hopefully funding for the rest of this fiscal year will be completed by April 8 when the current continuing resolution expires. This uncertainty is confronting farmers now; those already approved for USDA subsidized credit (FSA direct or guaranteed loans) could endure long waits to receive loan funds since only a small percentage of funds will be released, despite *thousands* of pending applications. This happens at the time farmers need to purchase seeds and inputs to plant their crops. NFFC, Farm Aid, Food and Water Watch and RAFI-USA jointly issued the credit report, "Don't Bank on It" based on a survey of credit hotlines and organizations in 2010; Tufts GDAE just issued "Still Waiting for the Farm Boom: Family Farmers Worse Off Despite High Crop Prices." These reports describe the experience of farmers on the ground and confirm that USDA's optimistic view of rural America overshadows what is truly happening to many farmers and their rural communities. NFFC has been watching this process closely due to concerns that the Republican-led House of Representatives could defund programs, just as they derailed country of origin labeling (COOL) in 2003.

The USDA Dairy Industry Advisory Commission issued its report in February 2011. NFFC feels strongly that the report missed the perfect opportunity to discuss the need for policy that would give farmers a milk price reflecting their cost of production. NFFC's Dairy Subcommittee continues to work on getting new legislation introduced in Congress based on the concepts of S. 1645 (from 2009), and NFFC continues to raise the need for reserve policy and pricing at a fair level for farmers everywhere.

NFFC has continued to push USDA to issue the GIPSA rule, and is joining organizations calling for action by the Department of Justice and USDA on the historic antitrust workshops of 2010.

The spring recess (April 18-29) is an opportune time for members of Congress to hear directly from their constituents on the importance of the GIPSA rules and opposition to the US-Korea FTA. Schedule appointments, attend town hall meetings and make sure your voices are heard - maybe Congress will be listening.

## Pig Business - The True Cost of Cheap Meat

On March 9, several hundred people packed into the Capitol Hill Visitor's Center Complex for the U.S. film premiere of Pig Business, a documentary produced by Tracy Ward, environmental advocate and the Marchioness of Worcester, UK. The documentary exposes Smithfield Foods, the largest hog processing company in the world, for destroying the livelihoods of independent hog farmers, rural communities and the environment.

This story is all too familiar. Corporate consolidation in the hog industry has led to the loss of 70% of U.S. independent hog farmers in just 20 years. The retail price of pork for consumers has increased by 71%, while the hog farmers' share of the retail dollar decreased by 50%. Escalating feed and fuel costs mean that farmers face an even tighter profit margin, they are simply unable to compete in a vertically-integrated operation in which Smithfield owns the pigs, feed and slaughterhouses. Small farmers become serfs to the company, stuck between going out of business or entering unfair contracts, while Smithfield reaps profits in the billions.

The film also centers on the environmental consequences of huge hog confinement operations for the surrounding ecosystem and community. In North Carolina, Smithfield's Tar Heel plant, the largest processing plant in the world, illegally dumps millions of pounds of hog waste into huge lagoons, polluting local waterways and engulfing the area's residents in an unbearable stench. Smithfield is a persistent violator of the Clean Water Act.

The voices of many stakeholders affected by Smithfield's empire are also noted. Ward spoke to farmers in Polish villages facing economic ruination, and heard from residents suffering from the stench of newly-constructed factory farms. The film also featured such activists as Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who warned the Polish government against Smithfield's expansion there.

Among the many guests were Reps. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Jim Moran (D-VA) and Jared Polis (D-CO). Rep. Kucinich moderated a panel of experts after the film screening which included local hog farmer Bev Eggleston, Dr. Michael Greger from the Humane Society of the United States, and NFFC's Kathy Ozer. The panel placed the film in the context of larger problems with our current food system: CAFO operations compromise food safety and create the risk for antibiotic resistant infections; unfair trade policies have expanded Smithfield's global reach; and major wins of the 2008 Farm Bill are at risk of corporate subversion in Congress.

Don Webb, a former Smithfield farmer-turned-environmental advocate, concluded the evening. A native of eastern NC, he bore witness to factory farming's destruction there, where poor communities "...suffered terribly from the odor, the stench, and the flies." He also noted that Smithfield made strategic alliances with local congressmen and county commissioners supporting beneficial legislation. "These corporate hog powers...would do anything in the world to make a dollar," Webb declared.

Pig Business convened allies with a common belief: CAFOs are inherently wrong and must be dismantled. The diverse organizations involved in co-sponsoring the film showed the potential for consumers, animal advocates, farmers and environmentalists to unite, demand corporate accountability for their actions and support viable alternatives to industrial pork production. As Ward noted, if "...these corporations weren't given subsidies, tax breaks or preferential loans, traditional farmers who bear the true costs of their production would out-compete them in the marketplace."

**Note:** *Missouri Rural Crisis Center (and another NFFC member organization or two, no doubt) is fighting state legislation that would severely limit the ability of residents to sue CAFO owners for property damages. When this newsletter was sent to print, there was still time for legislators to hear from their constituents before the next vote was cast, but corporate dollars speak loudly.*

## Dairy Farmers vs. Commodities Traders

Despite treating her cows humanely, strictly adhering to milk production regulations, and carefully stewarding her land, a Pennsylvania dairy farmer I know is \$70,000 in debt. She has no idea how she'll repay her creditors or how much longer they will allow her to buy feed and supplies before demanding payment. Without a fair price for her milk, she can't accrue enough funds to pay off her debt. Most likely, she will have to sell her dairy cows and the family farm--the home and livelihood for her, her husband, and their children.

Since November 2008, I have received daily crisis calls from dairy farmers. One, whose feed costs increased by \$500 between November and December, also received \$500 *less* for her milk during this period, equaling a \$1,000 loss when her cows were actually producing *more* milk. Another reported his feed costs had risen by almost \$8,000 in one month. Still another declared that the U.S.D.A.'s Farm Services Agency loan was approved at the county level, but was denied by a higher authority.

The continued spike in grain prices, coupled with increased electricity, oil, and other fuel costs, is threatening the survival of many independent dairy and livestock farmers. They were suffering before prices escalated due to an antiquated system allowing milk prices to be manipulated by Chicago Mercantile Exchange traders and investor-biased milk co-ops. These farmers have no control over the price they're paid for their milk. When they aren't paid enough to cover their production costs, they operate at a loss.

Dairy farmers don't begrudge fair compensation to grain producers, but corn at about \$7 a bushel costs twice what it did six months ago. Dairy farmers can't force the cooperatives buying their milk to pay more, and local banks (often not locally owned) are increasingly hesitant to lend more for farmers' operational costs. Dairy farmers are also consumers, trying to manage the financial crisis like the rest of us. These family farmers, who had viable operations for years if not decades, have little idea how their operations will continue. For the sake of these farmers and a healthy national milk supply, these adverse policies must change.

In 2009, Democratic Sens. Bob Casey and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania introduced the Federal Milk Marketing Improvement Act (S. 1645). It would have allowed dairy farmers to cover their production costs, helped maintain an adequate supply of domestic milk, and addressed the unnecessary import of dairy products. This bill would have also bolstered America's rural economy, which is losing pace rapidly as farmers sell their livestock and farms. It has enjoyed broad support among dairy farmers and consumers. Despite this support, many dairy organizations and economists oppose its passage.

American consumers love their milk, cheese, and ice cream. We must counter the mistaken belief that dairy farmers benefit from higher grain prices through higher milk prices. There's absolutely no direct relationship between the two.

I urge all consumers to support us in our efforts to adopt a pricing formula that provides our dairy farmers a fighting chance to stay in business, while assuring the public continued access to fresh, affordable, wholesome, locally produced milk.

President Barack Obama mentioned job creation and innovation in his latest State of the Union address. I suggest he revisit the idea of supporting well-paying jobs in rural communities and fair compensation for our farmers. Exports and trade may sound sexy, but family farmers who receive fair prices for their products can employ more local residents, buy more local goods, support local infrastructure, and help their communities thrive. That's the kind of change we can believe in.

Author Arden Tewksbury is the manager of ProAg Organization, an NFFC member. He can be reached at 570-833-5776 or proagorg@gmail.com.

## Farmers Show Solidarity with State Workers

Fifty-one tractors went to Madison for the Farmer Labor Tractorcade on Saturday, March 12, and met an enthusiastic crowd of more than 100,000. Two manure spreaders also confirmed how rural folks feel about



Farmer tractorcade to Madison - J. Peck photo

the political shenanigans at the state capitol. Contrary to some media pundits, the struggle for justice is NOT over in Wisconsin, and this powerful expression of working class solidarity from Wisconsin family farmers has given many more the heart and strength to stand up for what is right and fair for EVERYONE--not just what is cheap and easy for Gov. Walker and wealthy corporate donors. Joel Greeno later noted, "Grassroots groups have suffered long enough - it's time to get out and hit the streets, everyone!"



For videos of rousing speeches from Greeno, Tony Schultz and other leaders, as well as stories, photos and opportunities to support the efforts, visit the Family Farm Defenders website at:

Support from WI and beyond - J. Peck photo [www.familyfarmers.org](http://www.familyfarmers.org).

## Honoring Worker Sacrifices

Labor leaders, union organizers, historians, farmworker and other advocates met March 21 in D.C. to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire. The 1911 fire at a New York City garment factory cost 146 workers' lives and led to the creation of fire safety laws, revamped building codes and better workplace conditions. Despite advances, working conditions of the early 20th century parallel many struggles that workers across sectors suffer today under big business and corporate control, particularly agribusiness. Much as garment workers were paid "piece rates" for each shirtwaist sewn, farmworkers today are paid criminally low rates for industrial fruit and vegetable harvesting; both practices represent an economic model of efficiency valuing profit and production over worker rights and safety. More than 500,000 children in the U.S. toil in agriculture today, much as pre-teen youth worked in the garment industry in the early 1900s. Additionally, the 1991 Imperial Poultry Plant fire in Hamlet, NC, mirrored the locked-door aspect of the Triangle fire, which prevented workers from escaping. These parallels stress the need for continued reform--and enforcement--of worker safety and rights laws. Labor reps, including AFL-CIO Wisconsin, noted successes that collective bargaining has won for fairer pay and safer working conditions, and the need to support these efforts. An Upper Big Branch Mine disaster survivor ended the day describing the pain he and his community face since the April 2010 tragedy, which stemmed from monopolistic, corporate control over West Virginia mines and their dependents. The event stressed a solution NFFC and all food sovereignty advocates can support: while unifying miner, farmer and worker voices for fair labor practices, demand strong regulations and sound public policy from our government.

## Legislative Briefs and Administrative Actions

### Pigford II Settlement

After years of negotiations Congress approved payment of the claims under the Pigford II Settlement and the Cobell Settlement and it was signed into law by President Obama on December 8. The legislation opens the way for about 80,000 African American families to settle claims against USDA, which are expected to average about \$50,000. This will be a long process as the judge handling the case is expected to hold a hearing on the final settlement before USDA begins its outreach process.

### Food Safety

S. 510, the Food Safety Modernization Act, was signed into law in early 2011. The final legislation included the Tester (D-MT)-Hagan (D-NC) amendment that provides an exemption for direct farm sales for up to \$500,000. USDA and FDA are now implementing the legislation, although some provisions may be subject to proposed agency budget cuts.

### Farm Bill Livestock Title - Proposed GIPSA Rules

The USDA issued new rules to define and prohibit some of the worst corporate practices in the livestock and poultry contracting industries. These proposed rules are under a full-scale attack by multinational packers and poultry processors - both directly to USDA in the form of comments and on Capitol Hill. More than 65,000 comments were submitted by the November 22 deadline. The national Valentine's Day call-in to the White House resulted in more than 3,000 calls urging action. NFFC also co-organized Hill, White House and staffer's meetings in early March to affirm the importance of the implementation of this rule for farmers, growers and ranchers. During the appropriations hearings before Congress, Secretary Vilsack repeatedly stated that USDA will review the 65,000+ comments, analyze the economics and move forward on the rule without opening it up for a new public comment period, despite opposition requests.

### DOJ/USDA Competition Workshops

The 2010 workshops were integral to exposing the issues but action is needed now. On March 29, DOJ took enforcement action to break up the merger of Dean Foods and Foremost Foods (a WI dairy processor) which DOJ had filed in January 2010. NFFC hopes that this action is the first of many to realize their commitment to stem consolidation and concentration. NFFC joined more than 100 organizations in sending a letter to DOJ and USDA calling for action. "...it is clear 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." The record of verbal and written submissions from the year-long workshops - from Iowa to DC - is available for review 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 GE AquAdvantage Atlantic salmon. In late September, Rep. Don Young (R-AK) introduced H.R.6265, which would declare GE salmon unsafe. The bill did not leave committee, but Young re-introduced the bill as H.R.521 when the 112th Congress convened. Mark Begich (D-AK) introduced a companion bill in the Senate (S.230). Both congressmen also introduced legislation that would require mandatory labeling for consumers if GE salmon were approved (S. 229/H.R. 520). Currently, both bills are in committee (the Committee on Energy and Commerce in the House, and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions in the Senate.) For more details visit: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/briefs/ge-salmon-will-not-feed-the-world/>.

### Dairy Policy

We continue to support the principles behind the Spector-Casey bill (S.1645, introduced 2009) and are working on new legislation. This would be similarly based on dairy farmers receiving a price covering their cost of production with a new pricing formula based on the national average cost of production. For more information and updates on legislative proposals, visit [www.nffc.net](http://www.nffc.net).

### Supreme Court's ruling on APHIS and GE Alfalfa

On December 23, USDA issued the environmental impact statement (EIS) in response to the Supreme Court ruling on GE alfalfa that requires APHIS to conduct an EIS prior to the approval of any genetically engineered crops or livestock. Despite major public opposition during the one-month comment period, USDA's January 28 approval, or de-regulation, of GE alfalfa opens the way for its sale and use in the United States. NFFC joined the Center for Food Safety in filing a lawsuit to halt its use, following a legal strategy similar to a successful halt of its sale in March 2007. For more information: <http://usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2010/12/0667.xml>

### 2012 Farm Bill

NFFC continues to be engaged in discussions on various titles of the Farm Bill, and will encourage the Senate Agriculture Committee to hold hearings on credit and rural economic issues and the need for a fair pricing system for all commodities and dairy. Most likely Congress will not begin the actual re-writing of the farm bill until 2012, although discussions are underway and some changes driven by federal budget cuts may be included in the budget and appropriations process.

### Fair Trade

Congress will likely vote on the US-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS-FTA) under fast-track rules before June 1; House leadership has mounted pressure to consider the Columbia and Panama FTAs then, as well. NFFC remains strongly opposed to all FTAs based on the NAFTA-style model and supportive of the principles reflected in the TRADE ACT, introduced in the past two congressional sessions with 151 co-sponsors in the last (111th) session. Just prior to the winter meeting NFFC leaders met with a Korean peasant delegation from La Via Campesina, visiting the U.S. to voice their opposition to KORUS-FTA.

### Child Nutrition Reauthorization

President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act on December 13, 2010, capping a two-year effort to reauthorize and strengthen the nation's nutrition assistance programs for children. The legislation will increase meal reimbursement rates for the first time in 30 years, ease program access so more low-income children can be fed and simplify paperwork for participants and administrators alike. A major victory for NFFC and CFSC was the first-time inclusion of Farm to Cafeteria as a mandatory program providing a competitive grant program modeled after the Community Food Projects. The proposed regulations have not been issued and the first year's funding is not expected until 2012.

### Upcoming Legislative Dates to Remember

Spring Recess: April 15-May 1: contact your legislators at home!  
May Recess: May 13-20: House/ May 27-June 3: Senate  
July Recess: July 1-11: House/ June 24-July 5: Senate  
August Recess: August 5-September 6

### Powder River Basin Resource Council - WY

Wyoming and energy production have a long history together, one impacting the land and its people and another sustaining jobs and state finances through good and bad times. A variety of oil and gas plays, the largest collection of surface coal mines in North America, in-situ uranium (underground chemical extraction), and now wind energy, have affected private and public lands and resources in this arid, mountainous state for over a century. Since the first major boom in the 1970s as the state faced a foreign oil embargo, WY ranchers and city folks joined to create the PRBRC in response to major coal development and power plant construction that changed the landscape and the Wyoming way of life.

The coalbed methane (CBM) play beginning in late 1990s is one of the biggest energy impacts occurring to the state in its 120-year history. CBM is obtained by pumping water from Wyoming's abundant coal seams and releasing the bound natural gas. Over 6.6 billion barrels (42 gallons/barrel) of discharged water have been pumped out for CBM since 1998. These huge amounts of "waste" water are disposed down draws and tributaries, over crop lands and pastures. The highly saline nature of most discharges have destroyed agricultural lands, soils and crops with salt-loading, direct flooding and erosion. Thunderous gas compressor stations and the intense building of thousands of miles of roads, power lines, pipelines and related infrastructure across the arid Wyoming landscape continues today.

Some 60,000 CBM wells have been drilled since the beginning of this play. With energy dollars driving the Wyoming economy and job market, regulators and decision-makers are reluctant to fulfill the wishes of many landowners and PRBRC seeking "responsible development" of mineral resources and protection for agricultural operations.

Case in point is the "Agriculture Protection Policy" put forth by the WY Department of Environmental Quality in 2004. PRBRC and its members have worked tirelessly to put some teeth into a rule to truly protect existing uses, such as grazing and haying, downstream of CBM development. The policy remains toothless as regulators shy away from responsibility and succumb to political pressure of an energy-run state.

A durable and well respected organization, PRBRC continues to assist landowners with surface use mineral development agreements, lobbying of decision-makers in congress and in the state legislature, with occasional legal action and on-going oversight of state and federal agencies that often seem bound and determined to serve the mineral industry first.

PRBRC members continue to have a determined vision of the Wyoming we want for future generations. This includes family ranching and farming operations that have continued through depressions, low cattle prices, and long winters to live as independent producers in rural communities across Wyoming.

*(Contact organizer Bill Benseal at [billb@powderriverbasin.org](mailto:billb@powderriverbasin.org) or visit [www.powderriverbasin.org](http://www.powderriverbasin.org) for more info.)*

### Community Farm Alliance News - Kentucky

CFA emerged from its highly successful December annual meeting with a fresh sense of its power to affect change in farm and food policy at state and local levels. Early in January, CFA members faced an early test when a KY House of Representatives bill was filed to change the composition of the State Board of Ag (unit within KY's Dept. of Ag that writes administrative regulations) by giving a permanent seat to the KY Farm Bureau and by drawing seven of its voting members from the commodity groups with the highest cash-receipts from the previous year. We stopped this bill from being passed this year. Two Senate bills merged this session concerning the fallout from the eastern livestock collapse; however, neither of those bills could muster enough support in the

House to pass. Both livestock marketing and standards of care will continue to be big issues for KY agriculture in the future. CFA has had several significant changes recently: longtime leader Martin Richards is the new director as of November; and Kaycie Len Sparrow announced in February that she would be leaving CFA after nearly five years to spend more time with her new family. We are excited to have Martin on board and are sorry to see Kaycie Len leave—she will be missed dearly for all she has given to CFA. In February CFA also elected new officers: Tricia Houston, a Gallatin County farmer in northern KY, will serve as President; Adam Barr, previous President, will serve as Secretary.

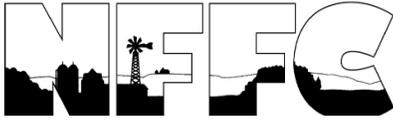
*(Tim Mayer, CFA lead organizer, can be reached at [timcfa@bellsouth.net](mailto:timcfa@bellsouth.net); see [www.communityfarmalliance.org](http://www.communityfarmalliance.org) for more info.)*

### MFSI's Food Sovereignty Symposium - OK

Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative hosted their Third Annual Food Sovereignty Symposium, February 18-19, at the Mound Building located on the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Tribal Complex in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Speakers included noted journalist and nonprofit management consultant Jackleen de La Harpe; Extension Outreach Specialist and President of Kiowa Native Farms Randall Ware; Lead Coordinator for DINE, Inc. Jamescita Peshlakai Pawnee Nation Corn Seed Restoration Project Keeper of Seeds; Deb Echo Hawk Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry; Farm to School Coordinator Chris Kirby; Muscogee (Creek) Nation Exercise Program Manager Duane Meadows; President of the OK Farmers and Ranchers Chris Jackson; Permaculture Design Consultant and Educator on traditional land management Louie Hena; Wilson Project Farmer Barton Williams; Organic Farmer Luke Fisher; OSU Extension Horticulturist Sue Gray; Director/Founder of CASA del Llano Lydia Villanueva; MFSI Youth Coordinator Cassandra Thompson; and Ecological Resources Manager and Ethnobotanist of the Chickasaw Nation Steven Bond. A surprise guest speaker was Koahnic Broadcast Corporation Acting Associate Producer Darla Antoine, from Albuquerque, NM, who discussed preserving our heritage through our recipes, and a livestock panel on grass-fed beef consisting of Ann Wells, DVM, Mike Everett, Ruby Tucker and Mike Oakley.

Between sessions, attendees enjoyed fitness activities, vendor booths and bidding on items in the silent auction. MFSI staff did a great job of creating a learning atmosphere for those gathered. The small crowds gave the event a classroom atmosphere and attendees were able to address speakers at the end of each day during a panel Q&A session. The traditional meal, prepared by Mary Harjo and family, was delicious. During lunch, many attendees commented on the great food and went back for seconds. All in all it was an improved symposium over last year, even with the lower attendance. There was a small amount of youth participation, however, next year will have a few more youth-oriented sessions. Media from Oklahoma Horizons attended the proceedings, as well as native college media outlets from across the nation to learn more about food sovereignty and its impact on local food systems. Visitors from across the nation attended the event, from Portland, OR, to Albuquerque, NM, to Washington, DC. "On behalf of the Muscogee Food Sovereignty Initiative I want to express my deepest appreciation for those taking part in our recent Food & Fitness Symposium held at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation," said MFSI Executive Director Darrell Fox. "It took a united effort from everyone to pull off an event of this magnitude. The information shared was informative, and thought-provoking. Our speakers did an excellent job in conveying their specific areas of interest. The staff at MFSI went above and beyond the call of duty and I sincerely appreciate their efforts." Plans are underway for next year's Agenda so mark your calendars for another informative meeting.

*(Rita Williams, MFSI Education and Policy Coordinator, can be reached at [rwilliams@mvsokokefood.org](mailto:rwilliams@mvsokokefood.org); visit [www.mvsokokefood.org](http://www.mvsokokefood.org) for more info.)*



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## First Class

**Support Family  
Farms!**

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### Book Reviews

**John Kinsman - Diet for a Hot Planet by Anna Lappe'**

It is easy for me to find some fault in much of the material I read. This was not the case reading Anna Lappe's Diet for a Hot Planet. It is a very well written book in which she details the crucial role our personal and global diet plays in the climate crisis. Anna's documented research covers the costs of food, both the obvious and the hidden, from its origin to our dinner plate. Over a period of many years I have interacted with many of the fine individuals and entities detailed in her book, both in this country and in other parts of the world. Their remarkable sustainable models are reversing desertification while producing more food than the unhealthy environmentally destructive industrial farm models. Several years ago I met Anna when she and her mother, Frances Moore Lappe', visited my farm during their writing of Hope's Edge. Frances has been a friend since we shared a panel presentation at the University of Notre Dame almost 30 years ago. Each of us can make a significant difference in combating climate change by how we eat. I wholeheartedly encourage you to read Diet for a Hot Planet. Our friend Anna lists the NFFC in a section of the book titled, Acting and Learning Resources. Are we putting enough action into her expectations of us? Not only can a responsible diet be a major solution to global warming, it can also be a major factor toward global prosperity and peace.

**Jessica Luna - Growing a Garden City by Jeremy Smith**

Jeremy Smith recently discussed Growing a Garden City at a D.C. event hosted by NFFC and local/fair food allies. Garden City chronicles the rise of urban farming in Missoula, MT--a Rocky

Mountain town of 68,000 where one in five residents experiences poverty. Despite short growing seasons and economic hardships, Missoula is a thriving example of "agriculture-supported community" in which farms and gardens surround and uplift its neighborhoods--or as Smith says, "...a community bound by local food and farming." The book showcases Missoula's diverse voices, compiling personal narratives from people benefiting from growing food. Stories vary from a farm caretaker donating to an area food bank to single mothers witnessing transformation in their lives--and eating habits--from gardening. Students of all ages, grandparents and others gather near gardens to source fresh food and enjoy the camaraderie. Entwined with these stories, Smith explains how each aspect--Community Gardens, Community Education, Student Farming, CSAs and Farm Work Therapy--can be recreated by any community trying to feed itself. In growing food together, we connect to the earth and to each other to defy the corporations seeking to depersonalize our food supply, dictate the lives of growers and damage the earth with GE food. Through our interdependence, we can find solutions to many of the crises we face.

### Upcoming Events:

April 17 - Day of Action; see page 3 for event details  
April 22 - Earth Day - Check local groups and media for events  
June 11 - CAGJ's annual dinner with keynote speaker Aba Ifeoma, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network  
June 16-18 - NFFC Summer Meeting in the Northeast  
August 10-16 - Sedgwick, ME - FFMF hosts the first US-based La Via Campesina youth camp