

Community Alliance for Global Justice Teach-in:
“Confronting the Food Crisis: Cultivating Just Alternatives to the Corporate Food
System”
December 5th-6th, 2008 Seattle Central Community College

****Session Notes****

Please note!! We are missing notes from the following sessions:

- How to Access Food Without Paying for It – One Person’s Trash is...
- The Potentials of Urban Agriculture and Growing the Next Generation
- Worker Rights in the Food Economy
- Panel of Local Farmers
- Choosing Sustainable Seafood and Meat — To Veg or not to Veg?

If you took notes during any of these sessions, we’d love to add them to our collection! Please contact fjp@seattleglobaljustice.org to submit session notes. Thanks!

Saturday December 6, 2008 Morning Session 1 10:15-11:45

What Makes Local Just?

Sage Van Wing, CAGJ , BALLE and Locavores, Facilitator; Viki Sonntag, EcoPraxis; Laura Niemi, Garden Program Manager, Seattle Tilth; AJ Hess, Madison Market, Tammy Morales, Acting Food Policy Council

Viki Sonntag, EcoPraxis

- Centralized food economy is unjust
- What is different with the local food economy compared to industrial agriculture?
- Who owns the business, is it grown locally? In the Puget Sound alone, a 20% shift would mean an increase of a billion dollars locally
- What are the local food economy business practices and is the structure different?
- A web of relationships, rooted in "place". Buying from people you know, having an economic relationship.
- How do we meet the demand for locally, justly produced food when the volume is so low? How can we sustainably grow

Tami Morales, Acting Food Policy Council

- Grounded in the belief that everyone should have access to local, healthy food
- Working around economic justice and environmental justice (Local food action committee, procurement policies)
- Access to urban land for Local Farms Healthy Kids Bill - Farm to School Program
- Sound Food Report: food security issues; transit, access to healthy food
- Policy addresses social and economic disparities
- How do we make sure farmers are able to make a living at this work while making sure lower income people are able to access their products? Purchasing decisions; there are trade-offs.
- Stay involved, engage in the legislative process, the political process is intended to be democratic.

AJ Hess, Produce Manager at Central Market

- Sustainable, just food practices, affordable prices
- Making local food affordable for members while being a sustainable business; "cheap" food while workers and farmers receive livable wages. Buying directly from farmers and larger distributors.

Laura Niemi, Seattle Tilth

- Balancing the needs of working families, fast food while keeping it sustainable.
- Agriculture in the city; composting, no pesticides (organically)
- The Garden Hotline, hands on learning-growing your own food, causes ripple effects. Respecting food while you're growing your own.

Questions:

- 1) How do we grow the local food economy, while keeping it relationship based? Tax credits, fighting horse farming, starting with your own community
- 2) How can the community help people who don't have access to land, time, ability, money get access to fresh local food?
- 3) How do we ensure local foods are sustainably priced, while still supporting local markets and farmers?
- 4) How do we avoid the 'elitist' label?
- 5) How do we ensure farm workers are treated justly?
- 6) How do we distribute to everyone knowledgeable about gardening, composting, organics, local food, etc?
- 7) How do you teach others? How do you learn from the community?
- 8) Who is "they"?
- 9) How do we remove barriers to urban farming?
- 10) How do we volunteer our skills to local farmers?

Toward an Anti-Oppressive Food Politics

Bill Aal, CAGJ and Tools for Change - Facilitator

Introduction: share with large group

- names
- what did you eat growing up?
- what is your *comfort food*?
- where is your home town?
- was the food *close to home*?

Food (small group discussion)

- where did my folks come from?
- how did they get here?
- what did they do for a living?
- what's one strength & one thing that holds me back from *the family/cultural heritage*?
- Urban v. Rural food systems
 - access to food differs with space
 - ideas of what food is and where it comes from
- Role of Heritage
 - can offer strength & support
 - conflict can be a catalyst for seeing issues and ameliorating
 - education: past roles and relationships with food (farmer, servant, worker)
- what are various heritages we belong to?
 - culture, family, ancestors
 - communal
 - autonomous
 - individual
 - generational
 - landscape
- What attitudes do we have/take from our families and culture about where food comes from
 - money provides options in quality/quantity
 - variable visibility of food system
 - grow: land and time
 - store: lesser quality = less money
- why do some people go hungry and others not?
 - injustice: money assumes some people live a lower quality of life
 - ability to *eat together*
 - no waste/no excess
 - we can try to engage children with *appreciation for food*
 - privilege through wealth allows access to food
 - media: starvation/famine appeal for *lesser countries*
- what is *eating*?
 - can/want/should
 - budget

- social activity: food & family
- grounding: also acclimating to new spaces through the *food culture of home*

Barriers to access (big group discussion)

- access to food varies geographically
- how do people come to have new tools?
- we can empower people thru knowledge of the system and alternatives to the system
- sacrificing heritage (roots) to modern (context)
- building community can central around family food values
- adapting to new consciousness (rethinking food system) by seeing family values
- navigating the system
- how do you link food to *heritage*?
- how do you diverge and recreate and resist for *new food ways*?
- understanding to food system is a privilege
- relationship of choices
- we can impact justice
- how can we make it possible for all people to engage in quality of life?

Saturday December 6, 2008 Afternoon Session 1 1:00-2:30

How to Share in the Food System — Buying and Cooking Cooperatively

Noam Gundle, Wedgewood Co-op – Facilitator, Eden Trenor, Wedgewood Co-op; Scott Behme, The Community Food pantry; webster walker, Central Coops's Madison Market

Presenters responded to various questions below.

What are the reasons for living as you do?

- to trust the world and food supply more
- sharing food is a gift
- great community builder
- whole life is one of integrity

Community Food Pantry

- a share costs \$30 or labor equivalent (no financial barriers)
- meals prepared and provided to members, as needed
- 35 people involved
- collective dumpstering provides some of the food
- other food is ordered
- meetings for food ordering and general meetings

How is what you do contributing to sustainability?

- remove middle person in food system
- strengthen community
- skill building in sharing and cooking food – ways to get introduced to various foods, ingredients, and food preparation techniques
- coops observe an appropriate scale and use of resources
- cooperative model
- direct democracy and community based
- promote real elements of sustainable, e.g. locally produced food and Madison Market
- more economical

What are the main issues which cause people to be focused on sustainable food systems?

- climate change
- personal health
- environmental health
- security
- personal and collective power
- creating just alternatives

Varying opinions about role communication and access barriers in promoting collective food buying and sharing. Through “social soil building” projects emerge.

Discussion of how to incorporate food sharing into one’s life

- legitimate creative, alternative models; standard is not normal
- potlucks
- food gardens, p-patches
- splitting a CSA share
- need for guidelines for developing community kitchens and for food sharing

How does the housing collective work regarding food?

- all coop members pay rent plus an amount for food and utilities
- agreements about food acquisition
- shared and private food storage areas in house
- limited shared meals
- sharing of p-patch and home garden - planting, harvest, etc.

Resources:

- Azure Standard - local bulk buying wholesaler of natural foods
- SCALLOPS - www.scallops.org
- Farm to Cafeteria program
- Puget Sound School Garden Collective
- Giving Garden part of p-patch program

Local Hunger, Food Security, and Access to Food

Yecelica Valdivia, UW Student - Facilitator ; Teresa Mares, UW and CAGJ; Michelle Bates Benetua, Solid Ground/Lettuce Link; Branden Born, UW and Acting Food Policy Council; Kelsey Beck, Food Lifeline

Session Objectives

- Group participation
- Learn about local issues with food
- have people leave with ideas of what to do next

Community Food Game Set-up

- Consumers with different economic situations
- Cashiers/organizations/social services in the community
- Consumers will try to access one day's worth of nutritious foods

Food Game De-briefing

- Some families met the 2,000 calories, some did not because they met various difficulties with lack of money, transportation, or assistance from DSHS
- Some people thought the game was very representative of some real-life situations.
- Community services (food banks, soup kitchens, DSHS) are not connected to each other. It was possible for participants to spend the whole day running around town and standing in line and not get anything done in the end.
- Moments for cooperation were great for people trying to meet their 2,000 calories, such as sharing rides, etc.

Local Food Information: what's going on in Seattle right now

- Food Lifeline – distribute food to food banks
- Rising food costs + layoffs + economic crises = unprecedented levels of people going to food banks, many who had never been before
- Still a large unmet need in number of meals remaining to end hunger in Washington

What issues are of most concern now?

- Affordable produce
- Involving all stakeholders
- Collaborative and sustainable efforts

Local efforts you know of/are involved with?

- Lawns to Lettuce
- Food Not Bombs – foodnotbombs.net is national website, Seattle area: scn.org/foodnotbombs

- Community breakfasts at Cascade People's Center
- Gleaning
- Seattle Farm workers Coop

What do you want to do or change?

- More community conversation
- Collaborative/family gardens
- Seattle King County Website – Julia Patterson

Challenging the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

Lucy Jarosz, UW Geography - Facilitator; Ashley Fent, CAGJ AGRA Watch; Carol Thompson, Northern Arizona University; Shana Greene, Village Volunteers

Intro by Ashley (CAGJ)

Background of Gates AGRA project:

- Structural Adjustment led to opening of the markets to powerful orgs like Gates Foundation with little accountability
- advertise “support” of small farmers but in cooperation with powerful international organizations and leaders, who do not protect the interests of small farmers

Village Volunteers

- 75% of Kenyans are farmers and 85% of them small farmers
- small farming can indeed feed the world
- GMO seeds introduced by Monsanto in Kenya depleted the soil of its nutrients and biodiversity and let to run-off into Lake Victoria (now the poorest county in Kenya)
- organic practices are yielding bigger harvests in Africa-bio-intensive organic farming techniques being taught
- Manor house

Carol Thompson

Gates Foundation:

- GMO or not, they are there is to access the genetic wealth of Africa, biotech industry, bio-piracy (patenting by US law, regardless of GMO status)
- GF is not philanthropic because they are investing in money-making projects...training African scientists for farming for profit.
- Forms of Resistance: On the Ground
 - seed exchanges and banks in rural communities
 - to value seed you must use it, insitu propagation of native seeds
 - contrast gene bank in Norway (15-20 years before it must be propagated)
- Forms of Resistance: Legal
 - PIC-prior informed consent-cannot remove seeds, plants, genes from a nation-state with prior informed consent.
 - ABS-access and benefit sharing
- Forms of Resistance: Organizing
 - through shared knowledge and seed propagation
 - trade-unions in South Africa raising questions
 - lobbying of governments (especially during international conferences)
 - Stewardship award has been proposed, but coming from Zimbabwe it is stalled. It would award sustainable farming across the continent.

Discussion led by Lucy Jarosz (UW):

- Top-down development strategy, dependent on technology
- Language is important...“We must feed the world” –Gates Foundation implies missionary goal. Accountability of the language we use.
- Image of Africa as a poor, hungry, unsustainable continent must change
- “Food security”...US defined this as trading African diamonds for American food, the community has coined “Food Sovereignty” which is now being used internationally.
- Local sourcing for nations in Southern Africa that cannot produce their own.
- There is no developed country today that has not had strict trade barriers and protection legislation at some point in their development (e.g. US, Europe, Japan post WWII)...Free Trade Agreements deny developing nations the right to do this.
- Kenya 80% of food is imported.
- Malawi storing grain/corn, WB demanded that they get rid of grain in order to continue to get international aid...the next year a drought hit and people starved. The government then reversed its policy, but handed out GMO and non-native seeds as well as chemical fertilizers to get through the famine year.
- Gates Foundation as well-intentioned but flawed technocratic org. AGRA ignores history and politics. They are using a top-down approach.
- CAGJ, Food First, and the Oakland Institute for AGRA watch info...also Via Campesina.
- Can we ask for Obama-like transparency from the Gates Foundation?
- Green Revolutions
 - 1st America
 - 2nd Asia/India
 - 3rd Africa
- Diseases (cancers, viruses, immune-deficiencies) in nations which have undergone green revolution evidence that this should not be forced on Africa.
- Profiting from feeding people is wrong
- When structures are unequal, conversations cannot be equal.
- Paul Collier on food crisis...if “free trade” was actually free then it would work.
- IAASTD report on possibility for sustainable agriculture.
- Patenting comes from the Anglo-Saxon tradition- John Locke

How Trade Agreements Impact What We Eat

Masha Burina, CAGJ – Facilitator; Cameron Herrington, CISPES; Carlos Marentes, Comite, Via Campesina; Marina Skumanich, WA Fair Trade Coalition

Marina Skumanich

- Trade Policy: What is free trade
 - Free trade is a branded concept. It's the freedom of producers to sell without conditions, limiting tariffs and government regulations
- Problem of food system
 - Free trade is a branded concept. It's the freedom of producers to sell without conditions, limiting tariffs and government regulations
 - Capital system
 - Imposed rules
 - Setup of foreign aid
 - Trade policy
- Issues of global capitalism
 - Deregulation which limit government control
 - Global warming
 - Focus on efficiency of production and not safety
 - Smaller producers/countries are at an disadvantage against larger producers/farmers
- Answers to the issues of global capitalism
 - More connection to have locally solidarity around the world
 - Reinvent trade policy
 - Start to enrich the economy and non market ways to connect to regulate producers

Cameron

- Free trade issues because of global capitalism
- 5 key components of trade policy everywhere
 - Deregulation
 - Elimination of trade barriers, tariffs
 - Privatization of public goods
 - Everyone should specialize on what can be made efficiently in that country
 - Commodification of labor and environment
- Deregulation to access to food
 - In Guatemala the GAT didn't allow labels on food if it changed or reduced the amount sold. As a result reducing laws to prevent alternatives and product labels
 - In El Salvador because of elimination of tariffs on US products sold in El Salvador the cost of US products were lower than El Salvador's products. As a

result the people of El Salvador were forced to buy imported food and products forcing many El Salvador businesses and farmers out of business.

- Privatization of bank loans
 - As a result of increase of loans from privatize banks many rural farms were unable to access these loans because of lack of credit and because not making a lot of money
- Specialization
 - El Salvador is forced out of production of agriculture as a result of not being the most profitable at production of agriculture. As a result they refocus on selling and being a part of other industries. In addition, many of its citizens move to other countries for work
- Danger of these action
 - It pushes El Salvador to global market rules and not to other alternative industries since it no longer isn't a great producer.
 - It pushes noncompetitive markets under

Carlos

- The Global food economy isn't broken, but how it works in capital economy
- Overlook of how surplus has been extracted through time
 - 1500-1800 stealing
 - 1800-1950 trade, colonialism of trade
 - 1950-1970 who produces specific goods
 - 1970-today developmental of techniques through debt
- Comparative Advantage don't always work
 - who produces at a lower/efficient level doesn't take into consideration the effects or environment
 - privatization has distorted or eliminated access in under developed countries
 - trend speculation not demand drives the market
 - access and control to other import increase the use of pesticides and increase yields of production to make profits
 - the increase prices of food are not all from need of food but also to feed cattle not people
 - removal people from land create labor exploitation and eliminates common property. As a result there has been an increase of urbanization in search for work.
- End points
 - Don't be afraid of a capitalist problem because we need to find solution and fix it. We need to figure out its causes in order to introduce plans of resolutions. There needs to be an exploration and discussion of capitalism to see what the problems, hopes, and solutions are.
 - We need to look and derive new trade policy for the current food crisis

- There needs to be collaboration in industries for change to impact capitalism
- Look at the past to not replicate the problems of the past.
- Discussion of Solutions to fix Free Trade and the Global Economy
 - There needs to be a local economy created internationally
 - Create solutions to the free trade problem
 - Combine cultural and economic ideas in the solutions
 - Search for alternative ways of fixing the market so small economies can thrive
 - Everyday people should get into policy making to make changes
 - People can plant food and make local gardens
 - Make specific changes to help the economy and market

Saturday December 6, 2008 Afternoon Session 2 2:45-4:15

Farmworker Victories and Organizing in WA State

Julio Gonzalez, Immigrantes Unidos de Shelton, shellfish worker; Clayton Burrows, Growing Washington; Stephanie Adler, Student Farmworker Alliance

- Oscar Rosales (OR) (facilitator): structure of session will be divided into 3 sections:
 - Introduction and involvement
 - Three break-out sections (farm/labor organizing, immigrant rights and labor rights/organizing)
 - And bouncing ideas from small sessions.
 - UW grad; now Center for Labor Studies researcher at SCCC (Chicano movement, working on archive of labor movement)
- Stephanie Adler: UW anthro student and int'l studies, Student/Farm worker Alliance and other groups
- Julio Gonzalez: Mexico City native, lives near Shelton – for past 8 years. Will talk about his work and participation in community group there.
- Clayton Burrows: farmer in WA State, director of Growing Washington, works for WA State small Farm program, specifically Latino farmers, will talk about projects of his program.

OR: Farm labor organizing (IWW) has been active in state since 1800s.

Farm/Labor arm (ag workers arm of IWW) started organizing in free speech and other movements in 1910s – movement crossed from urban to rural (Spokane and farmworker communities) rose to prominence. Again with activity in Yakima Valley in 1930s, which was one of the most widely known organizing actions outside California in 1933 . Bracero movement in 1940s. Were lots of tension between workers and conditions they encountered – and owners. Workers rose up and engaged in work stoppages. This was only region in entire country that actually saw bracero strikes. So WA has history of resistance farmworker organizing in Yakima became UFW WA state in 1986. Active engagement in community, using organizing as tool for betterment of collective group.

Stephanie: Student/Farmworker Alliance based in Imokalee, FL.

Started in CAW (Latino/a, Haitian and other workers organizing for farmerworker justice – Students joined in solidarity). Organizing model: Education, action and leadership development, Raising consciousness about movement and uniting with farmworker-led campaigns – how can students aid in that struggle and stand in solidarity with you? Leadership development is

building a larger movement through education and making sure students understand solidarity movement and organizing framework. We use idea of solidarity as central idea.

2000 march from Orlando to Tallahassee to talk to governor about conditions in tomato fields in FL and ask governor to address issue. The CAW decided the strategy would be to start campaigns that organized around specific fast food chains – make central demand of 1 penny more/pound of tomato picked, to eliminate slavery conditions in fields. Farmers were locked up in trucks at night and abused in terms of wages, working conditions.

Feb 2001 decided to boycott Taco Bell. Campaign began in April 2001 with students doing nationwide speaking tours with farmers from CAW to tell story about conditions – 30 cities had protests. Campaign continued for four years. Taco Bell agreed to accede to CAW demands, in part because of student solidarity with movement. Students have community presence, power & privilege – they are consumers and students, so they raised their voices in support of CAW.

Huge victory – that's just the beginning. Now making sure that miserable working conditions and issues of workplace slavery are addressed. Now Taco Bell extended agreement – agreed to involve KFC and other fast food chains. Next campaign was MacDonald's and they agreed to demands within one year. Next, Burger King – also agreed within one way. Now – enforce agreements, maybe Whole Foods. Student activism in WA state – actions at local Burger Kings to make sure consumers are aware of farmworker struggles.

JG: I'll describe my work as a farmworker with a company that grows clams and oysters. We work at low tide on boat to ride to other shore where we are going to work. We do it on low tide and we go into the areas where we are going to work. Some of the beaches are very muddy – it's hard to work there. To start work, we have to get on our knees, working with our digger tool. We start to scratch the sand to reach the clams and fill our buckets which, when full weigh 30-40 pounds. They pay us by contract, depending on how many buckets we fill each day. Price depends on what clams get in the area we're in. We usually get 12-15 buckets a day, The low tides are different every day – not always at the same time. We work 9 – 10 days in a row, then rest for 3 or 4 days. In summer it can be hard because of the heat during the day. In the winter, the low tides are at night, so we work then with the rain and dark, wind and sometimes snow, starting at midnight and coming back at dawn. For this we use a headlamp, and it's hard sometimes because sometimes it's hard to sleep during the day, so we really only can sleep well during our days off. The last two weeks, for example, I made half of what I made during May-July last summer, so you can see the work is hard and now it's gotten even harder.

Now I'm going to talk about United Immigrants in Shelton. We formed about four years ago. One of our goals is to unite the immigrant community so they can participate in the things that affect us. Another objective is to keep the immigrant community informed about its rights in

relation to immigration policy. And also to make strong ties with our allies who aren't immigrants, and make a strong community. We have also organized workshops in relation to people's rights re: police and ICE and organized assemblies with police and sheriff's offices. We have also organized assemblies to talk about the importance of having a community center in town. We also have cultural events, El Dia de Los Muertos, which we've celebrated 3 years in a row. We participate in Seattle and Olympia marches and organized marches in Shelton.

Now I'm going to tell you things that have been happening during the past year – immigration activity has increased during the past year. There is an apartment building that ICE has visited three times already. Because the majority of the people who live there are immigrants. I think they have taken more than 30 people from this building and the consequence of this is that the majority of times the men are taken, and wives and children leave behind. We have heard of immigration showing up at stores and arresting people and taking them into custody. Now I can say that most of the activity of immigration officers is in the forest...salt(?), ferns, moss [mushrooms?] are collected. What ICE does in this case is that they park on the road and immigration blocks the roads and arrests workers coming out of the forest with the product they've been collecting. We are here to have a better life and in addition we do jobs that Americans don't want to perform, and we contribute to the economy of this country. I think the government is investing money for more detention centers and hiring more immigration officers rather than investing in solutions – more jobs.

CB: I have some positive news re: immigrant farming community. I'm a farmer by trade and director of five farms (Growing Washington). Most are young farmers (20-somethings) and Latino farmers. I've been touched by the accomplishments of these farmers and am amazed by how much they grow. 2 CSA programs, farm store, state's largest farm-to-school program and other projects. Maslow's hierarchy of needs says that until people get past the basic food and shelter needs, they can't move up. The fact is that most American's self-development rests on back of Latino farmworkers. We're entitled to basic things like food, water; by working together with community of Latino farmers, who are an isolated community – they do not always raise their voice to demand their rights—they are able to move up. Now we guarantee \$15 to \$20 an hour wages. Now these farmers can support themselves and make contribution to community. Collectively helping strengthen farmers – and we see what these farmers are capable of, when what we take for granted is no longer an obstacle for people.

I work with these farmers to build our farmer operations and community work, and I learn how to help the community –it takes time to set up an appointment to get a green card, for example. The way the immigrant farmers are treated is inexcusable. I'm not an organizer or activist, but am with the farmers on the ground every day, seeing how hard they work and how much they accomplish. I'm inspired and it's changed my notion of family and the importance of food. My work has changed the way I see the world. I wish everyone could work with any immigrant

farmer...many people who have come from Michoacan, Mexico, now have a very successful farm in WA.

Breakouts – return to big circle.

1st speaker: how can consumers (not farmworkers or activists) – help raise awareness?

Industrial ag: built on oppression – what is goal of farmworker rights organizers – is it to change system? We talked about solidarity and gave examples of how some organizations are working with immigrant groups and how we can be observers and know what’s going on. We talked about being careful and focusing on changing consumption patterns vs. doing something to change how business is. I can make buying choices and tell my friends, but we talked about the value of looking horizontally for power and sharing stories...the power of talking with each other is great. Maybe as strong as always trying to change the system.

2nd speaker: we talked about ICE raids. People were asking questions about who is benefitting from the current system, looking at that and at what would be the ideal situation. Looked at NAFTA and globalization that forces people the land. We saw challenge of not always framing things as us-and-them...we’re all human beings, we’re all workers.

What would comprehensive immigration reform look like? We were looking at legal issues that arise...we never get to how can we reform the law. Look at when we had slavery....that was a law. Yet we were able to overcome it...we forget there are things that people can do.

ICE has a large detention center near Tacoma. This is happening all over WA state -- they are trying to expand. Already thousands of people are being detained. What does immigration reform look like? There are different classifications: undocumented, refugee status, visas - let people decide what’s best for them. Stop criminalization of immigrants. A subsidiary of Halliburton (privatization of ICE) – these are misdemeanors --- what other aspect of the legal system has a private police/detention system?

3rd speaker: what do farmers want from us (to pay workers and themselves a good wage)?

Where does the pressure come from the consumer to change the oppressive industrial farm system? Is there domestic fair trade? Educating farmer/owners? Collectivization? Organizing communities. How do we hear about the farmworker condition here in WA? (Clayton:

Remember that a label is just a label – “organic” or “free range” can be misleading.) Who is gaining money through these labeling systems? E.g., workers are not benefiting from Starbucks’ fair trade label. Let’s think about affordability and not just creating labeling systems that is a way for people to make money off the labeling system. Reframing as a community conversation and what are the resources a community can bring to change/improve systems? There’s a lot of privilege that certain people may have, but low income communities don’t have the option to buy fair trade. Food justice is all interconnected -- make sure that everyone has that access, autonomy and self-empowerment to grow and buy the food they want.

Carlos: this is a challenge: Look at how immigration policy is something that came out of the Dept of Labor and see that this will have broader impact. Immigrants are only 10-15% of farm labor – there's also processing. Let's bounce off of a more general and more inclusive platform – i.e., we are "workers". We're indigenous people, but all the rest of us are American immigrant descendents.

Julio: You can help our small community in Shelton. So there's a group of allies who are overseeing how immigration behaves when they go out into the community. Thank you to this group – there will be more opportunities to work together in the future.

OR : Thank you.

The Challenge of Improving the Farm Bill — Looking Forward to 2012

Andrea Hermanson, CAGJ –Facilitator; Kelly Horton, Lifelong AIDS Alliance/Chicken Soup Brigade; Kevin Fullerton, Institute for WA Future

Farm Bill Background:

- The Farm bill can impact international trade, environmental preservation, food safety, and the well-being of rural communities
- New Titles in Farm Bill 11, 12, 13, 14 intended to enhance agricultural security.
- Title 14 C.O.O.L (Country of origin labeling) will enforce that all raw animal products such as ground beef but not packaged or canned meats and all produce will have to denote its country of origin in all U.S. markets.

History of Farm Bill:

- Born under the Roosevelt administration, was decided during the Food and Nutrition White House Conference of 1969. The farm bill includes food stamps and WIC programs, as well as funding for environmental conservation and farmer subsidies.
- The conception of the farm bill is thought to have arisen from the fact that during the era it was developed, the U.S. was at war and the Farm Bill supported the war effort by feeding the frontlines by subsidizing U.S. farmers to overproduce.
- The result was after the war, food overproduction funded by the farm bill program had created a massive surplus. This thus benefits international trade because the U.S. can use this surplus for foreign aid programs.

2008 farm bill:

- What's being funded: Biofuel and sustainable production.
- Minority Farmworkers have now more access to funds from bill
- More subsidy for specialty food products.
- The Conservation Stewardship Program which preserves dying land for future use.

More History:

- The farm bill uncapped commodities and manipulated circumstance for benefits. In the past, if you wanted to grow peanuts, you would have to buy a peanut quota at no cost to the tax payers. In 2002, this policy was disbanded and farms became abandoned.
- The Farm bill gave rise to the value added producer grant program. Meaning, a massive percentage of farm bill funding goes to farmers who grow value added crops such as corn, soy, cotton, canola, sugarcane, and wheat. And these producers are usually huge scale producers vertically integrated with a corporate manufacturer, such as Archer Daniels Midland that buys and then processes the bulk of U.S. commodity products. Only 5% of these monies have recently shifted to local, small scale socially disadvantaged farmers, with Latinos being a growing force.

- Kelly, a nutritionist and a Tufts University Graduate in (?) reports that the U.S. agricultural system produces only half of the daily recommended fruits due to farm bill biases for commodities.
- The farm bill heavily subsidizes corn, which is then used for an array of products that are usually unhealthy. I.e. HFCS, sodas, candy, frying oil for junk foods, etc. Obama has chosen Ronnie Cummins for the secretary of agriculture. The secretary of agriculture is allotted 97 billion annually yet Cummins supports the use of GMO's in agriculture and does not speak out against chemically intensive farming methods and agribusiness monopolies.

Solutions:

- Community Food Security Coalition
- Washington Sustainable Food and Agriculture network
- better food choices which avoid commodity products
- pressure the EPA accountable for agricultural chemical pollution
- follow USDA listening sessions and stay informed to what's happening to our food supply and its policies.

The Dangers of Corporate Control, GMOs, and Genetic Engineering

Gabrielle Roesch, CAGJ – Facilitator, Mark Des Marets, NW Rage; Carol Thompson, Northern Arizona University; Devon Pena, UW/Acequia Institute

What is Genetic Engineering?

GE Background

- Genetic engineering is a continuation of and exponential expansion of the domination of life—taking genes from one organism and transferring genes into another organism
- Largely driven by chemical companies (e.g. Monsanto, which owns almost 50% of the seed companies around the world)
- This is an industry designed to boost profits of these companies
- This industry is:
 - immoral
 - unnecessary
 - unsustainable
- There are methods out there that already exist, solutions that can be found that don't have to be patented and controlled by a corporation
- “Genetic engineering is a solution in search of a problem”
- We can never get rid of GE corn, soy beans, cotton, canola—this industry is changing evolution, the genes are heritable, pollen spreads
 - Adventitious presence of GEs in organic foods (accidental pollination—must build buffer)
- Industry likes to say it is precise and regulated, but...
 - Bioballistics (insertion of genes via gold particles to confer resistance to pesticides)—construct has issues: Success ratio is 1 in 10,000—cells are cloned
- Every single Monsanto seed is a destruction of biodiversity—they are all clones!
- Patenting of living organisms needs to stop

Intellectual Property Rights –patenting life

- The US has the strongest laws for patenting life forms on earth
- Started by WTO for patenting microorganisms
- Patenting life is uniquely American
 - 4,000+ human genes have already been patented
- Had to redefine science: 25 years botanists agreed that one gene defines an organism...not only has this been redefined, it has also spilled over into law
- Now we can patent living organisms and call them inventions—most of the rest of the world has rejected this
- “Intellectual Property Rights” are patentable by scientists
- New seeds developed by farmers (who get their “hands dirty”) cannot be patented
- WTO hasn't been able to expand this particular approach to law—US government promoting notion that one gene defines a plant

Corporate Control vs. local

- Corporate agriculture tries to environmentalize itself—say it is sustainable
- Definition of sustainability has been broadened to include biotechnology in the mainstream
- Link between venture capitalists, biotech startups, and universities allows these practices to expand and continue
 - Major role of the university—promoting biotech startups
- Biotech lobby tries to say it will be the solution to global warming!
- Genetic modification of food began with the origin of agriculture—difference between GMOs and GEOs—done naturally (thru cross-pollination etc) vs. transgenics
- Crossing species boundaries, crossing phylum—this does not happen naturally
- This becomes an issue of oppression and exploitation as well: e.g. “Frankenrice”—recombination of rice and human genes—tested on indigenous people in Bolivia and Peru
 - You may not eat rice, but you will eat the processed supplements on granola bars, sport drinks, etc.
- Contaminating people, land race contamination
- Resilience of native plants—maybe the transgenics will be weeded out?
- This is like a “biological Chernobyl”, this is a human rights issue—violation of indigenous right of sovereignty—*biocolonialism*—extinction of land-based, place-based culture
- Must link ecocide and ethnocide in order to challenge current structure
- Everything you can do with transgenes you can do with permaculture, other practices
- We need to be aware that there is a great deal of agro-ecological diversity
- Capitalists like to use environmental crises as a way to make a profit—this is disingenuous; wants to profit from what they created

Main talking points at the Council for Responsible Genetics:

- Precautionary principle—there is no precaution anymore!
 - Everyone is ingesting genetically engineered crops... precautionary principle is thrown out the window: they say—prove to us that it is unsafe
- Uncertainty in terms of health issues/outcomes
- The right to know and label/boycott (this is insufficient—doesn’t end horizontal gene transfer)

Where are the resistance movements?

- This is the biggest human experiment on the planet—without even allowing a consensus
- Focus: Sheldon Crimpsky—relation between biotech companies, universities, and venture capitalists—need to disrupt this
- We need to rekindle the “peasant struggle”—recreation of agricultural lands—must refuse land to corporations that use genetic engineering
- Develop new meaningful strategies—help farm workers become farmers
- Acknowledge that there has been success—consumers wouldn’t buy it, producers wouldn’t produce it (in Africa)

- In response: the US government is forcing it on indigenous peoples: through trade agreements—no restrictions on marketing, production, and research of GMOs; South Africa walked out on FTA for southern Africa
 - US food aid—world food program recognizes that donors don't have to label—genetically modified grains are being planted from food aid
 - *Production and consumption didn't work—forcing thru trade, paid (philanthropy) and aid
 - *Philanthropy—Gates Foundation is supporting through grants
- One gene codes for one protein codes for one heritable trait: DOESN'T WORK—we only have 26,000 genes—based on Watson and Crick's theory—the basis of this science is fundamentally wrong
 - We are impacting evolutionary biology in ways that we don't understand
 - Agroecological and permaculture practices already exist: we don't need to rely on genetic engineering to remove nitrates, heavy metals

Are we (anti-GE proponents) creating a dichotomy? Us VS Them—not allowing a dialogue

- That question should have been asked 25 years ago when this technology was first used—but it was not.
- Deeper view of the organism—organisms cannot be engineered
- These practices are examples of epistemological violence!

2nd frontier of biotechnology

- Recombinant technologies bringing human and plant genomes together

How do you know what contains GMO?

- Certified organic is non-GMO
- 54-55% corn GMO
- Canola 70%
- 90% cotton
- 80% of foods with multiple ingredients will have GE

Agrofuels and GE

- Growing crops for agrofuels=not efficient
- Genetically engineered algae is being presented as the next biofuel (environmentalized version of biotechnology)

GE and Africa

- African continent is talking about a moratorium on biofuels; no land is available on the continent of Africa until the food deficit is taken care of... but huge lands are being bought

Action: What can we do? Where do we fit in?

- We must all become producers (not just consumers), restore local food systems, this weakens global commodity chains
- Encourage labeling, boycott GE products
- Call companies and inform them of your choice to boycott GEOs
 - e.g. 50% of the sugar in the US is going to be GE—every company has email or website—ask companies if they use GE ingredients
- Obama has an executive of Monsanto on his science advisory board: use your voice, share your concern—change.gov is a place to start

Info/Organizations on GE

- Beyond Biotechnology—written by people from the Nature Institute
- Washington Sustainable Food & Farming Network (WSFFN)
- Wash BAC
- NWRAGE
- (2008) ETC group: Who Owns Nature? Corporate Power and the Final Frontier on the Commodification of Life.
- Grain.org—documents land-grabs around the world

Summary of Main Issues with GE:

- Unsustainable, unnecessary, immoral
- Landownership
- Trade agreements, Gates Foundation (trade, aid, paid)
- Council for Responsible Genetics
- Label/boycott
- No patents on life
- Indigenous sovereignty
- Bio-colonialism
- Disrupt corporate control
- Commons
- Farmworker to Farmers