

**IN THIS ISSUE**  
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**Advancing the right to food**



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I just returned from the University of Vermont’s fourth annual Food Systems Summit, entitled *The Right to Food: Power, Policy, and Politics in the 21st Century*. The right to food is often misunderstood as meaning that a government has the obligation to feed its people. Instead, in our capitalism-based world it is the right of people to have unfettered access to food, and more specifically to feed themselves. Three remarkable keynote speakers hammered this point home.

Lawyer, activist, and human rights expert Smita Narula delved deep into the conference theme by speaking to the foundation for considering food as a human right while noting that the U.S. has dragged its feet on this issue, making more advances in civil and political rights than in economic and social rights that include the right to food. Berkeley conservation biologist Claire Kremen made the case for agroecology as a commonsense response to Earth’s biophysical constraints to the right to food. And *Stuffed and Starved* author Raj Patel suggested why the medicalization of food by adding vitamins (“nutritionism”) is not the route to solving the issue of widespread hunger.

From additional panel speakers we heard about New England’s lofty goal of supplying 50% of its own food by 2060; case studies of agroecology projects and working with smallholder farmers in Central America to adjust to climate change; and a remarkable program run by Vermont Youth Conservation Corps called the Health Care Share that includes a CSA operated with paid youth trainees in which shares are actually prescribed—and are free of charge—to limited-resource patients who have health issues related to weight and nutrition (see <http://www.farmatvcc.org/>). The patients pick up their shares at their doctor’s offices. While the long-term financial model for supporting this innovative approach to addressing two community issues (youth work development and health) will be an issue, this kind of multisectoral problem-solving offers a welcome and fresh example.

But one of the most powerful moments for me actually happened the evening before the conference, when organizers hosted a dinner gathering at the Intervale Center in Burlington. It was at this event that I

met several very thoughtful and eager law students and young attorneys who were participating in the conference, since the Vermont Law School was cosponsoring this year's Food Systems Summit.

As we ate dinner together and chatted about issues it occurred to me how the right to food will require their guidance and perhaps activism to move forward. Furthermore, it dawned on me how attorneys and legal experts are needed now and will be needed as time goes on in related food systems work: land use, farmland protection, alternative land ownership arrangements, labeling, place branding, food systems labor negotiations, international food treaties, trade negotiations, interstate commerce law, right-to-farm law and farm-neighbor relations, environmental regulation, food product liability, and minimizing litigation in all of the above through mitigation and mediation. With its Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, the Vermont Law School is now one of the leading institutions with a focus on legal aspects of food systems, and it is exciting to think we'll soon have a cadre of attorneys who will be able to put their shoulders to the wheel of the food movement.

I like to think JAFSCD covers many of the topics discussed at the UVM Food Systems Summit. In this open call issue, we begin with a focus on economics. Two of our columnists focused on topics at the core of their respective wheelhouses. In his "Metrics from the Field" column, **Ken Meter** introduces *Two New Tools for Measuring Economic Impacts*, and in his inimitable fashion our Economic Pamphleteer **John Ikerd** addresses the question, *Can Small Farms Be Sustained Economically?*

The first paper in this issue, published through JAFSD Open Choice (publicly available), is by **Danielle Lake, Lisa Sisson, and Lara Jaskiewicz** and entitled *Local Food Innovation in a World of Wicked Problems: The Pitfalls and the Potential*. In it the authors examine how an urban food project's ability to play a social "bridging" role in the community is hampered by a top-down development approach—and yet exhibits potential.

Next we offer a coincidental triptych of papers on community supported agriculture. In *Defining the "C" in Community Supported Agriculture*, **Jennifer Haney, Michael Ferguson, Elyzabeth Engle, Kathleen Wood, Kyle Olcott, A. E. Luloff, and James Finley** ask operators and members of four CSAs about what community means to them and find some interesting differences in perception that can be valuable to CSA operators and supporters who are trying to manage member turnover.

**Ted White** takes a candid look at the image and the realities of CSAs and offers constructive criticism in *The Branding of Community Supported Agriculture: Collective Myths and Opportunities*.

In the third CSA-related paper, entitled *From Bread We Build Community: Entrepreneurial Leadership and the Co-creation of Local Food Businesses and Systems*, **Matthew M. Mars** offers an in-depth case study of a community supported baker whose entrepreneurial leadership has served the local food community well through collaboration beyond the baking business.

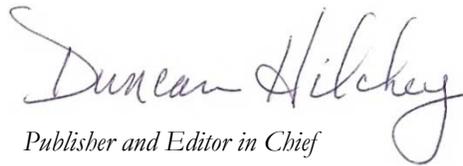
Next, **Sherrie K. Godette, Kathi Beratan, and Branda Nowell** find that formulaic approaches to food systems work are likely to struggle in *Barriers and Facilitators to Local Food Market Development: A Contingency Perspective*.

*Building the Capacity for Community Food Work: The Geographic Distribution of USDA Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program Grantees*, by **Keiko Tanaka, Erica Indiano, Graham Soley, and Patrick H. Mooney**, shows that the U.S. Southeast region is not as competitive in securing its share of CFP grant funds as other regions and suggests ways to remedy the problem.

Also focused on the Southeast, **Libby Christensen and Rita O'Sullivan** apply social network analysis to food systems work in North Carolina as a way to model trends in collaboration, in *Using Social Network Analysis to Measure Changes in Regional Food Systems Collaboration: A Methodological Framework*.

Our final paper of this issue is the *Potential of Local Food Use in the Ohio Health Care Industry: An Exploratory Study*, by **Brian Raison and Scott Scheer**, who identified the key factors that inform hospital foodservice directors' decisions to purchase more local food.

Wrapping up this issue are three book reviews relevant to the global right to food movement. **Angela Gordon Glore** reviews *Sustainable [R]Evolution: Permaculture in Ecovillages, Urban Farms, and Communities Worldwide*, edited by Juliana Birnbaum and Louis Fox. **Matt Hess** reviews *The Third Plate: Field Notes on the Future of Food*, by Dan Barber. Returning to the critical role played by the law in food system innovation, **Rachel Pilloff** reviews *The Intellectual Property and Food Project: From Rewarding Innovation and Creation to Feeding the World*, edited by Charles Lawson and Jay Sanderson. 

  
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