

THE FOOD GAPS

- × **Hunger, food insecurity and record SNAP (food stamp) participation**
- × **Overweight, obesity, and diet-related illness**
- × **Low-wage economy**
- × **Lack of food democracy and community engagement**
- × **Food deserts and food swamps (over 29 million people affected)**
- × **Climate Change**

A LITTLE HISTORY...

- × **1948 – Pres. Truman creates School Lunch Program due to high rejection of undernourished military recruits in WW Two.**
- × **Leading cause of military rejection today: obesity**
- × **1961 – JFK's creates the food stamp program in response to poor political showing in farm states**
- × **“I was...stunned seeing children staring at walls...because they weren't getting food. [They] were literally dying....” Army captain testimony before Senate Select Comm. on Nutrition (1970)**
- × **“I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident hit it in the stomach,” Upton Sinclair on *The Jungle*. Public more concerned with meat sanitation than immigrant worker conditions**

MEASURES OF FOOD INSECURITY & HUNGER

- × **2013: Total food insecure – 14.3%; 5.6% very low food security; 49 m. people total**
- × **2000: Total food insecure – 10%; 3% very low food security.**
- × **2004: SNAP (food stamps) - 25 m. (7%);**
- × **2014: 47 m. (15%) – (\$75 b. annually; 52% of infants receive WIC)**
- × **L.A. Food Bank: 32 m. lbs. of food – 2000; 60 m. lbs. 2011.**

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/>

OBESITY & DIET-RELATED ILLNESS

- * 30% of Americans obese today; 13% in 1994; 17% – 20% for children (Harvard Poll: 75% view obesity as a problem; Pew Poll: 60% want gov't to intervene for children); rates higher with racial and ethnic minorities**
- * Food aid recipients – 33% diabetic, 58% high blood pressure; general pop, 10% and 31%**
- * Public health advances in sanitation and immunization undercut by unhealthy eating**

FOOD INSECURITY AND OBESITY

- × Food insecure people eat half the servings of fresh fruits and vegetables, and fiber that are eaten by food secure
- × Too many processed food companies competing for fixed amount of “stomach real estate;” Industry spends \$4 B. annually marketing unhealthy food to children
- × Dr. Yum: “Food is Medicine” – 70% of her child patients have a diet-related illness.
www.doctoryum.com

CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD, AND FARMING

- × **Climate change responsible for unpredictable crop yields – 60% of U.S. in drought (2012)**
- × **Agriculture and deforestation = 25% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and 80% of water use**
- × **Global food demand (meat): CA ships alfalfa to China = 100 billion gals of water/year**
- × **11,000 gals of water per ton of veg; 145,000 gals per ton of beef; replacing 50% of avg. animal product consumption with plant products reduces individual water footprint by 30%**
- × **Local, grass-fed beef – 300 food miles; conventional beef – 5,340 miles (there are cost, elitism, social justice issues – but poor eating more processed and packaged food = cheap, unhealthy, and more GHG)**

HUNGER RESPONSES: A MIXED BAG

- × Food assistance (poverty management) takes priority over poverty; 15 separate USDA food nutrition programs**
- × Social contract redefined: more private assistance, less public; more charity, less justice; “Ikea Effect”**
- × Food banks dominate public awareness; 0 food banks 1979; 206 today;**
- × Olivier DeSchutter, Special Rapporteur for the United Nations...**
- × Washington Post – Nov. 2007**

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY

- × **Focus is on the food system**
- × **Develops capacity of local communities to meet a greater share of food needs**
- × **Promotes justice, equity, and sustainability in the food system**
- × **Based on collaboration and citizen participation**
- × **Nurtures a local economy (food 2nd or 3rd largest economic sector)**
- × **Impact as a “means” is greater than an end (e.g. \$1.3 B. direct local food sales)**

EMERGENCE OF MORE EQUITABLE, LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

- × **Farmers' markets (1970 – 340; 2014 – 8,100)**
- × **CSAs: First in 1984; 3,000-plus today**
- × **Farm to School: First in 1996; 38,000 schools (38%) and 21 m. students today**
- × **200 food hubs**
- × **Re-storing Food Deserts: 200 projects (e.g. new supermarkets) under Fresh Food Financing Initiative (PA) and Healthy Food Financing Initiative (U.S.)**
- × **Food policy councils: First in 1987; over 200 today**
- × **Policies and Programs Connect Low-income to Local Food: WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program; SNAP at farmers' markets, CSAs and food hubs, "Double-Bucks," and several "small" USDA programs, e.g. Food Insecurity Nutrition Initiative**

LOCAL AND STATE FOOD POLICY ASCEND

- × 2,000 cities: 3 food policies/city (MSU survey)**
- × Brooklyn food forum – 5,000; Mayoral food forum – 1,000**
- × Hundreds of local and state food assessments, plans, and charters**
- × Better food access in food deserts**
- × Public transportation (people to the food)**
- × Public procurement favors local food**
- × Urban agriculture and gardening – revamping zoning regs; communities of color engage**
- × Protecting farmland and enhancing farming**
- × Healthy food regs: soda taxes, banning toy premiums and trans-fats, calorie counts**

BUT IS THIS THE WAY TO END DOMESTIC HUNGER?

- * Poverty is the single best predictor of hunger and food insecurity, but we spend over \$100 B. annually on food assistance**
- * U.S. leads the developed world in income inequality**
- * Top 1% took 19% of income; top 10% took 48% of income**
- * Half of all U.S. jobs pay less than \$34,000; one-quarter pay less than \$22,000 (family of 3 eligible for food stamps)**

RAISE MINIMUM WAGE, SET LIVING WAGE

- **70% of U.S. poverty can be attributed to declining value of minimum wage**
- **1968 min. wage \$2.20 = \$10.95 current value**
- **U.S. min. wage - \$7.25; France – 12.22; Australia – 17.39; Canada – 10.00**
- **\$10.10 U.S. min. wage would lift b/w 4 and 6 m. Americans out of poverty and reduce cost of SNAP by \$4.6 B.**
- **If min. wage grew since '70s at same rate as top 1%, it would now be \$22.00**

IMPACT

- × **Food chain workers: largest occupational category (15%) – median wage \$9.65/hr. (only 13% earn living wage); health insurance and sick days rare; most are people of color**
- × **52% of fast food workers receive public assistance valued at \$7 billion/yr. – indirect subsidy for McDonalds, etc.**
- × **Fast food workers organizing for \$15/hr.; Chipotles 2 CEOs each earned \$25 m. or 778 times the company's median salary**

SO WHY DON'T WE TAKE ANOTHER COURSE?

- x Feeding America's 2012 Meal Gap Study: more federal nutrition programs but nothing about poverty or income inequality – Wal-Mart major contributor (\$6.2 b. (est.) in public assistance costs for 2013)**
- x Feeding America is still concerned about losing food donors by rejecting donations of unhealthy food**
- x Food banks donors and board may oppose (or be silent) min. wage campaigns are wages**
- x Food Research Action Center stresses nutrition program funding, not poverty reduction. ConAgra (co-sponsored FRAC report) and Tyson donors**
- x FRAC has opposed innovations in SNAP, e.g. disallowing SNAP purchases of sugary soft drinks.**
- x National School Food Assoc. strongly resists new school meal standards – numerous food corps**

ANOTHER COURSE?

- **Share Our Strength ends childhood hunger by taking millions from Arby's and National Restaurant Assoc. who oppose raising minimum wage and trans-fat bans.**
- **“Anti-hunger groups could play a major role in supporting...economic justice issues. The potential collective power to win social change would be incredible.” Joann Lo – Food Chain Workers Alliance**

CHALLENGES TO TAKING NEW COURSE...CONT'D

- ✗ **AARP hunger report: nothing on poverty but proud of partnership with NASCAR**
- ✗ ***Blueprint to End Hunger (2008)* says nothing about wages or jobs**
- ✗ **\$40 billion (41% more) annually would end hunger (Joel Berg, NYCCA), but...**
 - + - will government ever fund it?
 - + - why shouldn't employers pay higher wages?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- * Funders should redirect grants and donations toward grassroots leadership development and public policy advocacy designed to end poverty**
- * Food assistance programs should be given more leeway for innovation**
- * Labor and anti-hunger **MUST** form an alliance**
- * Food banks should expand healthy food and program options**

RECOMMENDATIONS...

- × **Mazon (Jewish Response to Hunger) expanding healthy food options for food banks**
- × **Anti-hunger groups should educate members and volunteers re: root causes of hunger**
- × **Anti-hunger groups should key their lobbying efforts to anti-poverty efforts**
- × **Funders and others should provide more support for locally based, comprehensive community food security initiatives, e.g. food policy councils; local and state policy responses**

MARK WINNE

- × www.markwinne.com
- × 860-558-8226
- × win5m@aol.com
- × Books: Closing the Food Gap; Food Rebels, Guerrilla Gardeners, and Smart Cookin' Mamas
- × Food policy resources at Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future:
www.foodpolicynetworks.org

