

## **Notes from Food Forum**

### **Workshop: Kristin Reynolds and Linda Shak Integrating Sustainable Food Systems and Public Health**

#### Some of the Workshop attendees:

Food stamp program, Garden educator in Concord, Public health in San Mateo county, Dietician San Mateo public health, Alameda public health nutrition services “healthy eating and active communities,” Nutritionist in Alameda county, Student of public policy at Cal, Planner at public health law program, Alameda county food bank, Cooperative extension in Santa Clara, Social services in Santa Clara, Charles Street gardens in Sunnyvale, SF Dept. of environmental justice, Children’s council of SF, Dept of children and families in SF, Project in Chinatown, Dietetic internship through UC Berkeley, Kristin Reynolds, Linda from prevention institute

#### **What is your vision of a healthful food system?**

- A system which does not deplete the limited resources for generations to come and leaves the environment better than found.
- everyone has access to healthy food.
- people can connect personally with how food is grown
- Easy access to fresh, affordable food that is environmentally friendly
- system that contributes to health of: people, environment, economy
- Access to quality food at affordable prices (community gardens, neighborhood stores)
- people of all ages (infancy to old age) have access to as much good quality food as they need to be healthy
- as much support for local farmers as possible
- processed foods should be unaffordable
- fresh local produce in schools
- connected food system (gardeners, grocers, etc all connected)
- people are engaged with growing food and know that what they eat determines their health
- environmentally friendly system=local
- infrastructure is important to make this all happen
- affordable and environmental--“I hope I’m out of a job”
- cultural appropriateness of food is important
- “organic, sustainable, local, affordable, teaching, community, green, healthy produce”
- access is most important
- no processed junk food should be available
- economical for farmers to grow food and not sell out to developers
- health of people environment and economy
- farmers should be able to take care of their families
- wants to see people have the ability to appreciate foods from different cultures, appreciation should start from youth, fast food industry should incorporate fresh food because we can’t avoid fast food

- if our environment isn't healthful, than we are all going to be sick from our food, so healthy food has to connect to healthy environment
- people should see food as nourishing medicine
- different realms of the food systems should be connected in all ways
- wants to see many stakeholders coming together "many players at the table"

### **Food system—what is it?**

Food production, processing, distribution, retail, consumption and waste  
 Everything that happens from the moment a seed goes in the ground until it gets to the plate

The time is "ripe" to bring this to the forefront of public health  
 "Cultivating Common Ground"—publication about links between agriculture and public health

### **What is most on public health mind?**

- Obesity
- Eliminating processed foods is key
- Antibiotic resistance are often used for non-therapeutic uses in poultry and meat which makes us more vulnerable
- Miles that food has to travel and the air pollution that results
- Risk of food-borne illness (eg. Spinach scare impacted people's perception of organic farms)
- Dangers within farm worker communities—safety for workers
- Use and exposure to toxins (workers, local residents, consumers)
- Public health goes beyond nutrition. Nutrition is only a piece of the puzzle.

### **Small groups—what are the practices we already have in place in our communities that are integrating health and agriculture?**

- Collaboration between Alameda county health department and city of Oakland: already planning a workshop on December 14th for corner store owners on how to expand their model to fresh fruit and veggies, etc. people are coming from SIDA, WIC, panel of store owners, distributors to talk about purchasing collaborative, environmental health folks (but they don't need to get a separate license to sell produce)---40 store owners have already rsvp'd
- full circle program: fresh produce stands at elementary schools (Franklin and Garfield) to sell produce after school hours for the parents, students, teachers, and community—some of the produce is grown by a few people in local community at alameda navy base site and one other site
- farms in Alameda and Sunole will eventually supply food for these stands
- teaching gardening in schools—those gardens could provide produce for a school stand or for snacks for after school programs
- encourage employees to attend farmer's markets and buy their food their
- WIC program clients get vouchers for farmer's market

- promote farmer's market use for low-income families and day care providers—provide tours, taste tests, nutrition education at the actual market sites
- fresh produce is already accessible in Chinatown on the street---empower the local grocers, the mom and pop stores—encourage them to buy local
- “the good neighbor” project: provide incentives to local corner and liquor stores to decrease processed foods in store and stock more produce (Literacy for Environmental justice) 415.282.6840
- SF food systems has funding to bring fresh produce from farmers to school lunch program (vendor for SF schools comes all the way from Irvine)  
Now they've cut out middle men and use “the fruit guys” a company that brings produce straight from the farm
- “second harvest” food bank in San Mateo county has a produce route (instead of just canned food)
- garden based education through school gardens in elementary middle and high schools—connect it up to families, farms, and communities
- cooperative extension encapsulates food system into its vision—how to put agriculture at the center of public health and nutrition?
- efforts to work with young people—experiential eating, gardening
- training youth to maintain community gardens that get certified as organic farms so then they can sell their produce
- 5 a day program promotes fruits and vegetables in schools and stores through posters and recipe note cards and food demos

Challenge: infrastructure and financial support for food system change

Idea: look to where the big players are, the big institutions and buyers

**Farm Bill:** community food projects program gets 5 million dollars

Not a partisan bill because agriculture becomes a regional rather than political issue

Everyone should educate themselves about the farm bill so we can step up and voice our concerns and ideas about agriculture systems

Community food security coalition: [www.foodsecurity.org](http://www.foodsecurity.org)

**Activity:** 5 steps toward a vision of healthy food system

**Focus on “Good Neighbor Program”**

Ideas and action steps:

Store owners need to know there is a market for the goods

Needs to be economic incentives and subsidies to switch over

Have youth trained to work with corner store owners to help public perception and demand for fresh food in the neighborhood

Think about placement of products in the store instead of eliminating certain things

Call state legislators about AB 2384

Toolkit on economic development and health ([www.healthandplanning.org](http://www.healthandplanning.org))

Talk to city and county to investigate and pressure them to fund these trainings and workshops

Aid in the marketing for store owners who are attempting the transition

Connecting schools with corner store owners (because students often go and get their lunches at the corner store)—conduct surveys of students to see what they really WANT to eat and presenting to store owners

Get support groups together to assist the store owners

Get ideas and share success stories from stores in the neighborhood who already do sell fresh produce

Examine the viability of the concept—we all want fresh produce in every neighborhood, but should corner stores really be the place where we focus our energies? Maybe we need more energy on the strategizing end.

Ultimately it's up to the community whether they want these changes