

# Organizing Grassroots To Build the Food Movement

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By  
Ted Quaday  
Santa Cruz, CA

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## Organizing Grassroots to Build the Food Movement

### Introduction

As the year 2012 came to a close, the fate of the federal farm bill remained in doubt. Despite two years of hearings in the field and on Capitol Hill, numerous bill drafts, and on-going leadership negotiations, the legislation remained hung up in a netherworld of ideological differences centered on commodity policy, crop insurance programs, food stamp support, and a philosophical disagreement over supply management in the dairy industry. It didn't help matters that center stage in post-election Washington, D.C. was occupied by continued partisan brinkmanship over budget policy.

Pressure to resolve budget negotiations aimed at preventing the country from plunging over the so-called "fiscal cliff" distracted all but the most dedicated farm bill observers. While the leadership in the House and Senate Agriculture Committees continued to talk about compromises that might — just might — bring a farm bill up for a House vote before the end of the year, the better odds were going to the probability of an extension of existing farm policy. Ultimately, a one-year farm law extension was wrapped into the "fiscal cliff" budget measure, giving Congress until December 31, 2013 to approve a new farm bill. Unfortunately, the extension eliminated funding for key programs highly valued by sustainable agriculture advocates. Some conservation programs were cut, as was research support for specialty and organic crops, cost share certification for organic producers, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer programs and farmers market promotions.

While this high political drama grabbed our attention and fueled our frustration over apparent paralysis in the halls of power, when all is said and done, those who dedicate themselves to advocating on behalf of healthful food, a healthy environment, and economically viable farms and ranches have to wonder what all the posturing and pontificating have to do with sustainability. Unfortunately, the answer seems to be: not much. That's because sustainable farm interests, with

few exceptions, are marginalized in the farm policy debate.

In the \$300 billion dollar 2008 farm law, conservation programs made up roughly nine percent (\$27 billion) of the total. In the 2012 iteration of the bill, both the House and Senate targeted conservation programs, which serve as the core elements of the sustainable agriculture platform, for \$6 billion in cuts. Clearly, the sustainable agriculture message that an environmentally friendly and healthful food production system is in the nation's long-term health and economic interest has not caught hold on Capitol Hill.

There are two principal reasons why this is the case. Many critics of the current system point out that well-heeled agribusiness interests wield undue influence in Washington. On both sides of the political aisle, agribusiness helps bankroll congressional campaigns. The Center for Responsive Politics reports that during the 2012 campaign, the chair of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK), received \$736,992 in agribusiness support while the chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), gained \$729,226 in contributions from similar sources. Other members of the agriculture committees were also acknowledged and supported, though not at the same financial levels, by agribusiness. It is hard to imagine that such financial largesse would not engender some level of allegiance when politicians gather to determine policy. For those in the agribusiness arena, commodity policy and its effect on the price of food processing raw materials such as corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, and sugar are of primary concern. It's no mystery why legislators dedicate so much time and energy to commodity policy, and why they have routinely voted to continue crop subsidies.

Then there are the lawmaker's constituencies to consider. Farm state lawmakers typically play a dominant role on the agriculture committees. The Midwest, the South, Northern Plains, and the

Western states are well represented in these bodies. These are also the country's major commodity production areas, and whether lawmakers are Republican or Democrat, they are tuned in to what the farmers in their districts are telling them. For generations, most commodity producers have argued for federal programs ensuring them reliable income regardless of weather and market price fluctuations. Sustainable farming advocates have long held that federal subsidy programs have distorted markets, driven overproduction of certain commodities, and encouraged environmentally abusive production practices. While these arguments appear to be gaining traction in a relatively limited sphere, the reality is that they remain only marginally persuasive in the broad political arena. Even in a time when it appears the Congress may actually take a heavy hand to some parts of the commodity price support structure, that action will be taken primarily as a budget-cutting move rather than as a philosophical shift toward support for more sustainable production methods.

So what is the sustainable agriculture movement left with in the political calculus of 2013 and beyond? Will it be forced to accept incremental change over decades? Can it, and does it want to, call that victory? Many of those working to build a more sustainable food production system would answer no to these questions.

The nation's heavy reliance on industrial methods of food production will continue to take an environmental and health-related toll. The stress we exert on our soil, water, air, and our own health is not simply a year-to-year phenomenon. It is a cumulative burden, one that adds greater and greater challenges as each growing season passes. Soil quantity and quality are in decline. Water quantity looms as a bigger question every year. Water quality is a question mark as well. Our production practices have led directly to the fouling of major waterways and the creation of the Dead Zone in the Gulf of Mexico. In Iowa and California, nitrates derived from agricultural fertilizers contaminate well water and render it undrinkable. Misapplied pesticides place the lives

of many in danger. We know our health, the health of our families, and the health of the environment are all at risk if we fail to gain, in a timely way, constructive change.

So, if the sustainable agriculture movement is ready to acknowledge that what it has done in the past is not working (or not working well enough), what must it do in the future to achieve victory? That is a complex question, and one that, broadly considered, is outside the scope of this inquiry. Our focus here is grassroots activism. Are there steps the movement can take today to organize its citizen base that may help it gain the political power required to effect real change?

Over the longer term, a shift from industrialized food production to a more sustainable model may be forced as much by cultural change as by policy change, but the two go hand in hand. Ultimately, the marketplace can be expected to respond to consumer demand. As more and more citizens make the values choice to buy organic, or free-range, or wild-caught, or pesticide free or any one of dozens of other more sustainable production models, producers, processors, and retailers can be expected to try to provide those choices. But a dramatic federal policy shift in support of sustainability in food production will help encourage and hasten those needed cultural and marketplace adjustments.

Unfortunately, without pressure from the citizenry, our elected representatives will likely act as they always have: by responding to the financial interests that support their political campaigns and to those constituents with the most influence over voters in their districts. Given that the sustainable agriculture movement is not likely to have the financial resources to compete with agribusiness anytime soon, its best option is to work district by district and state by state to build a popular voice influential enough to be taken seriously by our political representatives. To begin, the movement needs larger, stronger, state-based grassroots organizations that recognize this need and are committed to creating change by working to build real political power in Congressional districts.

The movement needs to engage people at the grassroots level. It needs to involve people who care about their health, the health of their families, the environment, and their working conditions. It needs to help them understand and embrace the idea that the production of and equitable access to good, sustainably-produced food is a central element of the effort to build a healthful and healthy society.

As the movement works to expand the base of people who place value in knowing how their food is produced, where, and by whom, it must also engender a commitment to work for political change. In short, if the movement is really dedicated to making policy change in Washington, it needs to embrace grass roots organizing as a means of unifying the popular voice in support of sustainable food production. If it fails to recognize this need, and to act on it, the sustainable agriculture movement can expect to continue occupying a seat on the margin in the on-going debate over federal farm policy.

## Executive Summary

In February 2012, the Nell Newman Foundation commissioned a research paper focused on grassroots organizing in the food movement. The Foundation sought information on the availability of training opportunities for food movement organizers and commissioned the Santa Cruz-based firm of Quaday and Associates to conduct a series of interviews with food movement activists, grass roots organizers, and others to learn more about training capacity. Participants were interviewed on the following primary topics:

- Among existing grassroots organizer training programs, is there a need for and a capacity to appropriately train community organizers dedicated to advancing the food movement?
- Is there a need for a comprehensive community organizing training program focused on farm and food issues?
- Could any of the existing training organizations reviewed expand their training capacity to answer food movement organizing needs, or is a new organizing entity focused on food and farms required?
- Should a new training module be created that could be made available to grass roots organizations seeking to train organizers on food related issues?
- If a specific training program designed for food movement activists is needed, what are some options for creating and delivering the training to prospective organizations or activists?
- If new training tools are needed, could they be housed on a website and made universally accessible to interested activists?
- What role do you see emerging social media playing in grassroots organizing activity?

Through our inquiry, we learned that the food movement is gaining in strength in the marketplace and in the political arena, but that it remains a relatively minor player in both realms. We learned, as well, that this weakness can be credited, in some measure, to a lack of effective power-building at the grassroots level, which indicates a need for more and better efforts to bring local activists together to push for political change.

With the need for grassroots organizing clearly identified, we turned attention to organizational capacity, and learned that there is deep training capacity around basic political organizing and power building, but that there is a gap when it comes to trainings focused on farms and food. Nearly all the activists we talked with said there was a strong need to add farm and food issues to basic grassroots training capacity and that success in our efforts to gain positive policy change around food issues was dependent on the food movement's ability to organize and build power at the local level. Relationship building focused on broadening the political base to support food policy change was also cited as a strong need.

Questions concerning the best means of delivering grassroots organizer training for the farm and food activist community brought mixed responses, some suggesting farm and food issues could be added onto existing organizer training programs, while others said those programs may not be flexible enough to allow that approach. Adopting an internet-based strategy, using social media, webinars, and web pages as educational tools had resonance with some, and others suggested using training DVDs in addition to the time-proven approach of face-to-face training workshops. Some organizers pointed out that web-based activism, while gaining acceptance, remained a little understood vehicle for advocacy, and they suggested more training on the use of new media tools in their work.

One concern expressed by a number of activists was a question of commitment to building political power as a strategy in pushing for policy change. A number of those we talked with said there are only a handful of organizations in the country right now that are committed to and actively pursuing grass roots organizing to change the food system. They underscored their belief that this strategy is crucial to any hopes of making real progress on Capitol Hill, and they suggested identifying and supporting a strong core of groups that could serve as models and trainers as other organizations adopt this strategy.

Based on our conversations, we arrived at the following conclusions:

- Training grassroots organizers in the food movement is essential, and adding strong understanding of farm and food issues is a positive step toward creating real change.
- There is plenty of basic organizer training available, but there is a gap on farm and food issues, and existing training programs would be pressed to provide the add-on farm and food issues orientation.
- Creating new farm and food oriented materials to be delivered via new media and through more traditional face-to-face workshops would help support grassroots activism.
- Efforts are needed to build broader coalitions with non-traditional allies as a means of deepening the political strength needed to push positive change in the halls of power.

Based on our interviews and conclusions, we make the following recommendations:

- Support organizations dedicated to building political power on farm and food issues through grassroots organizing and back their efforts to train other like-minded groups.
- Support the creation of educational training materials to be used in face-to-face workshops and delivered through web-based new media sources like websites, webinars, and social media.
- Support an inventory of farm and food issues materials and organizer training documents and help create a web-based distribution system that includes an on-line training program.
- Support efforts to train and engage non-traditional allies in farm and food advocacy.

To help frame our recommendations in the context of possible projects that could be supported by the funding community, we developed a framework for six project concepts that are offered as conversation starters in the effort to formulate a way forward in continuing to build the grassroots movement around farms and food. Those projects include:

1. *Grow the political base through grassroots organizer training and organizational support --* An intensive grassroots organizer training project.
2. *Develop a unique food and farm issues training curricula and train organizers --* Develop materials and support organizer training.
3. *Seed change through organizational support --* Build grassroots activism within existing groups.
4. *Create a Food Change Organizing Center and Information Clearinghouse --* Create a web-based training and information center.
5. *Develop Farm and Food Movement New Media Training --* develop and deliver training in how to use new media to build political power.
6. *Build political collaborations that promote Farm and Food Movement goals --* Support the convening of working groups consisting of non-traditional allies interested in networking and coalition building, with the aim of developing a national farm and food policy agenda.

We hope this new information, our observations, conclusions, recommendations and project ideas are useful to the Foundation as it continues its work related to building the farm and food movement. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute.



## Research Method

In February 2012, the Nell Newman Foundation commissioned a research paper focused on grassroots organizing in the food movement. The Foundation sought a variety of views on whether or not community organizer training for food movement activists was needed and readily available. As our principle source of information, we agreed to rely on direct contact with individuals involved at various levels with grassroots training and activism both within the food movement and within the broader community organizer arena.

We conducted 30 recorded telephone interviews of between 40 and 60 minutes in length during the period of March 14, 2012 to May 14, 2012.

We conversed with representatives from nine organizations whose primary purpose is to provide community organizer training. These groups and individuals included: Cindy Kang at Green Corps, Joe Chrastil and Mike Gecan at Industrial Areas Foundation, Erik Peterson at Wellstone Action, Andy MacDonald at Public Interest Network, Sue Chinn at New Organizing Institute, Judy Hertz at Midwest Academy, Beth Newkirk at Organizing Apprenticeship Program, Mehrdad Azemun at National People's Action, and Megan Swoboda at Ruckus Society.

We talked with representatives from another six organizations that combined training programs with grassroots activism. These groups and individuals included: Mark Schlosberg at Food & Water Watch, Anim Steel at Real Food Challenge, Nikki Henderson at People's Grocery, Pat Sweeney at Western Organization of Resource Councils, Kari Carney at Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, and Mark Schultz at Land Stewardship Project.

We talked with another eight individuals serving primarily as grassroots organizers for their organizations. These individuals and organizations included: Sriram Madhusoodanam at Corporate Accountability Project, Simone Senogles at Indigenous People's Network, Monica Cordova at Southwest Organizing Project, Hai Vo at Live Real,

Jeanne Merrill at California Climate and Agriculture Network, Steph Larsen at Center for Rural Affairs, Ryan Nagle at Service Employees International Union, and Udi Lazimy at Organic Farming Research Foundation.

We also spoke with five other individuals who were either intent on creating grassroots training activities, or engaged in web-based activism. These individuals and organizations included: Bill McKibben at 350.org, Dave Murphy at Food Democracy Now, Liz Johnson and Leigh Adcock at Women, Food and Agriculture Network, and Matt Sayre at University of Vermont. We also spoke with Celinda Lake at Lake Research Partners. Lake is a prominent pollster and political analyst who has dedicated time to working on food and farm related issues.

The principle questions we put to the interviewees included:

- Among existing grassroots organizer training programs, is there a need for and a capacity to appropriately train community organizers dedicated to advancing the food movement?
- Is there a need for a comprehensive community organizing training program focused on farm and food issues?
- Could any of the existing training organizations reviewed expand their training capacity to answer food movement organizing needs, or is a new organizing entity focused on food and farms required?
- Should a new training module be created that could be made available to grass roots organizations seeking to train organizers on food related issues?
- If a specific training program designed for food movement activists is needed, what are some options for creating and delivering the training to prospective organizations or activists?
- If new training tools are needed, could they be housed on a website and made universally accessible to interested activists?
- What role do you see emerging social media playing in grassroots organizing activity?

By their nature, one-on-one interviews are subjective and highly nuanced. Each interviewee provided a very personal perspective that served to shed light on the overall inquiry. While enlightening and useful in identifying a variety of interests and points of view, this approach, by its nature, is highly sensitive to interpretation. If the goal had been to provide a definitive breakdown of the state of grassroots training and the needs and interests of all those working at the grassroots level to advance the food movement, a more comprehensive and systematic survey of the field might have been employed to generate hard numbers related to program duration, trainings offered, costs, and participation by farm and food activists. The primary goal of this report, however, is to provide a broad view of the field in an effort to identify key issues for funder consideration. The interview survey can be relied upon to provide that. The organizations contacted and the activists interviewed are among the leaders in their respective fields of action. Their comments are strengthened by field experience. They provide valuable insight into the ongoing needs and challenges faced by those working to build a truly sustainable food system in this country.

*Section One***Gaining Perspective on the Food Movement**

By all appearances, interest in and activism around food and farm issues is growing exponentially. These days, when food and farms come up in casual conversation among people who have dedicated decades to promoting sustainable farming and healthful food, one will often hear remarks suggesting we are experiencing a phenomenal surge in popular interest. More and more people are taking up the good food cause, promoting local, organic, and sustainable food to their schools, hospitals, and other institutions as well as in their own homes.

In the spring of 2012, California activists launched a ballot initiative to place warning labels on foods containing genetically modified ingredients. In just ten weeks, the group gathered nearly one million signatures in support of the measure<sup>1</sup>, and though the initiative was ultimately defeated at the polls, more than six million Californians voted to label GMOs. In mid-May 2012, the Jamie Oliver Foundation sponsored an international Food Revolution Day to draw attention to the joys of cooking and consuming “real” food. That effort alone produced 1,400 events in 660 cities around the world.<sup>2</sup> Taking a cue from the Occupy Wall Street Movement in the fall of 2011, activist organizations launched a parallel campaign to Occupy the Food System with rallies on Wall Street and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Even the US Department of Agriculture is getting into the act with its “Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food” initiative emphasizing local production. These examples represent only a handful of recent developments that illustrate building momentum around interest in who is growing our food, where it’s being grown, and how.

Some have advanced the notion that a new food movement is emerging. They say the movement has the potential to dramatically shift our food system away from the industrialized model that has dominated over the past 60 years. In its place, they

see a more natural approach capable of yielding environmentally friendly and healthful food that can sustain food producers and consumers over the long term.

**Origins of the emerging food movement**

There are hundreds of organizations sponsoring thousands of events involving millions of people that have contributed to this rising interest. Public dissatisfaction with commodity subsidies to large farms is well documented.<sup>4</sup> Opinion polls indicate that a majority of people believe on-farm conservation measures are sound ways to ensure long-term productivity and a cleaner environment.<sup>5</sup> Food contamination reports in peanuts, cantaloupe, tomatoes, leafy greens, and other food products in recent years have intensified consumer fears over a highly-centralized food system. Animal welfare advocates speak out against inhumane treatment of farm animals. Nutritionists and public health officials warn that poor eating habits contribute to obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other food related maladies. Medical practitioners worry that the over-use of antibiotics in the industrialized animal production system will create resistance that will render some drugs useless in treating human illnesses. New websites, blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds focused on various aspects of food and farming appear with such regularity that it’s a challenge to keep up with the new entrants to the field let alone process the enormous flow of information provided by these reporters, commentators, advocates, and practitioners.

In speaking with younger activists, it’s clear that Eric Schlosser’s 2002 expose *Fast Food Nation* and Michael Pollan’s 2006 book *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, along with Robert Kenner’s 2008 film *Food, Inc.* played key roles in awakening their interest in the dangers of a food system run amok. Older activists point to the increasing influence of the organic movement in the 1990s and the USDA’s implementation of a full set of national

organic standards in 2002 as seminal moments in the evolution of public awareness concerning food quality, production methods, and the negative environmental and health impacts of the industrial food production model.

Reaching further back, it's clear that the farm crisis of the late 1970s with its heavily-publicized tractorcade and farmers march on Washington, D.C. and the credit crisis of the mid-1980s, which spawned the first of the Willie Nelson Farm Aid concerts, contributed to widespread public knowledge of problems in rural America and of the need for policy changes to ensure the survival of the family farm. Even earlier, the back-to-the-land movement of the mid-1970s and, in the 1950s, the beginnings of the sustainable agriculture movement with its emphasis on conservation and environmental and economic health can be counted among the first seeds of an emerging "re-visioning" in our way of thinking about farms, food, and our future.

Each of these developments, and many others over the past 50 to 60 years, have contributed to our evolving understanding of our food system. Today, those seeds have sprouted and now thrive in what has become an extraordinarily diverse field of individuals and activist organizations that are advancing positive food systems change. So, by all appearances, there is a growing movement with new awareness among the general public and it is clearly gaining momentum. But is this movement making itself felt with significance in the economic marketplace or in the political arena?

#### **Where is the movement having impact?**

In the marketplace, there are signs of positive change. The Washington, D.C.-based Organic Trade Association (OTA) reported in November of 2011 that 78 percent of American families are choosing to buy at least some organic food and that nearly half are doing so because they believe organic is more healthful for their families and the environment.<sup>6</sup> The OTA's 2012 Organic Industry Survey revealed that the U.S. organic industry grew by 9.5 percent in 2011 — reaching \$31.5 billion in sales.<sup>7</sup>

In his March 7, 2012 testimony before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, USDA Secretary Thomas Vilsack told committee members that "Local food is one of the fastest growing segments in agriculture, with direct consumer sales doubling in the past decade to reach close to \$5 billion in 2008. More than ever, consumers are interested in where their food comes from and are seeking out a connection to the men and women who put food on their tables. Buyers in every sector of the food system have increased local food purchases, and conversations between farmers and consumers are taking place every day in every part of the country."<sup>8</sup>

Availability and consumption of local and organic foods are among several key concerns of the burgeoning food movement, and while there is obvious interest and plenty of growth, these two marketplace segments, combined at roughly \$32 million, still only comprise a little over 2 percent of overall U.S. food sales, reported at \$1.5 trillion in 2011 by Plunkett's Research, Ltd.<sup>9</sup>

On the farm side, the Organic Farming Research Foundation reports that in 2011 there were 14,500 certified organic farms in the U.S.<sup>10</sup> With a total of 2.1 million farms in the country, organic producers represent less than one percent of the total. While the number of organic farmers has steadily risen over the last decade, they remain little more than a footnote among all food producers.

Farm numbers and retail sales figures provide two measures of where the food movement stands in its effort to transform the food system. One could bemoan the fact that the movement, while clearly gaining momentum, is still woefully behind in terms of farm numbers and food sales when compared with the conventional food system. Another analyst might look at the same numbers and conclude that the movement has tremendous room for growth. The increasing interest in farms and food among the general public represents an inviting opportunity to increase influence in both the marketplace and in the political arena. Federal and state policy changes could help encourage more farmers to transition to sustainable and organic production while employing food and nutrition

programs to expand market opportunities for local farmers and increase access to good, healthful food in all communities.

**Politically, the movement remains weak**

But the farm and food movement's record in the political realm is spotty at best. True, it was able to move approval of the Federal Organic Foods Production Act in 1990, and it has made incremental progress in building a conservation component in federal farm programs, but progress has been slow. In 2012, Congress debated yet another farm bill, the federal legislation which is enacted every five to six years to set farm and food policy. In a brutal budget year, the movement, led by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, staked out a defensive position, seeking to maintain funding for key sustainable agriculture programs rather than pushing for funding increases to grow programs it worked to build over several farm bill cycles. There may be no alternative in this difficult economic climate. However, it is not unreasonable to contemplate the possibility that a stronger food movement, with more focused and determined organizations in communities, more activists in the grassroots, and more dedicated champions in the halls of power, could exert meaningful political pressure and gain the wins necessary to keep the food movement growing not only in the policy arena, but in the marketplace, and in farm fields as well.

**Public opinion holds promise, but organizations come up short**

Public opinion pollster Celinda Lake, president of Lake Research Partners in Washington, D.C., is one of the few public opinion analysts who has dedicated time to thinking about the political opportunities presented by the food movement. Lake says polling data show "off the charts" concerns over food safety, large majority interest in country of origin labeling on food items, and an overwhelming majority of voters supporting hormone free milk and labels on food items containing genetically engineered ingredients.<sup>11</sup> She says people have made clear they want the government to step in to mandate change.

"Food is one of the areas where people would like to see greater regulation, even in this anti-regulatory arena, but you've got much greater power, more organizational clout on the side of agribusiness than you do on the side of food safety,"<sup>12</sup> she says, adding, "You'd think it would be pretty easy to organize, but in fact, it hasn't been done. They (good food interests) have been beaten back pretty easily by the industry."<sup>13</sup>

Lake says there are clear gaps in the food movement's political framework. It's too diffuse, for one thing, and it lacks a well-crafted narrative that people can understand and rally behind. In addition, there's a lack of organizational capacity, and a failure to link and build power through allied organizations. Lastly, she says, the movement has failed to connect policy demands to political consequences.<sup>14</sup>

"There's no agenda that says: We need to do these three things. There's no political agenda that says: If you vote against these three things you are a bad person, and we're going to run against you on it, and we're going to beat you on it. There's no political connection; there's no PAC; there's no voting record; there's no campaign. ... So you don't have the political legs for this that makes for accountability in Washington,"<sup>15</sup> says Lake.

Lake's is a harsh but valuable critique because it's provided by a political insider with strong credentials and no direct ties to the food movement itself. It is an evaluation echoed by veteran community organizer Mike Gecan, author and co-director of the Industrial Areas Foundation. Gecan says his organization has been looking at opportunities to engage in organizing around food issues in a handful of states. He admits to having limited personal understanding of farm and food issues, but he says a record of political set-backs and losses should prompt a period of self-analysis, reflection, and evaluation.

"It's kind of like the Chicago Cubs. After a while you just gotta figure out what's going wrong here? I mean, we can keep playing and losing, people will come to the ballpark, but it's not a lot of fun, and it sure doesn't get you that much,"<sup>16</sup> says Gecan.

From his “outsiders” viewpoint, Gecan says there are some obvious reasons that good food interests have not consistently gained political ground.

“They’re seen as marginal, you know, ‘hippie’. In the cities, they’re seen as kind of high-end, luxury, not part of the political landscape. They’re not for real yet,” he says, adding that “... they are so far inside their own legitimate struggles and worries, they think everybody is kind of lining up to help them. So I think the farm community and the organic farm community ... are isolated and self-isolated: isolated by their enemies, ridiculed, marginalized, but also self-isolated, not doing what we call a power analysis, figuring out who is out there. Are there those kinds of institutions in the country? Where are they? How do we reach them?”<sup>17</sup>

Community organizer Steph Larsen is a veteran farm policy activist who worked with the Community Food Security Coalition during the 2008 Farm Bill debate. She now works as assistant director for organizing at the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska. She too expresses dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of food movement strategy. Speaking as the bill was emerging from the Senate Agriculture Committee in the spring of 2012, Larsen expressed concern over its direction.

“I want to be careful here because the draft bill just came out of the Senate Ag Committee, and the Conservation Stewardship Program still exists. That’s important. Lots of the programs we fight for would have just ended up tossed in the garbage if not for those folks who are working tirelessly on the farm bill. But in order to make any progress, you have to have grassroots people in numbers to overpower the dollars that Monsanto can toss into the lobbying effort,”<sup>18</sup> says Larsen.

This record of defensive positioning and marginal victories raises a number of questions about how the food movement can or should reorient itself to achieve clear victories.

Here are some of the suggestions contained in these critiques:

- A period of self-evaluation is indicated.
- More grass roots organizing is needed.
- A stronger effort to identify strategic partners and create strong alliances is required.
- A cohesive and convincing narrative is essential.
- If the movement truly hopes to achieve its vision of a sustainable and just food future, it must be capable of ensuring that elected officials understand there will be political consequences for failing to support the kinds of changes required to re-orient the American food system toward a more sustainable food future.

Additional public opinion polling and more focused use of opinion data also seems warranted. National opinion polls conducted over the last several years support Lake’s views on key issues like food safety<sup>19</sup> and labeling genetically modified foods<sup>20</sup>. As reported above, other polls and surveys reveal opposition to on-going subsidies to commodity producers in some circumstances, and strong support for conservation programs. A comprehensive “meta-analysis” of public attitudes concerning food, health and farms<sup>21</sup> was conducted by the Frameworks Institute in July 2005. That data, while valuable in providing historical context, is likely in need of an update in 2013. Still, basic opinion polling is not enough. Efforts are needed to more widely circulate polling data among interested organizations and additional support is needed to aid organizations in transforming opinion data into messages that can be persuasive in public outreach and education initiatives.

#### **A new generation rallies around food**

As challenging as the political environment is, there appears to be a particularly positive note for the food movement. It comes in a rising interest among a new generation of activist organizers. Front and center in this youth movement focused on food is the group Live Real.<sup>22</sup> Live Real is a dedicated cadre of individuals working to unify and amplify the food movement among young people seeking to reshape the food system through what they term policy and practice. Hai Vo is the

fellowship coordinator with Live Real. In the spring of 2012, Live Real launched an organizing initiative called “Bring Healthy Back,” seeking to get members and others to pledge to abandon junk food for 30 days and eat only “real” food. Vo says Live Real is not necessarily about building a new organization, but about building a community of young people who are doing food work and who want a place to come together to share ideas. He estimates roughly 1,500 young people are affiliated with the group at present, but he sees tremendous potential for growth. “There’s like tens and hundreds of thousands of young people who are already doing good work out there on food. How do we start bridging them?”<sup>23</sup> he says.

The Real Food Challenge<sup>24</sup> is another bright spot in the youth food movement. Launched in 2008, it is affiliated with the Live Real project. The organization works with student activists on campuses across the country to push for food reform in campus cafeterias. Anim Steel directs the project, and he’s enthused about the level of interest and participation among students. He says in 2011 the group had 1,400 students attend its Real Food Summit meetings around the country and 35,000 others who participated in Real Food affiliated events.

Another focal point for touching base with youthful activists and folks interested in food organizing is the environmental activist training program Green Corps. Cindy Kang is a former executive director at Green Corps. She says that based on her experience interviewing college-aged candidates for the Green Corps training program, she sees a huge potential organizing opportunity around farm and food issues. “One of the things we ask is: What issue are you passionate about? What gets you excited these days? I would say in the last three to five years, food has been one of the top things we’ve been hearing about.”<sup>25</sup>

*Section Two***Capacity Matters – Identifying Training Opportunities**

Opportunities to receive training as a community organizer abound in the U.S. We talked directly with representatives from 16 organizations engaged in training community organizers. Many other groups offer similar programs providing basic and advanced trainings for people interested in grassroots activism and organizing. Each has its own particular emphasis. Some, like Wellstone Action, are heavily invested in training potential political candidates and giving them the tools to develop effective campaign organizations. Others, like Food & Water Watch and Green Corps, have a stronger consumer or environmental slant. Some, like the Industrial Areas Foundation emphasize housing, health, and other social justice issues. Land Stewardship Project and Western Organization of Resource Councils, two regional activist organizations, dedicate significant resources to work on food and farm issues, along with other work on environmental, and social justice matters. These organizations all approach their training programs guided by a “theory of change” that incorporates the belief that in a democracy, organized citizen action is essential if there is any hope of countering the undue influence in the public policy arena of corporate interests and individuals with extreme wealth.

Judy Hertz, executive director at the Chicago-based Midwest Academy, says: “What we tell organizers is that a lot of people, a majority of people in this country, feel very discouraged about their ability to make any changes, and when you feel discouraged about your ability to make change, it’s rational behavior to try something else. Where are you going to be effective in your life? So, part of the job of the organizer is to persuade people that it is possible to make change, give them the experience of making change to give them a sense of their own power; to see that it can be done and that it matters.”<sup>26</sup>

Sue Chinn, program director at the New Organizing Institute, put it this way: “Our theory of change is basically that given the right training, tools, and a community of support, everyone can make a contribution to making change. So that’s our overall approach to our training, and our tools, and technologies.”<sup>27</sup>

**Varied training formats available**

Training models are nearly as varied as the organizations offering the training. In terms of time frame, prospective trainees can find discrete, half-day workshops on most any organizing topic from using social media in an issue-based campaign to the best approach to conducting one-on-one interviews when doing grassroots organizing. Many full day sessions are offered. A number of organizations provide trainings that run from three to five days in duration. Some, like Green Corps, provide more in-depth opportunities to learn. Each year, Green Corps identifies a group of roughly 24 trainees and provides them with classroom and in-the-field learning opportunities that extend over a 13-month period. Others offer similar approaches in a six-month framework. Quite often, trainings of this duration include internship opportunities with existing organizations where trainees get a chance to run real campaigns and benefit from mentoring and repeat returns to the classroom to review and evaluate the material being learned.

**Trainings cover the organizing bases**

Regarding subject matter, there are definite commonalities among the training organizations. Developing a strong campaign requires, among other things, identifying organizational leaders that can drive the movement. It is also necessary to create a sound strategy and set clear, achievable goals. It is crucial to identifying persons in positions of authority, the key decision makers, who can make a difference on the issue at hand. Recruiting and managing volunteers, creating databases, managing messaging and media relations, and creating compelling events that will draw people in



are all essential elements of a strong grassroots organizer's tool kit. Existing training programs generally work to impart these skills, giving organizers the basic skills they'll need to be effective in the field. Among the individuals we spoke with who had received such training, the view is that this basic set of skills, once mastered, can be successfully applied in nearly any campaign. Additionally, training recipients were universal in assigning high value to the organizer trainings they'd received.

Jeanne Merrill, policy director at the California Climate and Agriculture Network, is a 1995 graduate of the organizer training program offered by Green Corps. Merrill says of the training she received: "I think it was fundamental. I learned a ton. A lot of those skills I continue to use today."<sup>28</sup>

Mehrdad Azemun, field director with Chicago-based National People's Action, received a variety of trainings from organizations like Midwest Academy, Industrial Areas Foundation and the New Organizing Institute. He, too, says he highly values the training he has received. "I had a fundamental understanding of power, and that power really is the end goal. I understood that at least in an open society, the best and most effective way for normal people without vast monetary resources to build power is to build relationships, and I understood how to build so-called 'public' relationships. I got campaign tools, and got to understand what a campaign was, and how one could move them to win particular issues,"<sup>29</sup> says Azemun.

*Section Three***A Farm and Food Training Focus**

While making clear that training to master an organizer's basic tool kit of skills would equip one to organize on almost any issue or in any political campaign environment, virtually every organizer we talked with who is currently engaged in working on sustainable agriculture issues suggested that specific training approaches focusing on farm and food matters could add real value to the training experience. Each interviewee had a slightly nuanced take on the subject. Each was clear in saying that while a focus on farms and food had little role to play in grasping the basics of grass roots organizing, such training could be valuable as an "add-on" set of informational tools to increase effectiveness.

Mark Schlosberg, organizing director at Food and Water Watch put it this way: "You need to learn about whatever issue you are working on, so you can talk about it and mobilize people on it. But the basic skills like how to get people organized, how to get people mobilized, how to execute specific tactics and build a campaign, those are basic skills that any organizer should learn whatever issue they're working on."<sup>30</sup>

Yet, as evidenced in Schlosberg comment, the organizers were also strong in stating that as an "issue" discussion in the context of a broader training framework, a focus on food could help energize organizers while aiding them in making stronger connections and more persuasive arguments within the farm and food constituency as well as among other people who have not yet joined the movement. Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement (Iowa CCI) is a grassroots based organization that has sent its organizers to trainings with groups like National People's Action, but has also developed and implemented its own training programs for members. Kari Carney, training and membership development director at Iowa CCI, says the organization has focused on bridging gaps in understanding between urban and rural constituencies and has seen a merging of

issues around farms and food as beneficial in generating community activism.

"One of the things we've noticed over the years is that since we started to focus on connecting the dots, connecting urban folks with rural folks and connecting their issues ... what we've seen happening from that is we've really expanded people's thinking. More people are willing to step up and take action on issues that they might not have felt were relevant in the past,"<sup>31</sup> Carney explains.

Hai Vo is a young activist who works in Orange County, California and serves as fellowship coordinator with Live Real, an organizing project launched four years ago which is focused on encouraging collaboration among young people working in the food movement. Live Real's aim is to increase movement strength by unifying activists. Though just 25 years of age, Vo is a veteran organizer and has participated in a number of training programs including some focused on food-related issues. The food-related trainings, he says, were particularly valuable.

"It lent itself to allowing us to focus on an issue, and therefore be able to focus on a campaign to move forward. Those trainings were also more beneficial because they allowed spaces for us to think about how food connects to other specific issues,"<sup>32</sup> says Vo. "Those trainings really started to allow us to start thinking about how food connects to religion, how food connects to environment, how food connects to climate change. What is so powerful about that is not only did we start learning from each other about different issues and how they connect with food, but it also started to challenge us to have those conversations with the people in our communities who may not think of food as 'The Issue'."

Before becoming executive director of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Pat Sweeney served as a community organizer and a

trainer and still occasionally conducts the Principles of Community Organizing trainings presented by WORC. He says an emphasis on food and farms as issues could be valuable, but mainly as an add-on to basic organizer training aimed at helping activists understand how to build power. It would be best, says Sweeney, to address farm and food issues in the context of a variety of other issues.

“To me, one of the keys is having multi-issue, cross-sector discussions with people in these trainings, to get them out of the silo of advocacy on their specific issue, as opposed to building power with people to win that issue. ... As long as you are adding on something like ‘What are the uniquenesses of rural?’ ‘What are the uniquenesses of farm?’ I think there are some things you can go back to which relate to how we are moving the issue, maybe, but that’s more about the tactics of the campaign, and the issue piece, not about building power.”<sup>33</sup>

Udi Lazimy received his grassroots organizer training through Green Corps and most recently served as the national policy organizer at the Organic Farming Research Foundation. Lazimy says he doesn’t see a focus on food and farming as essential to an organizer’s ability to implement a campaign, but there are clear benefits to adding such a focus to a training plan: “I think it’s really important if they want to have a lot of depth, and move beyond field organizing to be more strategic thinkers and policy analysts to understand the food system really well, on food policy or just the dynamics of the food system. ... The more you know the more helpful it is. It’s all about relationship building, telling stories, talking to people, so if you can speak knowledgeably about the issue, then, yeah, you’re going to be more effective.”<sup>34</sup>

Nikki Henderson, executive director at People’s Grocery in Oakland, CA, said she didn’t see the need for special training on farm and food issues in a general training context. Her view reflects that of others who believe that organizers are generally able to use the same techniques in most any campaign framework. However, she did say

training around social justice would be beneficial for all, adding that each activist organization should be able to overlay their specific issues on that basic framework. “What I think is needed is a basic organizer training for all social movements that has the dimensions of race and class. How to empathize with people. All the basic stuff. And then the various movements can design the housing specific, food specific, or education specific nodes that those trainees then get put through,”<sup>35</sup> says Henderson.

Because they’ve spent decades working in the farm and food arena, grassroots-based organizations like WORC, Iowa CCI and Minnesota’s Land Stewardship Project long ago acted to incorporate farm and food issues into their training and orientation programs for members. Many of the organizations which specialize in providing more general community organizer trainings – groups like Green Corps, Industrial Areas Foundation, and National Organizing Initiative among others – have not necessarily moved to adopt issue specific trainings on farms and food. This appears to be due in part to a lack of in-house expertise on specific issues and, barring a consulting contract that specifically calls for delivering such training, a lack of development resources.

For Joe Chrastil, the regional lead organizer with the Industrial Areas Foundation in the Northwest, the challenge for food organizers has more to do with building stronger person-to-person relationships than with obtaining specific training on food issues. Chrastil is a veteran farm activist who dedicated seven years to organizing in Minnesota at the height of the farm credit crisis of the 1980s. Chrastil says his experience in Minnesota taught him that strong relationships and an eye toward creating resilient and long-lasting organizations is crucial to building a movement that is capable of sustaining itself long term.

“We had 17,000 people at the state capitol in Minnesota at one point, but the issue went away, and the organization became hollowed out. There was no capacity left once the issue left because we weren’t really focused on building and sustaining

that capacity as we moved forward,”<sup>36</sup> Chrastil explains, adding “Issues are critical and actions are the life and fuel of the organization, but if we’re not building the relationships and training people and equipping them to think of these organizations as bigger than any one particular issue ... if we don’t do that, then we’ll see these things rise and collapse time and time again.”

*Section Four***Delivering a Farm and Food Training Component**

Given that many active grassroots organizers see benefit in a farm and food training component in some training situations, what might be the best approach in developing and delivering such material? While appearing simple on its face, this question raised a variety of intriguing responses among those with whom we talked. Most organizations saw food and farm issues training as something that would have to be added on to existing trainings, something to be treated as a focus module aimed at helping organizers come up to speed on the key elements of the issue relatively quickly, and providing them with the vocabulary for addressing farm and food issues in the context of key issues like food safety, and food justice, as well as distinctions to be made among sustainable, organic, and conventional food production approaches.

Most of the organizations providing community organizer training seemed to struggle with how such a module might be incorporated into their trainings. The Public Interest Network, a set of organizations that emerged out of the Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs), has created a training center which has focused on providing organizer training for its own members and is now branching out to offer similar trainings for other organizations. For Andy MacDonald, the center's director, developing a specific training on farm and food issues would require a clear understanding of purpose so the proper resources and expertise could be assembled to deliver the appropriate information.

"Doing a training for how best to move the farm bill would be something right up our alley. If it were something like expanding the organic food market, that would be something we'd have ideas on, but it would be a little bit out of our wheel-house in terms of our experience,"<sup>37</sup> says MacDonald.

MacDonald says if his organization were asked to provide training in an area where they felt they lacked depth, they'd comb their network of organizations and contact individuals who had participated in their training program to find people with the necessary expertise. "That would be the first set of people we'd reach out to, to say: 'You know us; you know our training; you know what we're doing now; where's the overlap and then, who can you recommend as people who would be good to work with on a training'."<sup>38</sup>

Erik Peterson, director of strategic initiatives at Wellstone Action, says his group would have the "know-how" to create a specialized farm and food issues training, but that it would not have the capacity in terms of staff time and resources to do so. When asked about the feasibility of receiving a pre-prepared training module on farm and food issues from an outside source and then plugging that into a regular training session, Peterson said that while he liked the idea, it presented some challenges. "Most often when you're brought in to train with an organization, they already have an agenda. Or like, for us, we have a curriculum or an approach. Sometimes it would be difficult to graft in other's materials. So I'm not sure that would be particularly effective,"<sup>39</sup> Peterson says.

At the Midwest Academy, which specializes in developing campaigns based on clearly stated strategies developed through a power mapping exercise, Executive Director Judy Hertz says addressing the training needs of a group working on farm and food issues would involve asking question after question to determine what the group is really seeking. Hertz says such involvement is available through the Academy when it is serving as a consultant to a campaign. The involvement, she says, would probably focus on a strategic analysis of likely opponents and potential allies, organizational strengths and

weaknesses, campaign targets and goals as well as tactics planned to advance a specific campaign.

“If we were doing that, we’d try to talk to lots of people up front and try to figure out what people are feeling. Is there a problem? Do people need to be thinking more strongly about the rural/urban gap? Do you need to figure out how to build a more effective coalition with upper middle class people who shop at Whole Foods and farmers who are trying to make a living? Whatever the issue or problem is: that would be the stuff we’d be asking people to tell us. We’re not experts on food and farms. But what we are experts on is the power analysis, institutional analysis to figure out the gaps and how to fill them. How do you think about what you’re going to need to win,”<sup>40</sup> says Hertz.

### **The organizer’s view on incorporating farm and food issues**

While the training organizations saw challenges in developing and injecting farm and food components into their trainings, grassroots organizers working in the farm and food arena seemed more open to exploring farm and food training options.

Real Food Challenge Director Anim Steel says not long ago he fielded in inquiry from a cluster of youth groups interested in doing organizing work, and they needed a training on “Food Systems 101.” Though the young people had organizing experience, they’d never worked on the food issue. Steel says while researching for the training he came to the conclusion that there is an information gap for food issue novices: no popular piece that fully identifies and summarizes the problems.

“There’s so much information about food out there, and about the problem, but I discovered there was not something that was the one, the one webinar, or whatever that we could pull from that kind of combined it all, so we had to create that,”<sup>41</sup> says Steel.

For Monica Cordova, a co-director at the Southwest Organizing Project (SWOP), the unique nature of farm and food issues creates a challenge for organizers. SWOP is a 32-year-old grassroots activist organization based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, that works on voter education and registration, environmental justice, and youth issues. Three years ago, SWOP began developing a community garden as one vehicle to creating awareness around access to healthful food in communities of color. The group found the garden to be a powerful tool in educating young people and creating community interest in food issues. Today, says Cordova, the garden experience has persuaded SWOP to launch a state policy initiative aimed at embedding school gardens in state classroom curriculum. Cordova says the steps to initiating a policy campaign were clear from the start, but understanding how the garden could be most effectively used was a bit of a mystery.

“We called the garden a ‘working classroom.’ It was a different space. It wasn’t us sitting around a table like we typically do, doing power mapping, strategy, and analysis. It opened up conversations in a different way. So, I think that something that was structured to help us understand how to use those bases, how to use a different approach, would have been helpful,”<sup>42</sup> says Cordova.

### **A web-based approach to training on food issues**

Internet communications, particularly e-mail contact lists, websites and a variety of social media tools have become an increasingly important set of communications and training tools for activist organizations worldwide. Some groups involved in providing grassroots training and many of those working to advance the food movement agenda see high value in using the so-called “new media” to further their work. We’ll look at bit more closely at organizations heavily invested in internet actions to advance their cause in a moment. Initially, we’ll touch briefly on the idea of using the internet, and specifically organizational websites, as places where

training information could be published and made readily available to a wider audience.

Generally, the groups we talked with that are engaged in training activists and building community organizations have not developed strong tools for delivering training programs via the internet. A survey of websites indicates that some groups provide resource lists, while others provide written guides to support some of their organizing concepts. Some sell their training materials through their websites. Many simply don't engage in the on-line training opportunity. The Washington, D.C.-based New Organizing Institute (NOI), however, takes a more involved approach and has a strong investment in sharing training information on-line. The Institute offers training videos, presenter notes, background information, and links to resource documents on its website.<sup>43</sup> In addition, NOI offers what it calls an "on-line university" where it delivers its primary organizer trainings to subscribed individuals via the internet. NOI Program Director Sue Chinn says of the effort: "We need to use every tool in the toolbox to organize for change in this country."<sup>44</sup>

Chinn says that on-line training tools have evolved to enable real interaction in real time among students during class. "People across the country can sit there with their headphones on in front of their laptops, and you can divide into small groups and have small group discussions of two people or four people or whatever the moderator arranges for. Then you can come back to the big classroom,"<sup>45</sup> says Chinn. She says the flexibility enables students to share strategies, discuss projects, and build a stronger sense of community than one might expect through an on-line training program.

Anim Steel with the Real Food Challenge successfully used the webinar approach in delivering some of the educational materials his organization provided to the young people referred to earlier who were seeking a Food Systems 101 training. Steel says he bookended the webinar with information from Eric Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation* and Michael

Pollen's *In Defense of Real Food* and added content provided by Unite Here, an international union representing food service workers. Steel says he was satisfied with the result. Still, the organization had to expend time and energy to produce the materials and might have been able to avoid the expenditure if the background materials had been produced, collated, and made available through an independent third party.

Other groups engaged in the food movement have successfully used webinars as well, but these trainings are typically aimed at practical activities related to actual food production rather than on providing information on policy, broader social issues, or organizing techniques. YouTube offers user generated videos that provide a wealth of food production information in a how-to fashion. It is worth noting here that it has become quite common in business to provide webinar training and informational opportunities for customers and potential customers via the web. As society migrates toward taking advantage of these new learning opportunities it may become more common and more productive to access and engage in organizer and issues training on-line, especially if the results produced mirror the successes the New Organizing Institute seems to be achieving.

*Section Five***Web-based Activism: A Growing Opportunity**

Beyond the question of training offerings, most grassroots oriented activist organizations are regularly confronting the challenges and opportunities for mobilization and movement building created by the internet. The ready flow of information from activists to constituents through websites, e-mail, and social mediums like Facebook and Twitter has intensified and helped focus tremendous attention on key issues. By 2012, it had become a daily exercise for one organization or another to issue an action alert calling on constituents to engage with a policymaker through an e-mail, a phone call, or a petition. Social media take up the call and spin the message far and wide, generating enormous numbers of signatures and e-mails that occasionally appear to affect the outcome of a particular policy issue. So regular is this engagement, that it has now clearly overtaken other more conventional approaches to mobilizing constituents. Well it should. In the past, phone banks, group letter writing meetings and actual petition drives were the norm for activist organizations, but their inefficiencies are clear and enormous when contrasted with today's e-mail blasts, which can reach several thousands of constituents in an instant and result in a near overwhelming deluge of carefully targeted phone calls, letters, and signatures within hours. As a communications vehicle and a mobilizing tool, the internet has liberated and richly-empowered activist organizations world-wide.

Environmental activist and author Bill McKibben can testify directly to the incredible power of the web. Four years ago, he launched 350.org, a web-based environmental organization focused on drawing attention to climate change as a growing environmental crisis. In a series of initiatives driven through 350.org's website, through its social media presence and through direct e-mail contacts, the organization has created public awareness actions on climate change across the globe.

"We obviously have made tremendous use of the web. We built the biggest grassroots climate campaign – really the biggest campaign about anything – and we've done it in four years with very limited funds,"<sup>46</sup> says McKibben. While the web has been an essential piece of 350.org's work, McKibben says the effort is really aimed at making things happen in the real world and then amplifying that action via the web.

McKibben cites 350.org's first international day of action, which involved individuals and groups around the world staging actions, photographing or videotaping them, then sending the images back to 350.org for distribution. "We used the web to set all that up. We managed – with a year's organizing – pulling off 1500 simultaneous rallies in 181 countries. Then we took the images of those from around the world and produced the top story on cable news for 36 hours. Very effective organizing,"<sup>47</sup> says McKibben. Despite reliance on the web to communicate with constituents and produce mobilizations, McKibben says it should be seen only as a tool that can be used to amplify activist voices and bring them to the table in new ways, not as an alternative to traditional grassroots organizing efforts.

"We're active in every country on Earth except North Korea. We've held, by now, 20,000 rallies and demonstrations. In this country, we organized demonstrations to protest the Keystone Pipeline. That turned into the largest civil disobedience act in thirty years. Again, we used the web to invite people, but they had to come out to the real world to do things,"<sup>48</sup> said McKibben.

Food Democracy Now (FDN) is another web-based activist organization. It has its roots in an on-line campaign initiated by Iowans Dave Murphy and Lisa Stokke shortly after Barack Obama was elected president in 2008. A letter writing campaign was initiated to express support for an agriculture secretary with interest and roots in sustainable agriculture. That original letter contained roughly 100 signatures. Through the website, FDN now has



registered more than 250,000 individuals that function as a national grassroots organization focused on farm and food policy reform. Murphy serves as Food Democracy Now's president. He researches key issues and launches issue campaigns from the website, using email blasts and social media platforms like Facebook to inform constituents and urge action on policy matters at the state and federal level. A single email blast, says Murphy, can generate tens of thousands of phone calls and comments when key policy battles are underway.

"Our goal has always been to augment the traditional groups that have helped build organic and sustainable agriculture. ... We're just really trying to bring another dimension to that work with online organizing,"<sup>49</sup> says Murphy. He agrees with McKibben's assessment that on-line outreach is a tool in the organizer's toolkit, but he says it's a really important tool that is growing in value as more and more people access information via the internet. "It's a cheap, fast, and effective way of communicating messages and opportunities to take action,"<sup>50</sup> says Murphy. He adds that advocacy organizations would be well-advised to place greater emphasis on using social media and web-based outreach in their organizing plans.

"A lot of people in traditional non-profits don't understand it, don't understand the challenges. Just because it is something of a new process it is relegated to the third-tier in a lot of organizations. I think it is vital that people understand the technology of our time. The internet is absolutely the most vital tool that we have,"<sup>51</sup> says Murphy.

For our inquiry, Murphy's observation raises the question of whether or not there is a need to create a training module around on-line organizing that focuses on the farm and food movement. Murphy says such training could be useful, and he offers some ideas on how to create the training: "I would break it down and focus the first portion on on-line organizing. Why it's important. What are the basic components? And then break it down to how it can be used for food and agriculture campaigns."<sup>52</sup>

At Food & Water Watch, another national organization with an emphasis on farm and food issues, social media is viewed as another means of communicating

with interested individuals. However, Organizing Director Mark Schlosberg says e-mail outreach is regarded as much more significant in terms of generating action responses from members. "As an organization we are definitely into the high end on the number of emails we send, not to each person because we segment our list so much. ... People generally get one e-mail a week, but it could be on a local, state, or national issue. We have a sophisticated system for scheduling to make sure people aren't getting too much e-mail,"<sup>53</sup> says Schlosberg.

Sue Chinn with the New Organizing Institute (NOI) agrees that there is new strength to be found in on-line activism, but she joins McKibben and Murphy in saying it is not a replacement for traditional organizing efforts. "I still believe in the importance of building relationships. ... You still need to build relationships off-line as well as on-line, and the most meaningful organizing integrates both from the get-go. So it's not like on-line organizing is an afterthought. What we teach is that it's really important to sit down and think about all the different ways you're going to be engaging people and make sure they (web-based resources) are part of the strategy,"<sup>54</sup> says Chinn.

Steph Larsen with Center for Rural Affairs agrees. As an organizer, she sees tremendous opportunity in on-line activism, and has participated in an NOI training on that specific subject. She views on-line organizing as an exciting new way to reach out. "As an organizer, you have to meet people where they are at, and if where they are at is on-line, then you need to respect that and find those people and get them involved via on-line means,"<sup>55</sup> says Larsen. She admits that organizers using on-line techniques do face a challenge in more effectively engaging those who are willing to respond to action alerts and send e-mail letters or sign on-line petitions, but seem unwilling to get more deeply involved. Some have labelled this approach "slacktivism," and use the word to demean much of the on-line activism that has taken place over the past couple of years. Larsen acknowledges there is some problem in that regard, and adds that there's no clear solution. "The question of how we move people up the ladder is a question organizers need to be paying attention to and being creative about,"<sup>56</sup> Larsen says.

*Section Six***A Commitment to Building Real Political Power**

Up to this point, we have been looking into opportunities for grassroots organizer training and discussing some of the options for how that training might be achieved for farm and food activists.

Basically, we've been operating under the assumption that such training could be a good idea as a movement builder, and that organizations would likely be interested in taking advantage of the opportunity if it arose. But there are some indications that this might not be the case.

Some farm and food organizations simply do not have policy interests on their agenda. Many in this category are focused on providing their members with information on production methods, offering advice on issues like organic certification, and simply providing fellowship among like-minded people. Some, says the Land Stewardship Project's Mark Schultz, have chosen to adopt other models in their approach to organizing their memberships and have neglected the basic political precept succinctly articulated by the late Massachusetts Congressman Thomas "Tip" O'Neil when he observed that "All politics is local." For activist organizers, that means if individuals or organizations want to make policy change at any governmental level, they need to start by building political power in the legislator's district. Schultz says it is a disinterest or inability to engage in the kind of grassroots political organizing that actually builds power that is a real weakness in the sustainable agriculture movement.

"My critique of the parts of the sustainable food and agriculture movement that I'm familiar with is that it's too staff and grant driven. Culturally, the family farm movement was more leader driven. When sustainable ag split off and did their own thing in the mid-80s, it was a more highly educated professional staff writing grants and getting funding that way. So there are very few organizations in our movement like LSP, where (there's a priority on) organizing, really organizing – not just

mobilizing people to make a phone call – but building a base of members who actually drive the decisions in their organizations,"<sup>57</sup> says Schultz.

Schultz says he can point to only a handful of farm and food activist organizations that, like LSP, emphasize community organizing to build political power. These include the Western Organization of Resource Councils, the Missouri Rural Crisis Center, and Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement. These groups, says Schultz, are rooted in the family farm movement that grew out of the farm crisis of the 1980s. He says the movement needs to acknowledge the nature of the political battle it must wage and dig deeper to build real power.

"We've had good growth in the sustainable food and farming movement. There are more people farming around the country than there used to be. There are more farmers. There are more people who want to buy local, regional, sustainable or organic. There is that kind of growth, but we're not consolidating power. That's why an organizing strategy is key,"<sup>58</sup> says Schultz. Schultz points to the battle over the 2012 Farm Bill as an indicator. "We've had some number of years of growth of our movement, but look at what's happening in this farm bill. We're struggling to retain anything of value. That's not power."<sup>59</sup>

Schultz says initiatives aimed at building a political base in the food movement by generating grassroots activist training opportunities would be a positive step, but there's a danger they could miss the mark if they fail to focus on organizations that sincerely want to invest the resources and organizational energy in base building. "People in those organizations are going to need to want to do it, and I don't think the draw of financial resources is enough. Like, if they are only doing it because they can get a grant to do it. That's a simplified expression of the idea, but they need to really want it,"<sup>60</sup> says Schultz. Schultz adds this

recommendation: “The critical piece is, rather than think about putting together a big pot of money that really could be substantial so we could have fifty groups over two years that could take part in trainings, I think it would be more successful to find something like six organizations that actually want to invest in making organizing a core strategy, getting the training, some resources and really following that path so that they would start to prove success. Then build out from there.”<sup>61</sup>

Jeanne Merrill, a veteran of the Green Corps training program in which participants were paired with activist organizations throughout the training period, says she and her colleagues in the program never doubted that they’d leave the program with a job in environmental organizing in hand. It was a part of the effort Green Corps made for its trainees. Now, working on farm and food issues in California, Merrill says that though there’s a clear need for increased organizing capacity, there’s a challenge in locating organizations that have the resources and the commitment to focusing on that work. “I think the challenge we face is that there really aren’t jobs in that arena. So, you can train people to be grassroots organizers to work on food and agriculture issues, but can they get jobs? That’s a fundamental question. You can’t train for jobs that don’t exist,”<sup>62</sup> says Merrill.

Merrill says she sees a number of reasons why farm and food organizations have been slow to initiate grassroots organizing activities. “There are organizations out there that understand and appreciate the importance of grassroots organizing, and they may have a staffer who does that work, or someone who does it part time. But chances are they have limited resources they can put into organizing work. And for other groups, it’s not their area of focus. They do educational work, or market development, or other kinds of work related to sustainable food or agriculture. They’re not necessarily focused on how to build power, and how to make decision makers change their perspective or act in ways that would benefit our agenda.”<sup>63</sup>

Cindy Kang, former executive director at Green Corps, says even for that organization, which is

deeply connected with the environmental movement and activist organizations associated with it, it is difficult to find partners willing to employ activists in training.

“We spend a lot of time going out to meet with existing environmental groups, and telling the story of why organizing is an important strategy for social change, and getting more organizations to invest in organizing as a strategy,”<sup>64</sup> Kang explains. She says finding organizations interested in farm and food issues is even more difficult. She says Green Corps has been partnering with Food & Water Watch to bring community organizers into issues like the use of rBGH<sup>65</sup> in industrial scale dairy operations and sustainable agriculture advocacy related to the 2012 Farm Bill. “For the most part, Food and Water Watch has been a very eager partner, and we’ve been happy to work with them on it. But we haven’t come across other groups that are organizing on those issues in a political way,”<sup>66</sup> says Kang.

Beth Newkirk is the executive director of the Organizing Apprenticeship Program (OAP) in Minnesota. OAP offers a six-month program that can include farm and food issues as well as social justice components and awareness building across all of its trainings so that institutional racism can be confronted and better understood in an organizing context. As structured, the program incorporates a monthly training retreat with hands-on field work and mentoring. But she says her organization struggles to maintain that approach. “We’re actually underfunded for this right now, but the main idea was to get some resources to people to be able to get out and work full-time as organizers, and then to get them to be seriously mentored,”<sup>67</sup> Newkirk explains. Newkirk adds that funding to support organizing activities is also crucial. She tells of one program OAP implemented where trainees were trained and mentored, but at the end of the program, most of the trainees were laid off. “And it wasn’t because of them, it was because there wasn’t a funding commitment to their organizing,”<sup>68</sup> says Newkirk. “If there are no resources for people to organize, then training the organizers is ridiculous,”<sup>69</sup> she says.

## Conclusions

As noted in the discussion of methods, we aimed to provide answers to a set of basic questions related to grassroots organizing capacity in the farm and food movement. Our conclusions, based on the responses of the 30 individuals interviewed, are as follows:

**Question One: Among existing grassroots organizer training programs, is there a need for, and a capacity to, appropriately train community organizers dedicated to advancing the food movement?**

**Conclusion:** On the capacity question, it seems clear that there are plenty of effective activist training programs available. Indeed, organizations we contacted represent only a handful of the dozens if not scores of organizations offering variations on the grassroots organizer training model. Some programs are more competitive than others, but trainers generally indicated training opportunities would be available for those able to pay, and in some cases, trainers offer scholarships to those unable to meet tuition requirements.

The need for basic organizer training was also clearly articulated by both trainers and activists. One recurrent theme in our conversations centered on the importance of obtaining the know-how to conduct an effective campaign to mobilize individuals during campaigns whether the issue was food, farming, or any other compelling policy challenge.

However, there is a lingering question of whether or not individuals or groups working in the farm and food area are interested or able to engage in grassroots organizing. Those we spoke with saw real value in building and activating a grassroots base to support political action, but the prevailing view was that there may only be a handful of organizations working in the farm and food arena that place a high value on creating change through grassroots-based political action.

**Question Two: Is there a need for a comprehensive community organizing training program focused on farm and food issues?**

**Conclusion:** Activists working in the farm and food arena voiced almost universal support for the idea that a special training on their issues would be valuable, but both activists and trainers suggested the issues piece should be viewed as an “add-on” to comprehensive training on the basics of community organizing.

Creating a comprehensive organizing program based solely on farm and food issues seems unnecessary, but a vehicle is needed to create additional content to support farm and food issues and organizer training.

One organizing gap pointed out by a number those we interviewed was insufficient effort to identify potential ally organizations and to build operational links to potential allies. While there is substantial evidence of coalition building within organizations already interested in farm and food issues, the real gap comes in the lack of successful outreach to non-traditional allies such as labor, some elements of the environmental movement, the health, education, and faith communities, as well as communities of color. These gaps suggest there is a need for trainings specifically focused on coalition building. Support for cross-interest convenings might also be considered.

**Question Three: Could any of the existing training organizations reviewed, with support, expand their training capacity to answer food movement organizing needs or is a new organizing entity focused on food and farms required?**

**Conclusion:** A number of the training organizations contacted indicated they could, under special circumstances, create farm and food issues oriented training modules, but among those we talked with, the prospect seemed to represent a stretch organizationally. In most cases, the organizations working on farm and food issues that

were functioning as organizers and trainers had already included the food issues discussion in their trainings. Under these circumstances, creating a new organizing entity focused on food and farm issues seems unnecessary. A stronger commitment to adapting and bolstering existing farm and food training programs may be needed. That commitment could come through a stand-alone resource entity, perhaps a website, where various support and training materials related to farm and food organizing could be located and easily accessed.

**Question Four: Should a new training module be created that could be made available to grass roots organizations seeking to train organizers on food related issues?**

**Conclusion:** Suggestions that an independent add-on training on food and farm issues be created and made available to existing training organizations fell a little flat. Most felt it would be a challenge to adapt their existing programs to accommodate the add-on. They agreed it could be done, but they generally indicated it would need to be custom-crafted to fit the needs of the group or groups they were working to train.

However, it is possible that a basic Food Issues 101 curriculum could be created and made available to any farm or food organization. This basic information might serve as a simple first step in creating awareness and fluency on a broad range of food issues that could include:

- The role of industrial agriculture in our food system
- The health dangers posed by dominant food production methods
- Why local, fresh, and organic foods are more sustainable
- How citizens are acting to change food politics
- What it means to vote with your fork as well as your ballot

One obvious challenge to this approach is that food systems issues are complex and nuanced. An organization working to convince the school district to approve school gardens for all its schools might not be interested in an analysis of the undue

influence corporate agribusiness wields in Congress. Organizations working to limit packer ownership of livestock might not want to learn more about food access challenges in underserved communities. While these issues might, in some minds, be linked to broader social challenges, the complex discussion to bring others to that conclusion might be more intricate than a basic Food Issues 101 curriculum could support. This, once again, suggests the possibility of creating support materials addressing nuanced farm and food issues and making them available to organizations and individuals via the Web.

**Question Five: If a specific training program designed for food movement activists is needed, what are some options for creating and delivering the training to prospective organizations or activists?**

**Conclusion:** Creating and delivering a specific informational training, while presenting the challenges already noted above, could be a valuable exercise under the right circumstances. Organizers at the Real Food Challenge suggested a Food Systems 101 curriculum would have been helpful to them. It is conceivable that such a curriculum could become part of a larger set of issues modules that could be produced as written materials, published on the web, perhaps developed as video presentations that could be sold as DVDs or offered as downloadable files. This treatment would eliminate the challenge of trying to create a one-size-fits all program. But given the multitude of farm and food issue related materials that already exist on the web, it would be wise to inventory the support materials that already exist and grow from there.

**Question Six: If new training tools are needed, could they be housed on a website and made universally accessible to interested activists?**

**Conclusion:** As folks from the New Organizing Institute indicated, using the internet as a grassroots training vehicle is a growing concept. Using webinars to train participants on specific issues could be an option. This too was mentioned by the Real Food Challenge. Warehousing

materials at a special issues and training site might prove to be beneficial. Again, there are thousands of pages of informational material already posted to the web addressing many of the issues that would likely be under discussion. An inventory would be an obvious first step, with an eye toward cataloguing and linking to key documents as a part of a resource site.

**Question Seven: What role do you see emerging social media playing in grassroots organizing activity?**

**Conclusion:** Clearly, the significance of on-line communication is expanding at a phenomenal rate. Activists and organizer trainers agree that the availability of rapid communications and the ability to take action on-line on key issues have altered the landscape for organizers. Some groups are taking full advantage of today's options, and continuing to stay up to speed on the emerging social media as it evolves. Others are a bit more tentative, but folks on the ground say it is crucial that organizers and activist organizations gain fluency in all forms of on-line communications, whether it is through websites, blogs, email lists, social media, cell phone applications and more. One point that should be noted here is that a number of our interviewees expressed interest in learning more about how to effectively use the new web-based tools in their work. While there are many trainings available on-line and through in-person workshops, the possibility of creating webinar workshops on food and farm issues should also be explored.

## Recommendations

### Support for Trainings

There is a clear need to ensure that farm and food activists and grassroots organizers receive training in basic organizing techniques, and in the issues specific to farms and food. The list of organizations that are heavily committed to building the political base of the farm and food movement appears to be relatively short. In the interests of resource efficiency, any training initiative should be carefully targeted to those groups either currently engaged in or actively interested in initiating a base-building program.

Because there are relatively few organizations engaged in grassroots organizing on farm and food issues, job opportunities for farm and food organizers will also be relatively limited. A training program of the kind suggested should recognize that fact and start with a core group that can be ensured of employment at the end of the training. Longer-term plans should include building and expanding the training program as the movement grows in political strength. A closer look at the Green Corps training model might provide ideas on how to structure a training and a trainee support program.

Grassroots organizing is a resource intensive activity, often requiring funds to support multiple staff members committing full-time effort to reaching out and building political power. It is also a long-term effort. It can extend over months for some issue specific campaigns and over years for groups intent on building a committed political base to push for systemic change to the farm and food system. Acting to ensure long-term support for the base-building efforts of grassroots organizations would provide encouragement to the groups already working to build power, and may help bring other groups into the organizing arena in a more effective way.

### Source for Trainings

Community organizer trainings are plentiful, but farm and food issue trainings are scarce. Both are needed and useful. Funding is needed to encourage activist organizations to acquire

trainings from existing groups, and to assist in developing farm and food specific issue training modules.

There may be existing activist organizations that could provide this service if supported to do so. An extensive inventory of existing training materials and a search for potential training partners is needed. If there are no willing training partners among existing groups, the possibility of creating a small training group and equipping them with training materials is an option to investigate.

### Internet opportunities

Developing training tools on farm and food issues and making them available via the internet is an option that should also be examined. Specific training topics need to be researched, and a web site to house the materials identified. The possibility of creating a website specifically dedicated to offering farm and food organizer training materials should also be considered. Web site managers may also want to consider creating a series of issues training webinars with downloadable collateral printed and video support materials.

In addition, social media and internet outreach training opportunities are in clear demand by farm and food activists. Support is needed to send communications and grassroots organizer personnel to such trainings. The possibility of creating a training program around the use of new media in farm and food organizing should also be considered, perhaps in the context of a web-based clearinghouse on farm and food organizing.

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## **Appendix**

### **Project Scenarios**

Working from our recommended action steps, we created six project scenarios with draft budgets to provide the Foundation with some general guidance on ways in which it could move forward in support of grass roots organizing in the farm and food movement. These scenarios are very preliminary with only the most basic of ideas represented. The budgets must also be regarded as very preliminary. More detailed project plans would be required to produce reliable budget projections. Thoughts of moving ahead with any of the projects suggested below, or variations on the themes presented, would require a much more thorough articulation of the concepts, research into potential partners in production and participation in actual organizer training activities as well as research into a formal coordinating vehicle to bring the projects to fruition. The scenarios presented here are intended only to help focus ongoing research into the best path forward.

**Project One: Grow the political base through grassroots organizer training and organizational support**

In a pilot project, activist farm and food organizations with a track record of successful issues organizing will be selected to pilot an intensive grassroots organizer training project.

Through a competitive grants process, seven activist organizations will be selected to participate in a two-year training and implementation project focused on building organizational capacity, implementing demonstrably successful organizing practices, and employing social media tools to expand organizing reach.

Training will be provided by qualified trainers from three activist organizations with community organizing credentials. Project will provide support to trainers and trainees.

The pilot project will measure the efficacy of grassroots organizer training on progress toward identified educational and policy goals.

Project One -- Preliminary Budget

General Expense	Detailed Expense	Notes	Annual Cost
Personnel	Project Director (1)	\$70,000 + .30% benefits	\$91,000
Contract Training Consultants	Trainers (3)	\$35,000/	\$105,000
Organizers	Trainees (14) -- two from each supported group	\$35,000/trainee + 30% benefits	\$637,000
Travel	Trainers (3) -- two on-site, 2-day trainings per year	7 sites/2-days/air,room,board = \$1,100/trip	\$15,400
Travel	Trainees (14) -- one off-site, 3-day training per year	1 site/3-days/air,room,board = \$1,300	\$18,200
Training Materials Research and Production	Costs to develop training modules, identifying topics, research, writing, photos, videos	Video production 10@\$7,500/ Photo Acquisition \$2,500 Purchase rights \$5,000 Multi-media production \$25,000	\$132,500 (year one only) Year two cost estimate at \$50,000 to expand and update training library.
Administrative	Accounting, support staff, office rent, utilities	20% of program cost	\$199,8230 -- year one \$183,320 -- year two
Estimated Cost	Year One		\$1.2 million
Estimate Cost	Year Two		\$1.02 million

**Project Two: Develop a unique food and farm issues training curricula and train organizers**

This project will produce engaging, interactive curricula to be delivered by a team of dynamic and experienced trainers. Ten farm and food training modules, each designed to run one full day, will be produced. The modules will address a full range of issues confronted by activist organizations working to build a political base in the grass roots. A cadre of trainers will be selected to deliver these trainings live, on-site via host organizations and at conferences throughout the country.

Training modules could include:

- 1 -- Basic Grassroots Organizing
- 2 -- Using Traditional Communications Strategies in Grass Roots Organizing
- 3 -- Using New Media to Build Political Power
- 4 -- Building Coalitions/Networks of Non-Traditional Allies
- 5 -- Achieving Food Justice in a Diverse Movement
- 6 -- Farm and Food Issues 101

Farm and Food Issues In-Depth:

- 7 -- Organic farms and food
- 8 -- School and Community Gardens in your town
- 9 -- Commodity Policy -- What Cheap Food Really Costs
- 10 -- Conservation Programs -- The Foundation of Sustainable Agriculture

Project Two -- Preliminary Budget

<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Personnel	Project Director (1)	\$67,500 + .30% benefits	\$87,750
Consultants	Researcher/Writer (2)	\$30,000/	\$60,000
Trainers	Contract Trainers (3)	\$45,000/	\$135,000
Travel	Support for trainer travel costs	48 trainings @ \$1,500	\$72,000
Promotions	Outreach to potential trainees	Direct contact, direct mail, email, facebook, twitter	\$5,000
Training Materials Research and Production	Costs to develop training modules, identifying topics, research, writing, photos, videos	Video production 10@\$7,500/ Photo Acquisition \$2,500 Purchase rights \$5,000 Multi-media production \$25,000	\$132,500
Administrative	Accounting, support staff, office rent, training space rent, utilities	20% of program cost	\$97,450
Estimated Cost			\$590,700

**Project Three: Seed change through organizational support**

This project identifies three farm and food organizations committed to building political power and provides them with resources needed to fund full-time organizing efforts over a two-year period. The organizations will be supported by a mentor who will assist in development of training strategy, materials and planning, full salary and benefits for one organizer per organization, administrative costs, and training travel expenses.

Project Three -- Preliminary Budget

<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Personnel	Project Director (1)	\$67,500 + .30% benefits	\$87,750
Training Mentor	Contract	\$45,000/	\$45,000
Organizers	Grassroots organizers (3)	\$37,500/ + .30% benefits	\$146,250
Travel	Support for trainer/mentor travel costs	\$700 air + \$200/day 3 sessions/group/year; 2-days in duration	\$9,900
Administrative	Accounting, support staff, office rent, training space rent, utilities	20% of program cost	\$57,780
Estimated Cost			\$346,680

**Project Four: Create a Food Change Organizing Center and Information Clearinghouse**

This project funds a comprehensive Food Change Organizing Center patterned after GreenCorps. The organization incorporates basic political organizing with farm and food organizing and provides the movement with online resources, political updates, reports on trends and public opinion data, social media content, plus grassroots organizer trainings on-site and as webinars. This is a major start-up project requiring significant support while the organization builds its revenue streams.

**Project Four -- Preliminary Budget**

<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Personnel	Executive Director (1)	\$90,000 + .30% benefits	\$117,000
	Development Director (1)	\$90,000 + .30% benefits	\$117,000
	Trainers (3)	\$60,000 + 30% benefits	\$234,000
	Researcher/Writer (1)	\$60,000 + 30% benefits	\$78,000
	Website/New Media Manager (1)	\$60,000 + 30% benefits	\$78,000
Travel	Trainers (3) -- three, 3-day trainings per month per trainer.	\$1,300 per training for 108 trips	\$140,400
	ED/Development fundraising and promotion	30 trips / three days each @ \$1,300/trip	\$39,000



<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Promotion	Website support and workshop promotion	Website hosting, email services, direct mail	\$15,000
Training Materials Research and Production	Costs to develop training modules, identifying topics, photos, videos	Video production 10@\$7,500/ Photo Acquisition \$2,500 Purchase rights \$5,000	\$82,500
	Webinar Production and Presentation	10 Training areas; 6 one-hour sessions per area = 60 hrs. of programming @ \$500/hr. + infrastructure @ \$100 per month	\$31,200
Administrative	Accounting, support staff, office rent, utilities	30% of program cost	\$279,630
Estimated Cost	Year One		\$1.2 million

**Project Five: Develop Farm and Food Movement New Media Training**

Develop a three-day training program for farm and food organizers or communications staff focused on using new media in food and farm organizing. This training program could be re-purposed as a Farm and Food Online webinar or DVD and made available to various grass roots organizations working on food issues.

In addition to developing the core curriculum, 30 communications specialists or others from various groups around the country will attend one of two, three-day training sessions hosted by two leading farm and food movement organizations.

**Project Five -- Preliminary Budget**

<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Personnel	Project Coordinator (.25 fte)	\$20,000	\$20,000
Consultants	Researcher/Writer (.25 fte)	\$15,000	\$15,000
	Trainer/Presenter (.25 fte)	\$15,000	\$15,000
Travel	Support for trainer travel costs	Two, three-day trainings @ \$1,300/training	\$2,600
	Travel scholarships to grass roots trainees	30 attendees @ \$1,300/	\$39,000

<b>General Expense</b>	<b>Detailed Expense</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Annual Cost</b>
Training Materials Research and Production	Costs to develop training modules, identifying topics, research, writing, photos, videos	Video production 3 @ \$1,000 Photo Acquisition \$500 Purchase rights \$500 Multi-media production \$3,000	\$7,000
DVD/Webinar Production	Repurpose training module for recording as webinar or DVD	Researcher and writer collaborate on this. Costs for video production.	\$10,000
Administrative	Accounting, support staff, office rent, training space rent, utilities	20% of program cost	\$21,720
Estimated Cost			\$130,320

Project Six: **Build political collaborations that promote Farm and Food Movement goals**

Fund five key national farm and food movement organizations as conveners of cross issue working sessions. These organizations will identify and invite non-traditional political allies to develop strategies for building cooperative bridges with an eye toward building and sustaining the broader coalitions that will wield more political power.

The five organizations selected will host four 6-hour regional working sessions each year. The first year goal will be to identify mutually beneficial policy outcomes that would serve as foci. The second year goal will be to increase participation in the sessions and develop a plan for creating and supporting a collaborative network or coalition aimed at strengthening grass roots organizing in the farm and food movement.

Year two will include a national gathering of all five convening organizations plus representatives from each of the participating groups to develop a food movement policy platform for the next farm bill and other food policy items.

Project Six -- Preliminary Budget

General Expense	Detailed Expense	Notes	Annual Cost
Personnel	Project Coordinator (1)	\$60,000	\$60,000
	Organizational Coordinators (5 @ .20 fte)	.20 fte = \$9,000	\$45,000
	Organizational Representatives (50)	Compensate at \$150 per day for 8 days total annually	\$60,000
Travel	Regional meetings	50 attendees, one-day, mileage + food = \$350/attendee/meeting (4)	\$70,000
Administrative	Office, accounting, utilities, supplies	.15 of project cost	\$28,755
Total Cost			\$220,225

Project Six -- National Convening Preliminary Budget (add on to Year Two general costs)

General Expense	Detailed Expense	Notes	Annual Cost
Travel	National meeting (75 attendees)	three-day, travel + food = /	\$97,500
Facility Rental	3 days/Hall + meeting rooms		\$10,000
Administrative	Office, accounting, utilities, supplies	.15 of project cost	\$16,125
Total Cost			\$123,625