



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION
CONGREGATIONAL STUDY/ACTION ISSUE

ETHICAL EATING

FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

2008-2012



CONGREGATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE

Revised and Updated April, 2010

For further information:

UUA Commission on Social Witness, socialwitness@uua.org
UUA Office of Congregational Advocacy and Witness, socialjustice@uua.org
UUA, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, MA 02108

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	3
The Congregational Study/Action Issue Process	4
Who Should Be Involved?	4
The CSAI Timeline	4
Text of the 2008-12 CSAI: Ethical Eating	5
Menu Plan: Suggestions for Congregational Activities and Engagement	6
A Note About Compassionate Communication	11
Resources for Congregational Study and Action	12
I. Understanding the Issues	12
A. What Exactly is “Environmental Justice?”	13
B. Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Water	16
C. Human Rights and Social Inequities	22
1. Global Hunger and Malnutrition	22
2. Domestic Food Security	24
3. Labor	26
4. Trade and Neo-Colonialism	29
D. Animal Rights and Human Responsibilities	36
II. Seeking Solutions	40
A. Fair Trade	41
B. Going Local	42
C. Choices in Animal Consumption	43
D. Organics	45
E. Slow Food	47
III. Unitarian Universalist Programs and Organizations	49
Acknowledgments, Copyrights and Credits	51

OPENING WORDS

Spirit who is all things to us, Presence in which we live and move and breathe and have our being: What a gift to be here together, sharing our food, our spirit, our selves! We ask no blessing upon this food, nor upon ourselves, because the blessing is always here, if we but pay attention. What we do ask is for the courage and wisdom to be mindful of thy great blessings. We ask, O Holy One, that we remember to cherish this food, savoring the tastes, the smells, the feel, the miracle of nourishment to our bodies, gifts of our lovely Earth. We ask, too, that we remember to cherish each other, to taste and savor our relationships, to understand that what we know of the sacred we know through these bodies and through these connections of friendship and love. Grant us the wisdom to pay attention; grant us the generosity and the strength to open our hearts. So be it. Blessed be. Amen.

— Elizabeth L. Greene

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to a delicious opportunity for you, your Unitarian Universalist congregation, and our entire Association!

This Resource Guide is part of the current UUA Congregational Study/Action Issue Process, begun at General Assembly 2008, where the delegates chose *Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice* as the topic our congregations would explore for the next four years.

This began an Association-wide effort to examine the hidden ways our food choices impact our communities and our world. Ethical eating is personal in nature (involving our free choices of what we put in our own bodies) and global in reach (with implications for ecosystems, human hunger, social inequity, animal welfare, and climate change). This guide will help you raise appropriate questions and find your own good answers--which may differ from the answers of other Unitarian Universalists.

Our religious tradition has no creed, so different Unitarian Universalists will define terms like “ethical eating” in different ways. We encourage all people, in all places, to develop

their individual vision and their personal understanding.

The point of this Guide is not to propose a dietary code or insist on adherence to a particular set of rituals or religious beliefs. It aims instead help you feel confident in making easy, tasty, nutritious food choices that fit with your individual ethical and spiritual values. Imagine that!

And there’s more. We enter this new discussion as a covenantal community, members of the same religious family, promising one another our mutual trust and support. With hundreds of congregations and tens of thousands of individuals using this Guide, we will learn a great deal about ethical eating from one another if we work together and pool our growing knowledge.

The Congregational Study/Action Issue process, of which this Guide is just a small part, is designed to do exactly that. We hope that your use of this guide will encourage you to participate in the development of a Statement of Conscience to be voted on by the delegates at the 2011 General Assembly, a theological statement and call to action for all UUs.



THE CONGREGATIONAL STUDY/ACTION ISSUE PROCESS

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

Whether you hope to explore issues for yourself alone, or hope to share what you find with our entire Association, this Guide is for you. Whether you are a newcomer to Unitarian Universalism searching for a fit, or an established congregational leader experienced with the Social/Action process, this guide is for you. This Guide is for you whether you like to eat gourmet or fast food, eat what's available or consume a special diet, eat based on cultural traditions or on ethical principles, or all of the above, or none. We need the participation of as many UUs as possible for this work to be most meaningful.

But this Guide is not only for individuals. It was developed primarily for those who are willing to gather with other UUs, even others in the local community, to explore these questions. Perhaps your congregation has a Social Action or Green Sanctuary committee that could help organize congregational participation, or a minister who can use the *Worship Resources Supplement* to stir excitement.

This process will appeal to people looking for new opportunities for religious education, spiritual reflection, intellectual stimulation, and social justice advocacy. This Guide will be most valuable to you and to our religious movement if you reach out to others in your congregation and involve them in the process. Take a moment and consider which individuals or groups might be interested.

This Guide was developed primarily for those who are willing to gather with other UUs, even others in the local community, to explore these questions.

CSAI TIMELINE

The Congregational Study/Action Issue (CSAI) process is designed to engage UU congregations in an ongoing process of study, action and reflection on pressing social issues. The process is congregationally driven and it is facilitated by the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) with support from the UUA staff.

General Assembly 2008 chose *Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice* for four years of study and action. A core team was formed with representatives from various UU organizations to help design resources to study this issue.

Fall 2008-Spring 2009: Congregations begin the study of Ethical Eating and get their ongoing comments to the CSW.

General Assembly 2009: The CSW conducted programs and workshops on the topic of Ethical Eating and reported on congregational involvement with the issue.

Summer 2009-Spring 2010: Congregations continue programs of education and reflection, community organizing, advocacy, and public witness on Ethical Eating. Comments submitted by congregations to the CSW are reviewed and the Resource Guide is updated.

March 1, 2010: All of the comments received by this date are reviewed by the CSW. These comments assist in refining this Resource Guide and help the CSW prepare for General Assembly (GA) workshops on this issue.

General Assembly 2010: The CSW conducts workshops on the CSAI. One workshop includes reports on successful practices and discusses future possibilities.

November 15, 2010: Deadline for the CSW to prepare a draft Statement of Conscience (SOC) on Ethical Eating. The draft statement and a ballot to place the SOC on the agenda of GA 2011 will be included in the annual congregational poll, conducted with annual membership certification.

February 1, 2011: Deadline for congregational poll ballots (a quorum of 25% participation required).

March 1, 2011: Deadline for submission of comments on the draft SOC. The CSW then prepares a revised draft of the SOC on Ethical Eating, and places this revised draft on the Final GA Agenda.

General Assembly 2011: General Assembly considers the SOC. Approval requires 2/3 vote. The Assembly may also vote to refer the statement for an additional year of study. If approved, congregations and UUA staff conduct a year of implementation and action. The next study/action issue will be selected at GA in 2012.



TEXT OF THE CONGREGATIONAL STUDY/ACTION ISSUE

ETHICAL EATING: FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Issue

Religious organizations throughout the world have discussed the production, distribution, and use of food. Some people enjoy many food choices while others remain hungry. The food industry produces wealth, but small farmers and farm workers are often poor. Food production and transportation contribute to many environmental problems.

Background and Reasons for Study

Congregations can develop effective strategies to address two of the world's biggest problems: social inequality and environmental destruction. This Congregational Study/Action Issue is inspired by the work of the several Unitarian Universalist (UU) affiliate and associate organizations that work with congregations in support of environmental justice.

Hunger is both a community problem and an international problem that can be approached in a variety of ways. There is a need for political advocacy in support of government programs that try to feed the hungry. There is a need also for involvement with service programs that deliver food to individuals and families - for example, Meals on Wheels programs.

Significance to Unitarian Universalism

Unitarian Universalists have a vision of environmental justice. One of our principles acknowledges "the interdependent web." Others affirm the importance of human rights. Together our principles form one holistic statement that helps to define liberal religion.

Possible Study Topics

- There are different religious teachings concerning the production, distribution, and use of food. Why is food so important in religion?
- There are environmental concerns and concerns about animal rights and human rights. What moral guidelines, if any, should govern food production?
- Some people have too much food and some have too little. How should congregations address issues like poverty and hunger, nutrition education, and health promotion?
- What guidelines, if any, govern the purchase and use of

food and beverages in your congregation? Do you pause for a blessing when you serve food?

Possible Actions

- Support sustainable agriculture and farmers' markets. Encourage organic community gardening.
- Volunteer in support of community food pantries, Meals on Wheels programs, and similar projects that address the problem of hunger.
- Become an advocate for social and economic justice. Support labor unions, farmers' cooperatives, "fair trade" associations, and other organizations that help the farmers and other workers who produce and distribute food in the global market.

Related Prior Social Witness Statements

- Ending Hunger (1987 General Resolution)
- Redirecting Economic Resources to Eliminate Poverty (1991 General Resolution)
- Environmental Justice (1994 General Resolution)
- Nutrition for a Healthy Start in Life (1994 General Resolution)



- Earth, Air, Water, and Fire (1997 General Resolution)
- Toxic Threats to Children (1997 General Resolution)
- Working for a Just Economic Community (1997 General Resolution)
- Economic Injustice, Poverty, and Racism: We Can Make a Difference! (2000 Statement of Conscience)
- Responsible Consumption as a Moral Imperative (2001 Statement of Conscience)
- Endorse the Earth Charter (2002 Action of Immediate Witness)
- Economic Globalization (2003 Statement of Conscience)
- Support of United Farm Workers (2005 Action of Immediate Witness)
- Threat of Global Warming/Climate Change (2006 Statement of Conscience)

Clarifying Statement: *The first paragraph of Background and Reasons for Study has been amended from the original proposal in agreement with the proposing congregation, the previously cited UU Service Committee, and the CSW to identify accurately the source of the work inspiring this proposal.*

MENU PLAN

Suggestions for Congregational Engagement

SUBSTITUTIONS AND CREATIVE COMBINATIONS ARE ENCOURAGED

APPETIZERS

Ways to begin the conversation about Ethical Eating

Organize an Ethical Eating Task Force in consultation with your congregation's leaders. This Task Force will organize and implement events that gain the participation of the larger group.

Invite youth to serve on the Task Force and to participate in activities, including activities designed especially for youth. Ask the youth to educate adults about ethical eating. What aspects of ethical eating do youth know more about than adults? Talk to UUA Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries staff about programs across the continent (youth@uua.org).

Invite your minister or another speaker to conduct a service on Ethical Eating, knowing you'll be joining countless other congregations in doing so. For help planning this service, see the Ethical Eating *Worship Resources Supplement*.

Potluck and a movie. Invite congregation members to bring dishes they consider ethical to the potluck. At tables, people discuss their current ideas and questions about "ethical eating," and how their thoughts influenced the dish they brought. Dinner is followed by movie and discussion.

Publicize local farmer's markets, food co-ops, and organic markets and restaurants in the congregation. Check out www.localharvest.org to find opportunities near your zip code. Locate pick-your-own farms at www.pickyourown.org. Take Religious Education classes there for a field trip. Come back and cook a meal.

Go on a field trip. Visit a local community garden, food co-op, organic farm, animal sanctuary or farmer's market. Volunteer at a local soup kitchen or food bank. Tour a grocery store with a nutritionist.

Offer a workshop or session on Compassionate (Non-Violent) Communication to improve the congregation's ability to effectively address the complex, personal, and deeply-felt issues of ethical eating.

Organize a group in your congregation to take the "Food Stamp Challenge." For one week, each person must spend no more than \$21 per week on food (or \$1 per meal), the average food stamp benefit received in the US. Participants may keep a journal during the experience and share their experiences with each other and with the congregation. See foodstampchallenge.typepad.com, www.frac.org/pdf/FSC_Toolkit.pdf and tinyurl.com/6k4jsw for more information.

Suggested Movies (more info in resource sections):

- *Food, Inc.*
- *Is Free Trade Fair Trade?*
- Van Jones's Ware Lecture from General Assembly 2008
- *The Emotional World of Farm Animals*
- *King Corn*



MENU PLAN

continued

SIDE DISHES

One-time programs to explore different issues

Panel Discussion with speakers recruited by your Ethical Eating Task Force. A morning or evening panel discussion with multiple presenters for a balanced perspective. Panelists might be from your congregation, from a local university or house of worship, or from the health or food industries: nutritionists, dieticians, small farmers, farm workers, commercial fishermen, restaurant and grocery workers.

Book or Article Discussion.

For suggestions on how to organize such a discussion, see www.readinggroupchoices.com/readinggroups/index.cfm.

Suggested Reading (more info in resource sections):

- Singer & Mason, *The Ethics of What We Eat*
- Decarlo, *Fair Trade: A Beginner's Guide*
- Pollan, "An Animal's Place," & Meyers, "Hard to Swallow"
- Jacobson, Michael F. *et. al. Six Arguments for a Greener Diet*

Provide a workshop on eating disorders, their prevention and treatment. Research shows that eating disorders disproportionately affect young women and racial and ethnic minorities, and affect 5-10 million US Americans from all ethnic groups. www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

Potlucks as Adult Education Opportunities. Invite congregants to bring dishes they consider ethical. At tables, people discuss their current ideas and questions about "ethical eating," and how their thoughts influenced the dish they brought. Follow with a movie, a speaker, or reports from each table's discussion. (If you've never organized a potluck, ask others what makes a success in your congregation, or see tinyurl.com/planpotluck for tips.) Consider a themed potluck, where participants bring specific dishes illustrating food that is locally grown/produced, or from organic farms, or without genetic modifications, or without animal products, or obtained through free trade. You can use the web tools you'll find at www.luckypotluck.com to organize a potluck where the types of dishes are planned by organizers. Potlucks have just entered the digital age.

Organize Sunday programs based on all you have learned. Combine education, worship, and action for people of all ages. Take it on the road to UU and other congregations in the area.

Auction off a sustainable compassionate meal in your congregation's fundraising effort, or volunteer to bring delicious, sustainably raised food to bake sales and church meals. These are both gentle introductions to new opportunities and ways of living that may help people try new things.

Teach a children's religious education class that emphasizes how food gets to the table. Include the children in menu development and meal preparation. Help them understand the basics of just, sustainable, compassionate food. Children like to learn about the production and use of food in different cultures and in different religious traditions. Consider adapting the curriculum *Sacred Food: Sunday School and Group Activities for Youth*, available at www.nccecojustice.org/resources.html

Encourage local restaurants to offer sustainable and/or animal friendly choices. Thank them. Have available at your congregation a list of restaurants that offer sustainable/animal friendly choices.



MAIN COURSES

Possibilities for ongoing programs and actions

Covenant Groups (Small Group Ministry)

Your congregation might already have a covenant group program, in which case the existing groups can be invited to discuss topics related to Ethical Eating at one or more upcoming meetings. As a service project, groups could plan a way to bring their discoveries to the congregation as a whole, through a Sunday service or special event. Consider using the “Questions for Individual or Group Reflection” throughout this Resource Guide as conversation starters.

See: www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/smallgroup/21822.shtml, www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/leaderslibrary/45430.shtml, and www.smallgroupministry.net.

Community Service. Organize the congregation to support of community food pantries, Meals on Wheels programs, and similar projects that address the problem of hunger or other issues of ethical eating.

Stay in touch with district staff and the Commission on Social Witness (CSW) to learn about new resources and what other congregations are doing.



MENU PLAN

continued

Start a compost pile for food waste. Many UU congregations produce enough coffee grounds to develop pretty respectable compost piles. There are many resources available to help create a healthy and productive compost pile. Have participants bring their own storage containers to church functions so they can share leftovers. Teach congregants how to compost at home.

Establish an ongoing relationship between your congregation and a community organization that promotes ethical eating. It might be another congregation, a cultural organization, an advocacy or dining group dedicated to a certain issue, or an interfaith organization and/or coalition.

Launch an eating disorders support group using the resources of the National Eating Disorders Association, in consultation with a professional in your community who works with people suffering from eating disorders. www.nationaleatingdisorders.org

Become a pick-up site for a local Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm. CSAs bring the food-buying public into relationship with farms. Offering your church as a pickup site for weekly food baskets will increase member participation in “Ethical Eating” programs—and expose community members to Unitarian Universalism. Find CSAs in your area by plugging your zip code into www.localharvest.org/csa/.

Organize fair trade coffee, tea and cocoa at the coffee hour. Work with the relevant parties at your congregation to switch to fair trade coffee, tea, and cocoa. Sell these products as a fundraiser for social justice efforts. For more information check out the following sites: www.equalexchange.com www.fairtradecoffee.org

Work with your Finance Committee to responsibly invest church funds in environmentally sound, non-exploitative ways. The UUA Socially Responsible Investing Committee holds workshops at GA on this topic. Research investing locally.

Provide your congregation with health and nutrition education. Consider launching a parish nursing program to help. See the *UUWorld* magazine article on parish nursing at tinyurl.com/parishnurse

Create a community garden on the congregation's property or in the community. Encourage organic community gardening. Research area community gardens and invite a representative to educate your group about getting started. Involve children and youth.

The UU Congregation of Washington County, OR established a community garden in cooperation with Latino-Latina neighbors. The garden included individual plots and a group plot for corn, and the effort featured potlucks with concomitant ESL classes.

The UU Fellowship of Falmouth, MA, which originated this Study/Action Issue, has been involved with organic community gardening for six years. Their garden is managed at a local human services center. Much produce is donated to food assistance programs. In April, the garden hosts the town's Earth Day festival. In October, the Rachel Carson Harvest Dinner raises funds for community food banks on Cape Cod. www.uuffm.org/environmentaljustice.htm

Ask adults to share what they know with the congregation's children in religious education classes, field trips, an special food parties. Offer children sustainable, healthy snacks during their programs, and let them know where the food comes from. Consider adapting the curriculum *Sacred Food: Sunday School and Group Activities for Youth*, available at www.nccecojustice.org/

Work with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee's food-related programs, such as the Small Farmer Fund, UUSC Coffee Project, or fair trade, workers' rights, living wage, water crisis, climate change, and shareholder accountability programs. www.uusc.org

Prepare an "Ethical Eating" cookbook with local foods representing regional cultures.



MENU PLAN

continued

DESSERTS

Creative ideas to make things fun

Service and Advocacy

Once your beliefs about ethical eating are strongly grounded in empirical data, our common faith, and your ethical commitments, advocate for your beliefs through lobbying or the media. The UUA Advocacy and Witness team produced an excellent, extensive handbook for congregational advocacy, called *Inspired Faith, Effective Action*, available as a pdf document at tinyurl.com/faithaction.

EarthSave: Healthy People Healthy Planet

www.earthsave.org/chapters.htm

Lists forty regional chapters of EarthSave throughout the United States. EarthSave helps lead "a global movement of people from all walks of life who are taking concrete steps to promote healthy and life-sustaining food choices." A place to find expert speakers, or go on a fact-finding mission.

Food Reference Website

www.foodreference.com/html/upcomingfoodevents.html

Lists, by state or by month, food festivals, food shows & food events, some of which would be appropriate for a field trip to learn more about the ethics of eating.

GreenFaith

Comprehensive guide called *Repairing Eden: Guide to Sustainable, Healthy Food Opportunities for Religious Institutions* which has very practical, concrete ways to transform the way a congregation approaches food.

Public Witness

Host a press-worthy event or organize congregational participation in a community fair, parade, or demonstration that proclaims and embodies your discoveries about ethical eating. Remember that the media is most interested in stories with one or more of the "Four C's": Controversy, Conflict, Contradiction, or Colorful Language/Characters. Be sure to address the religious and moral dimensions of the issue you are addressing, and explain how your event arises from our UU values.

Remember to have some fun as you learn about ethical eating. What can you learn at a Tex-Mex restaurant or during a visit to an Asian-American market? What is the purpose of a pagan cakes and ale ritual, or a Christian love feast?

Write an article or an ongoing “Food Feature” for your congregation’s newsletter telling people about the discoveries you made throughout the study process.

Eat low on the food chain. The environmental cost to produce a plant-based diet is dramatically lower than that of a meat-based diet. Many cookbooks offer easy-to-make, inexpensive and tasty recipes to help us reduce our intake of animal-based foods.

Ask the grocery store where you shop to display the origin of its produce. Urge them to indicate pesticides, sprays, waxes, etc.

Join a buying club or food cooperative in your area. These organizations offer whole foods, food in bulk, and minimally packaged food grown organically or sustainably. Congregations as well as individuals can join to purchase earth-friendly food, cleaning products and other supplies.

Buy in bulk. Cut down on cost and packaging. Even some supermarkets offer bulk products, although this might require asking a staff person or manager.

Use reusable bags. Save resources. Many stores will give a discount to customers who bring their own canvas or other reusable bags to carry groceries.

Choose organic food in season, from Fair Trade or local sources. Organic food includes crops grown without the use of conventional pesticides, artificial fertilizers or sewage sludge, and animals reared without the routine use of antibiotics or growth hormones.

Support sustainable agriculture and farmers’ markets. Every time we buy a product, we vote with our dollars for what kind of future we will create.



MENU PLAN

Single Servings

MAKE YOUR OWN MENU

Suggestions for thinking outside of the Menu Plan

Other Congregations in Your Area

Consider inviting neighboring congregations to a joint meal or food event, where representatives from different faith traditions discuss and celebrate their diverse values, traditions, stories, and teachings about food.

Members of Your Congregation

Find out which members have particular expertise or passion about an aspect of ethical eating, and invite those people to lead a workshop or worship or organize an event.

Leaders of Your Congregation

Invite your leaders (lay and ordained) to be involved in the CSAI process. Ask your minister about ways to address ethical eating in worship, then direct them to the *Worship Resources Supplement*. Ask your religious educator about age-appropriate ways to help children explore ethical eating. Invite the Social Action committee to share their wisdom about the types of events that tend to work the best in your congregation, and ask what resources they know in your congregation and community.

Marginalized Ethnic, Racial, and Cultural Groups

All people have opinions about food, but some voices are seldom heard. Listen to experiences of people of various racial, ethnic, class and religious groups in your area.

Food Banks, Soup Kitchens, Social Agencies and Social Workers

Ask what food-related issues affect the most marginalized members of your area, and how your congregation could get involved in addressing the problems. Ask how the financial crisis beginning in the fall of 2008 changed the hunger landscape in your community, and what can be done.

Local Government

Talk to local officials about hunger, sustainable agriculture, labor conditions, animal welfare, and climate change. If they don’t have plans in place to address these issues, connect them to community organizations that do. Let them know you’ll stay in touch to find out how they are faring.

We can begin by doing small things at the local level, like planting community gardens or looking out for our neighbors. That is how change takes place in living systems, not from above but from within, from many local actions occurring simultaneously.

-Grace Lee Boggs, Chinese-American Author, Feminist, Social Activist

A NOTE ABOUT COMPASSIONATE COMMUNICATION

Unitarian Universalists in hundreds of congregations are in the midst of examining what “ethical eating” means on a personal level and in our relationships with others.

Our journeys will differ: we begin in different places, proceed along different paths at different rates, and may arrive at different ends. Such journeys are inherently difficult because the factors that influence our relationship with food – culture, family, values, religion, resources, health – are personal and complicated. And such journeys are more difficult because in community, sharing diverse perspectives on personal matters can lead to defensiveness.

Change brings conflict. Our principles call upon us to support one another as we seek answers. **Compassionate Communication**, based on Marshall Rosenberg’s Nonviolent Communication method, is a tool for resolving differences. As each person has his or her needs met, issues are resolved. The Core Team **recommends that your congregation’s Ethical Eating Task Force review some of the following “Compassionate Communication” resources** before expanding its programming to the entire congregation.

Questions for Individual or Group Reflection:

1. What makes the ethics of food a difficult topic to discuss?
2. What outcome do I want when I engage in discussion with someone with whom I disagree?



© Joel Bischoff

RESOURCES

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Chicago: PuddleDancer Press, 2001. www.cnvc.org

This method of teaching effective, peaceful communication offers practical tools and experiential learning about how to talk to others with compassion and success. It focuses on empathetic listening and feelings. Used in conjunction with Leu, Lucy: *Communication Companion Workbook: A Practical Guide for Individual, Group or Classroom Study (Nonviolent Communication Guides.)* A simple method with powerful results, easily used by congregations negotiating challenging conversations about food and ethics.

d’Ansembourg, Thomas. *Being Genuine: Stop Being Nice, Start Being Real*. Chicago: PuddleDancer Press, 2007. This guide teaches communication skills to help readers manage difficult discussions and issues with ease. Topics include identifying feelings and needs without blame, honest and respectful self-expression, facing conflict with ease, and finding balance.

Rosenberg, Marshall B. *The Basics of Non Violent Communication: An Introductory Training in Non Violent Communication*. Albuquerque, 2001. 2 DVD set approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes, about 50 minutes per session. Using the basics of non-violent communication, Mr. Rosenberg demonstrates how to discuss challenging issues in a way that meet everybody’s needs.

The Center for Nonviolent Communication

www.cnvc.org

A global organization helping people connect compassionately with themselves and one another through Nonviolent Communication language. Site offers many resources, training opportunities, and newsletter.

UU Speak Peace

uuspeakpeace.org/web/

Compassionate Communication Consciousness for Congregations. Supporting UUs learning and practicing Compassionate (Nonviolent) Communication and other interpersonal peacemaking skills and approaches. An email list is available for UUs interested in Marshall Rosenberg’s Nonviolent Communication and other approaches to interpersonal peacemaking.

3. How do we remain in right relationship during a difficult discussion?
4. How can leaders promote compassionate communication in the congregation?
5. How do culture, economics, and families of origin affect the different ways we see food?

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES



This section identifies what's ethically at stake in our food choices and provides lists of resources for further exploration of these issues. It is divided into four main topics:

- A. What Exactly Is “Environmental Justice?”
- B. Climate Change, Environmental Degradation and Water
- C. Human Rights and Social Inequities, including:
 - 1. Global Hunger and Malnutrition
 - 2. Domestic Food Security
 - 3. Labor
 - 4. Trade and Neo-Colonialism
- D. Animal Rights and Human Responsibilities

The tastes and needs of the Association's member congregations will forever vary. This Guide identifies hundreds of books, films, articles, and websites. It is unlikely that you will have time to extensively sample the full buffet of the pages that follow. So take the cafeteria approach to this section.

Pick several resources at most: the ones likely to generate the most significant engagement for your group. We've identified recommended resources that the Core Team thinks will be particularly interesting for use in UU congregations.

WHAT EXACTLY IS “ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE?”

“Environmental Justice” connects environmental concerns with other social justice movements. Like other social justice movements that focus on structural oppression (racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.), environmental justice recognizes a problem of power in society. Much like power in society has been misused to oppress various social groups (people of color, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, etc.) power has also been misused to create vast areas of environmental devastation throughout the world and to thwart attempts at environmental reform and preservation. Today there is growing realization that negative environmental impacts disproportionately burden socially marginalized groups like people of color in the United States and people in developing countries abroad. In the midst of the environmental movement, advocates for environmental justice speak for human rights and for special concern for people who have often been abused.

Proponents of environmental justice argue that one of the significant reforms needed is a shift in the dominant worldview that commodifies land and objectifies living things. Proponents of environmental justice, like most environmentalists, encourage a shift from viewing the environment as a resource to exploit to a web of interconnected living things, and the source of life itself. But environmental justice proponents go one step further, by prioritizing the needs of low income people, People of Color communities, and other oppressed groups, who disproportionately lack access to nutritious food, clean air and water, parks, recreation, health care, education, transportation, safe jobs, etc.

“The other thing to keep in mind is that people who have a lot of opportunity, the affluent, love to hear about this big crisis. Oh my god, global warming, we're all going to die. For people who have a lot of crisis already, they don't want to hear about another big crisis. They've got sick parents, no health care, all that kind of stuff -- they don't want to hear about it. The rhetoric has to change. For people with a bunch of opportunity, you tell them about the crisis. For people with a bunch of crisis, you tell about the opportunities.”

-Van Jones in an interview with *Grist*

Self-determination, participation in decision-making and gaining control over land and resources are also key components of environmental justice for many people of color. Justice making activities not accountable to oppressed communities tend to perpetuate the very oppression they try to fight, becoming paternalistic at best and oppressive at worst. A good example is the current “green” movement in the US to move toward biodiesel to replace petroleum as an energy source; the demand for corn as a biofuel causes food shortages abroad and rising food prices in the US, which disproportionately harm both poor people and people of color.

Our UU seven principles (found in the Association’s bylaws) affirm not only “respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part,” but also individual rights and “the need for justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.” The seven principles connect as a whole and together form a religious statement that speaks for environmental justice.

Questions for Individual / Group Reflection

1. What is the difference between environmentalism and environmental justice? What happens when social justice issues and environmental issues are kept apart?
2. In order to participate in environmental justice work, what do Unitarian Universalists need to understand about social oppressions like poverty, neo-colonialism, racism, classism, and sexism?
3. Reflect on the Van Jones quote to the left. Do Unitarian Universalists need to hear about the crises or the opportunities? Why?
4. UUs have often expressed an interest in environmental



Van Jones delivers the Ware Lecture on Environmental Justice at the 2008 UUA General Assembly in Fort Lauderdale, FL

issues, and also a desire to work for economic, race, gender, and class justice. As we discuss food issues, how can we bring our social concerns together?

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Recommended Supporting Resources

Friedman, Thomas. *Hot, Flat, and Crowded*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008.
Thomas L. Friedman is a *New York Times* Foreign Affairs Columnist. In this number one best selling book, Friedman proposes that an ambitious national strategy of “Geo-Greenism” is not only what we need to save the planet from overheating; but also what we need to make America healthier, richer, more innovative, more productive, and more secure.

Jones, Van, *The Green Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems*, Harper Collins, New York, 2008. This book will provide deeper analysis of the issues raised by Van Jones in his Ware Lecture and more specific details of the solutions he proposes.

National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. **The Principles of Environmental Justice.**
www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html

A defining document for the environmental justice movement, the 17 Principles of Environmental Justice were drafted at the First “National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit” in Washington, D.C. in October 1991. The Preamble acknowledges the impacts of colonialism and oppression, and urges building a movement to fight the continued destruction of land, community and life, while securing political, economic and cultural liberation for oppressed communities.

Eco-Justice Notes

www.eco-justice.org/e-list.asp

This is a free, weekly e-mail newsletter. Each issue comments on a relevant theme or event from a distinctly non-dogmatic faith perspective. Covers broad eco-justice concepts as well as the justice implications of specific issues (including food/faith).

Eco-Justice Program Office of the National Council of Churches.

www.ncccojustice.org

The Eco-Justice Program office works in cooperation with the NCC Eco-Justice Working Group to provide an opportunity for the national bodies of member Protestant and Orthodox denominations to work together to protect and restore God’s Creation.

Green Faith

www.greenfaith.org

A New Jersey-based national organization that provides resources and consulting on faith and environmental issues for congregations, including food.

Oxfam International. **“Another Inconvenient Truth: How biofuel policies are deepening poverty and accelerating climate change.”** 2008.

preview.tinyurl.com/anotherinconvenienttruth

This article describes an example of how environmental issues and their solutions are often defined by wealthy countries that created the problems in the first place, like the United States. Not only does the environmental problem negatively impact People of Color and poor people disproportionately, but the proposed solutions tend to exacerbate the harm. People of Color and poor people would define the problem and the solution differently but are often silenced

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Van Jones’s Ware Lecture

www.uua.org/events/generalassembly/2008/commonthreads/115749.shtml

Van Jones was one of the most popular and inspiring speakers at the 2008 General Assembly in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. His Ware Lecture received a standing ovation for several minutes from over a thousand Unitarian Universalists. It is possible, he stressed, to fight pollution, poverty, and crime at the same time by “greening the ghetto first” and overcoming “eco-apartheid,” which leaves millions of already vulnerable people to shoulder the worst effects of the environmental crisis. Jones described how “a green wave can lift all boats,” and told UUs that they need “insist on a green economy” and prepare to govern. He pointed out that in West Oakland, a city of 35,000 people, there are no grocery stores, but 43 liquor stores. He called for urban farms, rooftop gardens, and other “ways to lift people up.” He reminded delegates that Martin Luther King’s speech was not “I Have a Complaint,” “I Have a Critique,” or “I Have a Long List of Issues.” The country isn’t looking for critique but needs our beautiful dream to be made real. With humor and conviction, humility and courage, Van Jones charges Unitarian Universalists to live with Environmental Justice. An excellent introduction to Environmental Justice in general; in this discussion, it will be most effective when paired with resources that focus on the relationship between environmental justice and food ethics, or combined with resources available on the website of an organization that Van Jones co-founded, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights, www.ellabakercenter.org.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Resources, continued

and made invisible through dynamics of environmental racism. People of Color and poor people also do not have control or access to the resources needed to mitigate the problem and transform society. The current biofuel policies of rich countries are neither a solution to the climate crisis nor the oil crisis, and instead are contributing to a third: the food crisis. In poor countries, biofuels may offer some genuine development opportunities, but the potential economic, social, and environmental costs are severe, and decision makers should proceed with caution.

Yulsman, Tom. **“Grass is Greener.”** *Audubon Magazine*, Sept-Oct 2007, pp. 80-86.

audubonmagazine.org/features0709/energy.html

When corn was found to be a source for biofuel, demand for it exploded. Mexican and Central American cultures and cuisines that depend on corn have suffered as the price for this commodity have escalated. Is it ethical to transpose corn from a fuel to a biofuel if doing so undermines ancient corn cultures? This article argues that switch grass should replace corn as a source for biofuel, as it takes less energy to produce and would not undermine corn as food.

Shrader-Frechette, Kristin. *Environmental Justice: Creating Equality, Reclaiming Democracy*. Oxford University Press, 2002.

Dr. Shrader-Frechette, a professor of public policy with a specialty in environmental justice, describes personal experiences of environmental projects and discusses the philosophical and historical issues surrounding the environmental justice movement.

Oxfam America. **“Farmers of Color Shut out from Farm Bill Programs”** 19 July, 2007.

www.oxfamamerica.org/newsandpublications/press_releases/farmers-of-color-shut-out-from-farm-bill-programs

Discusses ways to end the discrimination and inequities toward people of color associated with our farm programs.

Boff, Leonardo. *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Orbis Books, 1997. Systematic effort to link liberation theology with the urgent challenge of the environmental movement.

Brown, Phil. *Health Politics of Asthma: Environmental Justice and Collective Illness Experience*. *Journal of Social Science Medicine*, August, 2003. Demonstrates the disproportionate morbidity rates in communities of people of color and the obstacles to addressing the issues.

Sze, Julie and London, Jonathan. *Environmental Justice at the Crossroads*. Outlines competing definitions of environmental inequality and identifies the relationship between local and global issues.

Glave, Dianne and Stoll, Mark. *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History*. University of Pittsburg Press, 2005. Invaluable book for its insights into environmental and racial history.

Pellow, David and Brulle, Robert. *Power, Justice and the Environment: A Critical of the Environmental Justice Movement*. Chapter 12 by Orrin Williams on Food and Justice is particularly relevant and informative.



CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER

The call for a just, sustainable, humane world food system has never been louder. Scientific writings and popular media link our food production and distribution systems to climate change and the energy crisis, and uncover deep-seated problems with our agricultural infrastructure. As a result, many Unitarian Universalists are coming to perceive intricate connections between environmental concerns, economic justice, social justice, and food. We're not alone. Leaders from progressive and conservative faith traditions alike are now calling for politicians, business leaders, the agriculture industry, and religious institutions to assume more responsibility for the planet's health. Ordinary people—not just environmentalists or those working for social justice and rights issues, but people who are busy balancing issues of everyday living—are recognizing that the true cost of food is far greater than what we pay at the register. Costs include global warming, pollution, destruction of ecosystems, degradation of the fresh water supply, and degradation of arable land.

Global Warming

While estimates vary, there is no argument among scientists that food production and distribution contribute dramatically to greenhouse gases, up to 37 percent of all emissions. The worst offenders are animal farms, and the most prevalent farm animal-produced greenhouse gases are methane and nitrous oxide. All livestock emit methane gas; cattle alone are responsible for nineteen percent (19%) of all methane gases released into the atmosphere. Industrialized animal farms also contribute dramatically to levels of nitrous oxide (another greenhouse gas) in two ways: the animal waste itself and the ever-increasing use of fertilizer to grow food for animals.

Pollution

Industrial farming releases toxic chemicals into the atmosphere, including nitric oxide, hydrogen sulfide, ammonia, and volatile organic compounds. The current techniques of industrial agriculture depend on vast amounts of energy inputs from fossil fuel. In many cases, more energy goes into producing food than the food itself provides. In a similarly inefficient use of resources, the energy used to make the 22 billion pounds of fertilizer used to grow animal feed in the US alone could support 1 million people for one year. It takes up to 16 pound of grain to produce one pound of meat, and about 20 percent of the world's population could be fed with the grain and soybeans fed to U.S. cattle alone.

Destruction of Ecosystems

Vast amounts of manure and urine from confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) leak from lagoons into groundwater and streams, suffocating aquatic life and devastating ecosystems. A substantial amount of animal waste, fertilizer and pesticide from the central US makes its way into the Gulf of Mexico, where it has created a "dead zone" where bottom dwelling sea life cannot live. In 2002 this dead zone measured 8,500 square miles, the size of New Jersey. Many species native to the area have perished. In healthier

ocean areas, overfishing further contributes to species disruption and endangerment.

The spread of monoculture techniques and genetically modified seeds into developing countries threaten both plant and animal species. As current methods of industrialized agriculture upset the natural environmental balance, invasive predators enter areas and compete for food, further upsetting the balance.

Let us bless the source of life that brings forth bread from the Earth. Let our lives be a blessing to the Earth that sustains us, and to all the creatures who, like us, call this planet home – John Robbins



Degradation of the Fresh Water Supply

Industrial agriculture's contributions to climate change as well as its high consumption of fresh water have contributed significantly to the growing clean water crisis worldwide. Changes in weather and flood-drought patterns threaten crop production globally. (The UUA's 2006 CSAI addresses additional impacts of climate change in greater detail.)

The United States' centralized, industrial agricultural crop irrigation systems create enormously high water displacement from natural watersheds demand in many regions. Farm animals alone consume 2.3 billion gallons of water daily. Who decides which water goes where? Given that it takes five times as much irrigation to grow grain for beef as to raise vegetables and fruits, what are the justice implications for our own consumption? How do we balance water demands of agriculture, fisheries, and domestic interests? We are beginning to find some answers in solutions like recycling water, better definition of water use standards, and efforts like the Great Lakes compact, but more work is needed.

Degradation of Arable Land

Arable land, too, is a finite resource (and it may become more finite as glaciers melt and ocean levels rise in the coming decades, particularly impacting low-lying impoverished communities). Current industrial practices such as monoculture farming and intensive use of pesticides and fertilizers have led to dramatic erosion of topsoil. Even if we set about restoring the majority of the US's eroded soil now, it would take decades for it to re-

Books and Articles

Jacobson, Michael F, and the Staff of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. *Six Arguments for a Greener Diet: How a More Plant-Based Diet Could Save Your Health and the Environment.*

Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2006. There is a tremendous amount of well-researched, well-documented, accessible information in this book that points the way to a more environmentally friendly diet. With a strong focus on environmental issues, the authors seek to protect our planet and our health as they address the costs of our current system of agriculture to the environment, our health, and to animals. It clearly illustrates that concerns about the most efficient use of resources, food safety, human costs rights, and animal mistreatment cannot be separated from the environmental issues. The book is particularly useful because it dedicates two chapters to making change: changing our diets and changing the government policies that promote the current unsustainable industrial agricultural system on which most of us depend for our food.

Singer, Peter, and Jim Mason. *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter.* St. Martin's Press, 2007. This easily readable discussion of the impact of our food choices examines the grocery shopping habits of three very different American families and the ethical issues their choices raise. Without preaching, the authors explore issues of the environment, social justice, cruelty and corporate deception. Clear analysis of the environmental concerns created by current industrialized food production and distribution practices make these issues easy to navigate. Of particular interest is the discussion of the environmental impact of food production on climate change, and on the health of our land and water resources. Careful attention is paid to the human cost of our food – including treatment of employees, child labor, forced labor, and cultural disruption. The enlightening discussion of food labels such as “Animal Care Certified” and “Organic” is very helpful, as well. The complicated issues of whether to buy “farmed” or wild fish, “local” or “organic”, and “fair trade” or “free trade” are adeptly managed.

Pollan, Michael. **“Farmer in Chief.”** *New York Times Magazine.* 12 October 2008. 62-71,92. www.nytimes.com/2008/10/12/magazine/12policy-t.html. In an open letter to the next president, Pollan lays out a policy to decrease the dependence of the food industry on oil, decentralize the food system and make more secure the food, and rebuilding America's food culture. A comprehensive summary of how our food system was derailed, damaging our environment, our health and our economy. It's an excellent catalyst for discussion.

Course

North West Earth Institute. *A Menu for the Future.* www.nwei.org/discussion_courses/course-offerings/menu-for-the-future. Six-session course focusing on the connection between food and sustainability. In addition, Menu for the Future course books are available through a partnership with UUA Ministry for Earth and help to support the work of UUMFE www.uuministryforearth.org.

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER

Highly Recommended Resources

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER, *continued*

turn to its natural state, nutrient balance, and capacity to absorb rainwater like a sponge (thus preventing further erosion).

Obviously, this brief introduction has only touched on a few of the food issues directly related to climate change and environmental degradation. Hopefully, it has stoked your curiosity to learn more. The resources that follow provide a wealth of practical, inspiring information about how we can help the planet get back on track.

Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to respond now to this crisis. We cannot continue to rely on a food system that uses more fossil fuel than any sector of the economy, and emits more greenhouse gases than anything else we do. Nor can we support an inequitable system that does preventable harm to our planet and those who inhabit it. To do so when we could reasonably do otherwise would counter the principles at the heart of our faith.

Recommended Supporting Resources

Books and Articles

Bartlett, Andrew Kang. “**Energy, Food and You: On the Path to Reconciliation.**” *Church and Society*, March/April 2004: 17 – 30.

www.pcusa.org/food/downloads/ff-energy.pdf

Written by an Associate for National Hunger Concerns for

the Presbyterian Hunger Program, this engaging article addresses the huge cost to our planet of the current industrial agricultural system. It offers sound arguments for a sustainable global (and local) food system. The system he advocates provides an excellent point from which to start a meaningful discussion of the whys and hows of sustainable, ethical ways to meet food demands with less impact on the planet and its inhabitants.

Brown, Lester. *Plan B 3.0.*, Chapter 2. “**Deteriorating Oil and Food Security,**” Earthly Policy Institute, 2008. The author relates how in the 20th century, a “fast growing supply of cheap oil led to an explosive worldwide growth in food production, population, urbanization, and human mobility.” In years to come, “Food will become more costly as higher oil prices drive up production and transport costs... Diets will thus become more attuned to local products and more seasonal in nature.”

Co-op America. “**Good Food: The Joy, Health, and Security of It**” *Co-op America Quarterly*. Summer 2003 (60). 3-18. This issue focuses on food choices for change as it examines how we can create a more sustainable food economy and a healthy environment. It provides highly practical information including how to help low income families access good food, get healthy food in to our schools, and eat lower on the food chain. The benefits of organic and/or local food and food labeling are addressed.

Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. In what ways is my relationship with food part of my spiritual practice?
2. What was the environmental cost of getting my most recent meal to my table (production, distribution, and purchase)? e.g. What is my food footprint? See www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/.
3. Where should I look in our community for the most sustainable, humane food. Do I consider seasonal availability when making a food choice? Can I get this product through a fair trade co-op, farmers’ market, or local producer or retailer?
4. How do my food choices impact those who produce and distribute it? What are their working and living conditions? Was land that previously was used to raise food for indigenous people converted to raising food for Western countries?
5. Do I consider packaging when making purchases and choose that with the least environmental impact?
6. What support do I need to move toward a more just, environmentally friendly diet?

Energy Bulletin, energybulletin.net

This clearinghouse for information regarding the peak in global energy supply publishes news, research and analysis concerning energy production, articles regarding implications of peak oil, and a range of information about preparedness for peak energy.

Fritz, Hull, ed., *Earth and Spirit: The Spiritual Dimension of the Environmental Crisis*, Continuum, 1993. This is a collection of essays, including one by Miriam Therese MacGillis on “Food as Sacrament” (p. 159-166) that helps us to view environmental issues through a spiritual lens.

Heinberg, Richard, *Peak Everything*, Chapter 2. “**Fifty Million Farmers.**” New Society Publishers, 2007.

The author suggests that the future may be

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER

Resources continued

like “a time not long ago when famine was an expected, if not accepted, part of life.” In a future with diminishing fossil fuels, “we will need far more knowledge and muscle power devoted to food production...[which] could mean the revitalization not only of democracy, but of the family and of authentic, place-based culture.”

Heinberg, Richard, “**Threats of Peak Oil to the Global Food Supply.**” 2005 Conference paper.

archive.richardheinberg.com/museletter/159

“Food is energy. And it takes energy to get food. These two facts, taken together, have always established the biological limits to the human population...The transition to a fossil-fuel-free food system ... is an immense challenge and will call for unprecedented levels of creativity at all levels of society. But in the end it is the only rational option for averting human calamity on a scale never before seen.”

Heinberg, Richard, “**Will the End of Oil Be the End Of Food?**” www.alternet.org/environment/41023/

Richard Heinberg, peak oil expert, discusses what he calls our “fatal dependence on oil” and discusses directions toward sustainability that some farmers are taking. With comments.

National Council of Churches of Christ Eco Justice Programs. *Sacred Food: Sunday School and Group Activities for Youth.* www.nccecojustice.org/resources.html#foodandfarmingresources

A resource for use in religious education classes or other youth group activities, this book examines the miracle of our food and the interference of all God’s creation.

Nestle, Marion. *What to Eat.* North Point Press. 2006.

A nutritionist guides the reader through the labeling labyrinth and addresses many of the practical conundrums we face when trying to make healthy, sustainable and compassionate food choices.

Pearce, Fred. *Confessions of an Eco Sinner: Travels to Find Where My Stuff Comes From.* 25 Feb 2008. Boston: Beacon Press. On his travels, Pearce examines the environmental, social, and economic costs of his “stuff.”

Ronald, Pamela C. and Raoul W. Adamchak. *Tomorrow's Table: Organic Farming, Genetics, and the Future of Food.* Oxford University Press, 2008.

This well-reviewed book suggests that merging genetic engineering and organic farming offers our best shot at truly sustainable agriculture. The authors have a strong sense of both the wonder of the natural world and awareness that if treated with respect and carefully managed, it can remain a source of inspiration and provision of our daily needs.

Sierra Club. “**2008 Faith Report: Faith in Action: Communities of Faith Bring Hope for the Planet.**”

Sierra Club presents its first national report on the environmental engagement of communities of faith, The inspiring report highlights one exceptional faith based environmental initiative from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Several UU congregations are mentioned.

Schut, Michael (ed.). *Food & Faith: Justice, Joy and Daily Bread.* Church Publishing Incorporated. 2006.

A broad perspective from an ecumenical, Christian, environmental non-profit group, this anthology of essays and wisdom comes from many thoughtful people including Wendell Berry, Vandana Shiva, John Robbins, Thomas Moore, and Donella Meadows. Diverse and relevant topics as spirituality and food, genetically modified food, the industrialization of agriculture and its impact on the economy and the environment, food politics and hunger are discussed. It has a useful study guide.

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

“**Livestock’s Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options.**” *FAO Magazine.* Nov. 2006 www.fao.org/ag/magazine/0612sp1.htm.

This summary of a longer report discusses the complex impact of livestock on the environment and discusses its role as a major cause of serious environmental concerns including global warming, land degradation, air and water pollution, cultural disruption and loss of biodiversity. It addresses the challenge of reconciling the rapidly increasing global demand for animal food products with finite environmental resources.

Well-Fed World. “**Issues: World Bank and IFIs**”

www.wellfedworld.org/worldbank.htm

Discusses the threats of the Bertin Project in Brazil in which acres of rainforest will be cut down to graze beef cattle.

DVDs and Videos

A Life Connected. Nonviolence United.

www.nonviolenceunited.org/veganvideo.html

Gently describes impact of animal agriculture on the planet, its people and its animals. 12 minutes.

The Future of Food. www.thefutureoffood.com

Documentary investigating the implications of unlabeled,

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER

Resources continued

patented, genetically engineered food for consumer health, small farmers worldwide, and the environment. Shot in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, argues for organic, sustainable agriculture as an alternative to producing food through multinational corporations.

King Corn. Documentary about corn subsidies, two friends and one acre of corn. 90 minutes. Available from www.bullfrogfilms.com or (800) 543-3764

“The Meatrix I”, “The Meatrix II”, and “The Meatrix II ½.” This award-winning animated trilogy discusses factory farming, the dairy industry, and sustainability. Each piece is a fairly short 2 to 5 minutes. Includes cartoon violence. www.meatrix.com

Beyond Organic. Documentary about a farm and its long battle to survive in the face of rapid suburban development. It contrasts community supported agriculture and conventional chemical farming, and reviews principles of organic farming including fair labor practices, as their farms grow in size and power. 33 minutes www.bullfrogfilms.com or (800) 543-3764

Sierra Club Sustainable Consumption Committee. **The True Cost of Food.** Sierra Club. San Francisco. 2004. <<http://www.truecostoffood.org>> 15 minutes. This animated DVD examines environmental, social, compassion, health and other issues related to the cost, ethical and otherwise, of how we produce and buy our food. It is appropriate for children.

We Feed the World. Vividly reveals the profound problems of the industrialized world food system. 96 minutes. www.bullfrogfilms.com or (800) 543-3764

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil. www.powerofcommunity.org, 2 hours, 7 minutes. Focuses on responses to the depletion of fossil fuels, including discussion of sustainable agriculture as an alternative to the fossil fuel intense methods of “conventional” farming.

Broken Limbs: Apples, Agriculture and the New American Farmer www.brokenlimbs.org 60 minutes. Second-generation apple farmers spend two years documenting how American small and family owned orchards have been overcome by “increasingly untrustworthy” corporations, and the hope to be found in sustainable agriculture. An ultimately upbeat film, it outlines ways in which any individual can play a role in saving America’s small, local farmers.

Web Resources

Center for Science in the Public Interest. www.cspinet.org/

Since 1971, the Center for Science in the Public Interest has been a watchdog and strong advocate for nutrition and health, accurate labeling and food safety.

Coop America . www.coopamerica.org
Focused on economic action for a just planet, this organization sponsors a Climate Action Campaign that includes reducing one’s food footprint.

Eat Your Greens www.grist.org/cgi-bin/signmeup.pl
A weekly e-newsletter with a focus on environmental politics and policy.

FEED (Food & Environment Electronic Digest) www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture/feed/
A free monthly email newsletter designed to keep consumers up-to-date on food production and safety issues.

Food Ethics Council. www.foodethicscouncil.org
The non-profit Food Ethics Council, based in the UK, challenges government, business and society to make wise choices that lead to better food and farming. Of particular interest are links to innovation in agriculture, food distribution: an ethical agenda and sustainable food distribution.

The Food Project www.thefoodproject.org/blast/internal1.asp?ID=422. Well- rounded list of films and videos for youth and young adults that focus on food and agriculture.

Grace Factory Farm Project www.factoryfarm.org
Project of the Center for a Livable Future at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. Aims to replace factory farming in with a healthful, humane, ecologically viable, economically sound food production system.

KC Food Circle. www.kcfoodcircle.org/media/index-media.php
A good list of online food, ecojustice and sustainability resources.

Food Fights. *New York Times Magazine*, 12 Oct. 2008. The focus of this issue of the magazine is food. Michael Pollan, Mark Bittman, Robert Kenner, and others address a wide variety of food issues, including remaking the way we eat, an emerging Jewish food movement that considers sustainabil-

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND WATER

Resources continued

ity, and a controversial Gates Foundation effect to improve agriculture in Africa.

Organic Bytes

www.organicconsumers.org/organicbytes.cfm

A publication of the Organic Consumers Association, this twice-per-month email newsletter offers useful news related to justice, sustainability and health.

Presbyterian Church (USA). “How Much Does Your Burger Cost?”

www.pcusa.org/food/issues.htm#burger

Discusses the water, grain and environmental cost of a hamburger. Has very useful links to resources about food and the environment.

Prevent Climate Change: Farmers Markets.

www.preventclimatechange.co.uk/farmers-markets.html

Provides insight into the importance of supporting your local environment and shopping at farmers' markets including low food miles and less CO2 emissions.

Sierra Club.

www.sierraclub.org/sustainable_consumption

Resources for reducing impact of food choices on the environment, Activist Toolkit, SCC Book Reviews, Bibliography, Food and Energy Factsheets, Articles, Links, and Environmental Resources.

Sustainable Table.

www.sustainabletable.org/issues/environment

Reviews problems resulting from corporate agriculture and the impact on our environment including climate change, pollution, soil depletion, and water contamination. outlined (pollution, effects of certain farming techniques, etc).

Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth. “Beyond Science: Ethical and Religious Dimensions of Global Warming. June 2006.

uuministryforearth.org/globalwarming/BeyondScienceGA2006.pdf.

Donald Brown, Director of the Pennsylvania Consortium for Interdisciplinary Environmental Study, examines the ethical implications of climate change. Presented at UU General Assembly June 2006.

“Global Warming.” Well-fed World.

www.wellfedworld.org/globalwarming.htm.

Summary of UNFAO Report on the impact of animal agriculture climate change and anticipated effects on global hun-

ger.

Earth Ministry

www.earthministry.org

Programs to inspire and mobilize Christian Communities to play a leadership role in building a just and sustainable future. Their resource on this topic, *Food and Faith: Justice, Joy, and Daily Bread* includes a study guide for groups and individuals.

Forum on Religion and Ecology

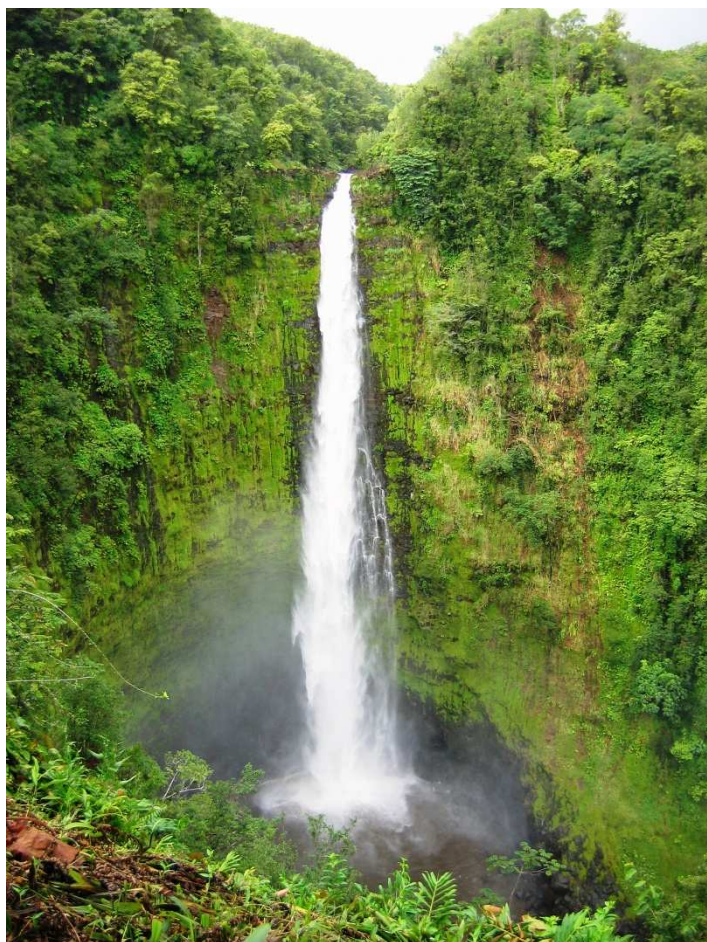
fore.research.yale.edu/main.html

This is the largest international interfaith project of its kind. With its conferences, publications, and website it is engaged in exploring religious worldviews, texts, and ethics in order to broaden understanding of the complex nature of current environmental concerns.

Water Footprint

www.waterfootprint.org

Water Footprint is a tool for people and groups to look at the amount of water they use.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES: GLOBAL HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Globally, 4.3 pounds of food are produced daily for every woman, man, and child on earth—enough to make all of us fat. Yet every year, six million children across the globe die as a result of hunger and malnutrition—one child dying of starvation or malnutrition every five seconds. For the year 2003, Action Against Hunger estimated that 852 million people in the world do not have enough to eat—more than the total population of Japan, Europe, Canada, and the US.

Hunger and malnutrition are responsible for more deaths in the world than AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined.

In the developing nations, isolated North American communities, and populations like the urban homeless and rural elderly, hunger may appear severe. However, in most regions the major food-related problems are poverty and chronic “undernutrition.” Poor nutrition has a harmful effect on physical and mental development, learning and productivity, physical and psychological health, and on family and community life.

Women are often more vulnerable to nutritional problems because of their lower economic and social status as well as their physiological needs. Younger women bear and feed children with their bodies, and at the same time are often expected to work more than men. Women who outlive their economic productivity are sometimes isolated and given little support from the community.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes the human right to food, to secure personal health and well-being (Article 25). The United Nations member states have agreed to achieve eight international development “Millennium Goals” by the year 2015. The first Millennium Goal calls for major reductions in poverty and hunger.



If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,’ but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

-James 2:15-17, New American Bible

Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. How do our own food choices contribute to world hunger?
2. How might our food choices and other choices contribute to alleviating world hunger?
3. How do our diets compare to the average diet of someone in West Africa? Bangladesh? Bolivia?

GLOBAL HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Highly Recommended Resources

Bread for the World. www.bread.org A faith organization that works through lobbying for legislation to end world-wide hunger. It encourages congregations to have letter-writing campaigns to Congress to pass pertinent legislation.

“Well-Fed World.” **United Nations Global Warming Report.** www.wellfedworld.org Discusses the United Nations FAO report on global warming and how it contributes to increasing hunger in our world.

*Sachs, Jeffrey. **The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time**, Penguin Books, NY, 2005.* Sachs argues that extreme poverty—defined by the World Bank as incomes of less than US \$1 per day—can be eliminated globally by the year 2025, through carefully planned development aid including agricultural aid, microcredit, etc. While Sachs has a “checkered” past in his promotion of economic policies (see Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*) he has taken the lead in arguing with heads of state for meeting the UN’s Millennium Development Goals which would do much to eliminate global hunger. Given the global financial situation it remains to be seen if pledging nations will ante up.

Recommended Supporting Resources

Global Issues. **“Solving World Hunger Means Solving World Poverty.”** June 15, 2002. www.globalissues.org/article/8/solving-world-hunger-means-solving-world-poverty. Discussion of the related issues of poverty and hunger and recommendations to address them. Emphasis on food as a human right, colonialism, and corporate agriculture.

Global Issues. **“The World Food Summit: What Went Wrong.” June 2002.** www.globalissues.org/print/article/8. The 2002 Summit [World Food Summit: Fives Years Later] was called by the United Nations to examine why hunger persisted despite the 1996 Plan of Action. Progress has lagged by at least 60% behind the goals for the first five years, and today conditions are worsening in much of the world. This web page relates hunger to poverty, explains food as a human right, and discusses the links between hunger and poverty.

Global Issues. **“World Hunger Notes: Facts 2008”** tinyurl.com/hungerfacts08. Comprehensive discussion of hunger and malnutrition across the globe. With useful links.

The Hunger Project, www.thp.org, 5 Union Square West, New York, NY 10003

Tel: +1-212-251-9100 Fax: 212-532-9785 In 13 countries, The Hunger Project works to support the developing world’s rural women and men to take self-reliant actions to ensure their own food security, and to have voice in government, so that food insecurity can be made a thing of the past.

The Heifer Project, www.heifer.org, is an organization which promotes food and economic security, environmental sustainability, gender equity, and local accountability in im-

poverished communities through the raising of livestock (for meat, eggs, milk, wool and labor), as well as bees & fruit trees. Extensive web resources for congregations wishing to participate.

Environmental Defense Fund. **“Food Prices and Feeding the Hungry.”** www.ewg.org/node/27188. You Tube presentation on by Ken Cook, on food policy for vulnerable people, public health, sensible agricultural policies.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). **ELCA World Hunger.** www.elca.org/our-faith-in-action/responding-to-the-world/elca-world-hunger.aspx. World Hunger is a comprehensive and sustainable program that uses multiple strategies—relief, development, education, and advocacy—to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Presbyterian Church (USA). **“Presbyterian Hunger Program - Global Warming likely to Increase World Hunger: Hits the Poor Hardest.”** May 27, 2005. www.pcusa.org/hunger/features/climate.htm. Report indicates that climate change already is affecting people and will dramatically impact food production patterns. Those with few resources are typically hardest hit.

Well Fed World, “Hunger: Scarcity vs. Distribution” www.wellfedworld.org/scarcity.htm, Discusses why scarcity is a critical issue for global food security, how scarcity is intensified by animal agriculture, and the ways in which scarcity and distribution are connected.

WK Kellogg Foundation tinyurl.com/wkkellogg. Primary efforts are aimed at reducing hunger and poverty.

Share the World’s Resources. www.stwr.org. Share The World’s Resources is an international non-profit dedi-

GLOBAL HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Resources continued

cated to sustainable economics. Of particular interest is the section on food security and agriculture.

United Nations. **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: Special Report on the Right to Food.** www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/food/index.htm.

“Ending Africa’s Hunger” Patel, Raj, Holt-Gimenez, Eric, Shattuck, Annie. The Nation. September 2, 2009.

Food for Thought and Action: A Food Sovereignty Curriculum <http://www.grassrootsonline.org/>

publications/educational-resources/food-thought-action-a-food-sovereignty-curriculum. A practical educational tool designed to strengthen the relationship between consumers, farmers, environmentalists and faith communities building from the experiences of millions of grassroots movements world-wide.

National Geographic Magazine. Global Food Crisis. *The Global Food Crisis: The End of Plenty.* Bourne, Joel. ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/06/cheap-food/bourne-text

HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES: DOMESTIC FOOD SECURITY

On one of my long shopping excursions, I was disheartened to discover that I could not grocery shop in my own neighborhood. There was only one grocery store, and it did not carry organic food... I wondered just how much effort it would take to grow some lettuce and a couple of tomatoes (little did I know the ultimate ramifications of that simple question).

-Ladonna Redmond

Founder of the Institute for Community Resource Development

In the year 2008, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that 49.1 million Americans lived in households considered to be food-insecure. Of these people, 16.7 million were children. This is up 11.1% from the year before and is the highest recorded rate of food insecurity in this country since the survey was first conducted.

Black and Hispanic households experienced food-insecurity at far higher rates than the national average: 27.5% and 26.9%, respectively. The problem persists on many Indian reservations as well.

In addition to not having enough food, often the food available is of sub-standard nutritional quality. This is particularly true in urban areas often termed “food deserts” in response to the lack of fresh food markets. In most of America’s cities there are neighborhoods defined by the lack of grocery

stores but lined with fast food, quick marts and liquor stores making processed food the only option for many families.

As a result, diabetes and heart disease are on the rise and today’s children have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Experts estimate one-third of American children are currently overweight, and these rates have tripled among children ages 12 to 19 since 1980. Nearly 10% of medical spending in 2009 was on obesity related treatment totaling about \$150 billion.

31 million American children eat lunch in school each day. Of them, 18 million are federally subsidized, but the food our nation provides is highly processed largely due to lack of funds. There is a total of \$1 allocated per child per meal each day, leading to high fat, high sodium and low nutrition meals.



DOMESTIC FOOD SECURITY

Highly Recommended Resources

Why Hunger: Food Security Learning Center

A network of activists working toward a just food system and world in the process of developing shared language and facilitating a common understanding of historical roots of racism in the United States in order to effectively implement strategies for change. This is a critical path toward transforming organizational structures that can end hunger and poverty through the development of sustainable and just food systems in our communities.

Roberts, Paul. **The End of Food.** Mariner Books. 2009.

In this carefully researched account, Roberts identifies the forces that are undermining our capacity to produce food that is safe, nourishing, or adequate to meet the appetites of a rapidly growing population. In *The End of Food*, readers will see not only how our food systems are breaking down--but how they can be put back on a sustainable course.

Recommended Supporting Resources

US Women's, Infant's and Children's Nutrition Program, (WIC) www.fns.usda.gov/wic/aboutwic/

Pollan, Michael, "Dear Mr. Next President -- Food, Food, Food," *The New York Times* October 14, 2008.

www.alternet.org/story/102678/

This article talks about the inequities of food production and distribution in the US today.

Gleaning Network: Society of St. Andrew.

www.endhunger.org

Gleaning means gathering vegetables that remain on fields after the official harvest, so that they not go to waste. Food is donated to the hungry. Connect with organized gleaning in your area or start your own program.

Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. How many children in our local schools are eligible for and receive a free breakfast?
2. How many families are eligible for food stamps? for WIC programs?
3. What are food kitchens and food pantries saying about the number of patrons in our area? Is it rising or falling?
4. If someone comes to our congregation seeking food, do we know what organizations are available to serve them? Does our congregation contribute to them? Why or why not?
5. What are the food needs of the elderly in our community? What services help senior citizens?
6. Are there community gardens in our area? If so, what is the fee to join? Are they accessible by mass transit?

Better School Food, www.betterschoolfood.org.

Better School Food is a national organization seeking to raise awareness of the connection between food and children's health, behavior and learning. Founded by Dr. Susan Rubin, the focus of the documentary *Two Angry Moms* (www.twoangrymoms.org) which documents the journey of two mothers trying to transform their school cafeteria.

Just Food, www.justfood.org/food-justice.

Website encouraging communities to exercise their right to grow, sell and eat healthy food.

Food Desert, www.fooddesert.net,

An oasis for residents in urban centers lacking in access to fresh food.

Bybee, Roger, "Growing Power in an Urban Food Desert," *Yes Magazine*, www.yesmagazine.org/issues/food-for-everyone/growing-power-in-an-urban-food-desert

Edwards, Jewel, "Green Collar Hero: LaDonna Redmond," *The Root*, www.theroot.com/views/green-collar-hero-ladonna-redmond

Viertel, Josh, "On Urban Farms, A Sense of Place," *The Atlantic*, www.theatlantic.com/food/archive/2009/09/on-urban-farms-a-sense-of-place/26675/



HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES: LABOR

Large farms in the United States have consistently depended on poorly paid labor, often to the point of exploitation. Much of the country's agricultural system was built on the backs of indentured and enslaved agricultural workers, and in the twenty-first century farm workers remain among the lowest paid laborers in the economy. In recent centuries, immigrants from Europe have been able to leave America's fields within a single generation; immigrants from Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific Islands have fewer options, however, and disproportionately toil under inhuman conditions, for less than living wages, for generations.

Snapshot of US Farm Labor History: Before the Thirteenth Amendment made slavery unconstitutional, the wide use of enslaved laborers kept the price of all farm labor low. When poor white farm workers tried to unionize, enslaved African workers were often used to break the strikes. In rare cases where free Africans had access to land and their own labor, they often became successful farmers in the Americas; many of the Africans kidnapped and forced into the US labor market were skilled farmers who brought innovations and African technology to US farms.

Slavery's end in 1865 did not usher in a period of African American agricultural prosperity.

Robbed of the forty acres and a mule the government had promised, African American farmers were swept into sharecropping, along with Native Americans and poor whites. Meanwhile, recruiters went abroad to find foreign workers whose wages could be kept suppressed. Immigrant workers from Asia, beginning with Chinese in 1848, were joined by workers from Latin America (particularly Mexico), the Phil-

ippines, Japan, Puerto Rico, and many other countries. Landowners pitted immigrant groups against one another in competition for wages, and used them as strike-breakers to suppress the wages of all farm workers. Sharecroppers and farm workers attempted to organize into grass roots collectives and trade unions beginning in the 1920s. These attempts were met with open violence by the state, and a racist vigilantism by mobilized whites. The sharecropping system was replaced in the decades after World War II when southern agriculture was mechanized and impoverished migrant workers became the preferred labor force. Migrant labor, drawn originally from Mexico and Central America, was preferred to domestic agricultural labor because state and local institutions could avoid responsibility for the social services to a large impoverished population, although even domestic-born agricultural workers were initially exempted from the social security laws.

Eventually, using their rights as citizens, white farm workers were able to organize into unions; many eventually found work in better paying industries. Immigrant people of color, however, were barred from citizenship (many until 1952), and so the legal protections of citizenship were not available to these workers until recently.

Snapshot of US Farm Labor Today: In 1962, the United Farm Workers of America organized. Through a combination of grass roots organizing, and reaching out for support from world wide public opinion, they secured contracts in strawberry, table grape, winery, rose, mushroom and vegetable farms. They have worked with Mexican American urban communities to forge coalitions that empowered farm labor, and championed laws that have made significant difference in the lives of agricultural workers across the coun-



LABOR, *continued*

try. Unfortunately, these laws are not always enforced in fields and plants employing large numbers of undocumented workers.

In addition to its low wages, agricultural labor today features some of the economy's most dangerous jobs. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration lists agriculture as the second most dangerous occupation in the United States. "Agricultural work" in this instance includes ranching, slaughtering, and commercial fishing, but working in fields can also be very hazardous. Field workers often stoop for long periods of time to harvest crops and must lift and move heavy containers. Farm workers are often expected to operate equipment that may be unfamiliar to them and in uncertain repair. Those who work with animals are often exposed to bacteria that are dangerous to humans. Almost all workers on conventional farms are exposed to massive doses of chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

While many farm workers receive proper protection and information about occupational hazards, workers who do not speak or read English are often at greater risk for injury. In addition, employers can be indifferent to workers' health and safety, and overlook their legal responsibilities. In summer 2008, many California growers did not provide adequate shade, water and restroom facilities for workers harvesting Central Valley crops in daytime temperatures that regularly exceeded one hundred degrees. Other food related industries that attract large numbers of immigrant and undocumented workers, like food processing, preparation, and service, also tend to poorly enforce labor, health and safety codes.

Highly Recommended Resources

Alliance for Fair Food

www.allianceforfairfood.org

A network of human rights, religious, student, labor, sustainable food and agriculture, environmental and grassroots organizations who work in partnership with the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)**, an internationally-recognized human rights organization working to eliminate modern-day slavery and sweatshop labor conditions from Florida agriculture. The AFF promote principles and practices of socially responsible purchasing in the corporate food industry that advance and ensure the human rights of farm workers at the bottom of corporate supply chains. AFF has, most recently, been working with faith (including UU) and labor organizations to receive a fairer wage and working conditions for tomato pickers.

Interfaith Worker Justice

www.iwj.org

A non-denominational non-profit organization that educates, organizes and mobilizes religious people of all faiths in the United States on economic issues and campaigns that will improve wages, benefits and conditions for workers, and give them a voice. There are chapters in many states as well as a national organization. "Labor in the Pulpit" is a program each Labor Day Sunday where a congregation invites someone from the labor movement to speak.

Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. What are the food related industries and activities (processing, transportation, marketing, preparation, and serving) in our community? Who works in these jobs? What are the health and safety issues peculiar to these jobs? How well are laws to protect workers in these industries enforced?
2. Do the farmers who raise my food & the workers who pick, butcher, cook or deliver my food receive a living wage and healthy working conditions? If not, do I care?
3. What forms of oppression are perpetuated through food-related jobs in our community (for example racism and sexism)?
4. What's it like to be a supermarket clerk, a cafeteria worker, or a waitress in our community? How many jobs do food workers in our community typically hold in order to make ends meet?
5. What are the immigration issues for food workers in our community?

LABOR

Recommended Supporting Resources

Eisnitz, Gail A. *Slaughterhouse*. Prometheus, November 2006. 328 pages. In the tradition of Upton Sinclair's muck-raking novel, *The Jungle*, except *Slaughterhouse* is true: a documentary (in book form) of the experiences of contemporary slaughterhouse workers. Explores how race and ethnicity, industry consolidation, and deregulation impact workers in what the U.S. Dept. of Labor calls some of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. today. Describes how conditions have both worsened and improved over the last twenty-five years, and makes clear the work remaining to be done, especially in terms of worker safety and the need for government inspection. Eisnitz is the chief investigator for the Humane Farming Association; her book resulted in exposés by ABC's *Good Morning America*, *PrimeTime Live*, and *Dateline NBC*, and her interviews have been heard on more than 1,000 radio stations.

Farm Worker Labor Organizing Committee

www.floc.com An AFL-CIO union active in the Middle West and in the South. Many excellent speakers available through this organization. Several UU congregations supported the Mount Olive pickle boycott during the 1990s.

Moyers, Bill. **"Migrant Labor in the United States:"** NOW: Politics and Economy: On the Border.

www.pbs.org/now/politics/migrants.html. Explores the lives of the approximately 1.3 million U.S. citizens who earn their living migrating among states in the agricultural industry. A basic introduction, with many links to further resources.

National Farm Worker Ministry

www.nfwm.org

An interfaith organization with a long history of supporting farm worker unions. The NFWM works in several regions in the United States. Particularly valuable for drawing the connections between faith and worker justice. Several UU congregations and districts have worked with the NFWM.

Sustainable Table. **The Issues**

www.sustainabletable.org/issues/workers/.

Short article providing information on issues faced by immigrant workers and workers in animal industries.



HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INEQUITIES: TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Snapshot of Free Trade: In a system of Free Trade, agricultural goods and services flow among countries unaffected by government-imposed restrictions like tariffs, taxes and quotas which generally increase the costs of goods and services to both consumers and producers. Free trade and its economic, social, political and environmental impacts is one of the most hotly debated contemporary issues with strong feelings on all sides of the debate.

Some arguments in favor of free trade assert that free trade will make society more prosperous according to standard economic measures, though 18th and 19th century advocates of free trade rarely relied on economic arguments alone; rather, they argued that international society is qualitatively improved by increased commerce. For example, free trade has been said to decrease war, reduce poverty, enrich culture, enhance security, and increase economic efficiency. Free trade is also understood as a sovereign right of free nations.

While proponents of free trade generally acknowledge that it creates winners and losers among cultures and nations, they contend free trade is a large and unambiguous net gain for world society and advocate for countries to eliminate remaining tariffs and other barriers to trade. They also support employers outsourcing work to foreign countries.

Opponents to free trade argue the research supporting it is flawed, founded on dubious assumptions about the nature of prosperity, and too narrowly focused on certain issues while ignoring others. As summarized by Dr. Peter Soderbaum of Malardalen University, Sweden, "This neoclassical trade theory focuses on one dimension, i.e., the price at which a commodity can be delivered, and is extremely narrow in cutting off a large number of other considerations about impacts on employment in different parts of the world, about environmental impacts and on culture." (Post-Autistic Economics Review, Sept 2007).

Snapshot of Fair Trade: In a system of Fair Trade, agricultural good and services flow among countries based not only on classic economic considerations, but also social, environmental, labor, and sustainability requirements. A market-based solution, Fair Trade relies on consumer readiness to pay slightly more for product that empowers, rather than exploits, vulnerable populations. Most Fair Trade standards also require progress requirements that ensure continuous improvement in the conditions of workers, communities, and the environment. The goal of Fair Trade is to empower consumers (through transparency of source conditions) and producers (through movement from vulnerability to greater self-sufficiency and security).

Free Trade proponents criticize Fair Trade for creating price floors (minimum prices) based on standards other than pure supply-and-demand considerations. This "artificial" pricing encourages more producers to enter the market, which drives down the price of non-Fair Trade goods. Free Trade advocates hold that at least in economic terms, letting supply and demand and other classic economic indicators set pricing would create greater efficiency overall.

Fair Traders offer two primary responses. First, we should be at least as concerned with sustainability, environmental considerations, and fairness as we are with efficiency measured in dollars and cents. Second, the conditions in which Free Trade might lead to the best outcomes are not present



TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM, *continued*

in much of the Global South with whom the North trades. Alex Nicholls, social entrepreneurship professor at Oxford University, points out that “key conditions on which classical and neo-liberal trade theories are based are notably absent in rural agricultural societies in many developing countries.” (Nicholls, A. & Opal, C. (2004). “Fair Trade: Market-Driven Ethical Consumption. London: Sage Publications. p17-19) These include classic economic assumptions such as perfect market information, access to credits and markets, and the ability to change equipment and techniques in response to changing market conditions, all of which “are fallacious in the context of agricultural producers and workers in developing countries.”

While Free Trade agreements tend to dramatically increase foreign investment in agricultural and manufacturing sectors of developing countries, they also tend to decrease the total number of jobs in these countries and compound already desperate economic circumstances. International treaties like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) allow for the free flow of capital investment and products across international borders according to pure market considerations, but do not allow for the free flow of people and their labor across borders according to pure market considerations. Consequently, cheap labor in poorer countries is exploited by the multinational corporations of wealthy countries (e.g., some of the poorest people in the world work on the farms and in factories of US corporations, for far lower wages than these same corporation would have to pay in the United States). For example, under NAFTA, investment in Mexico’s agricultural sector primarily went to relatively capital intensive industrial farms ; in NAFTA’s first ten years, Mexico lost 1.3 million agricultural jobs.

Neo-colonialism exists when a nation or state appears sovereign and independent, but has its economy, politics, and/or culture largely directed from outside, often by a former colonial or imperial power. The continuing impact of European and U.S. neo-colonialism is often overlooked in analyses of world hunger and environmental degradation. The dynamics of colonialism and neo-colonialism illuminate why poverty and hunger disproportionately impact People of Color in the U.S. and throughout the world. Modern trade, immigration and foreign aid policies in Europe and the U.S. continue to exacerbate the historic ravages of colonialism for indigenous and subjugated peoples worldwide.

Colonialism is obscured by the way history is typically taught in the United States, so that the “average” American might think the colonial period ended in 1776. Additionally, the term “post-colonial” has entered common usage to describe current global politics and seems to suggest colonialism is no longer with us. Unfortunately this is untrue. The world continues to be negatively impacted by the colonial era when Europe (and the United States) established white regimes in Africa, Asia, Australia, Oceania and the Americas.

Colonialism is defined by a particular set of socio-political-economic circumstances. First is the forceful invasion of indigenous peoples’ homeland by a colonizing group. Colonizers often use additional force to subjugate the indigenous

Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. What are the underlying assumptions of Free Trade and Fair Trade? What are the goals, and which are most compatible with our values?
2. How do we know if our food is produced in another country, or obtained through Free Trade or Fair Trade? Is it important?
3. When someone stays in a job of their own free will, can it be exploitation? Under what conditions?
4. What types of food purchases will do the most to support development of free and fair societies abroad? What kind of purchases will do the most to promote the sixth UU principle: “The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all”?
5. What more do we need to understand about colonialism and its relationship to racism and their impact on land and food?
6. To what group of indigenous people did the land where our community is located belong? Where are those people today? What are their lives like? What has the loss of their homeland meant to them?
7. What is the history of slavery in our community? How does that impact who lives here today and who owns land here today?
8. In what ways are foreign food practices imposed on the people of color in our community?
9. Do people of color and poor people have access to healthy food alternatives in our community?
10. What are the negative health impacts in our community because of lack of access to healthy food? How are poor people and people of color disproportionately impacted?

TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM, *continued*



population, in order to claim the land and its natural resources. The indigenous economy is destroyed, and the indigenous people subjugated and forced to occupy the lowest rungs of the colonizer's economy. The indigenous population typically forms the poorest segment of the new society, and experiences the highest rates of hunger, malnutrition, homelessness, unemployment, underemployment and incarceration. Furthermore, culture is used as a weapon: indigenous populations are forced to assimilate the cultural norms of the colonizer while indigenous cultural norms are demonized, criminalized and legally suppressed. Driving the entire colonial project, and key to justifying the violence and inhumanity it necessitates, is a racist ideology that asserts the racial supremacy of the colonizer and dehumanizes and objectifies the indigenous population.

The defining difference between classic colonialism and neo-colonialism is ownership of the land. In cases of classic colonialism the colonizer assumes ownership and control of indigenous peoples' land as a way of establishing or enlarging a land base for the colonizing society. Neo-colonialism differs in that the colonizer does not incorporate the invaded land mass into the colonizer's territory; rather, the colonizer assumes control of the political, social and economic systems of the invaded society. Typical targets of U.S. neo-colonialism are countries already altered by a history of classic colonialism but that have become independent from their original colonizers.

These dynamics of colonialism and neo-colonialism have powerfully influenced land access and food production throughout North American history. The continent experienced multiple invasions by European groups. Since the United States was established as an independent nation, colonialism has also defined the relationship between the United States and the indigenous peoples of the Americas, Alaska and Hawai'i; millions of enslaved Africans and their descendants; and indigenous Mexicans.

The dynamics and ramifications of colonialism continue to be experienced by People of Color in the United States today. For example, modern practices of prison agricultural labor have their roots in slavery and continue to disproportionately impact People of Color, especially African American men. U.S. agricultural practices continue to disrupt the traditional food practices of indigenous peoples.

Poor regions of the world have shifted from producing crops that support their self-sufficiency to "cash crops" valued by the dominant world economy, like cotton, tobacco, sugar, tea, rice, coffee, cocoa, bananas, pineapples, corn, soy beans, and livestock. Combined with free market economics, this perpetuates dependent, inequitable relationships and a system of poverty, malnutrition and exploited labor. Because indigenous and poor populations lack access to traditional hunting, gathering and farming lands, they no longer have access to their traditional food products and must resort to foreign diets, whose poor quality and highly processed nature lead to nutrition related diseases.

In our modern world, food and food production are inextricably linked to land. Land—and who has control and access and who doesn't—is inextricably linked to historic and contemporary colonialism and neo-colonialism. People throughout the world are engaged in struggles against the destructive impacts of multinational corporations, as well as colonial and neo-colonial policies. If Unitarian Universalists seek to create a more equitable and just society, we need to understand how agriculture and food distribution relate to colonialism and neo-colonialism. Most importantly, we need to join in the struggle to dismantle the root cause of colonialism — racism.

"Our defeat was always implicit in the history of others; our wealth has always generated our poverty by nourishing the prosperity of others, the empires and their native overseers...On the colonial and neo-colonial alchemy, gold changes to scrap metal and food into poison...We have become painfully aware of the mortality of wealth which nature bestows and imperialism appropriates.

**-Eduardo Galeano,
*Open Veins of Latin America***

Highly Recommended Resources

Economic Justice Action Group of the First Unitarian Congregation of Portland Oregon. *Is Free Trade Fair Trade?* DVD. Introduced by former UUA President Bill Sinkford, this clear, vivid video interviews farmers of roses in Portland and a Hood River woman pear farmer with an 82-year-old orchard, who are losing their farms to the “global economy.” It introduces the global overseers, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the WTO, the World Trade Organization, and NAFTA, and explains how profit is king for multinational corporations to the detriment of US workers, local communities and the environment. Barbara Dudley and Maude Barlow are among the excellent presenters. klore@firstunitarianportland.org.

Henderson, Hazel with Simran Sethi. *Ethical Markets: Growing the Green Economy*. Chelsea Green Publishing Company, White River Junction, Vermont, 2006. Long ignored and minimized by the mainstream media, visionary entrepreneurs, environmentalists, scientists and professionals have been creating a profitable new economy that lives in harmony with the earth and social well-being. Includes chapters on fair trade, clean food, socially responsible investing, etc.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. and Andrew Charlton. *Fair Trade for All: How Trade can Promote Development* (Initiative for Policy Dialogue Series C). Oxford University Press, USA September 17, 2007, 352 pages.

Academic in detail and density, yet excellent for serious readers who wish to explore the depths of trade policy. As written by *Publishers Weekly*, “Nobel Prize-winning economist and ex-World Bank official Stiglitz is the leading main-

stream critic of the free-trade, free-market “Washington Consensus” for developing countries. In this follow-up to his best-selling *Globalization and its Discontents*, he and Charlton, a development expert, present their vision of a liberalized global trade regime that is carefully geared to the interests of poorer countries. They...[note] the real-world constraints and complications that undermine the assumption that unregulated free trade is always a boon, and analyze the bias towards developed countries in previous trade agreements. They call for the current round of trade negotiations to re-focus on principles of equity and social

TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM, *continued*

justice... detailed policy prescriptions... readable, but rather dry and technical... isn't quite right for a general audience... those already interested in trade issues will consider it a must-read.”

LaDuke, Winona with Sarah Alexander. *Food Is Medicine: Recovering Traditional Foods to Heal the People*. Ponsford, MN: Honor the Earth, 2004.

This short (36 page) resource provides historical background on Native American land removal, land use and agriculture. Discusses current Native American concerns about the industrialization of agriculture and the health impacts on Indian communities. Also Native American community efforts to recover traditional diet and food practices.

LaDuke, Winona. *Winona LaDuke Reader: A Collection of Essential Writings*. Stillwater, MN: Voyageur Press, 2002.

The first section of the Reader, “Native Environmentalism,” discusses the impact of environmental racism on Native American communities. Several essays specifically focus on food and food production.

Trask, Haunani-Kay. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999.

Background on the role of US agricultural interests in the takeover and illegal annexation of Hawai'i. Includes current issues around environmental racism, land use, agriculture and ongoing oppression of Native Hawai'ians.



TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Recommended Supporting Resources

In support of Free Trade

CATO Institute Center for Trade Policy Studies. **Free Trade Frequently Asked Questions.**

www.freetrade.org/faqs/faqs.html

Ten questions and answers that respond directly to criticisms of Free Trade by proponents of Fair Trade.

Friedman, Milton. **The Case for Free Trade.** Hoover Digest 1997 No. 4.

www.hoover.org/publications/digest/3550727.html

A case against tariffs and in favor of unfettered free trade.

Whaples, Robert. **“Do Economists Agree on Anything? Yes!”** The Economists' Voice 3. Berkeley Electronic Press, 2006.

www.bepress.com/ev/vol3/iss9/art1/

Abstract: “Despite the appearances to the contrary, survey evidence by Robert Whaples suggests that economists agree on a wide range of policy issues from free trade to educational vouchers. Climate change and Social Security remain areas of disagreement.”

In support of Fair Trade

Food First Institute for Development and Policy

www.foodfirst.org/

This site provides useful analysis of the root causes of global hunger, poverty, and ecological degradation, and developing solutions in partnership with movements working for social change.

Oxfam International. **“Signing Away the Future: How Trade and Investment Agreements Between Rich and Poor Countries Undermine Development.”** 2007. tinyurl.com/signingawaythefuture.

Trade agreements between rich and poor countries are driven by the United States and the European Union and impose far reaching rules and policies on developing countries that perpetuate and exacerbate existing poverty. This Oxfam reports explores some of these issues.

Oxfam International. **“Trading Away Our Rights: Women Working in Global Supply Chains.”** 2004. tinyurl.com/tradingrights

This Oxfam report analyzes numerous inequities in global labor markets, including many food related industries. Special attention to women’s vulnerability to exploitation. Potential solutions are explored.

Ransome, David. **The No-Nonsense Guide to Fair Trade.** Oxfam Publishing, 2006.

tinyurl.com/nononsensefairtrade

This is a handy and accessible reference that provides information on a number of complex free trade and fair trade issues. Its 144 pages are particularly accessible to high school students to tell the human story behind the products we consume.

Scott, Robert E. **“The High Price of Free Trade.”**

Economic Policy Institute. Nov 17, 2003.

www.epi.org/content.cfm/briefingpapers_bp147

Academic analysis of NAFTA’s impact on jobs in the countries of North America.

Shiva, Vandana. **Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply.** South End Press, 2000.

Shiva, an Indian environmentalist compares corporate methods of food production with the small farmer economy that predominates in the third world and comes to the conclusion that local, small agriculture is better.

World Economy Project. **Global Village or Global Pilgrimage.** Preamble Center, 1737 21st St., NW, Washington DC 20009, 202-265-3263 ext. 330. 28 minutes. The video describes plant closings like Westinghouse which moved to Juarez, Mexico where they can pay \$.85/hour to save \$25,000 per worker in salary.



Resources on Neo-Colonialism

Acuña, Rudolfo. **Occupied America: A History of Chicanos.** Longman, 2000.

This book is an introduction to the experience of Mexican Americans in the United States, includes discussion of agricultural and food issues, also a description of colonialism from a Latino perspective.

Blauner, Bob. *Racial Oppression in America*. Harper & Row, 1972. Includes a chapter describing the conditions of colonialism and their application to People of Color in the United States.

Boucher, Douglas M. (editor). *The Paradox of Plenty: Hunger in a Bountiful World*. Institute for Food and Development Policy, 1999.

Exploration of inequities in the world food system. An anthology of twenty-seven of Food First's best publications to provide an integrated overview of the world food system, how global politics affect hungry people, and the impact of the free market.

Cajete, Gregory (ed.). *A People's Ecology: Explorations in Sustainable Living*. Clear Light Publishers, 1999.

Explores a Native American approach to sustainable agriculture and food production, and the links between healthy food practices and healthy populations.

Gonzalez, Juan. *Harvest of Empire*. Penguin, 2000. Provides broad background to US interventions in Latin America and their impact on the people. Includes broad discussion of US colonialism and neocolonialism as experienced in Latin America. The use of the military to further US corporate agricultural interest is discussed. In addition, the Latina/o experience in the US is also considered.

Lappé, Frances Moore, Collins, Joseph, Rosset, Peter, and Esparza, Luis. *World Hunger: Twelve Myths*. Grove Press, 1998. An examination of the policies and politics that perpetuate hunger throughout the world in both developed countries and developing countries. Twelve Myths demonstrates the interconnectedness of all people and encourages readers to stand with hunger people for the well being of all.

Articles on the Web

Call, Wendy, "Reclaiming Corn and Culture," *Yes Magazine* Summer 2008

www.yesmagazine.org/article.asp?ID=2696

Provides an example of Mexican people attempting to overcome colonial impacts on their agriculture and diets.

Dansie, Roberto "Good Medicine for the World," *Indian Country Today* Sep 11, 2008

www.indiancountrytoday.com/archive/28211019.html

Helpful article on indigenous food practices.

Dauenhauer, Katrin. "Africans Challenge Bush Claim that GM Food Good for Them"

www.commondreams.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi?file=/headlines03/0620-07.htm

This article provides an example of how the United States presumes to speak for African food policies based on the coercive power of trade and debt financing.

Dias, Robette "Historical Development of Institutional Racism Working Paper" tinyurl.com/5pxl2o

This working paper includes a description of racist ideologies, their origins in colonialism and US apartheid. It also describes the economic benefits to white society in perpetuating racist ideologies.

Green Peace, "Alaska Natives Provide Personal Testimony of the Impacts of Global Warming," 11 August 1998; archive.greenpeace.org/pressreleases/arctic/1998aug11.html

The Arctic region in Alaska is one of the few (if not the last) places left in the United States where Indigenous People continue to practice subsistence lifestyles. Unfortunately as the Arctic region experiences the impacts of global warming, subsistence food gathering is becoming more dangerous and more difficult. This article describes some of the concerns of Alaska Natives.

Indian Country Today Editors Report. "Preserving the Integrity of Indian Corn," *Indian Country Today* 10 Sept 2008 (updated)

www.indiancountrytoday.com/archive/28187974.html

This article discusses concern for biogenetics and the integrity of local agriculture.

Mazhar, Farhad; Buckles, Daniel; Satheesh, P.V. and Akhter, Farida, "Food Sovereignty and Uncultivated Biodiversity in South Asia"

www.idrc.ca/en/ev-107905-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Explores the meaning of agriculture and guides the reader into new territory, where food, ecology, and culture converge. The authors demonstrate the value of localized food production and consumption systems.

M'bokolo, Elikia "The impact of the slave trade on Africa." *Le Monde diplomatique*, April 1998.

mondediplo.com/1998/04/02africa

Describes the continued impact of slavery on Africa.

TRADE AND NEO-COLONIALISM

Resources, continued

Monbiot, George **“It's Pretty Clear That Europe Is Using 'Trade' Deals to Steal Food from Poor Countries,”** AlterNet, August 28, 2008.

www.alternet.org/story/96653/

This article demonstrates how Western Europe continues to dominate Africa.

Onesto, Li, **“The Global Food Crisis...And the Ravenous System Of Capitalism,”** 29 April, 2008.

www.countercurrents.org/onesto290408.htm

This article describes the impact on poor people worldwide of food crops being used for fuel.

Pupovac, Jessica **“FBI Witch Hunt Stokes Puerto Rican Independence Movement,”** January 31, 2008.

www.alternet.org/rights/75196/

Describes US colonialism in Puerto Rico, including the dynamic of US colonies being forced markets for US exports, particularly processed foods.

Renner, Matt, **“Slavery Today: A Clear and Present Danger,”** Truthout, 22 May 2008. www.truthout.org/article/slavery-today-a-clear-and-present-danger

This article discusses the ongoing reality of slavery in the United States.

Rodriguez, Roberto **“We are Farmers Not Gardeners,”** *Yes Online*. www.yesmagazine.org/other/pop_print_article.asp?ID=1496

This article describes urban farmers who are trying to grow healthy food for the poor people in their neighborhood.

Schenwar, Maya **“Slavery Haunts America’s Plantation Prisons,”** 28 August 2008. www.truthout.org/article/slavery-haunts-americas-plantation-prisons

This is a helpful article on contemporary US prisons and their links to slavery and food production.

Shand, Hope, **The Coming “Sugar Economy” Sweet for Multinationals, but a Bitter Pill for Everyone Else,** 14 October 2008 www.alternet.org/story/102948/
Worldwide, the projected growth of bio-diesel production creates greater demand for corn and other “sugar” crops for fuel production.

Sharma, Devinder, **WTO: ‘Importing Food is Importing Unemployment’** December 13, 2005 by Inter Press Service. tinyurl.com/6k2kuf

Tansey, Geoff and Rajotte, Tasmin, editors, **“The Future Control of Food; A Guide to International Negotiations and Rules on Intellectual Property, Biodiversity and Food Security”**

www.idrc.ca/en/ev-118094-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Litigation Relating to ICE Raids

www.aifl.org/lac/clearinghouse_122106_ICE.shtml

Provides information on the relationship between the subjugated workforce and the immigration policies of the United States.

Saulny, Susan, **“Hundreds Are Arrested in U.S. Sweep of Meat Plant.”** *New York Times*, May 13 2008

www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/us/13immig.html

Websites

Coalition of Immokalee Workers

www.ciw-online.org

This website provides information about a campaign against modern day agricultural slavery in the United States.

The Commission on Decolonization

www.decolonizeguam.com/historicalbackground.html

This is a Guam based independence movement that outlines their case for independence on their website.

United Farm Workers www.ufw.org

This website provides information about farm workers struggles to resist colonialism

Videos

www.youtube.com/watch?v=eosct6-dT4 A demonstration of the impact of slavery on African American youth.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwSOsfa1064 A short video about slavery.



ANIMAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

The simple act of eating expresses one of our most basic and profound relationships with Earth and life. For some of us, our main connection to non-human animals is through our forks and knives. Often, we know very little about them. The freezer pack wrapped in cellophane bears little resemblance to a fellow creature who sees and breathes and sighs. Their bodies become our bodies, yet their lives remain hidden from view. As **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“[Humanity] can and does live, in great measure, by preying on other animals; but this is a miserable way,—as anyone who will go to snaring rabbits, or slaughtering lambs, may learn...I have no doubt that it is part of the destiny of the human race, in its gradual improvement, to leave off eating animals.”

—Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Zoologists, biologists, and cognitive ethologists all now agree that animals are emotional beings, and that like us, they evolved capacities for satisfaction and frustration, pleasure and suffering as biological necessities. Though animals are often considered part of “the environment,” the complexity of their experiences suggest that they are much more than animated gardenias or slabs of granite. Animals are not so much a *part* of environment as they are subjects moving *through* the environment, with experiences all their own. As anyone who has gotten to know a dog, cat, bird, pig, or cow can tell you, animals are experiencing, sentient creatures with wants, needs, and frustrations.

At the same time that supply chains distance us further and further from the sources of our food, agricultural methods have become increasingly intensive for the animals entangled in them. Once raised on farms by people who cared for their welfare, animals now are treated as commodities managed in facilities the industry calls “Confined Animal Feeding Operations” (CAFOs), or “factory

wrote, “You have just dined, and however scrupulously the slaughterhouse is concealed in the graceful distance of miles, there is complicity.”

Zoologists, biologists, and

farms.” The goals of efficiency and profit dictate the textures of their lives and deaths, yet all the while, from birth to slaughter, these beings suffer egregiously. Following the adage that knowledge is power, knowledge about what our consumer dollars support allows us to reclaim the power to be intentional about the world we are creating for the creatures with whom we share our DNA and co-evolved.

At the heart of the impulse we call religious is the desire to lessen suffering and to extend justice and compassion. Increasingly, religious faiths and denominations are considering what this means in relation to non-human animals. Like many Unitarian Universalists, they are striving to articulate and practice interspecies ethics. Some Unitarian Universalists are reducing their meat consumption; some are shifting to alternate sources for their animal products; some are shifting to entirely-plant based diets; some are choosing to maintain their existing eating patterns. Wherever you are in your own process of discernment concerning your food choices and your relationship to animals, the tools below will be useful.

Both the Questions and the Resources are designed to increase awareness, knowledge, and the ability to act authentically and intentionally in relationship to other animals, that we may better honor the interdependent web of life of which we are all a part.



ANIMAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Highly Recommended Resources

Books and Articles

Pollan, Michael. “**An Animal’s Place.**” *New York Times Magazine* . 10 Nov. 2002, tinyurl.com/ybptzp2

B. R. Meyers, “**Hard to Swallow.**” *Atlantic Monthly*. Sept. 2007, tinyurl.com/2e63gw

Read in conjunction, these two articles will lead to a far deeper understanding of the issues of ethical eating. Pollan’s article makes a moral case for omnivorism, condemning many practices of factory farming but challenging the arguments for vegetarianism. Myers challenges Pollan’s thesis supporting animal consumption, examining his assertions in context of what we now know about individual and social lives of animals, and subsequent human responsibilities.

Walker, Alice. “**Am I Blue?**” *Living by the Word*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1988.

This short essay is simple and profound. Alice Walker describes her meeting with a horse. From this starting point, her reflection exposes an interconnected web of oppression. It expands from the divisions, objectification, and alienation between species to that between races, genders, and generations. Walker’s writing offers a gentle personal and philosophical basis for consideration of our interspecies ethics.

Foer, Jonathan Safran. *Eating Animals*. Little, Brown and Company. 2009. Without pulling any punches, factory farming is given the full expose treatment with an array of facts, anecdotes, and furious, inward-spinning energy to make a personal, highly entertaining take on an increasingly visible moral question.

Regan, Tom. *Empty Cages: Facing the Challenge of Animal Rights*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2004

Regan addresses the complex issues of animal rights. This highly readable book posits the view that animals deserve moral consideration. *Empty Cages* has been called the best introduction to ethics and animal issues. Not without controversial passages; an excellent reference to begin the discussion of animal rights and human responsibility.

DVDs

The Emotional World of Farm Animals

(52 minutes, 2004) www.animalplace.org/apvideo

A beautiful documentary for all ages about the thinking and feeling side of animals all too often just viewed as food.

Mad Cowboy: The Documentary.

DVD, 79 minutes. tinyurl.com/madcowboy

This powerful documentary, an extension of his books, tells the compelling story of rancher Howard Lyman’s efforts to inform the public of the impact of factory farming on the environment, the animals, and health, including his concerns about its relationship to “Mad Cow Disease” and Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease. As he interviews activists, scientists, victims, ranchers, farmers, doctors, and consumers through out the world, he presents opinions on every side of the issues. Available at a cost of \$20.00.



Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

1. Do you believe that animals have experiences that matter to them? Does that include the animals we treat as commodities?
2. Do you have a spiritual practice that deepens your gratitude and awareness of your connection with these animals?
3. If your diet includes foods from animals, do you know how they live and die?
4. What *morally relevant* traits distinguish animals we cherish as pets from farmed animals? Is there any *morally relevant* trait that would make it ethical to protect dogs from certain forms of cruelty and neglect, but not pigs? Parrots, but not chickens? Horses, but not cows? If so, what are those morally relevant traits? If not, what are the implications?
5. How do justice and compassion for animals affect your food choices?
6. When does it become a moral imperative to avoid financially supporting systems that perpetuate animal suffering?
7. Are you certain you know the legal meaning of labels like “USDA Organic,” “farm-raised,” and “free range?”
8. Does your family or congregation have a covenant that considers the use and abuse of animals in its food rituals?

ANIMAL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Recommended Supporting Resources

Books and Articles

Balcombe, Jonathan. *Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good*. Macmillan, 2006.

Delightful, research-based book by an animal behavior researcher focuses on how animals enjoy themselves.

Beers, Diane. *For the Prevention of Cruelty: The History and Legacy of Animal Rights Activism in the United States*. Swallow Press, 2006. Compelling study of the animal advocacy movement.

Kaufman, Stephen R, and Nathan Braun. *Good News for All Creation: Vegetarianism as Christian Stewardship*. Vegetarian Advocates Press, 2002.

Biblical-based exploration of ways in which vegetarianism has deepened the faith of the authors.

Kowalski, Rev. Gary. *The Souls of Animals*. Stillpoint Press, 1991. A UU minister examines the connections shared by all beings and offers insights into their spirituality in the context of love, joy and self-consciousness.

Lyman, Howard F. *Mad Cowboy*. Touchstone, 1998. The book version of author's journey from cattle rancher to vegetarian and animal rights activist. Highlights the environmental, health and cruelty issues that drove his search.

Masson, Jeffrey Moussaieff. *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals*. Ballantine Books, 2002.

Masson interweaves folklore, science and literature with his observations of farm animals' behaviors in this intense, compelling look at the emotions of animals. Also recommended and by this author: *The Face On Your Plate*.

Phelps, Norm. *The Great Compassion: Buddhism and Animal Rights*. Lantern, 2004. Buddhism considers kindness and compassion the highest virtues, and explicitly includes animals in its moral universe. Yet many Buddhists eat meat, and monks, priests, and scholars sometimes defend meat-eating as consistent with Buddhist teaching. The Great Compassion analyzes the various strains of Buddhism and the sutras.

Scully, Matthew. *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. St. Martin's Griffin, 2003. The author describes our moral imperative to respond to the shameful exploitation and cruelty of current practices. This work offers a strong scientific, religious and philosophical foundation for mercy.

Singer, Peter. *Animal Liberation*. HarperCollins, 2002. This seminal work, originally published in 1975, is widely considered to have launched the modern, worldwide animal rights movement. This updated version reflects current environmental concerns and includes the prefaces to previous editions.

Peter Singer, ed. *In Defense of Animals: The Second Wave*. Blackwell, 2006. An anthology of 18 short essays combining scholarship with accessibility.

“Position of the American Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada: Vegetarian diets.” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Vol. 103, Issue 6, Pages 748-765 (June 2003). tinyurl.com/adaposition

Roth, Ruby. *That's Why We Don't Eat Animals*. North Atlantic Books, 2009. www.wedonteatanimals.com/about.html Popular children's book with related website.

Tuttle, Will. *World Peace Diet: Eating for Spiritual Health and Social Harmony*. Lantern Books, 2005.

DVDs and Videos

A Life Connected.

www.nonviolenceunited.org/veganvideo.html 12 minutes. Produced by Nonviolence United, this video seeks to help people live a “connected life” by aligning their everyday choices with their values of justice, kindness and compassion for all beings.

Diet for A New America (60 minutes, 1991)

One of the most influential films early in the movement for compassionate, sustainable and healthy food.

Vegetarian Association. *Honoring God's Creation*

(26 minutes). www.all-creatures.org/cva/cvavideo.htm Biblically-based Christian call for compassion.

Front Porch Productions. *Seeing Through the Fence*. 2008.



Resources, continued

www.porchlife productions.com.

Eleni Vlachos's documentary examines the food industry and our relationship to the animals we eat.

Meat the Truth (74 minutes). Documents the relationship between animal agriculture and global warming.

Human Society. **Eating Mercifully**. (8 minutes.) Free video presents a compassionate, Christian view of factory farming. <http://tinyurl.com/bcocpw>

Animal Planet. **Fowl Play**. fowlplaymovie.com. DVD created to highlight the cruelty of our poultry industry.

Websites

Most of the websites below advocate movement toward a plant-based diet. Scientists and ethicists support a reduction in the consumption of animal products as a highly effective action we can take to reduce human impact on climate change and our environment, decrease world hunger, and prevent egregious animal suffering. Many of these sites offer very usable tips to help us in this effort.

Compassion In World Farming. **“Animal Sentience.”** www.ciwf.org.uk/farm_animals/animal_sentience
Informative discussion that calls for compassion for all animals in the context of the science.

Compassion Over Killing www.cok.net An animal advocacy group working to end animal abuse, COK focuses on cruelty to animals in agriculture and promotes vegetarian eating.

Food Revolution www.foodrevolution.org Addresses animal suffering and responses from faith perspectives and also gets real about issues of class & race as they relate to food.

Humane Farming Association

www.hfa.org/about/index.html HFA's comprehensive programs include anti-cruelty investigations and exposes, national media and ad campaigns, direct hands-on emergency care.

“Conscious Choices: Lisa Ling Investigates the Treatment of Animals on Farms.” The Oprah Winfrey Show, October 8, 2008. tinyurl.com/4m8ulw. In 2008, Winfrey facilitated a discussion among Wayne Pacelle of the Humane Society, the *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof, egg farmer Ryan Armstrong, and egg industry advocate Julie Buckner. Online you will find a summary of the conversation and related slide show.



People For the Ethical Treatment of Animals www.peta.org

Though perhaps best known for high-profile antics on the boundaries of taste, PETA is a serious animal rights organization whose investigations have done much to expose abuses in animal agriculture. PETA provides a wealth of well-researched resources.

Society of Ethical and Religious Vegetarians

www.serv-online.org. An interfaith effort to make religious communities aware that animal-based diets and agriculture are inconsistent with basic religious teachings.

Vegan Outreach www.veganoutreach.org With the goal of decreasing animal suffering, offers useful tips for moving toward a plant based diet including an excellent vegetarian starter kit.

Unitarian Universalists for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

www25.uua.org/ufeta Organization of Unitarian Universalists that advocates non-violence and compassion, and advocates for animals, especially those who suffer from cruelty, and commercial exploitation.

RESOURCES FOR CONGREGATIONAL STUDY AND ACTION: SEEKING SOLUTIONS

This section suggests some consumer choices and decisions that begin to address some of the issues raised in part I. In presenting these options, we have taken great care not to make decisions for you or present a dietary code that represents “Ethical Eating.” We encourage you to use these resources to begin conversations in your congregation and community.

Specifically addressed here are the following:

- A. Fair Trade
- B. Going Local
- C. Choices in Animal Consumption
- D. Organics
- E. Slow Food
- F. Recipes for Change



FAIR TRADE

The movement for Fair Trade recognizes that economic globalization perpetuates economic inequality, as well as systems of oppression such as racism, classism and colonialism. **Proponents of Fair Trade seek to incorporate guarantees of both economic and social equity into systems of trade.** According to the International Fair Trade Association (IFAT), Fair Trade “contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers....” (www.ifat.org)

As a movement, “Fair Trade” is often put in opposition to “Free Trade,” which refers to unregulated (“Free”) trade practices. The details of Free Trade and Fair Trade economic, ethical, and social foundations were introduced in the previous section entitled “Trade and Neo-Colonialism.”

Although the Fair Trade movement is alive and well at the level of international policy, many UUs have their first exposure to fair trade practices during their congregation’s “coffee hour.” Hundreds of UU congregations serve Fair Trade Certified coffee and tea during the social hour, and some also sell Fair Trade-certified coffee, tea and chocolate for use at home. If you find the right vendor, you can even find sources for Fair Trade-certified fruits, herbs, spices, flowers, rice, and sugar!

Recommended Supporting Resources

International Fair Trade Association

tinyurl.com/6er6v9

Defines fair trade; reviews history and standards. Particularly helpful: identifies registered Fair Trade Organizations around the world.

Global Exchange Fair Trade Campaign

www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/

Discusses fair trade principles, challenges, and benefits to over 800,000 farmers and cooperatives and unions in 48 countries.

TransFair USA

www.transfairusa.org

Resources and information about supporting and organizing fair trade efforts in the United States. TransFair USA controls the certification of Fair Trade products in the United States and monitors companies for compliance with Fair Trade principles. The TransFair website also can help you find local merchants who sell Fair Trade-certified products.

Fair Trade Labeling Organizations International

www.fairtrade.net/labelling_initiatives.html

The umbrella association of Labeling Initiatives known as Max Havelaar, TransFair, FairTrade Foundation (and by other national names), licenses the certification mark onto consumer products and promotes Fair Trade.

The Fair Trade Coffee Company

www.fairtradecoffee.org/

A UU-owned company based in New Jersey that offers a wide selection of Fair Trade-certified coffee, tea and chocolate and a program designed for congregational fundraising.

Equal Exchange

www.equalexchange.com

Fair Trade program used by many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Equal Exchange partners with co-operatives of farmers all over the world who provide high-quality organic coffees, teas, chocolates and snacks. Includes a resource for congregational fundraising.



Highly Recommended Resources

Decarlo, Jacqueline. *Fair Trade: A Beginner's Guide.*

Oneworld Publications (May 12, 2007). 192 pages.

From the book: “What impact can the average consumer have on global economics? Author and activist Jacqueline DeCarlo reveals why the movement has come to mean far more than just bananas, coffee, and chocolate. Grounded in the inspiring power of Fair Trade as a positive alternative to poverty, environmental destruction, and human exploitation...explains how we can make a difference. Providing an accessible explanation of the principles behind the movement and tracing its development into the powerful economic and social justice tool it is today.

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee

www.uusc.org

UUSC has made fair trade practices a centerpiece of their economic justice work, and has created a number of resources, activities and programs addressing fair trade practices and living wage. See “Promoting Fair Trade,” which describes UUSC’s three-pronged effort to promote and strengthen Fair Trade.

GOING LOCAL

Locavores center their diets on food grown within a 100-mile radius of where it is sold and consumed. "Eating local" keeps consumer dollars in the local community, which also strengthens relationships among neighbors. Eating local channels more money to farmers, as less money is spent on processing, transport, marketing, and intermediaries along vegetable's typically 1500-mile supply chains. Many locavores believe short "food routes" contribute less to climate change than transcontinental journeys of conventional food.

The ethics of eating local are complex. Factory farms, pesticide-intensive crops, and farms with exploitative labor practices can all be local, although most locavores would argue that by building a relationship with local farmers, it is easier to assess their practices. Although produce that is not shipped is higher in nutrients, driving a passenger car just three miles to and from a farmers' market releases as much carbon dioxide as would shipping 17 pounds of onions half-way around the world in vessels built for that purpose.

According to a 2008 Carnegie Mellon study, trips from producer to distributor account for just 4% of all food-related greenhouse gas emissions.

Though the issues are complex, following resources will help get you start exploring the benefits of eating local.

Recommended Supporting Resources

Berry, Wendell. *The Art of the Common Place: The Agrarian Essays*. Counterpoint, 2002. This contains a short, good introductory essay to many fair food issues.

Kingsolver, Barbara with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver. *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. Harper Perennial, 2008. A story-filled and research and recipe-augmented book of the life of one family committed to living one year eating only farm-raised and local produce as "locavores." Excellent reference list.

Shuman, Michael H. *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age*. The Free Press. 1998.

Science Daily. "**Organic Food Miles Take Toll On Environment.**" 7 June 2007.

www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070606113311.htm

Article indicates "organically grown is not the only consideration when choosing just, sustainable food. Sometimes local" food is best .

Sustainable Table. "**Buy Local.**"

www.sustainabletable.org/issues/buylocal/

Highly Recommended Resources

Yes! magazine: "**Go Local: Declare Independence from the Corporate Global Economy,**" Winter 2007.

This issue of the magazine whose mission is "Building a Just and Sustainable World" focuses on supporting local markets and businesses. "Food to Stay" (p. 30) advocates for local food systems that make consumers healthier, are more profitable for producers, and build stronger communities. www.yesmagazine.org

Cloud, John. "**Eating Better Than Organic**" *Time Magazine*, Mar. 02, 2007

www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1595245,00.html

In this highly readable and entertaining article, the author personalizes the organic-versus-local-versus conventional debate, and opts for local.

Singer, Peter, and Jim Mason. "**Eating Locally.**" Chapter 10 of *The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter*. St. Martin's Press, 2007, pages 135-150.

Compares eating local with eating organically, and with eating food imported through Fair Trade. Argues that many of the well-meaning principles undergirding "buying local" are problematic at best, unethical at worst, and can usually be better served through other means.

Taylor, Tess. "**Is Local Always Better?!**" *New York Times Magazine*, April 20 2008. tinyurl.com/islocalbetter.

Brief but powerful. Points out the problems of using "food miles" to evaluate food's environmental impact .

Norberg-Hodge, Helena, Merrifield, Todd, and Gorelick, Steven, *Bringing the Food Economy Home*, Zed Books, 2002. States the case for localizing our food economies as a "solution-multiplier" that will reduce the negative impacts of globalization.

GOING LOCAL, *continued*

Information on significant advantages to eating local as well as links to other pages on the topic

Sustainable Table. “**Family Farms.**”

www.sustainabletable.org/issues/familyfarms/

Discusses advantages of supporting family farms (small/local farmers) and its advantages of these over factory farming.

100 Mile Diet www.100milediet.org/map/

Find your 100-mile food mile radius, by zip code.

Eat Well Guide eatwellguide.com and

Local Harvest www.localharvest.org

Two more ways to find wholesome, fresh, sustainable food in the US and Canada by zip code, plus lots of info about eating local.

Eat Local Challenge www.eatlocalchallenge.com

A nationwide blog of local eaters.

The Garden. www.thegardenmovie.com. Powerful documentary about low income families struggling to keep 14 acres of community gardens in South Central Los Angeles Filmmaker Scott Hamilton Kennedy

Farm Fresh Food Fest: To provide an interactive experi-

ence for interested community members with local, organic, sustainable, healthy, tasty food choices and options. Vendors and UU members would have samples of tasty food, literature, coupons, etc.

Veggie Trader, a website where you can register to trade exchange/trade extra produce from your garden.

veggietrader.com.



CHOICES IN ANIMAL CONSUMPTION

One of the most difficult issues in Ethical Eating involves the ethics of eating animal products, including meat, dairy products and eggs. Feelings around this issue tend to be strong, with some claiming that it is never ethical to consume animals and some claiming it certainly is. Compassionate communication and sharing personal stories are musts for productively engaging this issue.

We hope that the resources presented in this section can spark discussion and reflection, equipping UUs to align their decisions regarding the consumption of animal products (whatever those decisions are) with their ethics and values.

Some believe that consumption of any animal products in the contemporary, commodified U.S. agricultural context is morally and ethically wrong, or that the choice to eat animal products is too fraught with possible ethical complications to be a viable one. These people often choose to adopt a **vegan** lifestyle. Most vegans also avoid the use of animal products such as leather, making this a lifestyle choice that goes well beyond food.

Others allow for some animal products in their diet.

Lacto-ovo vegetarians, for example, will consume eggs and dairy products but not meat of any sort. The English language can hardly keep up with the varieties of diets that contain some (often specific) animal products, such as fish and sea life (but not land animals) or birds (but not mammals).

Some people believe that ethical meat-eating is possible, and have come to realize that the factory farming techniques so widely used today are unethical and unsustainable. Because of this, people who seek to be **ethical omnivores** struggle at the market to understand label claims and buzzwords that may or may not actually mean anything about the ethical

United Egg Producers Certified

The overwhelming majority of the U.S. egg industry complies with this voluntary program, which permits routine cruel and inhumane factory farm practices. By 2008, hens laying these eggs will be afforded 67 square inches of cage space per bird, less area than a sheet of paper. The hens are confined in restrictive, barren cages and cannot perform many of their natural behaviors, including perching, nesting, foraging or even spreading their wings...

Highly Recommended Resources

Humane Society of the United States. “A Brief Guide to Meat and Dairy Labels and their Relevance to Animal Welfare.” 2008. tinyurl.com/meatdairy

The Humane Society of the United States defines the most commonly used labels for meat and dairy (not eggs). Excerpted by permission. See the website for full information.

- **Cage-Free:** As birds raised for meat, unlike those raised for eggs, are rarely caged prior to transport, this label on poultry products has virtually no relevance to animal welfare...
- **Natural:** This claim has no relevance to animal welfare.
- **No label:** Most likely, the absence of a label means animals are raised in factory farm conditions that significantly reduce their welfare.

Humane Society of the United States. “A Brief Guide to Egg Carton Labels and Their Relevance to Animal Welfare.” 2008. tinyurl.com/egglables

Most labels on egg cartons are marketing devices with no legal meaning for animal welfare. Excerpts below, reproduced with permission.

- **Certified Organic*:** ...They are fed an organic, all-vegetarian diet free of antibiotics and pesticides...Beak cutting and forced molting through starvation are permitted.
- **Free-Range:** ... many natural behaviors... nesting and foraging... Beak cutting and forced molting through starvation...permitted...no third-party auditing.
- **Certified Humane*:** The birds are uncaged inside barns or warehouses, but may be kept indoors at all times...Beak cutting is allowed...
- **Cage-Free:** ...uncaged inside barns or warehouses, but generally do not have access to the outdoors...

Joy, Melanie. *Why We Love Dogs, Eat Pigs, and Wear Cows*. 2009. Conari.

“...illuminates...how we can love our pets and value kindness to animals generally, yet consume meat from corporations that severely abuse and slaughter 10 billion sentient creatures a year...and disconnect from our natural empathy for farmed animals.”

-Bradley Larsen

CHOICES IN ANIMAL CONSUMPTION, *continued*

implications of the food inside.

The federal government does not regulate most of these claims, and those that are regulated may be mostly unenforced. **What do these “humane labels” mean? Some indicate true conditions under which animals are raised or slaughtered. Some are misleading. Some are pure marketing, and have no meaning at all.**

Animal agriculture practices have changed dramatically over the past fifty years. Technological innovations dramatically increased operational efficiency, and dramatically decreased the wellbeing of farmed animals. The farmyards of yesteryear are largely gone. Most animals raised for food never see a green field, rest in the shade of a tree, or play with another of their kind. In their entire lives, most animals raised for food will experience direct sunlight for just a few seconds, as they are moved in and out of trucks on the way to the slaughterhouse.

As scientists have learned more about the inner depths and dimensions of the lives of animals, they have recognized intricate social structures and deep ties to others of their species – especially their families. Scientists confirm that animals have emotions; for example, when a cow is separated from her calf, she moans and paces for days. Interest in these issues has generated consumer demand for more information about their food: where it comes from, how animals live, and how they die. In response, producers market “humane” labels designed to appeal to consumers.



How do we sort these out and bring our values to the table?

Recommended Supporting Resources

Farmed Animal Sanctuaries: American Sanctuary Association. tinyurl.com/farmsanctuaries. A rare chance to see and interact with living farm animals. Farmed animal sanctuaries rescue, rehabilitate and provide lifelong care for hundreds of animals who have been rescued from or escaped from stockyards, factory farms, and slaughterhouses.

“Meat & Poultry Labeling Terms” [www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Meat & Poultry Labeling Terms/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Meat%20&%20Poultry%20Labeling%20Terms/index.asp) USDA addresses meat and poultry labeling.

Midwest High Plains Journal **“Farm groups worried about meat.”** www.hpj.com/archives/2008/oct08/oct6/Farmgroupsworriedaboutmeatl.cfm. Discusses farmers’ concerns about labeling and consumer confusion.

“The Humane Myth” www.humanemyth.org/

CHOICES IN ANIMAL CONSUMPTION, *Resources continued*

mediabase/1016.htm. Discusses troubling issues related to the promotion of humane animal products.

Martin, Andrew. **“Meat Labels Hope to Lure the Sensitive Carnivore”** *New York Times*, October 24, 2006. tinyurl.com/meatlabels

World Society for the Protection of Animals. **“Eat Humane: Frequently Asked Questions.”** tinyurl.com/EatHumaneFAQ.

Nestle, Marion. *What to Eat*. North Point Press, 2006. A nutritionist guides the reader through the labeling labyrinth and addresses many of the dilemmas we face when trying to make healthy, sustainable and compassionate food choices.

Vegetarians in Paradise www.vegparadise.com

ORGANICS

Organic farming is a form of agriculture that seeks to **protect ecosystems and human health by conserving and improving soils, minimizing energy use, and raising animals and plants through natural means such as plant-based feeds, composting, crop rotation, use of manure as fertilizer, and careful use of water.** Organic farming does not use commercial oil-based fertilizers and chemical pesticides. Organic farming seeks to protect native plants and animals and preserve a wide variety of “heritage” seeds and stock. To be labeled “organic” vegetables and animals must have been raised under a code of procedures and thus certified.

In contrast, industrial agriculture typically raises monoculture crops, which are “resource intense,” requiring vast quantities of fossil fuels and water. Because monoculture leads to nutrient depletion of the soil and extreme vulnerability to blight, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides are to produce in bulk for the market. These run off into the waterways, often poison the workers in the fields, and leave residues in the plants and animals that humans consume. Industrial agriculture uses vast quantities of oil and water. While industrial agriculture has been touted as furthering a “green revolution,” able to feed the multiplying global population, some studies have suggested that organic farms using modern and traditional techniques are actually more productive once the land has been restored.

Research into plant and animal genes has created a new phenomenon called genetically modified organisms (GMOs), which bring both benefits and risks. New plants have been created to withstand droughts, survive floods, repel pests, and flourish in difficult climates. On the other hand, genetically modified pollen fertilizing neighboring plants changes ecosystems, not to mention neighboring crops. Further, some are concerned about the long-term effects on humans and other animals consuming GMOs. Many European countries created laws to ban or severely restrict GMOs in their countries. Movements in the US insisting that GMO foods be labeled have met with little success.



ORGANICS, *continued*

Recommended Supporting Resources

Books

Cummings, Claire Hope. *Uncertain Peril: Genetic Engineering and the Future of Seeds*. Beacon Press, 2008.

A former environmental lawyer discusses the threat to biodiversity, food security, and the world's food supply from privatization of the world's seed stock.

Cummins, Ronnie and Lilliston, Ben. *Genetically Engineered Food: A Self-Defense Guide for Consumers*.

Marlowe and Company. 2000.

Frances Moore Lappé writes the foreword to this book in which food safety proponents examine the scientific, political, economic, and health issues of bio-engineered and genetically modified foods.

Lerner, Steve and Jonathon Lash. *Eco-Pioneers: Practical Visionaries Solving Today's Environmental Problems*.

MIT Press, 1997. Many of the practical examples in this older book are applicable today as the authors make the interconnection of social and environmental problems.

They present case studies of sustainable development in diverse settings across the country as people from inner cities to rural communities grow food, build houses, treat wastes, and generate power in sustainable ways.

Websites

USDA National Organic Program.

www.ams.usda.gov/nop/indexIE.htm

The federal program addresses national production, handling, and labeling standards for organic agricultural products and accredits the certifying agents.

Local Harvest. www.localharvest.org/

Helps consumers find locally and sustainably grown produce, anywhere in the country from small farms, farmers markets, and other local food sources.

Highly Recommended Resource

Ronald, Pamela C. with Adamchak, Raoul W.

Tomorrow's Table.

Oxford University Press. 2008.

In this book, an organic farmer and a genetic engineer examine how the principles of organic farming and genetic engineering might merge to create a sustainable system of food production to feed Earth's rapidly expanding population.

Useful for congregations wishing to delve deeply into issues. Includes recommendations for consumers.

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association. **"Why Certified Organic Food is Better Food"**

www.mofga.org/food.html

Provides information to help farmers and gardeners grow organic food, protect the environment, recycle natural resources, increase local food production, support rural communities, and make the connection between healthful food and environmentally sound growing practices.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension. **What Does the "Organic" Label Really Mean?** [www.adajournal.org/article/S0002-8223\(03\)00294-3/abstract](http://www.adajournal.org/article/S0002-8223(03)00294-3/abstract)

Describes the United States Department of Agriculture national standards for the use of the word "organic."

The Organic Consumers Association

www.organicconsumers.org

OCA is a public interest organization campaigning for health, justice and sustainability. The website lists thousands of local businesses that support organic, fair trade, and sustainable enterprises.

Organic Crop Improvement Association

www.ocia.org This nonprofit, member-owned, agricultural organization certifies and provides organic products, with chapters all over the country that might be able to provide a speaker for an event, or tour guide for a local grocery store.

Rodale Institute newfarm.org

Based on 60 years of sustainable farming experience and extensive research, the institute provides farmers with the information and resources they need to succeed; policy-makers the information they need to best support our farmers; and consumers with the resources they need to make informed decisions about the food they buy and eat.

Videos

Future of Food

www.futureoffoodstore.com

Michael Pollan discusses "The Cost of Food", Erica Filanc presents information about Community Supported Agriculture, and two experts discuss seed planting and seed saving. Renowned cooks Deborah Madison, Molly Katzen and others offer recipes, along with a tool kit for taking action.

Good Food, 2008

www.goodfoodthemovie.org

"This lively tour of various Washington state farms and ranches that have adopted healthier organic methods in raising their products offers several lucid arguments in favor of smaller, more efficient farms, and purchasing locally grown crops. Still, none are as convincing as the marvelous bounty laid before our eyes in this film."

SLOW FOOD

Slow Food is a global grassroots movement with thousands of members committed to food that's good, clean and fair. "Good" food comes from healthy plants and animals and is a wonderful centerpiece for shared meals which become a catalyst for building family and community. "Clean" food is as good for our bodies as it is for the planet. Grown and

harvested with methods that have a positive impact on our planet, "clean" food promotes biodiversity and a strong eco-system. In addition, Slow Food, International promotes "fair" food, focusing on both providing equal access of fresh food to all regardless



of income or geographic location as well as to the just treatment of farm workers and others in the field of food production.

Slow Food advocates prize knowing the origin of our food, which often includes developing direct relationships with farmers and other food suppliers. Local members of Slow Food chapters support growers in their area as well as restaurants that purchase from small, regional farms.

"Slow Food" is a resistance movement to "Fast Food", typified by highly-processed mass-produced food, devoid of regional or cultural variation and individual attention to detail, often high in fats and sodium and of low or poor nutrition. Fast Food is also characterized by low-paid employees from farm to market, with exploitative labor practices in production and employees at restaurants paid less than a living wage.

Recommended Supporting Resources

Books and Articles

Pollan, Michael. *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. Penguin Press. 2008.

This ground-breaking book has become a classic. Pollan's mantra: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants." Has become a standard in the locavore movement.

Schlosser, Eric and Charles Wilson. *Chew On This: Everything You Don't Want to Know About Fast Food*. Houghton Mifflin. 2007.

Written for ages 9-12, this book is less graphic than "Fast Food Nation" as it examines the fast-food industry's growth, practices, and effects on public health.

Waters, Alice. *The Art of Simple Food: Notes, Lessons and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution*. Clarkson Potter. 2007.

With the tenets of eat locally, eat simply, eat sustainably, the well-known restaurateur and slow food proponent offers simple, delicious recipes and her philosophy of food.

Websites

Slow Food USA.

www.slowfoodusa.org

General site describing the slow food movement, including educational resources, local chapters, events and re-

Highly Recommended Resources

Petrini, Carlo. *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean and Fair*. Rizzoli Ex Libris, 2007.

The leader of the Slow Food movement describes ways by which we may regain control of our food. Core principles include sustainable and environmentally sound production, fair treatment of the food producers, and healthy, tasty food. Alice Waters writes the foreword.

Schlosser, Eric. *Fast Food Nation*. Harper Perennial, 2005.

This recent bestseller urges us to take a closer look at where our food comes from and how we eat. Reviews the history and development of the "fast food" movement, exploring terrible working conditions, union busting, unsanitary practices, and slaughterhouse horrors as it calls for an end to the "high risk behavior" of United States fast food.

SLOW FOOD, *continued*

cent news. You can also get involved with the **Time for Lunch** campaign designed to bring healthy food to schools, specifically targeting federally subsidized meals for low income children. They also sponsor campaigns for college campuses.

La Fondazione. www.slowfoodfoundation.org

International organization that defends food biodiversity, safeguards the environment and the land, endorses sustainable agriculture, protects small producers and their communities, and promotes gastronomic traditions.

Slow Food Nation slowfoodnation.org

Holds an annual event to raise awareness of the growing food crisis. The website features resources, videos, panel discussions from the event.

Food Declaration www.fooddeclaration.org

Site where you can sign your intention to support and consume food that's good, clean and fair.

Cultivating the Web: High Tech Tools for the Sustainable Food Movement www.eatwellguide.org/downloads/pubs/080811_CultivatingTheWeb.pdf

The "Eat Well Guide" to using the internet to promote sustainable eating. It includes a guide to food-related blogs.

Movies/Videos

Fast Food Nation. 2006. 114 min.

A fictionalized account of Eric Schlosser's book, starring Wilmer Valderrama (*That '70's Show*) and Catalina Sandino Moreno (*Maria Full of Grace*).

Super Size Me. 2004. 100 min.

This documentary follows Morgan Spurlock as he embarks on a 30 day diet of McDonald's. An intriguing look at obesity and one of its primary causes – fast food.

Ingredients 2009

Documentary film focusing on the individual parts that make up the whole.

The impulse is to grow food...grows out of a simple desire to be connected to place. We connect to a place through the food we eat and eventually through what eats us. Eating...confirms that we are part of a biological system that we are community members in an eco-system.

*-Josh Viertel, President,
Slow Food, USA*



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The “Green Sanctuary” Program

tinyurl.com/greensanctuary

Path for individual & congregational study/action in response to environmental challenges. Originated with the Seventh Principle Project (later named the UU Ministry for Earth) in the early 1990s; in 2001 it formalized as a program for congregational accreditation. Many Green Sanctuary congregations have pursued projects relating to food ethics/ environmental justice, including community gardening, CSAs, local food movements, and congregational commitments to reduce their “food footprint” by eating lower on the food chain.

Inspired Faith, Effective Action

tinyurl.com/faithaction

A Social Justice Workbook for Congregations, by the UUA Advocacy and Witness team. Outlines why and how to ensure that (1) religious grounding is central to congregation-based justice work; (2) work builds relationships, is strategic, effective, and accountable to those most affected by injustice. It’s a blend of theory and practice, designed to inspire faith and create effective action. An excellent resource for your congregation’s Ethical Eating Task Force!

The Social Justice Empowerment Program

tinyurl.com/empowerjustice

Managed by the UUA’s Office of Advocacy & Witness, the Social Justice Empowerment Program can help your congregation assess the quality of its justice programs and to make strategic decisions about direction and focus. Or design your own workshop using the extensive Handbook you’ll find online.

The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations (UUA) has many justice- and witness-related resources available for interested congregations and individuals. Most of them can be accessed through the Social Justice section of the UUA website, www.uua.org.



UUA Public Relations Manual (PDF, 112 pages)

tinyurl.com/uucommunications

Attracting media to your public witness events brings community awareness to the issues you are working on and work you are doing. This guide will help you attract and relate to the media.

Diverse & Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM)

www.druumm.org

A support and advocacy People of Color organization of the UUA, DRUUMM mobilizes in an anti-racist collective that unites to: work for self-determination, justice and equal opportunity; empower various ministries of DRUUMM members; celebrate diverse People of Color heritages; overcome racism through resistance; and transform and enrich Unitarian Universalism through DRUUMM’s multiracial, multicultural experiences.

UU Allies for Racial Equity (ARE)

www.uuallies.org

An organization whose mission is to participate in the anti-racist transformation of Unitarian Universalism and our world by confronting racism in ways that are accountable to communities of color and creating opportunities for white UUs to understand white privilege and unlearn white supremacy. ARE provides educational opportunities for integrating anti-racist analysis into social justice work as well as consultation making this work accountable to communities of color.

UU Service Committee (UUSC)

www.uusc.org

The UUSC advances human rights and social justice around the world, partnering with those who confront unjust power structures and mobilizing to challenge oppressive policies. On their economic justice site, you can get involved in programs like the UUSC Small Farmer Fund and the UUSC Coffee Project, while learning more about fair trade, workers' rights, and the living wage. On their environmental justice site, learn about the human right to water and get involved in the water crisis, climate change, and shareholder accountability. UUSC resources for learning, advocacy, and direct service abound!

UU Ministry for Earth (UUMFE)

www.uuministryforearth.org

Formerly known as the Seventh Principle Project, UUMFE's purpose is to inspire, facilitate and support personal, congregational, and denominational practices that honor and sustain the Earth and all beings. UUMFE provides educational and worship resources, publications, and suggestions for practical actions to help reduce our impact on the planet. Programs emphasize eco-spirituality, environmental justice, and sustainability.

UU United Nations Office (UU-UNO)

www.uu-uno.org/

The UU-UNO promotes the goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all, as reflected in the United Nations Charter. Through targeted education, advocacy and outreach, they engage Unitarian Universalists in support of international cooperation and the work of the United Nations. UUUNO promotes the "Friends of the World Food

Program," a US-based non-profit organization dedicated to building support for the World Food Program (WFP) and other hunger relief efforts. See <http://tinyurl.com/foodfriends>.

UUs for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC)

uujec.org

UUJEC's mission is to engage, educate and activate UUs to work for economic justice. It provides study packets on economic globalization and "The Great Turning from Empire to Earth Community," conferences and e-news to keep members posted on ways they can be active toward a fair economy.

UUs for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (UFETA)

www25.uua.org/ufeta/

UFETA supports Unitarian Universalists in their efforts to meet the moral challenge of living with ecological sustainability and without supporting cruelty to animals. UFETA works to help individuals and congregations move from the mere celebration of the "interdependent web of existence" into practices that affirm species interdependence in personal and social, economic and political life. Its website includes resources for informed consumption, news of congregational initiatives, action alerts, and materials for religious exploration, social activities, social justice, and worship. Worship resources include "The Blessing of the Animals Resource Packet" and past winners of the Schweitzer Sermon Award.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When the UUA 2008 General Assembly selected “Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice” as the new CSAI, the UUA Washington Office for Advocacy held a workshop for delegate input on this Resource Guide. The Director of the Washington Office then hired Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh, Co-Minister of the Winchester Unitarian Society in Winchester, Massachusetts, as a consultant to produce this Resource Guide. Rev. Millspaugh put out a call to relevant organizations in the UUA to send **volunteer** representatives to help write the Guide; team members representing those groups are listed with their organizational affiliations. Together they form the group that produced this guide:

THE ETHICAL EATING: FOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CORE TEAM *present and former members*

Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh (Chair & Consultant to the UUA)

John Dale (UU United Nations Office)

Rev. Lee Devoe (UUs for the Ethical Treatment of Animals)

Robette Dias (Diverse and Revolutionary UU Multicultural Ministries)

Rev. Dr. Lucy Hitchcock Seck (UUs for a Just Economic Community)

Rev. Dr. Paul Johnson (Commission on Social Witness)

Rev. Bob Murphy (UU Fellowship of Falmouth, MA, which initiated this CSAI)

Rev. Dr. Michael Tino (UU Allies for Racial Equity)

Vicki Talbert (UU Ministry for Earth)

Maisie Taibbi and Corie White (Youth Representatives)

Eliza Burns

Peggy Clarke

Rev. Nate Walker



Contact the groups represented for more information. Through the Core Team’s gifts of energy and time and through input from many advisors, we have completed the first phase of Study: assembling resources. But this collective work is only meaningful if you take up some small part of the Resource Guide and give it life. **May it be so.**

CREDITS AND COPYRIGHTS

This document, the “Ethical Eating: Food and Environmental Justice” Resource Guide, ©2010 UUA, if unaltered and unmodified, and with attribution, may be freely reprinted, transmitted, and distributed for non-commercial purposes.

Photographs of UUA General Assembly attendees, ©Nancy Pierce/UUA. Some photographs used within are stock photographs used with permission or licensed through istockphoto.com. Other photographs were obtained through Creative Commons licenses, and are copyrighted and sourced as follows: “Welcome Food Center” ©2007 flickr user Kent Wang, <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/kentwang/864817702/>>; “Ramadan” ©2006 flickr user Vit Hassan, <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vithassan/129498610/>>; “Masa Restaurant Menu” ©2006 flickr user perldude, <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/perldude/91908396/>>; “short yogi restaurant menu” ©2006 flickr user Mrs Hilksom <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/95976276@N00/104000297/>>; “Farmer’s Market” ©2007 flickr user NatalieMaynor <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nataliemaynor/530316492/>>; “Hamburg, the food, not the city” ©2005 flickr user Paul Watson <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/paulwatson/12315878/>>; “stained glass roundel” ©2006 flickr user Leo Reynolds <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/lwr/237152027/>>, of a piece made by Stephen Pask in 1999; “Stop...” ©2008 flickr user JoelBischoff <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/teched/2341665172/>>; “Wedding Buffet” ©2004 flickr user sgrace <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/stasiland/2971932643/>>; “Malnourished Boy in Gordil” ©2007 flickr user hdptcar <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/hdptcar/1251207570/>>; “Workers Picking Strawberries” ©2008 flickr user donnaphoto <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/77043400@N00/2813045688/>>; “Delivery/Deliverance” ©2007 flickr user .bullish <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/77043400@N00/2813045688/>>; “68_egg1” ©2006-8 East Bay Animal Advocates <<http://www.cal-eggs.com/>>; “Red and green peppers, Allentown Farmer’s Market” ©2006 flickr user Martin Labar <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/martinlabar/159577406/>>; “tower of limes” ©2006 flickr user Darwin Bell <<http://www.flickr.com/photos/darwinbell/297466626/>>; “The UU Congregation of Miami at the Burger King protest” ©2008 Jeff Reite. Slow Food Picture taken by David Naugle and reprinted with permission. Additional photos care of InterGenerate (www.intergenerateny.org) and Michael Tino.