

University of California Irvine
Real Food Series 2009 Community Dinner
Thursday, April 16, 2009
Mesa Commons Silverado Room

Community Dinner Panel and Roundtable Discussion Notes
Challenges, Opportunities, Visions, Ideas, and Next Steps Toward a Sustainable UC Irvine Food System
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Real Food Challenge at UC Irvine

Major Questions of Thought

- What are the major challenges to a sustainable food system?
 - Creating sustainable livelihoods in Orange County and Southern California
 - Creating agroecosystems and large-scale restoration projects
 - global food system - people are undernourished while others are getting too much food
 - Supply and demand - can the local area supply sustainable food to large institutions and will members within an institution
- How do we ensure food security?
- How do we create a sustainable food system?
- Are the foods available for us going to be available for future generations?
- Are farmers taking care of livestock properly?
- How do we make suburban sprawl more food sustainable?
- What should we think of genetically-modified organisms with respect to security and sustainability?
 - some of the new technologies towards drought-resistant crops will be important for future climate change
 - the issue is WHO will control the seeds
 - genetic modification is the greatest threat to food security; GMO crops can infect neighboring fields

Major Challenges

- Everyone dislikes something (i.e. smell, durability) about recyclable utensils -- culture shift needed
- Getting people to care/want to be sustainable
- How do we make healthy food available to all levels of income?
- How do we include all groups in this food sustainability movement?
- How do we educate about the health risks of unsustainable food?

Visions and Thoughts

- education is a team-effort
- we vote with our food dollars and with our interactions with each other
- everybody connects with food
- even though food is not always a topic of high politics, food production connects to a lot of current issues; recent planting of an organic garden at the White House is attracting attention to the sustainable food movement
- pair humans with trees, animals, grains, and crops is key to a sustainable food system

In 20 years...

- on-campus organic farm or small garden for education, nourishment, and entrepreneurial innovation
- newly-created student-alliance and farm stand
- local and abroad food policy internships and research
- UC system devoting money towards sustainability, including food

- using water more efficiently towards food production
- using recyclable, reusable, compost-able materials
- building compost programs
- UCI members bringing their own utensils
- child education programs in the community

What the UCI & local community members pledged @ the Community Dinner toward a sustainable food system

- Grow our own food.
- Share grown food within the community
- Go to the farmers' market
- get a garden plot
- adopt diets that are better for the environment
- help spread the word!
- Help mobilize a student/community movement

Next Steps for UCI & the local community toward a sustainable food system

- Restore diversity and the value of farmers by fiscally investing in diversified, organic, and local farmers in Orange County and Southern California
- balance the number of undernourished and nourished within the campus and local communities
- feed people while sustaining the environment
- visit local farmers' markets
- UCI has immense purchasing power. Use it towards sustainable options.
- Bring the community aspect back to food - eat as a family, shop at farmers' markets, start a food cooperative
- improve nutrition; it will reduce health care costs, bring food to the people who are in risk of going hungry and ill
- retrofit our campus and local cities
 - i.e. plant fruit trees and gardens in open spaces and lawns