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Social Justice for Food Workers in a Foodie World

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Abstract

In the United States, a movement towards sustainable food production and food systems has been growing, as evidenced by interest in community gardens, urban agriculture, and healthy, local, and “slow” food access, but this broad food movement has not yet fully integrated the voices and leadership of the workers who bring our food from the farm to the table. This article argues that those who want a sustainable, just food system need to care about and collaborate with food workers in order to achieve that goal. With almost 20 million workers in the food system in the U.S., and millions more around the world, food workers are a key stakeholder group that should not be ignored. They face a multitude of injustices such as low wages, a lack of benefits, and dangerous working conditions that intersect with many of the issues that those in the “sustainable food” movement are working on, such as food insecurity and a lack of access to healthy and affordable food. Food workers in the U.S. also make up the largest employment sector in the country. As an organized group, food workers have the potential to influence governments, corporations, and society at large and to directly diminish the power of corporations in the current food system.

The author of this article is the executive director of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), a national coalition of unions, workers centers, and advocacy organizations throughout the food system. She provides a first-hand account of the history of the FCWA, its work in bringing the issues of food workers to the attention of the sustainable food movement, its collaborations with others working for justice in the food system, and its hopes for future movement-building.

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Introduction

If you care about sustainability — the capacity to endure — it's time to expand our definition to include workers. You can't call food sustainable when it's produced by people whose capacity to endure is challenged by poverty-level wages.

— Mark Bittman (2012, para. 17), *New York Times* columnist

In the United States, a movement towards sustainable food production and food systems has been growing, as evidenced by interest in community gardens, urban agriculture, and healthy, local, and “slow” food access. Unfortunately, this broad food movement has not yet fully integrated the voices and leadership of the workers who bring our food from the farm to the table. This article argues that those who want a sustainable, just food system need to care about and collaborate with food workers in order to achieve that goal. With almost 20 million workers in the food system in the U.S., and millions more around the world, food workers are a key stakeholder group that should not be ignored (FCWA, 2012, p. 1). They face a multitude of injustices, such as low wages, a lack of benefits, and dangerous working conditions, that intersect with many of the issues that those in the “sustainable food”¹ movement are working on, such as food insecurity and a lack of access to healthy and affordable food. Food workers in the U.S. also make up the largest employment sector in the country. As an organized group, food workers have the potential to influence governments, corporations, and society at large, and to directly diminish the power of corporations in the current food system.

As executive director of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), a national coalition of workers’ organizations throughout the food system, I share the FCWA’s history and describe our theory of social change. The FCWA believes that positive social change can only be achieved once those who are most marginalized understand their common source of oppression and exploitation, organize, and take leadership of a shared movement for social justice; work in coalition with other organizations and individuals; and build support among the general public. I, therefore, describe our work in bringing the issues of food workers to the attention of the

¹ I use the term “sustainable food” as a general catchall term for the broad food movement described above. Allen (2010) uses “alternative agrifood.” Some individuals simply use “food movement” (Pollan, 2010), while others use “good food,” “eco-food,” “slow food,” “real food,” and “local food” (Yen Liu & Apollon, 2011, p. 2). I see the food justice movement separate from the broader sustainable food movement, mainly because food justice activists and organizations place race, ethnicity, class, and gender at the forefront (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 229). In general, many also see the broad sustainable food movement as not just one movement, but segmented into many sectors or many movements (Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011, p. 86; see also Pollan, 2010).

sustainable food movement, our collaborations with others working for justice in the food system (see Appendix A), and our hopes for future movement building. While I could write an entire article on the FCWA's strategies, tactics, and program work (such as our worker leadership development and policy advocacy²), that is not within the scope of this paper, as my hope in writing this article is for individuals and organizations involved in the sustainable food movement to be inspired to work in partnership with food workers and vice versa, since the FCWA sees many areas of common concern between the two movements.

Despite many positive efforts, many "sustainable food" initiatives are not yet addressing social justice issues, in general, and food workers, in particular. The sustainable food movement includes a diversity of individuals and organizations focused on a variety of issues, such as the environment, family farmers, and local sustainable food production, as well as individual and public health, food safety, and food security. First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" initiative to encourage youth to eat healthier and exercise more has gained much attention from the public and from the media, and it is one example of the increased national interest in food. Many national environmental organizations, such as the National Resources Defense Council, now have a food or food systems program. Yet, as Allen (2008) writes,

Despite much popular interest in food issues, there remains a lack of social justice in the American agrifood system, as evidenced by prevalent hunger and obesity in low-income populations and exploitation of farmworkers. While many consumers and alternative agrifood organizations express interest in and support social justice goals, the incorporation of these goals into on-the-ground alternatives is often tenuous. (p. 157)

For example, while Michelle Obama works with Wal-Mart and Olive Garden so that these companies offer healthier food choices and more locally produced food, her program does not address the issues of the low pay and lack of benefits facing these corporations' employees, which could then help the workers afford healthier food.

Similarly, the challenges facing farmworkers, as well as other workers throughout the food system, have mostly received "scant attention compared with the attention lavished, relatively speaking, on food quality, food safety, accessibility and affordability concerns" (Gottlieb & Joshi, 2010, p. 22). Allen (2010) also writes, "...many of those working in local food campaigns are interested in other priorities and do not include equity or social justice as a goal

² For an initial introduction into the FCWA's other strategies and tactics, readers can go to the following website – www.foodchainworkers.org.

or benefit of food-system localization” while “inequities in the agrifood system abound — low wages and poor working conditions for food-system workers . . . ” (p. 297).

The work of FCWA member organizations before the Alliance was formed, such as the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, CATA – the Farmworkers Support Committee, and the Farmworker Association of Florida, has helped to gain some attention on the exploitation of farmworkers. However, as Allen (2010) writes, “. . . workers as actors and justice as principle are often missing in both theory and practice of alternative agrifood consumer efforts” (p. 306) (Figure 1). As Mark Bittman (2012), a well-known food author and journalist for the *New York Times*, wrote, “[D]espite our obsession with food, the worker is an afterthought.” (para. 5).

There seems to be multiple reasons as to why the broader sustainable food movement has paid little attention to workers in the food system. As aforementioned, Allen (2010) believes that individuals working in local food campaigns do not view social justice and the issues of food workers as important enough to warrant their attention; they are more concerned with other priorities. Until recently, the movement has lacked multiple large groups of organized workers who can call attention to their circumstances and who can influence culture and society to support them.

Another reason little attention has been paid to social justice in the food system is a difference in race and class between food workers and low-income communities, on the one hand, and many who are working and participating in the sustainable food movement, on the other (Slocum, 2006). White privilege and racial oppression can be reproduced in food movement organizations (WhyHunger, 2010). Guthman’s (2008) survey of managers of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs in California found that the vast majority of customers were White. Similarly, of the 13 community food organizations in the North East U.S. with a staff of 10 to 35 people, Slocum (2006) found that the leadership positions were 84% White as compared to 16% people of color while the board members were 11% people of color and 89% White (p. 330). The mainstream media also tends to focus on the sustainable food movement’s social base as being “predominantly white, middle-class consumers,” which makes the “realities of low-income people and people of color invisible” (Holt-Giménez & Wang, 2011, p. 85).

In the FCWA’s experience, White politicians and advocates will enter into communities of color to provide solutions, but they do not ask for the community’s input on what those solutions should be. One example is the Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH)

program that was put in place by former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg³. The FRESH program provides zoning and financial incentives to encourage grocery companies to open stores in underserved communities. However, when the program was first envisioned, no community input was solicited as to what kinds of jobs or quality of food these grocery stores would be required to provide. It wasn't until the Building Blocks Coalition, a group of community organizations, food advocates, unions, and responsible businesses, pressured the City Council were "increased community input and oversight mechanisms" adopted for the program⁴. In addition, in FCWA's experience, when these kinds of programs are implemented, no accountability mechanism exists to ensure that jobs are provided to locals, that workers are paid the wages they are promised, or that grocery stores provide good food to the community.

In addition to White privilege and racial oppression, another reason for the lack of collaboration between worker and food movement advocates is the challenge of differing priorities. Yen Liu (2012) found that many "good food" advocates that she surveyed fear "diluting their mission" (p. 2), while, on the other hand, many labor advocates are focused solely on workplace issues and are uninterested in taking on issues of the food movement. However, labor groups were more likely to minimally (57%) or strongly engage (25%) in cross-sector food issues than food advocates (p. 9).

Lastly, the Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United, a national organization of restaurant workers, has found that a major reason for the sustainable food movement's inattention to food workers seems to be the lack of awareness or knowledge about the exploitation of food workers. In 2012, ROC United commissioned an online focus group of 25 individuals who consider themselves "foodies" but confirmed that their knowledge of the injustices facing food workers was low. At the start of the weeklong focus group, there were no individuals who said they would take action on a food-worker issue. After a week of watching videos and learning more about food workers, the majority of the participants were willing to take action to support the workers (Childress, 2013). "It really is about information, education and finding the right tools for people in this movement," Saru Jayaraman⁵ told *Frontline* (Childress, 2013, para. 3). The sustainable food system movement is growing, but rather than

³ Go to <http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/html/2009/fresh.shtml> for more information on the FRESH program.

⁴ Go to <http://www.alignny.org/posts/campaign/2010/12/fresh-victory/> and <http://wagnerfpa.wordpress.com/2009/12/10/reception-to-celebrate-the-fresh-initiative/> for more information

⁵ Saru Jayaraman is co-founder and co-director of ROC United, which is a member of the FCWA.

growing to expand social justice as a critical component, it is expanding into the organic and natural foods sectors while ignoring the welfare of its workers.

Food Chain Workers in the United States

The food system is the largest employer in the U.S. The almost 20 million people working in the U.S. food system comprise one-sixth of the nation's entire workforce, larger than retail and healthcare (FCWA, 2012). The industries of food production, processing, distribution, retail, and service collectively sell over \$1.8 trillion dollars in goods and services annually, accounting for over 13% of the United States Gross Domestic Product (FCWA, 2012, p. 3). Core food occupations and industries include farmworkers (production), slaughterhouse and other processing facilities workers (processing), warehouse workers (distribution), grocery store workers (retail), and restaurant and food service workers (service) (Figure 2).

Food system workers are among the lowest paid workers in the U.S. Front-line workers make up 86% of the 20 million people employed by the U.S. food system, and they earn a median annual salary of \$18,889 (FCWA, 2012, p. 19). CEOs, meanwhile, earn a median income of \$151,833, eight times that of frontline workers (FCWA, 2012, p. 19) (Figure 3). Overall, the median hourly wage of food system front-line workers is about a third less than that of all front-line workers in the U.S., and wages of workers at all levels of the food system are lower than the general workforce (FCWA, 2012, p. 20).

In June of 2012, the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA), a national coalition of unions, workers centers, and advocacy organizations, released the first-ever (and currently the only) comprehensive report on workers in the food system, entitled *The Hands That Feed Us: Challenges and Opportunities for Workers Along the Food Chain*. With assistance from the DataCenter, a non-profit organization that trains and supports community organizations in participatory action research, workers and organizers from FCWA member groups surveyed over 600 food workers and conducted 47 in-depth interviews with workers and employers around the country on issues such as wages, hours, pay, benefits, health and safety, career advancement, and discrimination. *The Hands That Feed Us* then analyzed the responses to these surveys and interviews, as well as government data on food workers. The median hourly wage of the surveyed workers was \$9.65 (FCWA, 2012, p. 4) (Figure 4). Due to such low wages, the report *A Dime A Day* found that more than half of food system workers – 10 million people – earn less than the poverty line for a family of three (Benner & Jayaraman, 2012, p. 2).

Food system workers also suffer higher rates of food insecurity⁶ and use food stamps at more than 1.5 times the rate of the general workforce (FCWA, 2012, p. 5 & p. 20) (Figure 5).

The food system has historically been and continues to be one of the largest employers and exploiters of workers of color and women. Close to half of the U.S. food workforce are women while almost 41% of the workers are people of color (FCWA, 2012, p. 21). In their 2011 report *The Color of Food*, Yen Liu and Apollon of the Applied Research Center (now called Race Forward)⁷ reported that people of color earn, on average, less than Whites working in the food chain – half of White food workers earn \$25,024 a year, while workers of color make \$5,675 less than that (p. 9) (Figure 6). Male and female food system workers are also treated differently. In the FCWA survey, women earned median weekly wages of \$400, while men reported a median weekly take-home pay of \$421 (FCWA, 2012, p. 43). Women also reported feeling discriminated against at a much higher rate than men – 44% versus 32% (FCWA, 2012, p. 43) – and almost half of all White men who work in the food system hold management positions (Yen Liu & Apollon, p.11).

Immigrant workers are also more vulnerable to exploitation in the food system. Undocumented workers were far more concentrated in lower-wage jobs, resulting in less than 1% of undocumented workers reporting that they earned more than 150% of the poverty line, compared to 20% of documented workers.⁸ Undocumented workers reported a median wage of \$7.60 per hour, compared to \$10 per hour for all other workers (FCWA, 2012, p. 43). Because of the overall low wages and the lower pay for workers of color, women, and immigrants, many workers in the food system around the U.S. are now organizing to improve their wages and working conditions, and their organizations have now joined together in the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) towards this same goal.

History of the Food Chain Workers Alliance

⁶ The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life.” <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us.aspx#.U6lYHo1dXpY>

⁷ Race Forward is a non-profit organization that works to “advance racial justice through research, media and practice.” See <https://www.raceforward.org>

⁸ With advice from a number of academics and researchers that comprised an advisory board for the report *The Hands That Feed Us*, the FCWA chose to use the federal poverty level for a family of three as the poverty line. In 2011, when the FCWA conducted these surveys of workers, the poverty level for a family of three was \$18,530; the poverty line is used to determine eligibility for various federal benefits programs, such as SNAP benefits (previously known as food stamps), WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) program, and others.

Prior to 2008, a number of organizations of workers along the food chain had been struggling with ways to integrate their work with the new national interest in food systems, and some had begun talking with each other about possible ways to collaborate with each other. In January 2008, the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United), a national organization of restaurant workers (Figure 7), organized an initial meeting of several organizations and, in May 2008, convened eight organizations at the Labor Notes Conference in Detroit. At this meeting, the groups came together to get to know each other better, to share information on their work, and to talk about the idea of partnering with each other. These groups included ROC United, the Center for New Community, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), el Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA – the Farmworker Support Committee), the International Labor Rights Forum, and the Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center (NRAWJC).

ROC United then acquired funding for an in-person retreat in Chicago in July 2009. In addition to the groups listed above, Brandworkers International, Just Harvest USA, the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York, and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1500 also participated in the meeting. The groups officially created the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) at that retreat. NRAWJC could not attend the meeting but, afterwards, confirmed its membership in the Alliance.

At that 2009 meeting, the organizations formed the Alliance for two primary reasons: 1) workers all along the food chain coming together could build collective power in order to challenge corporate power over the food system and to win higher wages and improved working conditions; and 2) as a national alliance, these groups could garner the attention of the sustainable food movement on the issues facing food workers and work in collaboration with individuals and groups in this movement to advance social justice for all. The groups decided that the Alliance should focus its work on the following four program areas, with member organizations forming committees to carry out this work:

- Policy and Standards – This committee works towards policies and standards, such as laws, administrative policies, certification standards, and corporate policies, that ensure protections for workers, their families, and their community and for our food supply.
- Campaigns – This committee looks for ways that the member organizations can support each other and explores potential joint FCWA campaigns.

- Workers Leadership Development and Solidarity – This committee looks for ways that FCWA members can share skills, knowledge, and experience and organizes one worker leaders retreat per year to provide a space for workers to learn from each other, build solidarity as workers across the food chain, and to take action in support of each others' campaigns.
- Education and Communications – This committee creates tools and strategies to educate the public, the media, and the sustainable food movement about the issues facing workers throughout the food system as well as about the work of the FCWA.

Since the founding of the Alliance in 2009, the FCWA has grown from 10 member organizations to 23 that have a collective membership of over 280,000 workers⁹ (Figures 8, 9, & 10). A few of the members are advocacy organizations, but the Alliance has a rule that states that, at all times, at least three-quarters of the member groups must be worker-based organizations. The 23 member organizations are the following:

- Brandworkers International
- Brooklyn Food Coalition
- California Institute for Rural Studies
- CATA – the Farmworker Support Committee
- Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers
- Fair World Project
- Farmworker Association of Florida
- International Labor Rights Forum
- Just Harvest USA
- Mississippi Workers' Center for Human Rights
- Northwest Arkansas Workers' Justice Center
- Restaurant Opportunities Center of New York
- Restaurant Opportunities Centers United
- Rural and Migrant Ministry
- Rural Community Workers Alliance
- The Street Vendor Project

⁹ As of March of 2014.

- Teamsters Joint Council No. 7
- UNITE HERE Food Service Division
- UE Research and Education Fund
- UFCW Local 770
- UFCW Local 1500
- Warehouse Workers Resource Center

Working to Collaborate Across Issues and Movements

The 10 organizations that founded the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) in July of 2009 came together, in large part, to make food worker justice an integral part of the sustainable food movement and to work together with others towards a more sustainable food system. The FCWA defines justice for food workers by the following criteria¹⁰:

- The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Fair contracts, a fair grievance process, and a strong non-discrimination policy
- Direct involvement of and participation by workers and their organizations
- Living wages and fair pricing
- A safe and healthy workplace
- Protections against the exploitation of child labor
- Capacity-building and training for workers

The members of the FCWA fully believe in the fundamental principle that workers should be in the leadership of their movement for economic and social justice; one of the criteria for unions and workers' centers to become members in the FCWA is that workers lead the organization. The FCWA also understands that working alone is a recipe for failure. Therefore, one of the FCWA's initial strategies to make worker justice a priority for the sustainable food movement was to first join other networks or alliances working on issues of justice in the food system. Starting with those most closely aligned with the FCWA in principle, but not so much focused on food workers, seemed strategic, as working with these organizations would help the FCWA to gain allies for worker organizing campaigns, as well as introduce the FCWA as a respectable organization with integrity to other groups working on sustainable food issues. These networks

¹⁰ From the FCWA's Statement on Social Certification
http://foodchainworkers.org/?page_id=232

also included organizations and employers that, at first glance, might not seem like natural allies.

One of the ally networks that the FCWA first joined was the Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA). The DFTA is a membership organization of farm and food workers organizations, farmers and farmer groups, retailers, non-governmental organizations, and marketers, processors, and manufacturers. Its mission is to promote and protect the integrity of domestic fair trade principles and practices through education, marketing, advocacy and endorsement. One of the FCWA's founding members, CATA – the Farmworkers Support Committee, was also a founding member of the DFTA and encouraged the FCWA to join. In April of 2010, the FCWA became the first organization representing food workers other than farmworkers to join the DFTA, and this helped lift up the importance of workers throughout the food chain to other member groups in the DFTA.

Since the FCWA joined the DFTA, the FCWA has gained the association's endorsement and support to raise the federal minimum wage. This endorsement is important because the DFTA membership includes family farmers and other employers, groups that are often assumed to be against increases in the minimum wage. The DFTA also developed criteria to evaluate domestic fair trade certification programs, and the Rights of Labor has remained an essential principle for these evaluations. The DFTA also participated in promoting the FCWA's annual International Food Workers Week, which was launched in 2012 to educate consumers about food chain workers during Thanksgiving week and to move them to take action. Because the FCWA believes in mutual support and collaboration, rather than only asking for what we want, the FCWA has strongly stood by the other domestic fair trade principles of the DFTA, including fair pricing for family farmers and sustainable agriculture.

Through the DFTA, the FCWA met the Fair World Project (FWP), an independent campaign of the Organic Consumers Association (OCA). The FWP works to promote and expand markets for authentic fair trade, to educate consumers, to advocate for policies for a just economy, and to facilitate collaborative relationships. In January of 2013, the FWP helped us gain the OCA's commitment to send a message to its email list that educated its 800,000 members about the importance of raising the minimum wage for food workers and encouraging organizations and businesses to sign on to a support letter. The FWP asked to join the FCWA as an advocacy member organization, which the FCWA members approved in February of 2013. Since then, the FWP has been active in educating its supporters about food workers' organizing campaigns as well as fair trade certification programs that have high labor standards for workers. The FWP has also published an article that I authored about why immigration

reform is important to those who care about fair trade and has started a pledge for consumers to sign to support the Wal-Mart store employees who are organizing with the Organization United for Respect (OUR) at Wal-Mart.

In early 2010, another ally network that the FCWA became active in was the U.S. Working Group on the Food Crisis, which later became the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA). The working group was, and continues to be, an alliance of food justice, anti-hunger, labor, environmental, faith-based, and food producer groups. In early 2010, the working group was focused on organizing testimony and media attention for the joint hearings between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Justice on corporate control of the food system, as well as preparing for a food justice tent and People's Assembly at the U.S. Social Forum (USSF) that summer. On behalf of the FCWA, I asked to join the planning committee for the USSF and was welcomed by the working group leadership.

At the USSF, I participated in a discussion about the idea of forming the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance. However, still not knowing the groups and individuals involved very deeply, I was hesitant to recommend to the FCWA member organizations that we commit to the formation of this new alliance. Two months after the USSF, however, the FCWA was invited to join the interim coordinating committee to form the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance. This seemed to be an indication of the commitment of the organizations in the newly forming alliance to workers' rights in the food system; so, the FCWA accepted the invitation. For the official launch of the USFSA in October 2010, the USFSA organized a protest in support of the New Orleans restaurant workers' campaign for owed wages from Tony Moran's in the French Quarter (Figure 11).

With a mission to end poverty, rebuild local food economies, and assert democratic control over the food system, the USFSA has continued to support various food workers' organizing campaigns. The USFSA held its second annual assembly in Florida to coincide with the CIW's march for farmworker justice in March of 2013. The Immigrant Rights and Trade Team of the USFSA has held learning calls about food workers and organized support for the Sakuma Brothers Farm workers in Washington State. The USFSA also issued a statement on Immigration Policy Principles for Food Sovereignty in the spring of 2013. In return, and through the USFSA, the FCWA has taken action to protest the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, which some call the NAFTA of the Pacific; to support family farmers, including the Family Farm Defenders' campaign focused on unfair prices for dairy farmers; and to call for climate justice.

Because of our continued leadership role with the USFSA as a member of the Coordinating Team and co-facilitator of the Immigrant Rights and Trade Team, La Via

Campesina (LVC) invited the FCWA to participate in its North America regional meeting in January of 2014. LVC is the international movement for food sovereignty, which brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants, and agricultural workers from around the world. LVC defends small-scale sustainable agriculture as a way to promote social justice and dignity and strongly opposes corporate-driven agriculture and transnational companies. While LVC has farmworker organization members, it does not have organizations of other food chain workers. The FCWA is hopeful that this meeting was the first step in developing a relationship between our two organizations and exploring mutually beneficial work.

Having joined with the DFTA and the USFSA, allies who strongly share our principles of social justice, we also began inserting ourselves into spaces where there were organizations and individuals that also care about sustainable food and food access. One such organization that has allowed the FCWA to reach a diverse audience is the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC). The LAFPC is a network of organizations and individuals working to make Southern California a “Good Food” region for everyone. Good Food is defined as healthy, affordable, fair and sustainable. The LAFPC is one of the very few food policy councils around the country that includes fair treatment of food workers as a top priority, although few in the LAFPC network focus on food workers.

In early 2011, representing FCWA, I joined a working group of the LAFPC to develop a model food procurement policy for the City of Los Angeles and other major institutional purchasers of food in the region. With the working group, I was able to collaborate with people whom the FCWA normally might not work with on a deep level – this included individuals from distribution companies, farms, and environmental and animal welfare organizations. We worked to develop what the LAFPC came to call the Good Food Purchasing Program (GFPP) and to win its adoption by the Los Angeles City Council and the Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District in the fall of 2012. As far as I am aware, the GFPP is the most comprehensive food procurement policy in the U.S. The GFPP emphasizes five key values: (1) Local Economies, (2) Environmental Sustainability, (3) Valued Workforce, (4) Animal Welfare, and (5) Nutrition (Figure 12). Participating institutions must meet the baseline purchasing criteria of the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines, and a tiered, points-based scoring system allows participants to choose which level of commitment best suits the Good Food goals of their organization (Delwiche & Lo, 2013, p. 28). Participants are then awarded one to five stars based on their total score. Thanks to the work that I did on the GFPP, I was invited to serve on the Leadership Board of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council in January of 2013. Then in

November, the Leadership Board members elected me to serve as Vice Chair starting in January of 2014.

On July 17, 2013, the FCWA and 11 other organizations co-hosted the Mayoral Forum on the Future of Food in New York City. Six mayoral candidates participated in the event moderated by Marion Nestle, author of the prize-winning book *Food Politics*. The FCWA's campaign and education coordinator, Diana Robinson, attended and helped to organize the forum. Due to FCWA's deep involvement, one of the questions asked of the mayoral candidates was about food workers. Over 700 people attended the event, while over 1,300 people watched the forum live-streamed online. Since the event, the organizations, including the FCWA, have continued collaborating in a coalition called the NYC Food Forum. The NYC Food Forum developed the Food Primer for the new mayor that addresses many issues and stakeholders that are impacted by the NYC food system.

Building Support for Food Workers' Organizing Campaigns from the Sustainable Food Movement

A major area of work of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) is supporting our member organizations' campaigns. Working in collaboration with the organizations and networks described above has been, in part, to develop the relationships and the credibility to be able to ask for support from sustainable food movement organizations and activists for these campaigns. One of the simplest, most direct ways of doing this is by talking about our members' campaigns in presentations and workshops. In 2013 alone, the FCWA spoke to over 2,100 people in 34 webinars, talks, and presentations directed mainly to audiences interested in the food system.

The campaigns that the FCWA supports include the Wal-Mart workers organizing with OUR Wal-Mart and the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (Figure 13). Two of the UFCW's largest local unions are members of the Alliance. The FCWA also supports two of our member organizations that organize Wal-Mart warehouse workers: the Warehouse Workers Resource Center in Southern California and Warehouse Workers for Justice outside Chicago. The FCWA report *The Hands That Feed Us* highlighted Wal-Mart's exploitative labor practices that include:

- Low wages – The average hourly wage for a Wal-Mart employee is \$8.90, according to Glassdoor.com (Boak, 2014). In California, Wal-Mart workers earn “an average

wage of \$9.70 per hour compared to the \$14.01 average hourly earnings for employees in large retail (firms with 1,000 or more employees)” (Dube & Jacobs, 2004, p.1).

- Encouraging employees to use public assistance – A January 2012 Wal-Mart Associates Benefits Book lists government agency offices where employees can apply for Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (Wal-Mart, 2012, p. 7). Wal-Mart itself reported, “a significant number of Associates and their children . . . receive health insurance through public-assistance programs” (Wal-Mart, 2006, pp. 237-239). In 21 of 24 states that have publicly disclosed information, Wal-Mart has the largest number of employees on publicly funded health programs of all other employers (Good Jobs First, 2013).
- Gender discrimination – Wal-Mart female employees earn less than men “due to women working disproportionately in the lower paying hourly jobs, and earning less money than men holding the same jobs” (Drogin, 2003, p. 11).

The report also profiled a Wal-Mart store employee and a Wal-Mart warehouse worker and their work experiences. The FCWA encourages consumers to attend Wal-Mart workers’ protests on Black Friday, which falls during International Food Workers Week. The FCWA also shares information about the campaign with the major food security and food justice email listserves. After doing so before the 2013 Black Friday protests, an activist with a family farmers organization contacted Robinson, saying she lived in a town where two members of the Wal-Mart board of directors live and asking if she could help organize a protest focused on them.

Another example of how the FCWA is working to bridge the labor and sustainable, local food movements was a case in New York State in 2013. Diana Robinson, the FCWA’s campaign and education coordinator based in New York City, brokered a relationship between a local affiliate of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, which was organizing workers at a chicken processing plant in upstate New York, and the Brooklyn Food Coalition (BFC), a grassroots organization dedicated to the vision of a just and sustainable food system in Brooklyn and New York City. Robinson serves on the governing board of the BFC and is a member of its labor committee. She, along with the BFC, helped to influence the Park Slope Food Coop, one of the chicken plant’s biggest customers, to pressure the chicken plant to negotiate a fair contract with the union and its members. This pressure ultimately helped the union and the workers reach a successful contract settlement. Robinson has also worked

closely with other organizations and individuals in the BFC in advocating and building support from labor groups for healthier food in the public schools and access to healthy, affordable food in low-income communities, among other issues. In December of 2013, BFC became a member of the FCWA.

One last example of a campaign that the FCWA has supported is the national fast food workers' campaign, Low Pay Is Not Ok, which has excelled at building broad public support for increasing the minimum wage. For the 2013 International Food Workers Week, I wrote an op-ed piece on the minimum wage that highlighted the CIW's Campaign for Fair Food with farmworkers and the Low Pay Is Not Ok campaign. The op-ed featured a Wendy's restaurant worker and a farmworker who picks tomatoes in Florida's fields that are purchased by Wendy's. Then, in addition to encouraging our supporters to go out to support the fast food workers' strikes in over 100 cities on December 5, 2013, I was able to connect Michael Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and influential writer in the sustainable food movement, to MoveOn.org with the help of a mutual colleague. An organizer at MoveOn.org, which also supports the fast food workers' strikes, wanted to invite Pollan to send a message to MoveOn.org members asking them to express solidarity with the workers. In his message, he wrote,

[T]o produce food sustainably and justly and sell it at an honest price, we will first have to pay people a living wage so that they can afford to buy it. Let's start with the people who work so hard to feed us. (M. Pollan, email to MoveOn members from moveon-help@list.moveon.org, December 5, 2013)

The FCWA acknowledges this action as an example of how a prominent, influential voice in the White and affluent foodie world is now engaging in food justice issues, as well as a hopeful sign that the discourse in the sustainable food movement is changing and becoming more inclusive of social justice issues, such as food workers' wages.

Educating “Foodies” to Take Action

In addition to working with other networks and organizations and bridging the labor and sustainable food movements, the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) has developed the Education and Communications program to educate sustainable food and food justice activists, foodies, and consumers, in general, about food workers and to build support for food workers' organizing campaigns and policy initiatives. I do believe that the FCWA is leading the

conversation about social justice and food workers. Ultimately, in the future, when people talk about sustainable food, the FCWA wants that to also mean sustainable jobs for the workers in the food system.

Some of the tools that the FCWA uses for this education and communication work include research and videos. The FCWA's report *The Hands That Feed Us* has been a useful tool for educating the public and policymakers. Top media outlets, including National Public Radio, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Huffington Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and others, covered the report's release in June of 2012. The report is now regularly cited in news articles, news reports, and blog posts. Bittman (2012) highlighted the report in *The New York Times*, writing, "[FCWA's report] *The Hands That Feed Us*, and the work being done on the ground by groups like ROC [United] . . . may signal the beginning of a change" (para. 6).

The FCWA has learned from communications experts that workers' personal stories and seeing their faces often move people more than statistics. In the winter of 2012-2013, the FCWA produced a three-video series called "The Hands That Feed Us" about three of the key issue areas covered in the report: low wages and long hours, discrimination, and health and safety and the lack of paid sick days. The videos feature workers giving personal testimony on these issues, and many of them spoke on camera after participating in a story-telling training that the FCWA provided. Each video is available with English/Spanish subtitles, with a second version with Chinese subtitles.

The FCWA's latest short video is called "Guess Who's Coming to Breakfast?" which was produced with support from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (Figure 14). The video shows a family whose son asks, "Where does our food come from?" Workers representing the five major sectors in the food chain, one by one, fill the family's kitchen. Most of the worker "characters" in the video are played by actual workers. The video reached close to 20,000 views¹¹ on YouTube within three months after its release in October of 2013 without any paid media consultants or advertisements to help with marketing the video.

In 2012, the FCWA launched the first-ever International Food Workers Week (IFWW) to raise more awareness about food chain workers and to move people to take action. IFWW takes place annually from the Sunday before Thanksgiving to the Saturday afterwards. The 2013 IFWW grew successfully from 2012, with actions in 14 different cities to support food workers' organizing campaigns and four local events held specifically for the week (Figure 15).

¹¹ This includes the almost 15,000 views of the current video available on YouTube and the 5,000 views on the first version of the video released on October 24, 2013.

One of the major themes of the 2013 IFWW was the need to raise the federal minimum wage, both the regular minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour and the minimum wage of \$2.13 for workers who receive tips. The FCWA recruited noted food movement authors Raj Patel and Michele Simon to write about this issue, and in their op-eds, they also expressed support for the fast food workers' campaign. Also, because of our request, individuals from organizations that are focused on food system and environmental issues also published op-ed pieces. These groups included the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, the Sierra Club, and the Center for a Livable Future at Johns Hopkins University. My op-ed featuring a Wendy's worker and a farmworker down Wendy's supply chain was published in the *Huffington Post*, with a shortened version posted on the websites Food Tank and Civil Eats, both major blog sites for the sustainable food movement. On the third day of the 2013 IFWW, the FCWA organized a Twitter Storm focused on raising the minimum wage and, in addition to our typical economic justice allies, the FCWA recruited many sustainable food and food justice organizations to tweet on this issue, including Food Day, Food Tank, Just Food, and the Sustainable Table. Due to this day of social media action, the FCWA's online petition supporting the federal proposal to raise the minimum wage surpassed our goal of 100,000 signatures.

Challenges

While I have mostly described the FCWA's successes and progress in building collaborations with food movement organizations since its founding in 2009, the FCWA has also faced challenges. I believe that, so far, the FCWA has only made a small dent in the overall consciousness of the U.S. general public and, particularly, in the sustainable food movement. The FCWA would welcome suggestions from readers of this article to the challenges described below.

One of the FCWA's initial attempts to collaborate with an environmental justice (EJ) organization with a program focused on gaining more access to healthy food in its community ended in dissolution of the partnership. A staff member of this grassroots EJ organization, located in a large metropolitan city, attended the FCWA workshop at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum. He invited the FCWA to collaborate with him and his organization on a purchasing policy for the city's school district that prioritized local, healthy, fresh food produced and processed by workers who are treated fairly. I, as FCWA staff and a staff member of a local FCWA member organization, worked with this EJ organization for over a year to develop the outlines of such a policy and to conduct research to support the needs and the benefits of such a policy. In the fall

of 2011, FCWA and the EJ organization began outreach to other organizations to build a coalition to influence the mayor and the city council to adopt this policy.

In January of 2011, the first task of potential coalition members was to sign on to a group letter to city officials. A large national environmental organization based in the city responded that, since labor issues were not its area of expertise, it was not comfortable signing on to a letter that included fair labor standards as part of the school food purchasing policy goals. Another organization focused on children's health gave the same response. The EJ organization then informed the FCWA that it wanted to continue the coalition work without fair labor standards as one of the policy goals, as it felt that it had a strategic moment to win a local, healthy food procurement policy and that maybe it could work with FCWA later to win the labor standards. Without fair labor standards as one of the policy goals and as FCWA had limited resources, the FCWA, therefore, made the decision to pull out of the coalition, but we said that we would sign on to support letters and to act in solidarity. This EJ organization and the coalition have not yet won a healthy, local school food purchasing policy.

I believe that this collaboration failed for a few reasons, in contrast to the success of the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines that the FCWA helped to develop with the Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC). One reason was that the principal staff member of the EJ organization who worked with the FCWA left the organization in mid-2011, and I believe he was more committed to labor standards than other individuals at the EJ organization. The LAFPC's staff and members of its Leadership Board, on the other hand, are committed to fair labor standards as much as any other value, such as supporting local farmers and environmental sustainability. A second reason for the failed collaboration is that the FCWA was still relatively new and unknown in this metropolitan city, and the FCWA, therefore, had little influence over other invited coalition partners. In contrast, within the LAFPC, a few of the Leadership Board members knew me personally or knew member organizations of the FCWA and respected us.

Yet, I think the biggest reason for the failed school food policy effort was the lack of commitment to broader social justice goals on the part of the organizations that would not sign a letter that included fair labor standards. They were focused on their own missions, instead. As Yen Liu (2012) noted in her report *Good Food and Good Jobs For All*, good food organizations were more unlikely to collaborate with good jobs organizations due to concern about mission drift. In the LAFPC, however, all members of the working group that developed the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines (GFPG) are committed to supporting each other's issues. Overall, the FCWA has not yet determined how to move most large national organizations, like the environmental group mentioned above in the school food case, that are focused on local or

sustainable food to collaborate beyond tweeting and taking small actions in support of food workers. Building a broader coalition to work together as a movement, rather than remaining in separate issue area silos, remains a challenge.

Another challenge has been finding funding to grow beyond three staff and to increase the FCWA's impact. The FCWA members pay dues on a sliding scale based on the annual budget of each organization, but the dues amounts are not very high in order not to burden the majority of the members that are local, grassroots organizations. The majority of the FCWA's budget is, therefore, comprised of grants from private foundations that support social justice work, and only a few of those foundations are members of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders (SAFSF) network. SAFSF has grown quickly in the past five to 10 years, but the number of its members that fund work related to food workers has not increased, despite the attempts of FCWA funders to educate other SAFSF members about food workers.

The FCWA knows that the vast majority of consumers are still not thinking about food worker justice, and more people still care about whether or not their food is organic or local. Finding the strategies, tools, and resources to turn that around and to shift the culture of food in the U.S. and around the world is still a challenge. Currently, defining food culture is in the hands of corporate actors and not communities. So long as profit is the underlying motivation for the creation and marketing of food, people will be a formula to solve, and not whole beings that are part of the creation and consumption of the products themselves. The FCWA's educational work has been to dispute this notion. The question of how the FCWA can be more effective in shifting the culture of food and reaching more people on a larger scale is one that we continue to grapple with.

Ideas for Future Collaboration

Challenges and opportunities exist for sustainable food and labor advocates to work together (Yen Liu, 2012). The path forward is not an "either/or" paradigm of focusing only on issues of sustainable food or only on food workers, but an "and/both" approach. We must begin to see all of these approaches as a spectrum in a struggle to diminish corporate control and to grow community power in the food system.

Some of the opportunities for collaboration that the FCWA foresees include holding corporations accountable to high standards for workers, communities, the environment, and animal welfare. Food workers are engaged in numerous campaigns focused on corporations, some of which are described above. Sustainable food organizations and activists can participate

in supporting those workers and partner with food workers' organizations to demand these corporations act responsibly in other areas, such as land reform, water rights, and fair prices for family farmers.

Jointly advocating for government policies that positively impact workers, communities, the economy, and public health is another potential opportunity. Such policies include paid sick days and raising the minimum wage, as higher wages for low-income communities mean they can afford healthier, sustainably and locally produced food and paid sick days protect food safety and public health. The successful development and adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Guidelines in Los Angeles can also be a model for other institutional food purchasing policies that bring together advocates working on a variety of food-related issues.

Other policies that FCWA members are working on that can be models for collaboration between labor and sustainable food movement organizations include:

- The Restaurant Opportunities Center of Michigan is partnering with food security advocates in Detroit on the Good Food Good Jobs Campaign. The campaign hopes to win new regulations on liquor licenses such that, if a food retailer or restaurant is found to violate employment law and/or to sell expired food three times, then that business could lose its license to sell liquor.
- Brandworkers International, a worker center organizing food-processing workers in New York City and an FCWA member, has proposed attaching fair labor standards to requirements for food manufacturing businesses to receive loans from a joint program of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and Goldman Sachs.
- The United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1500 in New York City and Long Island has worked with a community coalition to propose that fair labor standards be attached to any loans or subsidies provided to companies to open food retail outlets in low-income neighborhoods.

Consumers have been successful in moving the food system to produce, process, and sell more organic and local food. The FCWA, therefore, sees another potential collaboration to be the co-creation of consumer organizations that are focused on worker issues or the incorporation of specific worker issues into food consumer organizations, with the worker programs in these consumer organizations led by food workers themselves.

Developing what are currently considered alternative institutions or businesses, such as worker-owned cooperatives, is another example of an area of potential collaboration. The UFCW Local 21 in Cincinnati is working with other institutions, such as the Mondragon Cooperative of Spain, The Ohio State University Extension, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and others, to create the Our Harvest Food Hub Cooperative. This project has begun with an organic farm and is part of the larger Cincinnati Union Coop Initiative. The farm is a worker-owned cooperative in which the workers are also members of UFCW. The farm is supplying a variety of local retail outlets, a Cincinnati State University's salad bar, and a local restaurant, as well as 200 local community members through its Community Supported Agriculture program. Our Harvest Food Hub Cooperative plans to expand to a facility to minimally process food, a distribution center, and potentially a restaurant.

An existing cross-sector, multi-issue collaboration that could be supported to increase its impact is the Agricultural Justice Project (AJP). AJP has created the "Food-Justice Certified" label that is awarded to farms and all other businesses along the food chain that meet its social justice standards. The standards address fair treatment of workers, fair pricing for farmers, fair business practices, and sustainable agricultural practices. AJP is led by a partnership of four non-profit organizations that are representative of different stakeholder groups: CATA – the Farmworkers Support Committee (also an FCWA member), Florida Organic Growers, Northeastern Organic Farming Association, and Rural Advancement Foundation International. With little funding, currently only three organic farms in California and Florida and one cooperative of organic farmers in Canada have been certified, but AJP plans to expand certification of additional farms to New York soon.

Beyond these specific policies and building alternative food structures, the FCWA calls on all who care about sustainable food and social justice in the food system to join with us and other food justice leaders to build an organized movement to re-align national food and agriculture policies with principles of health, sustainability, and fairness. The other food justice leaders that the FCWA is collaborating with are the following: Navina Khanna of the Movement Strategy Center, which supports the development of local and national alliances; Ricardo Salvador of the Food and Environment program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, which is working on federal policy to support healthy food and healthy farms; and Anim Steel of Real Food Generation, which organizes and mobilizes young people for a just and sustainable food system. Our four organizations have begun planning a series of convenings for food movement organizations to come together to develop a shared vision for the food system, create a governance structure to work together, and formulate strategic plans integrating our common

interests.

Conclusion

To win more economic and social justice changes in the food system, the FCWA is working in collaboration with other networks and organizations that care about food and is striving to bridge the labor and sustainable food movements. The FCWA's work and the work of our members and allies are changing the national dialogue around food and food workers and moving people who used to care mainly about where their food came from to take action to support food workers. At a meeting with food justice and labor organizations convened by the Movement Strategy Center and the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) in September of 2013, Ricardo Salvador of the Union of Concerned Scientists said, "Over the last few years, the sector of the food movement that has grown more rapidly, developed, acquired visibility and achieved most outcomes is unquestionably the food chain workers sector. Food workers are the most exciting, dynamic part of the food justice movement now."

FCWA member organizations are the principal reason for Salvador's assessment. They are winning union contracts and agreements with employers and corporations up the food chain. Some members are starting community gardens where they grow their own food organically and also provide this food to others in their communities. Other members have started worker-owned cooperatives. And more than ever, food workers are aware that they are not only workers in this system, but that they are also consumers, producers, and powerful agents to bring about change for a just food system for all.

While the FCWA has made many in-roads in bridging the labor and sustainable food movements and collaborating with food movement organizations, much work remains. The FCWA is hopeful. We envision a day when people talk about sustainable food, which will automatically include sustainable jobs for the workers in our food system.

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Figure 1. Farmworkers on a tomato farm in Immokalee, Florida (Photo: Forrest Woodward).

WORKERS ALONG THE FOOD CHAIN



Figure 2. Workers along the food chain – production, processing, distribution, service, and retail.

INCOME IN THE ENTIRE ECONOMY VS. IN THE FOOD CHAIN 2010

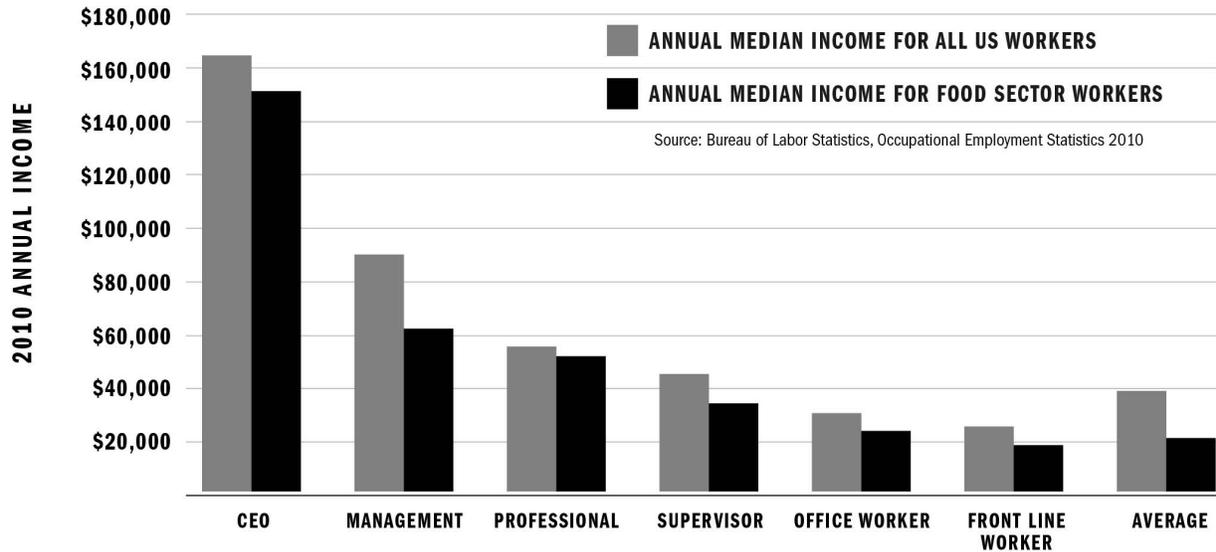
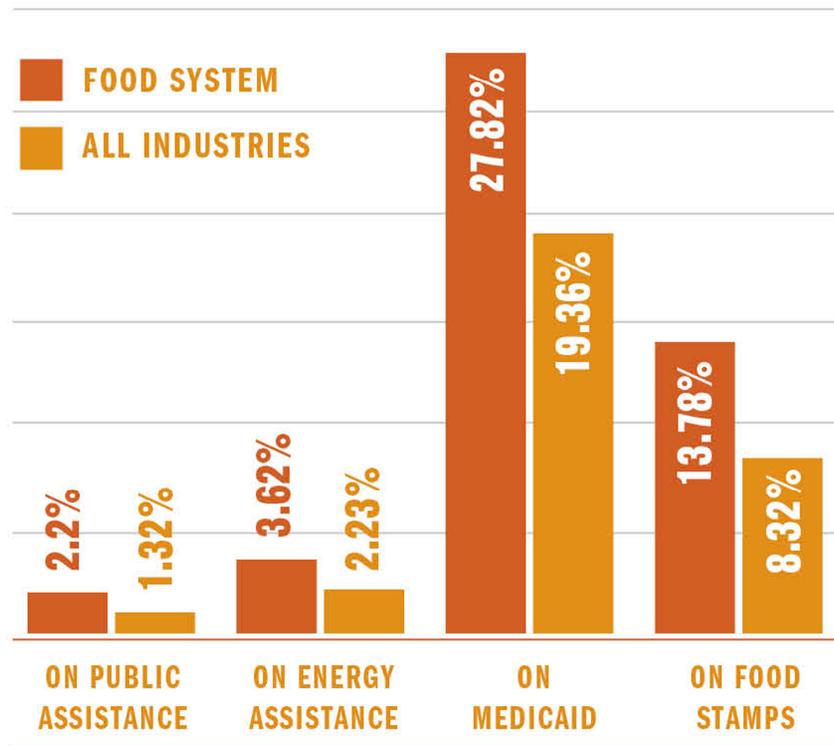


Figure 3. Income of food workers versus the general workforce by job category. Reprinted from the 2012 report *The Hands That Feed Us: Opportunities and Challenges for Workers Along the Food Chain* (p. 20) by the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA).

WAGES	
MEDIAN WAGE \$9.65	
%	WAGE SEGMENT
23%	Subminimum wage
37.6%	Poverty wage
25.8%	Low wage
13.5%	Living wage

Figure 4. Median wage of over 629 surveyed workers and percent in each wage segment. Reprinted from the 2012 report *The Hands That Feed Us: Opportunities and Challenges for Workers Along the Food Chain* (p. 4) by the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA).

USE OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY FOOD SYSTEM WORKERS V. U.S. WORKFORCE, 2010



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics 2010

Figure 5. Use of public assistance by food chain workers. Reprinted from the 2012 report *The Hands That Feed Us: Opportunities and Challenges for Workers Along the Food Chain* (p. 5) by the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA).

RACE/ETHNICITY BY WAGE SEGMENT

	SUBMINIMUM WAGE	POVERTY WAGE	LOW WAGE	LIVING WAGE
Black	21%	28.4%	36.9%	13.6%
Latino	24.4%	38.7%	22.9%	14%
Asian	37.5%	31.3%	18.8%	12.5%
Indigenous	28.6%	64.3%	7.1%	0%
White	13.5%	62.2%	8.1%	16.2%
Other	0%	50%	50%	0%
Total	23%	37.6%	25.8%	13.5%

Source: Food Chain Workers Alliance survey data

*Figure 6. Wage categories by race/ethnicity. Reprinted from 2012 report *The Hands That Feed Us: Opportunities and Challenges for Workers Along the Food Chain* (p. 37) by the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA).*



Figure 7. Restaurant workers in Chicago (Photo: Restaurant Opportunities Centers United).



Figure 8. Key events in the history of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) – January 2008 to April 2010.

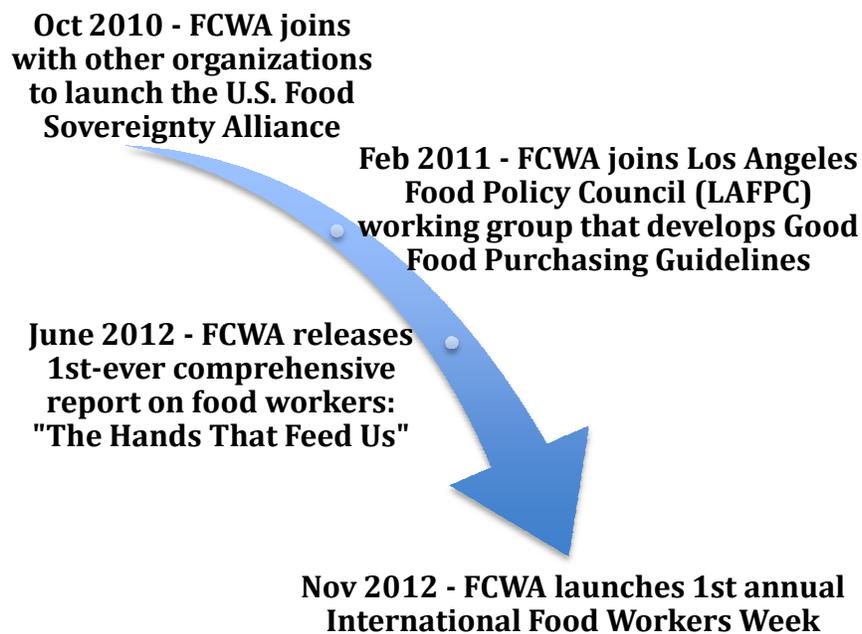


Figure 9. Key events in the history of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) – October 2010 to November 2012.

**Nov 2013 - 2nd annual
International Food
Workers Week**

**Jan 2014 - FCWA attends
North America regional
meeting of La Via
Campesina**

**Jan 2014 - FCWA Executive
Director becomes Vice
Chair of the Leadership
Board of the LAFPC**

**Feb 2014 - FCWA Executive
Director elected to board of
directors of the DFTA**

Figure 10. Key events in the history of the Food Chain Workers Alliance (FCWA) – November 2013 to February 2014.



Figure 11. Protest outside Tony Moran's Restaurant in the French Quarter, in support of restaurant workers and the Restaurant Opportunities Center of New Orleans, as part of the launch of the U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance on October 10, 2010 (Photo: Food Chain Workers Alliance).



Figure 12. The five value categories of the Los Angeles Food Policy Council’s Good Food Purchasing Policy (Image: Los Angeles Food Policy Council).



Figure 13. Diana Robinson, the FCWA's campaign and education coordinator, holds the organizations banner at a protest against Wal-Mart-by-Wal-Mart workers and their organization OUR Wal-Mart on September 5, 2013 (Photo: Food Chain Workers Alliance).



Figure 14. Food workers in FCWA's short video "Guess Who's Coming to Breakfast?" (Photo: Food Chain Workers Alliance).



Figure 15. The 2013 International Food Workers Week (IFFWW) poster (Image: Food Chain Workers Alliance).

Appendix A

List of Organizations Referenced More Than Once in This Article

- Brooklyn Food Coalition (BFC) – a grassroots organization dedicated to the vision of a just and sustainable food system in Brooklyn and New York City and a member of the FCWA
- Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) – an organization of farmworkers in Florida and a founding member of the FCWA
- El Comité de Apoyo a los Trabajadores Agrícolas (CATA – the Farmworkers Support Committee) – an organization of farmworkers in southern New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, and Maryland and a founding member of the FCWA
- The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC) – from 1994 to 2012, the largest network of organizations and individuals working to support strong, sustainable local and regional food systems and to increase access to healthy, local affordable food
- Domestic Fair Trade Association (DFTA) – a membership organization of farm and food workers organizations, farmers and farmer groups, retailers, NGOs, and marketer, processors, and manufacturers whose mission is to promote and protect the integrity of domestic fair trade principles and practices
- Fair World Project (FWP) - an independent campaign of the Organic Consumers Association and a member of the FCWA
- Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) – a non-profit organization that describes itself as working “locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems” (<http://www.iatp.org/about>)
- La Via Campesina – the international movement for food sovereignty, which brings together millions of peasants, small and medium-size farmers, landless people, women farmers, indigenous people, migrants and agricultural workers from around the world
- Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC) – a network of organizations and individuals working to make Southern California a “Good Food” region for everyone

- Organization United for Respect (OUR) at Wal-Mart – an association of Wal-Mart employees in the United States
- Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC United) – a national organization of restaurant workers and a founding member of the FCWA
- School Food Focus (SFF) – a national collaborative that works with 40 of the nation’s largest school districts and their community partners to make school meals nationwide more healthy, regionally sourced, and sustainably produced
- UNITE HERE – a national union that represents workers throughout the U.S. and Canada in the hotel, gaming, food service, manufacturing, textile, distribution, laundry, and airport industries. The UNITE HERE Food Service Division is a member of the FCWA.
- United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) International Union – a union of over 1.3 million members in the U.S. and Canada representing workers mostly in grocery, retail, and meat and food processing industries
- U.S. Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) – an alliance of food justice, anti-hunger, labor, environmental, faith-based, and food producer groups
- U.S. Social Forum (USSF) – the USSF describes itself as “a movement building process . . . a space to come up with the peoples’ solutions to the □economic and ecological crisis” (<http://www.ussocialforum.net/about>)