

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEM GLOSSARY

Compiled from numerous sources, the major one being Cornell University Library Guides Glossary- Local and Regional Food Systems by Jeff Piestrak. Numbers after terms indicate references at end.

CAFO 8

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, where animals are confined for more than 45 days per year. The EPA determines whether an agricultural business is a CAFO based on regulations created by the Clean Water Act, and special permits have to be given for the owners to operate a CAFO legally. Enforcement of these regulations has not been very strict, which has caused problems in communities where they are located.

Cage Free 8

Birds raised without cages. Does not guarantee that birds were allowed access to the outdoors or pasture. Birds may be raised in large flocks in commercial confinement facilities. There is no single, universally accepted definition or independent verification of "Cage-Free" claims.¹

Capacity Building 8

Enhancing the ability of individuals, organizations or communities to address their own long term needs.

Community Food Security

Food security [is] a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, *social* and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FAO, The State of Food Insecurity, 2001)

Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. Community food security represents a comprehensive strategy to address many of the ills affecting our society and environment due to an unsustainable and unjust food system.

Basic principles and methods of community food security (CFS) : 1) **Increase Access** – CFS focuses on meeting the food needs of low-income communities, eliminating poverty and hunger and improving individual health. 2) **Systems-oriented** - CFS projects address the broad range of problems affecting the food system and are "inter-disciplinary," crossing many boundaries and incorporating collaborations with multiple agencies. 3) **Self-reliance/empowerment**: Build up an individual and community's food resources to meet their own needs. Build upon community and individual assets, rather than focus on their deficiencies. Engage community residents in all phases of project planning, implementation, and evaluation. 4) **Thriving Local Agriculture**- A stable local agricultural base is key to a community-responsive food system. Farmers need increased access to markets that pay them a decent wage for their labor, and farmland needs planning protection from suburban development. Direct connection between farmers and consumers builds stability and resilience.

Direct-to-Consumer Marketing

Methods used by growers to market and sell products directly to consumers, enabling them to compete outside the supermarket system and other large wholesale market channels. Includes farmers' markets, farm stands, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture, pick-your-own farms, Internet marketing, and niche marketing.

Eco-label¹

A seal or logo indicating that a product has met a set of environmental or social standards.

Ecological Footprint (EF)¹

Term introduced by William Rees in 1992 and elaborated upon in his book, coauthored with Mathis

Wackernagel, *Our Ecological Footprint: Reducing Human Impact on the Earth*, New Society Publishers, 1996. A measure of how much land and water is needed to produce the resources we consume and to dispose of the waste we produce. Related term: **Carbon footprint**

Economic Gardening

An innovative entrepreneur-centered economic growth strategy originally developed by the city of Littleton Colorado, based on the belief that small local entrepreneurial firms are the engine for the creation of sustainable wealth and new jobs. More attention is paid to the unique attributes and resources of a given community, and the “complex biological and interrelated factors of building an environment conducive to entrepreneurial activity: intellectual stimulation, openness to new ideas, the support infrastructure of venture capital and universities, information and community support.” (from Small Business Administration article).

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)³

An electronic system that allows participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to authorize transfer of their government benefits from a federal account to a retailer account to pay for fresh foods. A growing number of farmers markets are equipped with the technology to accept SNAP benefits.

Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

A diverse set of inter-dependent actors within a geographic region that influence the formation and eventual trajectory of the entire group of actors and potentially the economy as a whole. Entrepreneurial ecosystems evolve through a set of interdependent components which interact to generate new venture creation over time⁷. Within an ecosystem, start-ups, established businesses, research institutions and others can interact and mutually benefit from each other's ideas, knowledge and connections. Formal accumulation of knowledge and the conceptualization of previous experiences contributes to improving the virtuous cycle.

Externalities ¹

In economics, benefits or costs that are not included in the market price of goods or services. For example, the cost of natural resource depletion, pollution and other environmental and social factors are externalities that often are not factored into the market price of a product.

Fair Trade

An organized social movement and market-based approach that aims to help producers get better trading conditions and promote sustainability. The movement advocates the payment of a higher price to producers as well as higher social and environmental standards. (Wikipedia).

Farmers' Market ⁴

A common facility or area where several farmers or growers gather on a regular, recurring basis to sell a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and other locally-grown farm products directly to consumers. Related Term: **Certified Farmers Market** -Some states offer or require certification of farmers markets to ensure that the products sold are produced by the farmers themselves.

Farmland Preservation/Protection ¹

Land that produces our food and provides us with scenic open space, wildlife habitat and clean water is increasingly at risk from urban sprawl and rural subdivisions. According to a 1997 American Farmland Trust study, every state in the nation is sacrificing irreplaceable agricultural resources to urban sprawl. We are converting a total of 1 million acres a year, and while the quantity of top-quality agricultural land being lost varies from state to state, the process of conversion increases the pressures on agriculture even beyond the

acres that are actually taken out of production. Actions to reverse this trend are being taken on many levels. Tactics include focusing on policies related to property tax relief and protection from nuisance lawsuits for farmers, purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs, special agricultural districts where commercial agriculture is encouraged and protected, comprehensive land use planning, and farm-friendly zoning ordinances.

Food Circle ¹

A dynamic, community-based and regionally-integrated food systems concept/model/vision. In effect, it is a systems ecology. In contrast to current linear production-consumption systems, the food circle is a production-consumption-recycle model. A celebration of cycles, this model mirrors all natural systems and is based on the fact that all stable, biological and other systems function as closed cycles or circles, carefully preserving energy, nutrients, resources and the integrity of the whole.

The Food Commons

The Food Commons seeks to connect local and regional food system enterprises in a cooperative national federation that enhances their profitability and sustainability while creating and supporting a robust system of local community financing, ownership, management and accountability. www.thefoodcommons.org
The Food Commons has three integral components:

The Food Commons Trust, a non-profit, quasi-public entity to acquire and steward critical foodshed assets

The Food Commons Bank, a community-owned financial institution that provides capital and financial services to foodshed enterprises

The Food Commons Hub, a locally-owned, cooperatively integrated business enterprise that builds and manages foodshed-based physical infrastructure and facilitates the complex logistics of aggregation and distribution at different scales among all the moving parts of the system, and provides scale economies, business services, technical assistance and training to new small food businesses.

The Commons

The commons is a very old idea — that some forms of wealth belong to all of us, and that these community resources must be actively protected and managed for the good of all. The commons consists of natural resources such as air, oceans and wildlife as well as shared social creations such as libraries, public spaces, scientific research and creative works. Common assets are those parts of the commons that have a value in the market and which are appropriate to buy and sell. But in the commons, “value” can also be something intangible and not available for sale, such as the social satisfaction of belonging to a community and contributing to a shared goal.

A commons can also create economic value as efficiently as a market; examples include Wikipedia, and Craigslist The difference is that a commons usually does not convert its output into a marketable commodity. The conversion of commons into private property, termed **enclosure**, refers historically to the privatization of common grazing lands beginning in 15th Century England which impoverished many peasants. Enclosure entails not just the privatization of a resource, but also the introduction of money and market exchange as the prevailing principles for managing that resource.

Food Desert

“A geographic area that lacks convenient access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly lower income neighborhoods and communities.” (see Food Insecurity)

Food Hub

“A centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/ regionally produced food products.” (USDA Agricultural Marketing Service)

-Aggregation/Distribution - Wholesale Drop off point for multiple farmers and a pick up point for

distribution firms and customers that want to buy source-verified local and regional food

-Active Coordination - Hub business management team that actively coordinates supply chain logistics , including seeking market for producers, and coordinating efforts with distributors, processors, and buyers.

-Permanent Facilities - Provide the space and equipment for food to be stored, lightly processed, packed, palletized and possibly even sold under a Hub's regional label

Food insecurity ⁹

Food insecurity exists whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain. Food insecurity, as measured in the United States, refers to the social and economic problem of lack of food due to resource or other constraints, not voluntary fasting or dieting, or because of illness, or for other reasons... Food insecurity is experienced when there is (1) uncertainty about future food availability and access, (2) insufficiency in the amount and kind of food required for a healthy lifestyle, and/or (3) the need to use socially unacceptable ways to acquire food

Food Justice

- Identifies the significant structural inequalities that exist within our food system that prohibit the basic right of all people to food.
- Envisions a food system that is inclusive, community-led and participatory.
- Works to remove barriers that prevent equitable access to healthful food, land for growing food, and educational and financial resources that allow communities and individuals to make their own food choices.
- Ends the exploitation of people, land and the environment.

Food Miles ¹

The distance food travels from where it is grown or raised to where it is ultimately purchased by the consumer or end-user. Local food systems can reduce 'food miles' and transportation costs, offering significant energy savings. Consumers also benefit from fresher, better-tasting, and more nutritious food, while more food dollars stay within rural communities. Related terms: [100 Mile Diet](#)

Food Policy Councils (FPC)

Officially sanctioned bodies comprised of stakeholders from different elements of a state or local food system. Food policy councils allow collaborations between citizens and government officials to examine the operation of a local food system and provide ideas or recommendations for how it can be improved. They are considered a key aspect of community food security. ([OregonHunger.org](#))

Food System

A Food System includes the whole ecosystem from the biological to socioeconomic processes , from the infrastructure to the relationships involved in the growing, harvesting, processing , packaging, distribution, marketing, preparation, consumption, and disposal of food and food-related items. It also includes the inputs needed and outputs generated at each of these steps. A food system operates within and is influenced by social, political, economic and environmental contexts. It also requires human resources that provide labor, research and education.

Food System Assessment (FSA) ⁸

A comprehensive "picture" of the way a particular area grows, processes, distributes, consumes, and disposes/reuses its food. It documents the specific ways to strengthen the links between the economic, environmental, and social aspects of the food system." Adapted from [Garrett and Feenstra, 1999](#).

Food Systems Council (FSC)

A grassroots network focused on educating the public, coordinating non-profit efforts, and influencing government, commercial, and institutional practices and policies on food systems. They help the community to explore its own food system, assess what is possible, and build programs for change. "While FSCs share the same primary goal as FPCs, to examine the operation of a local food system and provide recommendations for how it can be improved, they are different from FPCs in that they are generally a coalition of grassroots groups and non-profit organizations addressing local, regional, or state food systems issues and are not official advisory bodies to city, county, or state governments" (WHY Food Security Learning Center)

Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty is defined as the right of peoples and sovereign states to democratically determine their own agricultural and food policies IAASTD Intergovernmental Plenary 2008

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their *right to define their own food and agriculture systems*. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers.

Food sovereignty prioritizes local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability. Food sovereignty promotes transparent trade that guarantees just income to all peoples and the rights of consumers to control their food and nutrition. It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations Nyéleni Declaration, Mali, February 2007

Communities achieve food sovereignty when they democratically control what they eat, how it is raised and by whom, and how profits in the food system are distributed. Food sovereignty encompasses the rights to food, adequate nutrition and resources necessary for each person to be able to feed him or herself with dignity and in culturally appropriate ways. Fulfilling these rights requires community action to overcome barriers imposed on some people because of gender, income, race, religion and class. Under conditions of food sovereignty, food is produced using sustainable practices and never used as a weapon or denied because of social conflict. (La Vía Campesina)

Foodshed

The area of land and sea within a region from which food is produced in order to deliver nutrition to a population base. A local or regional food system includes all the inputs, outputs and processes involved in feeding the population within a foodshed. Note that the foodshed concept does not obviate the goal or need to export or import food outside of a region. (Los Angeles Urban-Rural Roundtable, 2010)

Most often attributed to Arthur Getz in his 1991 Urban Foodsheds article in *Permaculture Activist* [Vol. VII, no. 3], uses the analogy of a watershed to describe "the area that is defined by a structure of supply." Getz used the image of a foodshed to answer the question of "where our food and regional food supply system works." Inherent in this concept, he emphasized, was "the suggestion of a need to protect a source, as well as the need to know and understand its specific geographic and ecological dimensions, condition and stability in order for it to be safeguarded and enhanced." 8 Cornell U. Library Guides- Glossary- Local & Regional Food Systems

Free Range 3

Free-range, free-roaming, and pastured imply that a product comes from an animal that was raised unconfined and free to roam. "Free-range" claims on beef and eggs are unregulated, but USDA requires that poultry have access to the outdoors (not necessarily actually spending time outdoors) for an undetermined period each day.

Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) 3

Plants and animals whose genetic make-up has been altered to exhibit traits that they would not normally have, like longer shelf-life, different color, or resistance to certain chemicals. In general, genes are taken (copied) from one organism that shows a desired trait and transferred into the genetic code of another organism. Genetic modification is currently allowed in conventional farming.

Global Food System 5

A concept developed around the vast influences of trade, globalization, labor and market competition in the way it effects the production, distribution, pricing and consumption of food worldwide.

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) 1

GAP approach aims at applying available knowledge to addressing environmental, economic and social sustainability dimensions for on-farm production and post-production processes, resulting in safe and quality food and non-food agricultural products. Based on generic sustainability principles, it aims at supporting locally developed optimal practices for a given production system based on a desired outcome, taking into account market demands and farmers constraints and incentives to apply practices.

Governance Network

Network governance constitutes a "distinct form of coordinating economic activity"^[2] which contrasts and competes with markets and hierarchies-As such, governance networks distinguish themselves from the hierarchical control of the state and the competitive regulation of the market in at least three ways A)

**In terms of the relationship between the actors, governance networks can be described as a "pluricentric governance system" as opposed to the "unicentric system of state rule and the multicentric system of market competition- In contrast to state rule and competitive market regulation, governance networks involve a large number of interdependent actors who interact in order to produce public purpose.

**In terms of decision-making, governance networks are based on negotiation rationality as opposed to the substantial rationality that governs state rule and the procedural rationality that governs market competition

Compliance is ensured through trust and political obligation which, over time, becomes sustained by self-constituted rules and norms

Grass Farming/Grass-based Farming 1

Grass-based production relies on pasture or rangeland to supply the protein and energy requirements of livestock. Grazing and forage feeding replace high grain diets, close confinement and feedlot-finishing during most or all of an animal's lifetime. The producer focuses on pasture plant and soil management, and proper stocking density and rotational grazing. Related terms: **Grass-fed; Pasture-based; Pasture-raised; Pastured poultry; Free-range; Intensive grazing**

Heirloom 3

Heirloom crop varieties, also called farmers' varieties or traditional varieties, have been developed by farmers through years of cultivation, selection, and seed saving, and passed down through generations. Generally speaking, heirlooms are varieties that have been in existence for a minimum of fifty years.

Heritage 3

A term applied to breeds of livestock that were bred over time to be well-adapted to local environmental conditions, withstand disease, and survive in harsh environmental conditions. Heritage breeds generally have slow growth rates and long productive lifespans outdoors, making them well-suited for grazing and pasturing.

High Tunnels

Also called high hoops or **hoop houses**. Temporary, covered (e.g. translucent plastic or polyethylene fabric) structures that extend the growing season. Constructed in the field in order to protect crops from the weather (rain, wind, cool or warm temperatures) and, in some cases, pests. High tunnels offer an intermediate level of environmental control—a growing system between row covers and greenhouses. In comparison to greenhouses, they are unheated, provide less climate control, and are less expensive (Source: eXtension.org)

Hydroponics

Growing vegetables and fruits (such as lettuce, tomatoes and cucumbers) in water with nutrients washing over the roots of the plants.

Industrialized Food System 5

A wide range of activities and disciplines in modern food production. From a consumer perspective, the industrialized food system might be equated with corporate farming. As such, it represents large-scale, vertically integrated food production businesses, seen as the source of a range of effects (some undesirable) on the environment, on food quality, and on society in general.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) 1

An ecologically based approach to pest (animal and weed) control that utilizes a multi-disciplinary knowledge of crop/pest relationships, establishment of acceptable economic thresholds for pest populations and constant field monitoring for potential problems. Management may include such practices as "the use of resistant varieties; crop rotation; cultural practices; optimal use of biological control organisms; certified seed; protective seed treatments; disease-free transplants or rootstock; timeliness of crop cultivation; improved timing of pesticide applications; and removal or 'plow down' of infested plant material.

Kitchen Incubator

A shared-use commercial kitchen where caterers, street cart vendors, farmers, and producers of specialty/gourmet food items can prepare their food products in a fully licensed and certified kitchen. The kitchens, often sponsored by an umbrella nonprofit organization, provide start-up businesses the opportunity to explore food production without the high cost of buying their own equipment or constructing their own building. Kitchen incubators usually offer technical assistance in food production as well as general business management skills, networking opportunities among entrepreneurs, and the opportunity to form shared services cooperatives for marketing, distribution, and supply purchasing. ([New Farm Options-University of Wisconsin Extension Service](#)). [Interactive map](#) of incubators in the US available from CulinaryIncubator.com.

Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) 1

A quantification of the level of energy and raw materials used as well as the solid, liquid and gaseous wastes produced at every stage of a product's life or process. LCA can be conducted for a whole process or for part of a process. Conducting an LCA can be complicated, therefore it is important to set boundaries for the study.

Local/Community Food System ¹

A community food system, also known as a local food system, is a collaborative effort to integrate agricultural production with food distribution to enhance the economic, environmental, and social well-being of a particular place (i.e. a neighborhood, city, county or region). One of the primary assumptions underlying the sustainable diet concept is that foods are produced, processed, and distributed as locally as possible. This approach supports a food system that preserves local farmland and fosters community economic viability, requires less energy for transportation, and offers consumers the freshest foods. Related terms: **Foodshed, Food Circle, Food Miles**

Locally-Grown ³

Food and other agricultural products that are produced, processed, and sold within a certain region, whether defined by distance, state border, or regional boundaries. The term is unregulated at the national level, meaning that each individual farmers market can define and regulate the term based on their own mission and circumstances.

Locavore²

A person who exclusively or primarily eats foods produced within a predetermined radius from his or her home.

100 Mile Diet

Eating food products produced within a 100-mile radius of where the consumer lives.

Organic Farming¹

A production system which avoids or largely excludes the use of synthetically compounded fertilizers, pesticides, growth regulators, and livestock feed additives. To the maximum extent feasible, organic farming systems rely upon crop rotations, crop residues, animal manures, legumes, green manures, off-farm organic wastes, mechanical cultivation, mineral-bearing rocks, and aspects of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity and tilth, to supply plant nutrients, and to control insects, weeds and other pests. Related

Terms: **Certified Organic**

Permaculture ¹

A contraction of "permanent agriculture," the word "permaculture" was coined by Australian Bill Mollison in the late 1970s. One of the many alternative agriculture systems described as sustainable, permaculture is "unique in its emphasis on design; that is, the location of each element in a landscape, and the evolution of landscape over time. The goal of permaculture is to produce an efficient, low-maintenance integration of plants, animals, people and structure... applied at the scale of a home garden, all the way through to a large farm.

Regional Food System

"An ideal regional food system describes a system in which as much food as possible to meet the population's food needs is produced, processed, distributed and purchased at multiple levels and scales within the region, resulting in maximum resilience, minimum importation, and significant economic and social return to all stakeholders in the region. This is known as "self-reliance" as opposed to "self-sufficiency" wherein everything consumed is supplied from within the target area." (Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, 2010)

Rural Communities ⁸

Places (incorporated or unincorporated) with fewer than 2,500 residents and open territory.

Social Capital

The idea is that social networks can be a valuable asset, enabling people to commit themselves to each other and common goals, knitting the social fabric necessary to build strong resilient communities. ([Wikipedia](#))

Social Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurial approaches to organize, create, and manage ventures to address social problems and make social change. Social entrepreneurship focuses on creating social capital, but need not be incompatible with making a profit. ([Wikipedia](#)). Learn more about social entrepreneurship at Cornell [Center for Transformative Action](#).

Slow Food

An international movement begun by Carlo Petrini in Italy seeking to preserve cultural cuisine, advocate for the consumption of wholesome, local foods, and to enjoy the food available within a short distance. The movement combats a global food system associated with “fast foods.” ([Slow Food USA website](#)).

Slow Money

An international movement to build local and national networks, and develop new financial products and services, dedicated to investing in small food enterprises and local food systems, connecting investors to their local economies and building the nurture capital industry. ([Slow Money Alliance](#))

Sustainable Agriculture ⁵

Integrates three main goals: environmental stewardship, farm profitability, and prosperous farming communities. In general, sustainable agriculture addresses the ecological, economic and social aspects of agriculture. To be sustainable, agriculture can operate only when the environment, its caretakers and surrounding communities are healthy.

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program (USDA)¹

SARE is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's primary means of studying and publicizing sustainable agriculture practices. Through a competitive grants program that works with teams of agencies, organizations, and farmers, more than 3000 projects have been implemented.

Value-Added Product ⁸

A raw agricultural product that has been modified or enhanced to be a product with a higher market value and/or a longer shelf life. Examples include fruits made into pies or jams, meats made into jerky, and tomatoes and peppers made into salsa.

Value chain

“Strings of companies or collaborating players who work together to satisfy market demands for specific products or services. Sustainable value chains emphasize long-term, significant economic return to all firms in a chain, particularly producers who follow production practices using the highest standards of environmental and community stewardship. In a value chain business arrangement, each actor in the chain must make a mental shift from simply “What is best for my firm and my firm now?” to “What can I do in my firm to maximize the economic, environmental and community benefit to all the members of this value chain?” A significant change often comes in the form of information sharing. In a value chain members need to share a great deal more business information with one another so that all can make better decisions that affect the group.” (www.valuechains.org)

Vine-Ripened/Tree-Ripened ³

Fruit that has been allowed to ripen on the vine or tree. Many fruits that are shipped long distances are

picked while still unripe and firm, and later treated with ethylene gas at the point of distribution to “ripen” and soften them.

Sources

1. USDA National Agriculture Library -<http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/terms/srb9902terms.shtml>
2. American Farmland Trust -<http://www.farmland.org/programs/localfood/farmlingo.asp>
3. USDA AMS Farmers Market Glossary of Terms -
<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5078261&acct=frmrdirpkt>
4. USDA Agricultural Marketing Service -<http://www.ams.usda.gov>
5. Why Food Security Learning Center Local & Regional Food Systems Glossary -
<http://www.whyhunger.org/programs/fslc/topics/local-a-regional-food-systems/glossary.html>
6. USDA Economic Research Service -<http://www.ers.usda.gov/>
7. Cohen, Boyd, *Sustainable Valley Entrepreneurial Ecosystems*, Business Strategy and the Environment, v.15, iss.1 2006
8. Cornell University Library Guides Glossary- Local and Regional Food Systems
<http://guides.library.cornell.edu/content.php?pid=84833&sid=645798#resilience>
9. Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure (2006)
Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT)