

FAIR FOOD: AN EDUCATORS' TOOLKIT

Alida Cantor, California Institute for Rural Studies

acantor@cirsinc.org

<http://www.cirsinc.org>

530-765-6555 x13

ABOUT “FAIR FOOD: FIELD TO TABLE”

“Fair Food: Field to Table” is a documentary promoting a more socially just food system in the U.S. by raising awareness on agricultural labor conditions and the growing movement for fair food.

Through the stories and voices of farmworkers, growers, businesses and fair food advocates, viewers learn about the harsh realities of farmworker conditions and, more importantly, the promise of improved farm labor practices.



The documentary is made up of three parts:

Part 1: The Farmworkers. The documentary begins with a glimpse into the current harsh reality of farmworker conditions in the U.S.

Part 2: The Growers. Next, viewers meet farmers around the country who are providing good labor conditions on their farms—and making a better living themselves by doing so.

Part 3: The Advocates. Finally, viewers hear from advocates and businesses on the forefront of this growing movement for fair food.

“Fair Food: Field to Table” is meant to be used as an educational tool. If you are a teacher, a student, a member of a community organization, or anyone interested in fair food systems, this documentary can help you explore the issues around social justice in agriculture with those around you. This educators’ toolkit gives some suggestions for how to use this documentary as an educational tool, along with further resources and a discussion guide. Feel free to print and use pages from the educators’ toolkit.

“Fair Food: Field to Table” was created by the California Institute for Rural Studies and Rick Nahmias Photography through a generous grant from the Columbia Foundation and additional funding from the Ben & Jerry’s Foundation and the Clif Bar Foundation.

Watch **FAIR FOOD: FIELD TO TABLE** and learn more at fairfoodproject.org

California Institute for Rural Studies and Rick Nahmias Photography, 2009

PRESENTATION GUIDE

Ways to use “Fair Food: Field to Table”

- **Share with your club**, community group, church group, or even with your family as a way of raising awareness and sparking a discussion on social justice in the food system.
- **Show it in class.** If you are a student, ask a professor teaching a class related to the topic if you can show it in class. If you are a teacher, hold a class session on fair trade, food systems, or sustainability, and show it as part of that class.
- **Use as part of a fundraiser** for a local cause related to farmworkers, food security, or sustainable food systems.

When planning a presentation...

- **Tie it in with other events**, such as “Local Food Week,” Thanksgiving, or Labor Day. If your organization or another group has an annual event related to food, social justice, sustainable agriculture, or labor, incorporate a screening of “Fair Food: Field to Table” as part of the event.
- **Invite a local farmer** and workers from a local farm with good labor practices to be part of your screening (talk to them ahead of time to make sure their farm is a good fit). Have some questions prepared to get the conversation rolling after the film. You may want to arrange to have a translator if your guests are more comfortable speaking in Spanish.
- **Advertise** before the event! Flyers, emails, local newspaper—make sure people know your event is happening.

At the presentation...

- **Be prepared.** Make sure you have your space reserved, a projector set up, speakers for the audio, adequate seating, snacks, and so on. If you’re well organized things will go more smoothly. Have other information such as fact sheets on hand for people who are interested.
- **Be informed.** Do some reading on the issues—immigration, U.S. agriculture, and domestic fair trade—and be prepared to answer questions. Print up a few fact sheets (in the Resources section of this document) to have on hand.
- **Encourage discussion.** Make sure to provide a format for people to share ideas and brainstorm strategies for action. Include extra time after the movie for people to talk about it. Don’t feel that you have to answer every question as the host—you can turn the questions back to the audience for a discussion.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What images did you find the most powerful?
- Did anything in the movie surprise you?
- What are some of the root causes of poor agricultural working conditions?
- Even though sustainability is often defined as being environmentally sound, economically viable, and socially equitable, social equity is often left behind in discussions of sustainability and sustainable food. Why do you think this is?
- When you buy food do you know how the workers who grew it were treated? Do you find it easy or difficult to get information about your food? Why?
- What do you see as the most promising way to make change in terms of improving farm labor conditions? Legislation, organizing and unionizing, consumer support? What are the pros and cons of each approach?
- How can we have food that is fair to workers and affordable to consumers?
- How can we support farmers with good labor conditions?
- Immigration policy is one of the major barriers to better farm labor conditions. How can we work towards an immigration system that meets the needs of workers, their families, and employers? What might this system look like?
- What do you see as the biggest barriers to a more fair food system?
- What do you see as the most promising opportunities?
- Where do you have power to make change? What might be some things you could do from where you are to get involved and support fair food?

FACTS ABOUT U.S. FARMWORKERS TODAY

Wages. There are 2-3 million farmworkers in the U.S. making an average of \$11,000 per year, well below the poverty line. Seasonal periods of un- and under-employment keep wages low. Most farmworkers are not eligible for or do not use social services or government benefits.

Health & safety. Agriculture is one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States and farmworkers suffer from high rates of occupational hazards including pesticide exposure, heat stress, and injuries related to equipment and ergonomics.

Legislation. Farmworkers have been excluded from key labor legislation. As a result, farmworkers do not have the right to overtime pay, minimum wage, or the right to unionize and collectively bargain with employers. While 16 is the minimum age for most occupations, in farm work it is 12.

Modern-day slavery. In Florida there have been seven cases of modern-day slavery involving over 1,000 agricultural workers since 1997.

RESOURCES ON U.S. AGRICULTURAL LABOR AND DOMESTIC FAIR TRADE

Organizations & Websites

Agricultural Justice Project: <http://www.agriculturaljusticeproject.org/>
Agricultural Worker Health Project: <http://www.agworkerhealth.org/>
Association of Farmworker Opportunity Programs: <http://www.afop.org/>
California Rural Legal Assistance: <http://www.crla.org>
Coalition for Immokalee Workers (CIW): <http://www.ciw-online.org/>
Domestic Fair Trade Association: <http://www.dftassociation.org/>
Farm Labor Organizing Committee: <http://www.floc.com/>
Farmworker Justice: <http://www.fwjjustice.org/>
Food Alliance: <http://www.foodalliance.org/>
Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org>
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy: <http://www.iatp.org>
Lideres Campesinas: <http://www.liderescampesinas.org/>
National Center for Farmworker Health: <http://www.ncfh.org/>
Northwest Treeplanters and Farmworkers United (PCUN): <http://www.pcun.org/>
Oxfam America: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org>
Real Food Challenge: <http://realfoodchallenge.org>
Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA: <http://www.rafiusa.org>
Student Action with Farmworkers: <http://www.saf-unite.org/>
Student Farmworker Alliance: <http://sfalliance.org>
The Farmworker Support Committee (CATA): <http://www.cata-farmworkers.org/>
United Farm Workers (UFW): <http://www.ufw.org/>
United Students for Fair Trade: <http://usft.org>
Western Center on Law and Poverty: <http://www.wclp.org>

Nonfiction

Daniel, Cletus (1981). *Bitter Harvest: A History of California Farmworkers*.
Guthman, Julie (2004). *Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California*.
López, Ann Aurelia (2007). *The Farmworkers' Journey*.
Matthiessen, Peter (1969). *Sal Si Puedes: Cesar Chavez and the New American Revolution*.
McWilliams, Carey (1939). *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California*.
Mooney, Patrick & Majka, Theo (1994). *Farmers' and Farm Workers' Movements*.
Oxfam America (2004). *Like Machines in the Field: Workers Without Rights in American Agriculture*.
Rothenberg, Daniel (1998). *With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today*.
Schlosser, Eric (2001). *Fast Food Nation*.
Wells, Miriam J. (1996) *Strawberry Fields: Politics, Class, and Work in California Agriculture*.
Wilkinson, Alec (1989) *Big Sugar: Seasons in the Cane Fields of Florida*.

Fiction

- Boyle, T.C. (1996). *The Tortilla Curtain*.
Moraga, Cherrie (1992). *Heroes and Saints & Other Plays*.
Steinbeck, John (1939). *The Grapes of Wrath*.
Viramontes, Helena Maria (1995). *Under the Feet of Jesus*.

Photography

- Bacon, David (2006). *Communities Without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration*.
Nahmias, Rick (2008). *The Migrant Project: Contemporary California Farm Workers*.
Street, Richard Steven (2004). *Photographing Farmworkers in California*.

Movies

- Harvest of Shame* (1960)
Migrant Farm Workers Speak Out (2006)
Si Se Puede (2009)
The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworkers' Struggle (1997)
The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon (2006)

Fact Sheets

- National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc: *Facts About Farmworkers*.
<http://www.ncfh.org/?pid=5>
Student Alliance with Farmworkers: *U.S. Farmworker Fact Sheet*.
<http://www.saf-unite.org/learn/factsheet.htm>
Student Farmworker Alliance: *Facts and Figures on Florida Farmworkers*.
<http://www.sfalliance.org/resources/09FactsFigures.pdf>