



Transforming the Way Americans Eat

Healthy, Affordable Food Produced in a Humane, Environmentally Sustainable Way

The last 40 years have seen parallel citizens' movements concerning the environment and, subsequently, food. Starting with consumers but ultimately involving top government officials, people around the globe have grown increasingly concerned about the effects of food and farming on health and the environment.

Just as all the Earth Days since 1970 have greatly increased interest in protecting the environment, Food Day will spark interest—from kindergartens to Congress—in improving the American diet and the ways that food is produced and marketed here and around the world.

Change is urgently needed to reduce the harms related to food. All too many marketers are encouraging children and adults to eat high-calorie sugary and salty diets that cause obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer, and accounting for more than 200,000 deaths annually. Factory farms and feedlots despoil the environment and harm cattle, pigs, and poultry. And limited access to affordable healthy food remains a problem for millions, while the age-old skill of cooking is dying a slow death.

Those problems demonstrate the urgent need to improve what farmers and manufacturers produce and how they produce it; what

supermarkets sell and restaurants serve; and what consumers grow, buy, and eat.

Millions of Americans are demanding change, starting with their own diets and extending to the way food is produced. That interest has been stoked by dedicated health and environmental activists; media exposés; legislators; advocates for protection of farm workers, humane treatment of animals, farm-policy reforms, and a President and First Lady who care deeply about children's health. The First Family, with the help of local school kids, even plants a vegetable garden on the White House lawn.

Building on that foundation, now is the time for a quantum leap in the public's understanding of the dramatic effects America's food system has on health, the environment, hunger, farm workers, and farm animals. Now is the time for citizens groups, governments at all levels, progressive farmers, and parts of the food industry to educate, organize, and legislate to overcome the powerful forces that retard progress. Food Day, celebrated nationally on October 24, 2011, will help accomplish that.

As in the Food Days sponsored by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) in 1975–77, Food Day 2011 will spur a multitude of activities around the country: cooking classes in elementary schools, campus-wide

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debates and symposia at universities, discussions at faith-based venues, newspaper ads sponsored by supermarkets, rallies in city parks, and legislative hearings, all accompanied by major local and national publicity. It will serve as an opportunity to educate the general public, involve thousands of people in local activities, and influence national food policies and corporate practices.

Overall, Food Day will catalyze greater effectiveness by the growing food movement.

While the event is called “Food Day,” that day will only be the culmination of a multi-month campaign. Also, many events, such as those at college and religious institutions (some of which celebrate World Food Day on October 16), will continue over the week or a weekend. Food Day will provide an annual high point for ongoing organizing and activism.

Food Day will build on the strength of concerned individuals, national and local organizations, and public officials who are striving to improve the American diet and food system. Food Day also should stimulate

the formation of new local groups and coalitions. The main Food Day office in Washington, DC, will organize national events and stimulate local ones by working with coordinators in towns nationwide.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a leading advocate for healthier diets and safer food, is coordinating Food Day. Other groups and individuals focused on agriculture, hunger, health, environment, and animal welfare serve as key advisors and cosponsors. A multitude of national, regional, and local organizations will take advantage of national Food Day to generate support for their own goals.

Funding comes from philanthropic foundations and generous donors. While encouraging supermarkets and producers of healthful foods to participate in Food Day, CSPI and Food Day do not accept industry (or government) funding.

To help make Food Day a success, visit www.FoodDay.org or write to FoodDay@cspinet.org.

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