IN THIS ISSUE
DUNCAN HILCHEY

The forefront of food systems policy and practice

Published online 22 September 2012

Copyright © 2012 by New Leaf Associates, Inc.

Though completely coincidental, this issue has a strong theme of food systems policy and practice. If we’d actually formally announced a special topic call on this subject, I don’t think we would have gotten a better set of submissions! In this issue we offer a collection of papers that provide both depth and breadth across a wide range of issues related to food system policy and practice: land use, farm viability, food assistance, urban agriculture, public engagement, and others.

In Exploring Food System Policy: A Survey of Food Policy Councils in the United States, Allyson Scherb, Anne Palmer, Shannon Frattaroli, and Keshia Pollack report the results of a survey of a sample of food policy councils and find the need for more rigorous evaluation of the processes, outcomes, and impacts of their work. Nathan McClintock, Heather Wooten, and Alethea (Harper) Brown provide a highly detailed account of one food policy council’s efforts in Toward a Food Policy “First Step” in Oakland, California: A Food Policy Council’s Efforts To Promote Urban Agriculture Zoning. Nathaniel Roth, James Thorne, Robert Johnston, James Quinn, and Michael McCoy utilize urban growth modeling to identify the farmland loss and economic impact of sprawl on the agriculture community near Fresno, California, in Modeling Impacts to Agricultural Revenue and Government Service Costs from Urban Growth. Lydia Oberholtzer, Carolyn Dimitri, and Gus Schumacher identify the types of farmers’ markets and vendors most likely to benefit from federal nutrition benefit and incentive usage in Linking Farmers, Healthy Foods, and Underserved Consumers: Exploring the Impact of Nutrition Incentive Programs on Farmers and Farmers’ Markets. Howard Rosing challenges conventional wisdom about town-gown relationships in Demystifying the Local: Considerations for Higher Education Engagement with Community Food Systems. Sima Patel and Rod MacRae wrap up a three-part series of papers on Toronto’s urban food productive capacity with Community Supported Agriculture in the City: The Case of Toronto.

In More Than Counting Beans: Adapting USDA Data Collection Practices To Track Marketing Channel Diversification, Alan R. Hunt and Gary Matteson offer recommendations for changes to the quinquennial Census of Agriculture to better reflect emerging farming trends and the needs of data analysts. Kristine Hammel and
Thorsten Arnold explore the challenges and opportunities in revitalizing a still productive, traditional European farming landscape in Understanding the Loss of Traditional Agricultural Systems: A Case Study of Orchard Meadows in Germany. Cathy Rozel Farnworth and Mette Vaarst provide a remarkable case study of the complex and often frustrating relationships of researchers and their intended beneficiaries in Making It Too Simple? Researchers, Recommendations, and NGOs in the Sundarhans, Indian West Bengal. Finally, wrapping up this issue’s theme on food and agriculture policy is Safe Re-use Practices in Wastewater-Irrigated Urban Vegetable Farming in Ghana, by Bernard Keraita, Robert C. Abaidoo, Ines Beernaerts, Sasha Koo-Oshima, Philip Amoah, Pay Drechsel, and Flemming Konradsen, who provide a thorough list of research-based best practices for producers using wastewater irrigation.