

IN THIS ISSUE
 DUNCAN HILCHEY

The wellbeing of its children: The ultimate expression of a nation's wealth



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It seems like just yesterday that I attended a very early farm-to-school workshop in the mid-'90s at a national conference. I don't remember the name of the conference or where it took place, but I vividly recall the animated discourse that included expressions of frustration in navigating the National School Lunch and Department of Defense's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program protocols. I also heard the kernels of clever strategy being formulated in a handful of schools around the country to get fresh local farm products into their cafeterias. Back in those early days, things sure were complicated—but also exciting.

The U.S. has come a long way since then. With federal and foundation support, the National Farm to School Network is thriving, and nearly half of all U.S. schools purchase at least small amounts of local farm products. The U.S. is also sprouting farm-to-college, farm-to-prison, farm-to-hospital, and now farm-to-childcare programs. This 20-year trend in direct wholesaling to sympathetic local institutions was a logical maturation of the food movement that began with the resurgence of farmers markets in the late 1970s and the advent of community supported agriculture operations (CSAs) in the 1980s. And one might argue that food hubs were a natural next response to the challenges of meeting the needs of institutions—that is, the small-scale wholesaling established by intrepid farm-to-school organizers.

On our cover: Zariah enjoys a morning snack of local cantaloupe at the Cary Towne KinderCare childcare center in Cary, North Carolina. This center is joining many other providers from around the country enrolling in farm to early care and education programs to help connect low-income families with sources of fresh, local foods. This center committed to feeding children three or more local food items a week through the growing season, exposing children to a variety of new fruits and vegetables while also investing in local farmers and distributors. See the article in this issue, "Farm to Childcare: An Analysis of Social and Economic Values in Local Food Systems," by Jacob C. Rutz, J. Dara Bloom, Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, and Chris Gunter, at <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2018.083.004>.

Photo credit: Jacob C. Rutz; used with permission.

The cover of this issue (courtesy of Jacob Rutz at North Carolina State University) reflects not only the youth and promise of the farm-to-institution movement, but also its growing diversity. Alas, if the health and wellbeing of children is a key indicator of any nation's real wealth, then many countries (and especially the United States) have a long way to go. The U.S. has the highest rate of childhood hunger of any Global North nation outside of Eastern Europe.¹ Farm-to-childcare is a way to push increased access to fresh, healthy food down the age scale, where it has the chance to influence food choices for life. While not without its challenges, it is an exciting new opportunity in the supply chain that parents and both the public and private sectors should be looking at. It has the potential to become another critical piece in a resilient community food system infrastructure that is emerging out of growing collaborations among local activists, nonprofits and Cooperative Extension, local government, and researchers and educators in higher education.

As always, we offer a fresh crop of columns in this issue. In *Dignity and Devastation in Vermont's Dairy Industry*, **Teresa Mares** delves into the new Milk with Dignity program in which dairy farmers receive a premium for their fair treatment of migrant employees.

Kate Clancy collaborates with **Kathryn Ruhf** in encouraging us to consider aggregating our local efforts into strong regional collaborations in *New Thinking on "Regional."* And in his Economic Pamphleteer column, *The Battle for the Future of Food*, **John Ikerd** makes a strong case for agroecology as the best antidote to global agriculture industrialization.

Next, in her *Voice from the Grassroots* story, *Community Kitchen Freezing and Vacuum Packaging*, **Anna Dawson** shares her decades-long effort to produce local frozen meals from the community, for the community. We hope to publish many more "voices" in coming issues. Learn more about the Voices from the Grassroots series on our website.²

Our first open-call paper is *Farm to Childcare: An Analysis of Social and Economic Values in Local Food Systems* by **Jacob C. Rutz, J. Dara Bloom, Michelle Schroeder-Moreno, and Chris Gunter**, who explore some of the tensions between the values and economic realities of this new short supply chain.

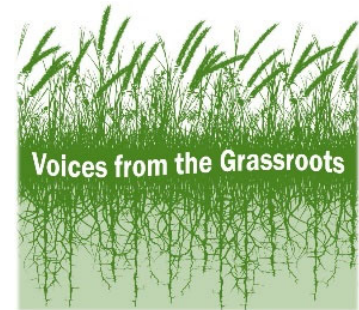
Finding that food hubs need to be financially solvent before they can fully address community food security, **Lesli Hoey, Lilly Fink Shapiro, and Noel Bielaczyc** offer wise advice in *"Put Your Own Mask on Before Helping Someone Else": The Capacity of Food Hubs to Build Equitable Food Access*.

Continuing our mini-theme of short supply chains, **Jonathan Watson, Danielle Treadwell, and Ray Bucklin** explore the financial challenges and opportunities in a large-scale, districtwide farm-to-school program in *Economic Analysis of Local Food Procurement in Southwest Florida's Farm-to-School Programs*.

Next, *Farm Direct at Five Years: An Early Assessment of Oregon's Farm-Focused Cottage Food Law* by **Lauren Gwin, Christy Anderson Brekken, and Lindsay Trant** provides us with a candid glimpse into the efficacy of a state initiative to foster simultaneously food entrepreneurship and food safety.

Switching now from supply chains to more food policy-oriented papers in our fall issue, **Jared McGuirt, Stephanie Jilcott Pitts, Rebecca Seguin, Margaret Bentley, Molly DeMarco, and Alice Ammerman** explore the perceived feasibility of CSA subsidies in *Perspectives on a Local Food Access and Nutrition Education Program from Cooperative Extension Nutrition Educators*.

In *Toward a Community Impact Assessment for Food Policy Councils: Identifying Potential Impact Domains*, **Larissa Calancie, Kristen Cooksey-Stowers, Anne Palmer, Natasha Frost, Holly Calhoun, Abbey Piner, and Karen Webb** proffer a useful approach to classifying the impacts of food policy councils.



¹ <https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/1626-first-global-estimates-of-food-insecurity-among-households-with-children.html>

² <https://www.foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/grassroots>

Next, we have two papers presenting tools for measuring progress in the good food movement. First, **Jairus Rossi, Timothy Woods, and Alison Davis** present *The Local Food System Vitality Index: A Pilot Analysis to Demonstrate a Process for Measuring System Performance and Development*. This is followed by another prototype index presented in *The Progressive Agriculture Index: Assessing the Advancement of Agri-food Systems*, by **Maizy Ludden, Rick Welsh, Evan Weissman, Duncan Hilchey, Gil Gillespie, and Amy Guptill**.

Our final open-call paper, *Cultivating Successful Student Farms through Site Selection and Design* by **Rebekah VanWieren** provides insights into locating and developing a successful student farm.


Finally, in this issue we catch up on a backlog of book reviews:

Corey Lee Wrenn reviews *Building Nature's Market: The Business and Politics of Natural Foods* by Laura J. Miller. **Matt Comi** reviews *Agri-Environmental Governance as an Assemblage: Multiplicity, Power, and Transformation* by Jérémie Forney, Chris Rosin, and Hugh Campbell.

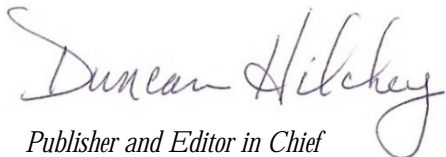
Marianna Siegmund-Schultze reviews *Beginning to End Hunger: Food and the Environment in Belo Horizonte, Brazil, and Beyond*, by M. Jahi Chappell. **Christine Porter** reviews *Food Justice in US and Global Contexts: Bringing Theory and Practice Together*, edited by Ian Werkheiser and Zachary Piso.

Renee Brooks Catacalos reviews *Stand Together or Starve Alone: Unity and Chaos in the U.S. Food Movement*, by Mark Winne. **Aaryn Wilson** reviews *Catfish Dream: Ed Scott's Fight for His Family Farm and Racial Justice in the Mississippi Delta*, by Julian Rankin. And finally, **Carrie Scrufari** reviews *Knowing Where It Comes From: Labeling Traditional Foods to Compete in a Global Market*, by Fabio Parasecoli.

We are pleased to announce that JAFSCD is now listed in the **Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)**, a mostly volunteer organization that thoroughly vets open access journals and only includes nonpredatory publications in its listing (<https://doaj.org>). This is a great endorsement of our publication policies and practices, and is good news for our readers, authors, and especially our shareholding libraries, which consult the DOAJ to ensure their support goes to reputable publications.

As this is the holiday season, the staff of JAFSCD wish our readers, authors, columnists, reviewers, advisors, partners, and shareholding organizations safe travel and good times with friends and family. 

With appreciation,



Publisher and Editor in Chief