



Photo credit: Washington Area Spark

## Farm Justice: Food First's Newest Analysis Serves Rural Communities

Often lost in the conversations and strategies of the food justice movement in the US are the causes of the growing crisis in US agriculture and the structural changes that will transform our food system for both urban *and* rural communities. So Food First is excited to announce our newest analysis which explores the role of *farm justice* as a necessary pillar to food justice and food sovereignty.

Currently a working definition, *farm justice* is a call for social and economic equity grounded in agrarian justice. Parity—an economic relation in which farm families receive a fair income that is indexed to their production costs and not dictated by the ‘free market,’ ensuring a dignified, rural livelihood without destroying the land or exploiting people. Farm justice prevents capitalist overproduction and boom-bust cycles in agriculture, and provides incentives for ecologically sound production that does not pass off the costs of environmental damages on to society. It is not a social welfare program, but a form of market management to ensure distributive economic justice for farmers and consumers.

Farm justice promotes radical social inclusion and equity in agriculture for women, immigrants, people of color, and young people, while producing healthy food for all. It pushes back against social, political and economic urban bias and promotes public investment in the countryside to secure the health, education, and wellbeing of rural communities. With farm justice, the land and the wealth it produces belongs to the women and men in this world who work the land, not to the banks, financial institutions, or agrifood monopolies.

In one of our recent pieces, *If a Farm Bill Crashes in the Woods, Does Anybody Hear It?* Iowa farm leader, George Naylor provides us with vital clarity on the emerging agricultural crisis, the politics behind it, and the need for a *farm justice* approach

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INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND  
DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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Food First is a “peoples’ think tank” and education-for-action center. Our work highlights the root causes and solutions to hunger and poverty, with a commitment to fighting racism and establishing food as a fundamental human right.

that serves the needs of rural and urban communities, not the greed of corporations. For grassroots social movements, our goal should be to build strategies and policies which correct the “imbalances of economic power” while uniting together to create systemic change.

Take a look at our newest Backgrounder, *Parity and Farm Justice: Recipe for a Resilient Food System*, to learn more about *Farm Justice!*

## After 40 Years, It Was Due Time for a Sabbatical: A Letter from Our Executive Director

In ancient times, farmers were encouraged to fallow their fields on the seventh year. This “sabbatical” let the land rest and regenerate nutrients, and helped ensure the land’s long-term sustainability. Heading towards my thirteenth year as Executive Director at Food First, Hank Herrera of our board of directors suggested it was time for me to rest and regenerate, not for a year, but for four months.



Photo Credit: Leonor Hurtado

On January 1, 2018, after 40 years of work in non-profit service, I set off on my very first sabbatical!

My wife Leonor and I cashed in our airline miles and flew eastward. I turned in the final manuscript of my upcoming book *How Can We Feed the World Without Destroying It*, and headed for Lisbon. There we ate some of Portugal’s famed seafood and enjoyed listening to *fado* music in the neighborhood bars. After staying in Lisbon for four days, we headed to Casablanca. From there, we traveled along the coast where I really recharged, as we enjoyed long days on the beach, learned about

Moroccan culture, and surfed some of Morocco’s most famous point breaks. While on the coast of Morocco, we were also visited by two of Food First’s former interns, Tasnim Elboute, who is Moroccan-American, and Ilja Van Lammeren, from the Netherlands.

We returned to the US in mid-March. While gone, I lost my best friend, Manolo Moran, to cancer. I’d called him from Morocco when he went into the emergency room for the last time and we were able to say our good-byes. He was a *campesino* from Puebla, Mexico who, as an adult, had managed to finish high school and graduate from Cornell Agricultural College in the US. We became friends when I worked in Mexico on a rural development project in the 1970s. He taught me so much about peasant farming and life in the *campo*. We worked together for two decades with the *Campesino a Campesino Movement*. His legacy lives on in the movement, the countryside, and in the hearts of many, many farmers. *¡Hasta siempre, Manolo!*

The time off allowed me a lot of reflection on the work, on Food First, and the food movement. I’m excited about the role the food system and the food movement can play in transforming our societies. Hope—that key nutrient in our growing movement for justice, equity, and sustainability—has been renewed.

## Lending Food First’s Expertise to Food Security Educational Program

For the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row Food First’s Director of Development, Alyshia Silva, will add her expertise to develop the School of International Training’s food and agriculture program, *Rethinking Food Security: Agriculture, People, and Politics*.

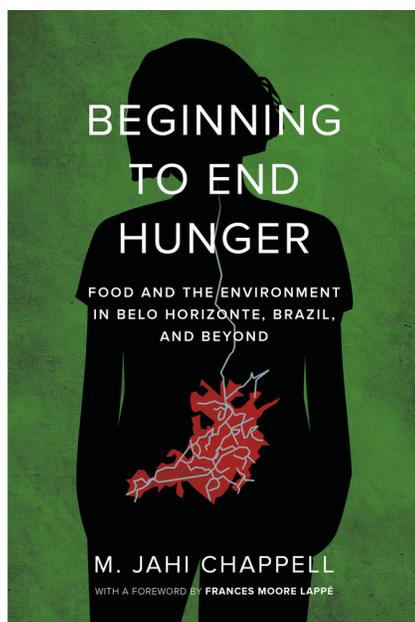
Food First is helping to build a curriculum that exposes students to political and economic theory while introducing them to on-the-ground organizing being led by farmers and farmworkers. The curriculum challenges mainstream narratives on poverty and hunger, while ensuring that those most affected by

hunger are telling their own stories and solutions to the next generation of farmers and activists.

For two weeks in the fall of 2018, Food First will host these students to introduce them to the California and US landscapes of food and agriculture and the deep political organizing that is being led by workers, farmers, and people of color. From there, students will spend the remainder of their semester abroad learning directly from smallholder farmers in Malawi, food sovereignty activists in Ecuador, and food security and trade regulation specialists in Italy.

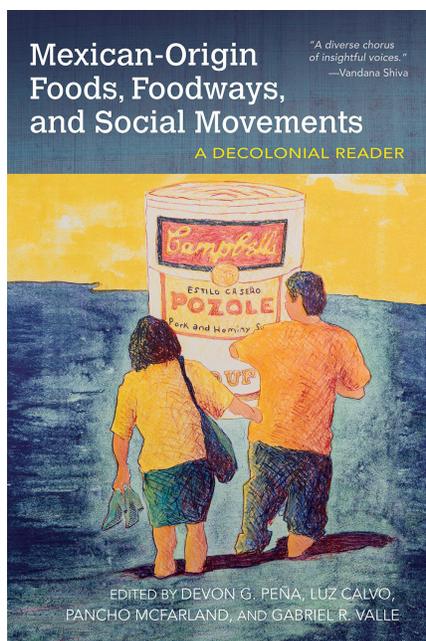
## Holistic Food Security Policies Show Hope for Ending Global Hunger

In January 2018, Food First Fellow, Jahi Chappell published his first book, *Beginning to End Hunger*. With a foreword by Food First co-founder Frances Moore Lappé, *Beginning to End Hunger* presents the story of Belo Horizonte, home to one of the world's most successful city food security programs. Going beyond merely an in-depth case study, *Beginning to End Hunger* shows the importance of holistic approaches to food security, offers ideas on how to design successful policies to end hunger, and lays out strategies for how to make policy change happen towards ending hunger, everywhere.



## Connecting Food, Resilience, and Social Movements of Mesoamerican People

Longtime board member Devon G. Peña's newest book, *Mexican-Origin Foods, Foodways, and Social Movements* weaves the voices of indigenous farmers, foodworkers, organizers, chefs, and gardeners to amplify the deep power and resilience of Mesoamerican people.



Broken into three parts, “Theorizing,” “Witnessing,” and “Organizing,” this anthology “explores the origins and bioregional diversity of the food, cuisines, and foodways of the Mexican-origin people in the United States.” Through the framework of the Decolonial Food Movement, Devon and his co-editors have created a resource that broadens and deepens grassroots struggles to end violence against Mexican-origin people, rejects socially and environmentally destructive agriculture, and embraces Indigenous agroecological and permaculture practices that cultivate resilient ecosystems.

We're also excited to share that board member Rosalinda Guillen, farmworker organizer and Executive Director of *Community to Community Development*, is also featured in this anthology. Rosalinda connects food sovereignty to immigration reform, workers' rights,

and women's autonomy; she also examines the solidarity economy through worker-run cooperatives and how they form a participatory direct democracy.

## The Gender Gap, Patriarchy, and Agriculture in Eastern Africa

Since early 2017, Food First Fellow, Haroon Akram-Lodhi, professor of International Development Studies, has been busy investigating the role that the gender gap plays in agricultural productivity in Eastern Africa.

What has emerged thus far in his research is that the gender gap in agricultural productivity in Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda is driven by women's disproportionate responsibilities to undertake unpaid care and domestic work within the household, provide unpaid contributing labor on their husbands' plots of land, and provide the cash necessary to meet household needs. All of these reduce the amount of time that women can devote to their plots of land, with implications for the productivity of those plots and thus the food security of their children. The research has also found out that in too many instances these responsibilities are enforced through the use of gender-based violence. Gender-based violence cuts agricultural productivity directly by reducing women's labor supply to work on their plots, as well as discouraging saving and investment by women. He has found that patriarchal social norms and values are the underlying cause of the gender gap in agricultural productivity.

## How does Farming Fit into Urban Form?

That question was posed to Director of Development, Alyshia Silva on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup>. Sitting alongside urban farmers and economic and racial justice advocates at UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design's panel, *Edible Urbanisms*, Alyshia examined the role of food justice and food sovereignty in the future of our cities.

Alyshia spoke to access to land as a core tenant to a more just food system within our cities while also emphasizing that hunger and poverty cannot be treated as technical problems. They are caused by larger political and economic structures that create inequality, and much like our global industrial food system, urban food systems must examine and actively interrogate systems of oppression. Heeding the words of longtime food justice and Oakland-based advocate, Aunti Frances, founder of the Self-Help Hunger Program, Alyshia highlighted the importance of “public land for public good.” Not only is land critical to growing our food, developing affordable housing, and building the schools that we need, but it should be seen as “a critical organizing space that brings community members together to become politically active and informed.”

## Food, Co-ops, Capitalism

Food First’s Eric Holt-Giménez gave the keynote address at the Consumer

Cooperative Management Association conference in Portland, Oregon on June 2nd. Eric discussed the different histories of the co-op movement and how food co-ops and capitalism emerged together. During his talk, he emphasized how workers and communities of color used co-ops as not only tools for survival, but as “radical public spheres” that could “rebuild the social relationships” destroyed by capitalism and racism.

Today, co-ops which prioritize social and economic democracy, equity and radical social inclusion have the potential to help build a powerful movement. Similar to the food movement, if the co-op movement can reach out to the farmers, farmworkers, and food workers throughout the food system, it may be the catalyst to bring us together to not only transform the food system, but the capitalist system in which it is embedded.

Read Eric’s latest publication on the role of cooperatives at [foodfirst.org/food-coops-capitalism](http://foodfirst.org/food-coops-capitalism).

## Food First Will Be on the Ground in Puerto Rico

In the last week of June, Food First will be going to Puerto Rico to join farmers, activists, and other organizations in the ongoing agroecological reconstruction process underway on the island. Food First’s Executive Director, Eric Holt-Giménez and Food First Fellow, Miguel Altieri, will be giving a field-based workshop for farmers and activists on resiliency and agroecology. Food First will be coordinating this course with *Organización Boricúa de Agricultura Ecológica*, a Puerto Rican organization dedicated to the spread of agroecology.



Photo Credit: Jesús Vázquez

## How Can You Help?

- **Become a monthly Sustainer!** Your support will provide consistent income so Food First can focus on supporting grassroots movements transforming our food system and beyond. Donating as a little as \$10 a month will make a huge difference! See [www.foodfirst.org/pledgetojoin](http://www.foodfirst.org/pledgetojoin).
- **Make a one-time gift!** As an independent think tank, we don’t take a penny from governments or corporations. Consider making a tax-deductible donation today. See [www.foodfirst.org/support](http://www.foodfirst.org/support).
- **Invite Food First to speak!** Invite A Foodie’s Guide to Capitalism author Eric Holt-Giménez to speak in your community! Please contact Martha Katigbak-Fernandez at [marthak@foodfirst.org](mailto:marthak@foodfirst.org) for more information.
- **Share this work!** Most importantly, share this grassroots support work with your friends, family, and colleagues. Circulating Food First’s materials is critical to creating change from the ground up!

## Ensure Change-Making Work Today for the Rest of Your Life and Beyond!

1. Naming Food First in your will
2. Giving appreciated assets, such as stock and bonds
3. Giving a life insurance policy
4. Donating to our Pooled Income Fund
5. Creating a Charitable Remainder Trust
6. Donating part of your IRA or qualified retirement plan



See [www.foodfirst.org/livinglegacy](http://www.foodfirst.org/livinglegacy) for more details. For a copy of our latest federal 990, go to <https://foodfirst.org/donor-information-990>.