



2018 Annual Report: Your Impact

Food First members, donors, friends and colleagues:

You helped Food First in 2018 make a major impact in ending the injustices that cause hunger.

Because of you, Food First has been able to publish and share our research and analysis to support farmers, organizers, and food activists fighting to bring justice to the food system from the ground up. Since 1975, supporters like you have provided free and open-access resources that explain the root causes of why people go hungry in a world of plenty while informing the strategies and actions of the growing food movement.

Food First collaborated with social movements to create publications that can be used as on-the-ground educational tools. These tools amplify the knowledge and actions of frontline communities, farmers, and organizers—the real experts in social change—to shed light on the injustices that cause hunger and bring forth solutions to a food system that treats food as a weapon, squeezes farmers, exploits workers, and harms communities of color.

A deeply informed and broadly-based social movement is what it will take to transform our food system from the ground up. Together, we know that we can change everything.

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INSTITUTE FOR FOOD AND
DEVELOPMENT POLICY

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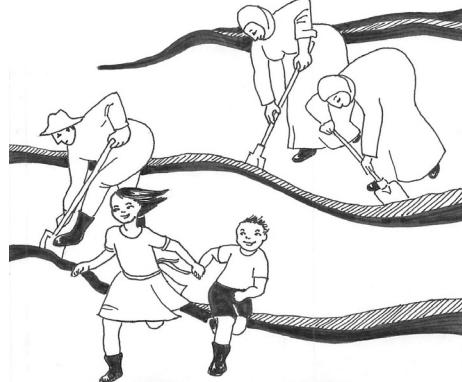
Food First is a “peoples’ think tank” and education-for-action center. Our work highlights the root causes and solutions to hunger and poverty, with a commitment to fighting racism and establishing food as a fundamental human right.

Research for the People and Analysis to Inform Movements

Changing the National Narrative on Food Waste and Publishing to Support Frontline Communities

In August 2018, you helped Food First support community-supported agriculture (CSA). We worked with Phat Beets, a grassroots food justice organization in Oakland, California to reveal the contradictions of the “ugly produce” movement in *The Ugly Truth of Ugly Produce*. We uncovered how companies like Imperfect Produce, who brand themselves as a CSA and a solution to food waste, do not actually solve food waste, but instead profit from its root cause—overproduction. Conscious consumers who want to fight food waste flock to this hungry start-up posing as a CSA, even while the company sources its produce from large, industrial growers who are overproducing food. As CSAs, like Phat Beets, around the country lose members to these new businesses, the small farmers who depend on local CSAs lose as well. Together with Phat Beets, we showed that food waste can only be solved at the source by politically changing how our food system causes chronic overproduction.

Since we published that article, not only has Phat Beets regained members for its CSA, but Food First’s analysis has made its way throughout the nation and is reshaping the discourse around food waste. Media outlets from Civil Eats to the New Republic to the Atlantic and more have sought input and analysis from Food First’s experts in order to reevaluate how we understand food waste, and thus how we can begin to solve it. We have been thrilled at the impact of this collaboration with our partners in the food movement.



Together with multiple other food justice and community-based organizations, we have taken further action by demanding that Imperfect Produce commit to a community benefits agreement to mitigate and reverse their effects on local food systems. This is how we combine research and analysis with action to support grassroots organizations and frontline activists.

Breaking Down Racism in the Food System

Two of Food First’s Backgrounders linked the relationship between capitalism and racism in our food system. *Overcoming the Barrier of Racism in Our Capitalist Food System* showed how racism is foundational to our food system. The piece argued that in order for a just and equitable food system to emerge, we must dismantle racism not only in the food system, but also in our food movements.

Our fall Backgrounder, *Immigration and the Food System* demonstrated how capitalism, racism, and immigration converge together as the main pillars of injustice in our food system. Author Tomas Madrigal described the ways migrant farmworkers are resisting the unjust immigration system and showed us how their knowledge and skills make an alternative food system possible. Madrigal makes the case that if we are invested in the fight for justice in our food system, we must defend immigrant rights in the food justice movement.

Bringing Our Food, Farm, and Climate Movements Together in the Green New Deal

In December, Food First released a critical article, *The Green New Deal: Fulcrum for the farm and food movement* calling on legislators to work with farmers, frontline communities, and the food move-

ment to implement the necessary structural reforms to our food system that would reverse climate change *and* equitably transition our society to a sustainable economy. We know that to avert climate change, we must transform our food system now.

In this piece, we made the case that the Green New Deal offers the first real significant political opportunity in decades to move beyond the corporate Farm Bill and fundamentally change our food system. But to ensure that we receive the Green New Deal that we all desire and deserve, the food, farm, and climate movements must join forces in order to build the political power necessary to change everything. Understanding how our movements are interconnected is the first step towards deeper political action to take on our food system *and* climate challenges.

Supporting Agroecology by Revealing Corporate Power Behind “Climate-smart Agriculture”

Because of you, we were able to publish a cutting-edge policy brief *What’s Smart About Climate-smart Agriculture?* Author and researcher Marcus Taylor shows how climate-smart agriculture, which is supported by major international institutions such as the FAO, World Bank, and many more, is not what it appears upon closer inspection.

Taylor’s work details how climate-smart agriculture supports corporate interests

and industry instead of sustainable agriculture or small farmers practicing agroecology. In order to support climate-friendly and sustainable agriculture, policymakers must look to measures that don’t support the business-as-usual corporate agenda of industrial agriculture disguised with environmentally-friendly language such as “Climate-smart.” Instead, policymakers must respond to social movements and small farmers that have anchored their “climate-wise” visions of the future of farming with food sovereignty and agroecology.

Helping Build Thriving Rural Communities with Farm Justice

You made it possible for farmers and grassroots activists to come together and uncover the growing crisis in agriculture with our newest series that supports urban and rural communities and the farmers we all rely upon. Iowa farmers George and Patti Naylor, along with Food First Fellow and Iowan Ahna Kruzic, showed us how we can work towards an equitable farm and sustainable food system in *Parity and Farm Justice: Recipe for a Resilient Food System*.

Where the Farm Bill fails, parity *and* farm justice will deliver. Parity, which ensures fair prices for farmers, would help end chronic overproduction and save the livelihood of farmers and their communities. Parity could make it possible for many conventional farmers to turn towards sustainable agriculture and would greatly weaken the power that agrifood monopolies hold over our food. Parity is absolutely essential for building an equitable, sustainable, and sovereign food system that works for all of us—farmers, workers, and their communities in the US *and* abroad. If the food movement stands behind family farmers, we can achieve farm justice and build a resilient, humane food system that works for us all.

Joining with Grassroots Movements to Transform Our Food System

Your support made it possible for us to join with farmers, organizers, and activists around the country and the world to share knowledge, build community, and strategize to strengthen our movements for a just food system.



Building Resiliency and Sovereignty in Puerto Rico

Eight months after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, Food First’s Executive Director Eric Holt-Giménez along with Food First Fellows Leonor Hurtado and Miguel Altieri, were invited to the archipelago by *Organizacion Boricua* to hold a series of workshops on agroecological resistance and reconstruction. During these workshops, we spoke to conventional farmers, organic farmers, permaculturists, agroecologists, students, and activists. Combining technical skills and political education, these workshops are a key part in building food sovereignty in the face of disaster capitalism and US colonialism.

Connecting Our Movements Internationally

This past October, Food First joined with food movement activists across Australia and linked together our struggles for a better food system. As part of the “Food for Thought and Action Series,” organized by activist-writer and Food First Fellow Eva Perroni, Food First took part in roundtables, community forums, lectures, and other events. During the two-week series, we engaged in discussions on the role of global capitalism in the crises facing agriculture and our food system. Together with food activists, farmers, and indigenous peoples, we developed strategies for building a strong, united food movement that could reconstruct a public sphere and dismantle patriarchy and white supremacy. These were lively debates that are vital for igniting the ideas and tactics to transform our food system into one that is equitable and sustainable.



Forging Food Sovereignty in the US

This past October, we were at US Food Sovereignty Alliance's bi-annual Assembly in Bellingham, WA. While there, we joined 140 US organizations and international allies committed to ending hunger, rebuilding our local economies, and democratizing our food system. Assemblies such as these are vital public spaces for grassroots organizers, activists, and sup-

port organizations to build collective political power and to begin imagining a food system in which people and communities can determine how their food is produced, distributed, and consumed.

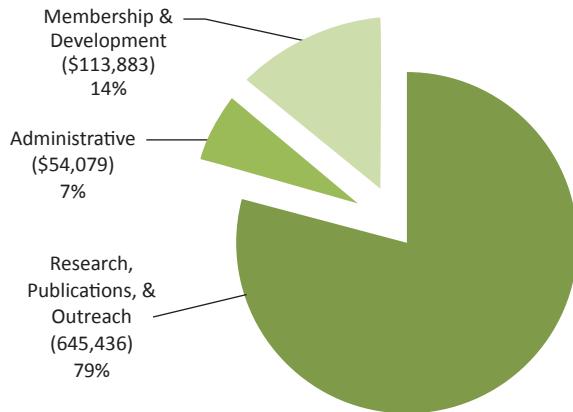
Developing Tools and Solutions with Future Farmers and Activists

Food First led its 6th semester of *Rethinking Food Security: Agriculture, People, and Politics*. Through this program, Food First

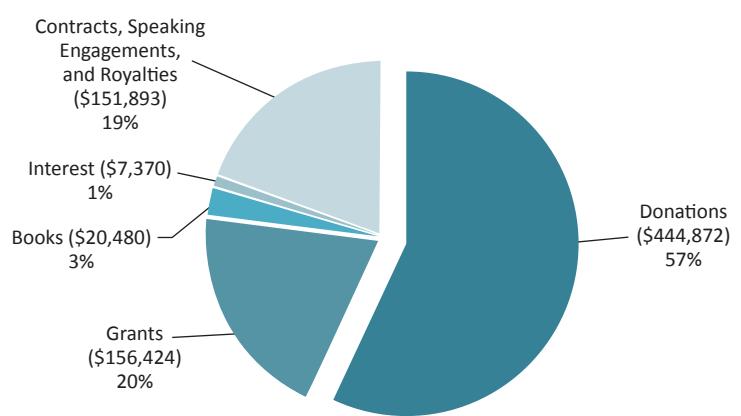
connects youth with frontline community organizers and farmers throughout parts of California to better understand our local and global food system and explore solutions to its most pressing problems. This is how we plant the seeds of food justice and food sovereignty for the future. After traveling throughout California, students travel on to Ecuador, followed by Malawi and then Italy to see how these problems unfold in the global context.

Fiscal Year 2017-2018

Expense Total \$813,398



Revenue Total \$781,039



A Note to Our Donors

Food First currently faces a small 4% deficit. Our board and staff are excited to initiate our upcoming fundraising campaign to close the deficit while Food First undergoes an exciting transition. Please see the segment below for more information on this transition and how you can help.

Food First's Executive Director Announces Retirement After 13 Years



Eric Holt-Giménez, the Executive Director of Food First for the past 13 years, announced in March that he will be retiring this summer. Read an excerpt of his letter below:

"I want you to know that after 13 years at the helm of Food First, the time has come for me to retire—with a smile.

At Food First, I've been privileged to work with frontline communities who taught me that giving up hope is not an option. I've found so much courage, creativity, and love in these relationships. It's an honor to count myself among the countless who have been transformed by Food First.

That's why I want to give back to the organization that has shaped me and so many. I am fundraising \$85,000 from March

1 - June 30, 2019 and I ask you to join me. Food First's biggest advocates have also come together to donate \$15,000 as a matching gift. That's right—\$5 becomes \$10, \$100 becomes \$200, and \$1,000 becomes \$2,000."

How You Can Help Food First's Transition

- **Double your gift.** Please consider upgrading or even doubling your gift this year to ensure Food First for decades to come. Visit www.foodfirst.org/support or send us your donation in the mail.
- **Become a Monthly Sustainer.** Your gift allows Food First to plan ahead and accomplish even more. Visit www.foodfirst.org/sustainer.
- **Name Food First in your will or donate a part of your retirement plan.** Leave a living legacy for future generations to benefit from Food First's research and action. Visit www.foodfirst.org/livinglegacy.
- **Give stock.** It's tax-smart and keeps us running. Give www.foodfirst.org/stock.