

What Is The Problem?

- ▶ More and more people are hungry
- ▶ Farmers can't make a decent living
- ▶ Pregnant women can't afford the nutrition they require
- ▶ Intensive, industrial agriculture threatens the health of the environment
- ▶ The whole food system is controlled by a small number of very big corporations which have no interest in our local economy or community health

Our food system is based on the principle of market economics, so that farmers are trapped into the production of commodities rather than food for their local communities.

To maximize profit, the food system continuously increases the distance between producer and consumer, at the same time decreasing the control of the consumer over the source and quality of their food.

Hunger and malnutrition, as well as environmental degradation, low prices for farmers, and increased poverty for Third World producers of export commodities, are products of this food system.

For more information check our website:
www.fooddemocracy.org

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To create a *sustainable food system*, we need

- individual access to affordable, appropriate, and nutritious food
- and
- the capacity of the region to produce food in a manner which does not threaten the health of the environment or the workers.



For *consumers to have genuine choice about what they eat*, we need

- easy access to locally produced foods (eg. at farmers' markets)
- accurate information about food through nutrition education and labeling
- (including such environmental and food issues as irradiation and genetic engineering)
- access to locally-grown, organic and whole foods



To create a *democratic food system*, we need

- public participation in policy-making
- and
- support for those grass-roots movements and organizations which combat the negative effects of the current food policy and create alternatives

The BC Food Systems Network

A food system is the deliberate organization of the production, processing, distribution, selection and consumption of food.

The dominant food system in North America is industrial, oriented toward global trade rather than the satisfaction of local needs, and is controlled by a handful of large transnational corporations.

The Network advocates a food policy which places community food security as the highest priority.



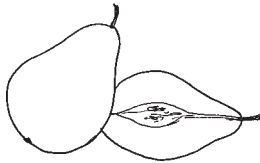
A satisfied customer of the Nelson Good Food Box enjoys an organic carrot from Spicer Farm

FOOD SECURITY

By food security we mean a [sustainable food system](#) in which:

- (1) everyone is able to acquire, in a dignified manner, adequate quantity and quality of personally acceptable food.
- (2) people are able to earn a living wage by growing, producing, processing, handling, retailing and serving food;
- (3) the quality of land, air and water are maintained and enhanced for future generations; and
- (4) food is recognized as the basis of health and celebrated as central to community and cultural integrity.

► We recognize that [food is essential to life and is therefore](#) a human right. It is also a gift from the Creator so that both the food and its sources must be honoured.



HEALTH

Good food is the basis of health. This means that people in need of healing, whether in hospitals, care facilities, or remand centres, require healthy food, and children require the best possible food, starting with breastmilk.

► We develop and advocate policies to redesign all systems contributing to hunger and unsustainable food systems, including but not limited to health, welfare, education, economic, trade, institutional, food production, processing, transport and food retail systems.

"Feed the family and trade the left-overs"

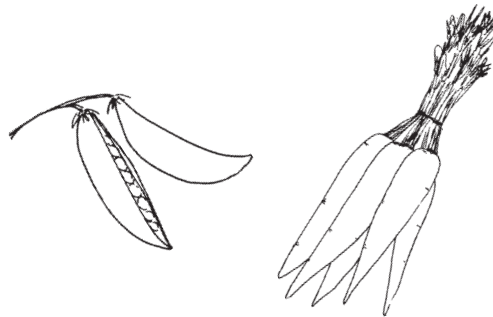


JUSTICE

The principles of democracy and equity require that *good food is available to everyone, not just those who can afford to pay for it.* Nor is it acceptable that BC's food policy is based on the exploitation of people or the environment in other countries.

► We work to ensure that the voices of grassroots organizations and marginalized groups are heard in the process of policy formation at all levels. Our network therefore includes people who experience hunger and food insecurity, who produce food, who work to protect the environment, and who develop policy frameworks that foster food security for the whole population.

► We link provincially, nationally and internationally with organizations and networks committed to the same goals.



ECONOMY

Without food production, there is no economy. Full cost-accounting reveals the costs as well as the risks of a food system which is dependent on outside sources, long-distance movement of food, high-input agriculture, and poor population health. Food dependency holds political as well as economic dangers: *any jurisdiction which cannot feed its people is at the mercy of whoever does.*

► We encourage initiatives to reclaim local ownership of community food systems and develop food self-reliance by sharing information, skills, and resources.



PROCESS

In keeping with the holistic perspective of the local food security policy organizations, the Network emphasizes the way in which food issues cross cultures, sectors, and age groups. Through an email network and annual meetings, we share insights, initiatives, strategies and critical analysis of events in the food system and the work of our members throughout British Columbia.

Membership in the Network is open to any person or group who supports our mission and democratic, inclusive process.

The Network is a BC Society administered by a Coordinator who is responsible to a Board of Directors elected each year at the annual Sorrento Gathering.