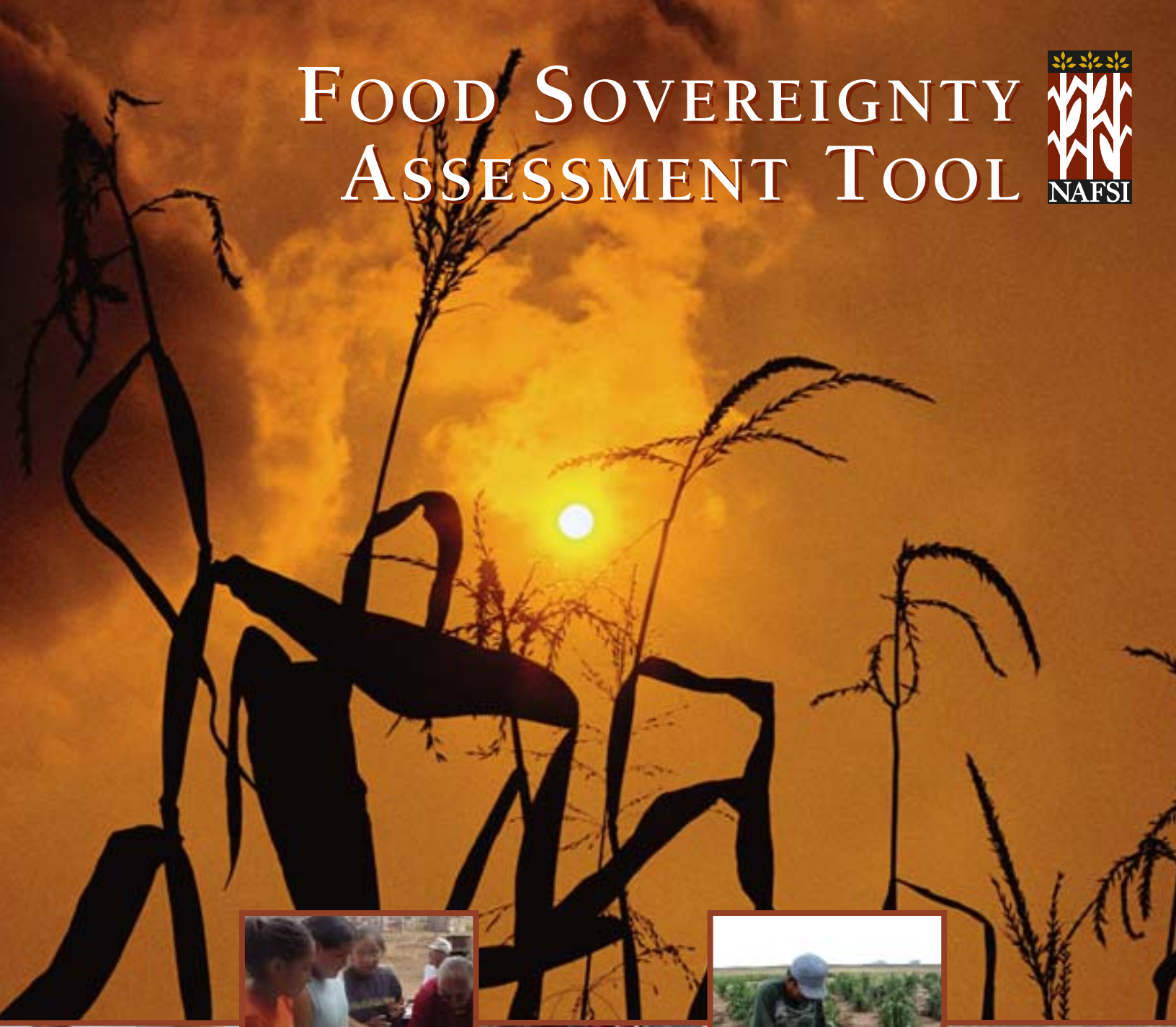
Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

NAFSI



Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative

First Nations Development Institute

"I asked the Earthmaker Itoi to see our need and give us a good crop and plentiful blessing that we might share with others when harvest came. Now it was time and I picked up my gourd and sang the songs of planting with my granddaughters at my side. We lifted our voices to the heavens for rains to come and let us relive our Tohono ways."

~ Tohono O'odham basket weaver

Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

Alicia Bell-Sheeter

Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative
First Nations Development Institute

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a nonprofit organization that is committed to helping people help themselves through the practical application of knowledge and resources to improve their quality of life and that of future generations. Established in 1930, the Foundation has continuously focused on building the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to solve their own problems.

First Nations Development is a nonprofit organization that helps Native communities build sound, sustainable economies. First Nations helps community members to identify assets and build models to create and retain wealth in ways that reflect the culture and desires of the people in those communities. The strategy coordinates local grassroots projects with national program and policy development initiatives to build capacity for self-reliant communities.

First Nations' Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative (NAFSI) is made possible with primary support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, through its Food and Society Initiative (FAS). The purpose of the FAS Initiative is to support the creation and expansion of community-based food systems that are locally owned and controlled, environmentally sound and health-promoting. The FAS Initiative is based on a vision of a future food system that provides for all segments of society a safe and nutritious food supply grown in a manner that protects health and the environment and adds economic and social value to rural and urban communities.

First Nations' NAFSI program endeavors to assist Native communities in controlling their agricultural assets, to obtain equal access to the marketplace for Native food producers, and to help build capacity within communities that will lead to a movement for systemic change, resulting in healthy and sustainable food systems within their communities.

Thanks to the staff of the Community Food Security Coalition for their assistance in providing rural models of community food assessments. Thanks to all of those who gave their time to review and comment on drafts of this document, including Kai Siedenburg and Andy Fisher of the Community Food Security Coalition, Gary Tenorio of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, Bill Ver Voort of Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems, Andrew Lewis and Tammie Tootsie-Trottier of the Nat'Wani Coalition, Dr. Kyril Calsoyas of Diné, Inc., and staff at First Nations Development Institute, including Sarah Dewees, Sherry Salway-Black, and Jackie Tiller.

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Introduction

There are many assets related to Native food systems. Increased consumption of healthy and traditional foods may lead to better health among community members, preserving one of the most important assets in any community, its people. Of course, healthy, productive people are a cornerstone of any healthy community, but the last 200 years of federal policy toward Native Americans has reduced their control of land, disrupted traditional agricultural practices, and dramatically changed diets. Despite challenges created by historical practices and current environments in Native communities, there are many examples of successful projects whereby people are reclaiming local food systems, educating community members about diet-related diseases, revitalizing traditions associated with agriculture, and developing new food and agricultural enterprises. Food sovereignty assessments are one strategy that can be used to help reach these goals, and to revitalize Native agriculture and food systems. Implementing these tools will assist in identifying barriers and opportunities in the areas of health, economic development, and cultural revitalization as they relate to food and agriculture.

What is food sovereignty?

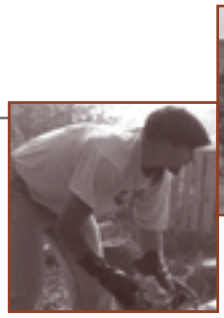
Food sovereignty, like "community food security," is that state of being in which "all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice."

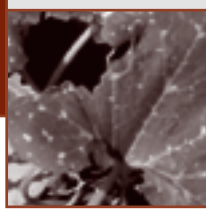
Drs. Michael W. Hamm and Anne C. Bellows

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and societies.

Food Sovereignty: A Right for All
Political Statement of the NGO/CSO Forum for Food Sovereignty
13 June 2002, Rome

While the previous definition arose from an international forum (the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development held in Rome, Italy on June 13, 2002), and responds to broader economic, political, and social platforms, it is equally applicable to Native communities within the United States. In order to create viable, vibrant Native communities – communities that incorporate the important culture and traditions of Native food systems into everyday life and economies – we must first understand not only the downfall in current systems, but where the opportunities lie – in order to get where we want to be, we need to know where we are.





exercise

1. What kinds of food are available in your community?

2. Who decides what foods are available in your community (at the grocery, delivered by the commodities program, etc.)?

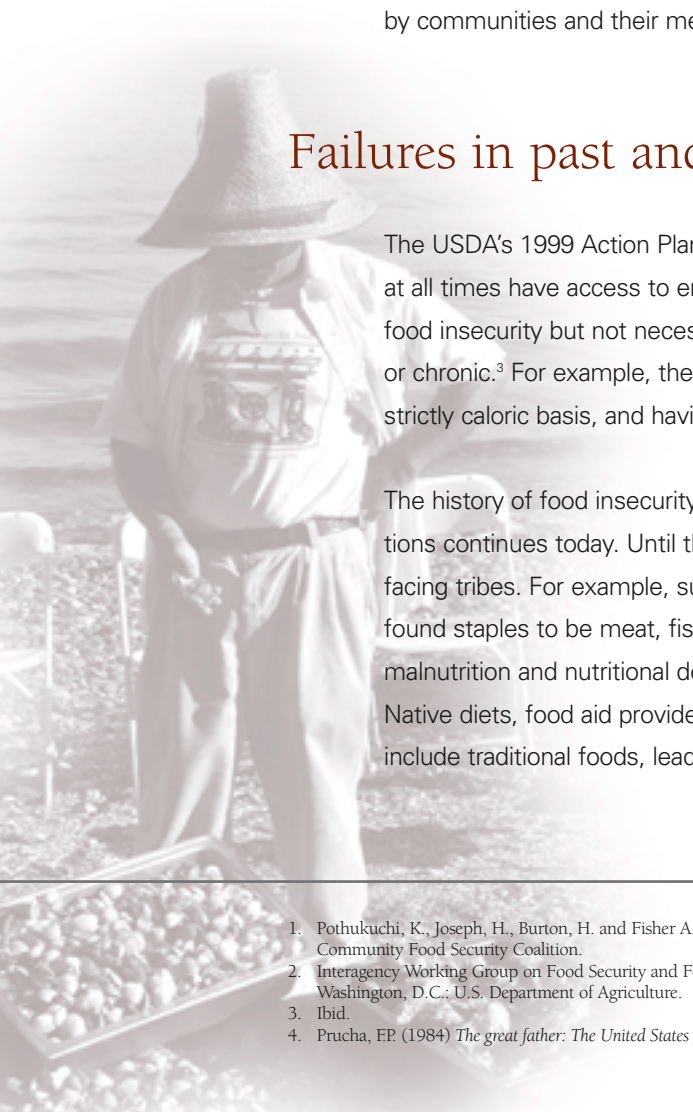
3. Who decides what you eat?

4. Who decides what is grown in your community?

5. Do people in your community rely on others to provide their food?

What is a food sovereignty assessment?

Known as "community food assessments" in other communities, a food sovereignty assessment tool (FSAT) is a collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a range of community food assets, so as to inform change actions and to make the community food secure. An FSAT takes a solution-oriented approach that looks at assets and resources as well as problems. FSATs promote community food security by increasing knowledge about food-related needs and resources, and by building collaboration and capacity. Using a participatory approach that advocates for community control of the food system, FSATs can (and should) be conducted by communities and their members.[1]



Failures in past and current systems

The USDA's 1999 Action Plan on Food Security states that food security exists, "when all people at all times have access to enough food for an active and healthy life."[2] Hunger may accompany food insecurity but not necessarily and not consistently; food insecurity may be either temporary or chronic.[3] For example, the Tohono O'odham distinguish between having enough to eat, on a strictly caloric basis, and having enough nutritional and culturally appropriate food.

The history of food insecurity for Native Americans that began with the establishment of reservations continues today. Until the 1950s, malnutrition and hunger were the primary food issues facing tribes. For example, surveys of Native American diets from the 1920s into the 1950s found staples to be meat, fish, bread, beans, sugar, and coffee or tea.[4] On many reservations, malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies were endemic. Despite recommendations to improve Native diets, food aid provided to the tribes was usually insufficient and of low quality, and did not include traditional foods, leading to further deterioration in health.

1. Pothukuchi, K., Joseph, H., Burton, H. and Fisher A. (2002). What's cooking in your food system: A guide to community food assessment. Venice, CA: Community Food Security Coalition.
2. Interagency Working Group on Food Security and Food Security Advisory Committee. (1999, March). *U.S. action plan on food security: Solutions to hunger.* Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture.
3. Ibid.
4. Prucha, F.P. (1984) *The great father: The United States government and American Indians, Volumes 1 and 2.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

After the 1950s, Native dietary patterns were increasingly dictated by "the arrival of [welfare] checks and the distribution of government commodities."[5] Yet, despite the increase in federal food aid, Native diets remained inadequate to their needs. A study of Kiowa nutrition published in 1953 found that out of 30 families, over 50 percent were nutritionally deficient. Among the elements lacking in their diet were milk, vegetables, and fruits. The bulk of the Kiowa diet consisted of bread, eggs, cereals, and meat.[6] Although insufficient caloric intake continued to exist on some reservations, by the 1960s most Native Americans had diets similar to that of the non-Indian population. Since then, increased external economic development and dependence on federal aid coupled with continued low incomes has meant that tribes increasingly rely on the unhealthy foodstuffs that have replaced nutritious traditional foods.

Statistics show that even as recently as the late 1990s, almost one-fourth of Native American households were food insecure, meaning that they did not have access to enough food to meet their basic needs and one out of 12 experienced food insecurity coupled with hunger.[7] Moreover, many Native Americans have difficulty accessing healthy and/or culturally appropriate foods. The failure of federal programs to include or support the continued use of traditional foods has contributed to Native Americans' reliance on less healthy foods and culturally inappropriate patterns of consumption. Activities such as gardening and collecting may have also been reduced by the availability of commodity foods.[8] For example, the abandonment of the use of wild foods, such as the prairie turnip among the Sioux, has been blamed on the availability of government-supplied commodities.[9]

Access to food is complicated by the geographic isolation of many reservations and many Native communities. Long distances to adequately stocked stores and lack of public transportation often mean that reservation residents have poor access to sources of high-quality food. Small, reservation-based stores frequently do not stock a full range of food (particularly fresh fruits and vegetables), providing instead snack and convenience foods. Many traditional foods recommended for control of diabetes and weight are either unavailable or too expensive to purchase on a regular basis. Low-calorie, high-nutrition foods are frequently among the more expensive items in stores accessible to Native populations.

5. Bass, M.A. and Wakefield, L.M. (1974) Nutrient intake and food patterns of Indians on Standing Rock Reservation. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 64*, 36-41.
6. Bettis, F.P. and Burton, H.B. (1953) Nutritional study of a community of Kiowa Indians. *Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science 34*, 110-114.
7. Henchy, G.M. Cheung, and Weill, J. (2002). *WIC in Native American communities: Building a healthier America – report summary*. Washington, D.C.: Food Research and Action Center.
8. Nabhan, G.P. (1989). Food, health, and Native American agriculture. *Journal of Gastronomy 12*, 70-81.
9. Wedel, W.R. (1978). Notes on the prairie turnip (Psoralea Esculenta) among the Plains Indians. *NEBRASKA HISTORY 2, 59*, 155-179.

Research has only recently begun to demonstrate the connections between the health of Native peoples and the problems that have built up over the years as a result of poor policies – and very little information is accessible about how communities are revitalizing their food systems in response. The Toronto Food Policy Council in Canada, however, has created a viable platform for food systems and food sovereignty in a manner that offers several good lessons about how to think about one's food system.

Why do a food sovereignty assessment in your community?[10]

Native Americans have a rich history of healthy food systems and prosperous agricultural economies. By 800 A.D., North American Indian farmers from Florida to Ontario were cultivating several crops and developing varieties that were appropriate for the growing season where they lived.[11] Explorers landing in the "new world" marveled at the abundance of agricultural crops and the advanced agricultural technology, and many explorers and settlers were aided by Indian farmers' bounty.[12] Currently, however, the traditional food systems of Native populations have been severely disrupted and agricultural enterprises are waning. Hunger and diet-related diseases are a problem for many Native people, and cultural traditions associated with agriculture have all but disappeared.

Many of the problems found in food systems nationally can also be found in Native communities. The majority of foods available in most Native communities are provided by non-Indian-owned businesses or the federal government, and there are few successful agricultural enterprises that are locally supported. As is the case in many limited-resource communities, many reservations lack access to healthy foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables. A recent study of the Navajo reservation found that the amount of healthful foods found on the reservation is limited, and rural convenience stores and trading posts reported that "junk food" was the most commonly sold food.[13] Another study of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine peoples on the Fort Belknap

10. Dewees, S., Miewald, C., Bishop, K. and Thorpe, D. (2003). *Time for the harvest: Native food systems in perspective.* Fredericksburg, VA: First Nations Development Institute. Excerpted.
11. Keoke, E.D. & Porterfield, K.M. (Eds.). (2002). *Encyclopedia of American Indian Contributions to the World: Fifteen Thousand Years of Inventions and Innovations.* New York: Facts on File.
12. Ibid.
13. Bauer, M., (2001). *The availability and variety of healthful foods at convenience stores and trading posts on the Navajo Reservation: Project report.* Shiprock, NM: Diné College.

Reservation found that primary food sources have changed dramatically over the past 100 years. Traditional food systems such as hunting, fishing, and gathering have declined and there has been an increased reliance on store-bought food.[14] In Native communities, as elsewhere in the United States, the ways in which foods are produced, distributed, and consumed have direct implications for the local economy and local community.

A focus on food systems in Native communities provides a way to understand the economic, social, and cultural aspects of food production and consumption. If a community purchases foods locally, farmers in that community profit and economic assets remain in the local area, leading to economic development. Production and consumption of locally-grown foods can also increase economic independence, as reliance on externally produced goods and commodity foods are reduced. Selling locally-produced foods outside the community can also bring new income to the local economy. The production of traditional foods can also contribute to community development, as people come together to achieve a common goal. As individuals learn to run their own businesses and manage their own farm operations, local leaders are born.

The food system can also affect the health of Native peoples. If community members eat fresh, healthful foods, especially foods that are culturally appropriate, diet-related disease will be reduced. Research has shown that decreased consumption of traditional foods is related to increased rates of diabetes and other diet-related diseases in Native Americans.[15] If foods are produced locally, producers can make an effort to grow traditional foods, as well as fresh fruits and vegetables, that contribute to a healthy diet.

While traditional foods may restore physical health, they are equally important for the revitalization and continuation of Native American cultural and spiritual traditions. Years of forced cultural assimilation and disrupted food systems have eroded many agricultural traditions. Yet many communities are revitalizing cultural traditions as traditional cultivation practices are rediscovered. These traditional cultivation practices not only revive a connection to traditional ceremonies, they are often better for the environment and better suited for the local ecosystem than western farming practices that were adopted during periods of forced assimilation.

14. Grant, R.C. (2001). *Federal food programs, traditional foods, and the Gros Ventre and Assinboine Nations of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation: Project report.* Harlem, MT.
15. Lopez, D., Reader, T. and Wyndham, K. (n.d.). *The impact of food assistance programs on the Tohono O'odham food system: An analysis and recommendations.* Sells, AZ: Tohono O'odham Community College and Tohono O'odham Community Action.

Current circumstances as well as the potential for improvement in many Native communities provide a strong incentive to undertake the process of a food sovereignty assessment. In order to escape the nutritional "prison" of the federal commodities and other food programs, communities must be proactive about regaining control of their health and agricultural economies. Food sovereignty assessments, like other tools, are a method of reaching the goals of:[16]

- Access to food as a basic human right.
- Elimination of hunger and food insecurity.
- Building more local and regional food self-reliance and thriving local economies.
- Creating a more democratic food system that gives communities a greater role in deciding how their food is produced and distributed.
- Making the food system more equitable and socially just.
- Developing environmentally sustainable food production and distribution systems.
- Teaching young people in food production and preparation, and connecting them to other community issues through food traditions.
- Preserving and celebrating culture through food.

16. Pothukuchi, K. et al. (2002).

exercise

1. Do you know what people in your community eat?

2. Do you know where people in your community get their food?

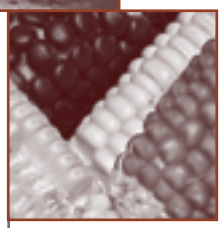
3. Is the food supply in your community reliable? Is it subject to federal budgetary limitations?

4. Is it nutritious? Is it safe?

5. Do people in your community pay a fair price for healthy foods?

6. Is the food provided by the government healthy, nutritious, and suited to people in your community?

7. Are there people in your community interested in revitalizing traditional agricultural and food systems?

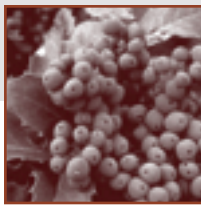


Control of Native food systems means control of Native assets

While a focus on Native food systems highlights the interconnections between health, community development, economic development, and culture, it also helps frame the importance of Native asset control in the local agricultural system. Control of Native food systems is intricately connected to control of Native assets, and increased Native control of agricultural assets is an important strategy for increasing control of Native food systems.

Native communities own many assets that are related to agriculture, the most important asset being land. Native Americans own over 54 million acres in the United States, making them collectively the single largest private owner of agricultural land,[17] yet many Native people and Native communities do not control this land, and lease it out to non-Native farmers for cultivation and management. Other Native people own land that is highly fractionated, and find it difficult to identify and use their individual share for agricultural purposes. Because the federal government and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) hold this land in trust for Native peoples, individuals and tribal governments often have little say in how their land is used or have little experience managing land for agricultural pursuits. Many activists working in the area of Indian agriculture state that Native control of Native land, and resolution of fractionated land, are the single most important issues facing Indian agriculture.

17. Intertribal Agriculture Council (1999). *Indian agriculture yesterday, today, and tomorrow.* Hearing on H.R. 4328 before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, 105th Cong (statement of the Intertribal Agriculture Council, citing the BIA Natural Resource Inventory System, 1993).



The 1997 Census of Agriculture reported that U.S. farm lands comprised 954.8 million acres.[18] The Intertribal Agriculture Council estimates that American Indian agricultural land assets account for 47 million acres of these farms, which represent nearly six percent of all farm and ranch land in the U.S.[19] Further, the 1997 Census of Agriculture reported the market value of agricultural products sold (that were produced on Indian lands) at over $662 million.[20] With 47 million acres in agricultural production, simple math would suggest that opportunities to increase community wealth based on Indian land assets are vast indeed, irrespective of other economic benefits from production activities (employment, services, etc.).

Due to historic federal allotment policy, title to the land on most reservations today is held by many different entities, including tribes, individual Indians, non-Indian individuals and groups, states, counties, and the federal government. This checkerboard pattern of ownership causes a variety of problems, including jurisdictional issues and coordination of services. While the land holdings of American Indians have held relatively constant since the 1930s, diminishment of assets continues to occur in less overt but no less significant ways. As an example, within the Upper Great Plains and Pacific Northwest states today there are 15.7 million acres of tribal and individual Indian trust land (reduced from the original treaty acreage of 81.3 million acres). Of the nine million acres of Indian-owned agricultural lands included in this region, non-Indians farm or ranch 67 percent, or six million acres.[21] The lack of managerial control, and likely less-than-optimal lease terms of these lands, results in a potential economic loss to Indian land-owners in this region of $84.5 million annually, less any lease income generated.

18. National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2004, February). *2002 Census of Agriculture: Preliminary Report (AC-02-A-PR) 1.*
19. Intertribal Agriculture Council (1999).
20. National Agricultural Statistics Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture (2002, July). *American Indians be counted!* 2002 Census of Agriculture brochure.
21. Indian Land Tenure Foundation (n.d.). *Frequently Asked Questions: What are the land issues Indians face?* Last accessed 04/05/04 at www.indiandlandtenure.org/faqs/faqs.html#4. According to the Indian Land Tenure Foundation, the Pacific Northwest and Upper Great Plains region includes Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Washington.

exercise

1. Who decides what to do with land in your community?

2. Who decides what to do with water in your community?

3. Who decides what is grown in your community?

4. What percentage of agricultural and food businesses in your community are Native owned and/or operated?

5. Who controls land leases in your community?

6. Who profits from land and water resources in your community?

Diet and health

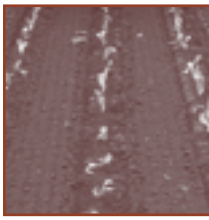
Did you know that:

- American Indians and Alaska Natives suffer almost twice the rate of heart disease as other populations?
- American Indians and Alaska Natives have the highest blood pressure and cholesterol levels of any racial group?
- Approximately half of the adult population in some tribes has diabetes?[22]
- American Indians and Alaska Natives are almost twice as likely to be obese (with the exception of African-American women)?[23]

According to the National Congress of American Indians, life expectancy for Native Americans is five years less than all other races in the U.S., but Native Americans receive one third less spending per capita for Medicaid. Furthermore, the mortality rate in Native American communities from diabetes is more than three times greater than the national average.[24]

A February, 2004 study published by RTI International and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Obesity Research illustrates the potential social and economic costs of poor health in America. U.S. expenditures for weight-related diseases are approximately $75 billion a year, with Type II diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, and high cholesterol leading the list. Healthcare costs for illnesses resulting from obesity now exceed those related to smoking and problem drinking, and about 325,000 deaths per year are attributed to obesity.[25] Given that Native Americans tend to be affected by many of these diseases at higher rates than the general population, it is reasonable to speculate that the costs to their communities are proportionately higher as well.

The leading cause of death in America – for all people, including American Indians and Alaska Natives – is cardiovascular disease. A relatively new phenomenon among American Indians and Alaska Natives, cardiovascular disease can be attributed in part to the adoption of Western lifestyles in many Native communities, which are characterized by high-fat, high-calorie diets and



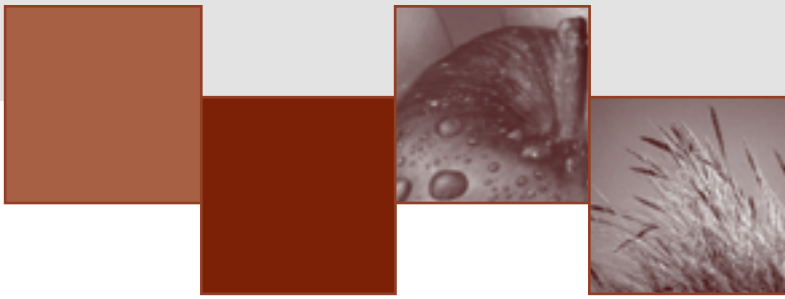
22. Centers for Disease Control (2003, November 28). Health status of American Indians compared with other racial/ethnic minority populations – selected states, 2001-2002. *MMWR WEEKLY 47, 52,* 1148-1152. Last accessed at Centers for Disease Control on May 10, 2004 at http://www.cD.C..gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5247a3.htm. Survey data were derived from 21 communities in 14 states (AL, CA, GA, IL, LA, MA, MI, NC, NY, OK, SC, TN, TX, WA). Data provided is in comparison to African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics.
23. Ibid.
24. Hall, T. (2003, January). *State of Indian Nations address at the National Press Club.* Washington, D.C.: National Congress of American Indians.
25. Spake, A. (2004, February 9). Rethinking Weight. *U.S. News & World Report.*

low levels of physical activity. While other factors that contribute to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease such as age, gender, and family history cannot be controlled, others can be prevented and managed by altering one's lifestyle. Risk factors that can be modified by lifestyle changes include high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, smoking, physical inactivity, diabetes, obesity, and heavy alcohol consumption.[26]

"I was born at a time when people were still farming and everybody had large gardens and we ate directly from the gardens, and life in general was fairly happy. If you were looking from the outside into our communities, you would maybe see that our communities were impoverished – meaning that we didn't have a lot of material things. But we had a lot of other things. And one of the things that we did have was good healthy food, good healthy water, and so forth, which is very different from what we see today."

~ Clayton Brascoupe,
Traditional Native American Farmers Association

26. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health (1998). *Building healthy hearts for American Indians and Alaska Natives: A background report.* Washington, D.C.



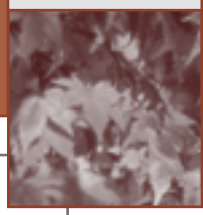
Diabetes in particular

Diabetes Mellitus is a group of disorders characterized by high blood glucose levels. The most common type of diabetes found among American Indians and Alaska Natives is non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, commonly known as Type II diabetes. This type of diabetes occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin and doesn't process glucose, or blood sugar, properly. This type of diabetes is more common among people who are overweight, older than the age of 40, and are of African American, Latino, or American Indian descent.[27] While complications from diabetes account for a number of health burdens, including kidney disease, cardiovascular disease, stroke, eye disease, and amputations, cardiovascular disease is two to four times more common in people with diabetes (present in 75 percent of diabetes-related deaths) and end-stage kidney disease occurs among American Indians and Alaska Native at six times the rate seen among whites in the United States.[28]

Fortunately, many people with Type II diabetes are able to control their blood sugar through weight control, regular exercise, and a healthful diet. The staggering rates of Type II diabetes in Native communities and the subsequent burdens on health and resources that result are sufficient reasons all on their own for Native communities to take a long, hard look at what they are eating.

In general, there is a growing realization among the medical profession that traditional Native American foods are an important component in preventing and controlling nutritionally related diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Programs among the Pima, Tohono O'odham, Winnebago, and Zuni have integrated traditional culture and healing into the Western health care system with positive results.[29] While the emphasis of these programs is on the alleviation of illnesses after they have been diagnosed, preventive measures such as nutrition counseling and health education also are used.

27. Ibid at p. 18.
28. Ibid at p. 19.
29. Boyce, V.L. and Swinburn, B.A. (1993). The traditional Pima diet – composition and adaptation for use in a dietary intervention study, *Diabetes Care 1, 16,* 369-371.



exercise

1. Do people in your community know how diet choices affect health?

2. Do you know how many people in your community are sick? Do you know why they are sick?

3. Do you know the costs to your community in medical bills, lost work time, and spiritual well being for unhealthy community members?

4. Do you know who in your community is hungry?

5. Do environmental regulations exist for your community? Do they protect your community's food safety and natural resources? Who determines what those are? Who enforces them?

"There was a time when a lot of foods weren't being grown and people were not participating in cultural activities. The ties were weakened and broken. The people suffered from cultural detachment because everything is tied to land use, ceremonies, and food. There is a realization that moving back to these activities will strengthen the culture. There is a resurgence of culture and agricultural processes."

~ Mike Rios, San Javier Cooperative and member of the Indian Land Working Group

Food and culture

Food is often not simply something that provides energy and nutrients, but "is capable of symbolizing the manner in which people view themselves with respect to insiders and outsiders in society."[30] For Native Americans, foods frequently possess psychological as well as nutritional significance. These foods are often served as a connection with the past and an expression of cultural identity. Among the Oglala, bison and wasna are important foods that should be served at ehanni Lakota (old-time Indian) occasions such as sacred dances, curing ceremonies or memorial feasts.[31] This function becomes especially important for Native Americans who have struggled to maintain their identity in the face of decades of forced assimilation.

If you lose your foods, you lose part of your culture – and it has a devastating effect on the psyche.

~ Yakama tribal nurse[32]

Food production needs to be appreciated as a keystone of the new economy that taps into the world wide web of nature. All the factors of production and distribution depend on knowledge. Good local land comes by grace of nature, but the soil can only be sustained by growers who know how to sustain and enrich it. Seeds are a product of human as well as natural selection, and require the gentle touch of people with a long view of place, productivity, and diversity.

~ Wayne Roberts[33]

30. Powers, W. and Powers, M. (n.d.). *Metaphysical aspects of Oglala food system.* In Douglas, M. (1984). Food in the social order: Studies of food and festivals in three American communities (p. 89).
31. Ibid at p. 90.
32. Meuth, J. and Rollins, D. (2002, June). *Tribal worldviews: Kellogg partnership 2020 Tribal Food Systems Initiative.* Puyallup, WA: Center for Environmental Education, Washington State University.
33. Roberts, W. (2001, June). *The way to a city's heart is through its stomach: Putting food security on the urban planning menu.* The Toronto Food Policy Council.

exercise

1. Does your community want to preserve its cultural food traditions?

2. Do you know what agriculture and food traditions are still practiced in your community?

3. Do you know why agriculture and food traditions have been lost in your community?

4. Who has knowledge of these traditions?

5. How will these traditions be passed on to other generations?

Case Study

Tohono O'odham

The harm caused by food system destruction goes beyond the physical health of individual Tohono O'odham; it has also had a devastating effect on Tohono O'odham cultural survival. Virtually all elements of traditional culture – ceremonies, stories, songs, the language – are directly rooted in the system of food production. O'odham culture is truly an agricultural culture [*sic*]. For example, the saguaro harvest and the wine ceremony (noted above) served as the cornerstone of O'odham ceremonial life for centuries, calling forth the monsoon rains that make agriculture possible in the arid desert environment. After weeks of preparation, people would gather together in each O'odham community for the multi-day ceremony, telling stories, singing songs and passing on culture. But all of that has begun to change. Today, only a tiny portion of the O'odham community participates in this sacred rite. Each year, O'odham still gather near the roundhouses for the ceremony, but only in one or two communities with fewer and fewer people participating.

The reason for this is relatively simple: today, few O'odham produce their own food. Grocery stores and federal commodity programs, rather than the desert, are the source of food. Is it any wonder that the saguaro wine ceremony is endangered? The endangerment of this essential element of O'odham culture is the direct result of changes in the food system: People did not stop planting the fields because the ceremony was dying out; the ceremony began to die out when people stopped planting their fields. The ceremony is in danger of being lost precisely because it no longer has any connection to the material reality of people's lives. When food comes in cans from the grocery store or in sacks from USDA commodity distribution programs, it no longer really matters to most people whether or not the rains come. In such circumstances, there is no longer a compelling reason to spend long, hot days camped in the desert collecting bahidaj, no reason to learn the songs which bring down the rain, no reason to bless the ground...no reason for a key element of Tohono O'odham culture to continue.

The destruction of indigenous food systems is causing similar, albeit somewhat less dramatic, damage to the health of Native people and communities throughout the U.S. The physical and cultural survival of many Native peoples requires the rejuvenation of these food systems. Like in Native communities across the U.S., such renewal is beginning to happen on the Tohono O'odham Nation.

The Tohono O'odham community is not alone in the realization that physical health and cultural survival are dependent upon the rejuvenation of the traditional food systems. Native peoples from the deserts of Arizona to the ice flows of Alaska are actively seeking to redevelop the ways of producing, processing, distributing and consuming foods that have nurtured both body and spirit for generations.

Shortly after the bahidaj harvest was over and the monsoon rains had brought precious moisture to the desert plants, Christine Johnson, a basketweaver from the village of Nolic, reflected on her experiences harvesting and planting in the desert heat. "Every year, I sang the songs that called down the summer rains," she said. "But this year, I had a garden filled with devil's claw and corn, melons and squash. This year, I sang for them. This year, I sang like I really meant it."

Excerpted from Singing Like We Mean It: Native Food Systems, Health and Culture, T. Reader at http://www.oxfamamerica.org/global/art4144.html?backresults=TRUE (n.d.) last accessed May 24, 2004.

More than with any other of our biological needs, the choices we make around food affect the shape, style, pulse, smell, look, feel, health, and economy of the community. Public health needs to take on the job of re-establishing once-common skills, culture, and habits around food production and preparation, common knowledge that was lost when convenience and fast food industries – and reliance on the U.S. commodities program – became dominant.[34]

"Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish has been caught, will we realize that we cannot eat money "

~ 19th century Cree saying

Environment

Traditional food systems amongst Native communities are part of the web of life, with strong connections between food and the health of the environment. This common theme among Native peoples was reinforced by research conducted as part of the Kellogg Partnership 2020 Tribal Food Systems Initiative.[35] Among tribes in the Pacific Northwest, common themes exist. A Warm Springs/Skokomish/Taos educator noted that when a dam or stream is polluted, a salmon run is destroyed and with it, the lifestyle of a people. The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission found that Umatilla, Warm Springs, Nez Perce, and Yakama Natives are more susceptible to contamination than other, non-Indian populations living in the same area because they consume a higher percentage of fish that are affected by changes in water quality.[36] Land management practices also impact the health of natural resources. A Blackfeet tribal member laments the loss of native plants to pesticides, radical farming techniques, and overgrazing. What is needed, he says, is a philosophy of preservation and restoration. Chemicals used in agriculture also negatively impact food safety and production in other areas, particularly in fish species. In turn, Native peoples are affected.[37]

34. Ibid.
35. Meuth and Rollins (2002).
36. Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (1994). *A fish consumption survey of the Umatilla, Nez Perce, Yakama, and Warm Springs Tribes of the Columbia River Basin.* Technical Report 94-3. Portland, OR.
37. Ibid.

A "movable" feast

Throughout the world, food systems have been disrupted by an ever-increasing concentration in control of critical resources. No longer do communities provide adequate food for their people, and more and more often what is produced locally is shipped hundreds of miles away and even overseas. Ironically, communities in some of the most productive farmlands in the world now import a majority of their fresh foods. The distances that food now travels to reach our plates represents more than just the concentration of our collective food supply into the hands of a few multinational companies. It also represents vast consumption of environmental resources and unnecessary expenditure on things that won't sustain us (fossil fuels, packaging, marketing, etc.).

A report by the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University found that:

- The conventional food distribution systems used four to 17 times more fuel and emitted five to 17 times more CO_2 (carbon dioxide) than the local and regional systems, depending on the system and type.
- Produce arriving by truck traveled an average distance of 1,518 miles to reach Chicago, one of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's distribution terminals for fruits and vegetables.
- In a study which analyzed a Swedish breakfast, consisting of an apple, bread, butter, cheese, coffee, cream, and sugar, the summed distances each ingredient traveled from the producer to the consumer is equal to the circumference of the earth.[38]

This data and similar reports amply demonstrate the negative environmental effects of our current food system (i.e., excessive use of fossil fuels and contributions to greenhouse gases), as well as the risks posed when a food chain is stretched over astonishing distances. With over 1,500 miles to cover before reaching our plates, potential crises outside a community's control could interrupt the food supply. Fuel shortages, trucker strikes, and increases in the costs of distribution can drastically affect food systems that are dependent on a limited supply of fossil fuel. While natural disasters like drought, pest infestation, or flood can, of course, impact any community, if you're at the tail-end of the distribution network the prospects for a healthy meal look quite grim.

38. Pirog, R., Van Pelt, T., Enshayan, K. and Cook, E. (2001, June). *Food, fuel and freeways: An Iowa perspective on how far food travels, fuel usage, and greenhouse gas emissions.* Ames, IA: Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

exercise

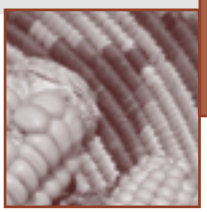
1. Do you know where your community's food supply comes from? How does it get to your community?

2. Do you know how far your food travels to get to you?

3. What resources are required (land, water, gasoline, distribution costs, etc.) to produce food for your community?

4. Do you know what impacts on the environment result from the shipment of your community's food?

5. How would your community get food if a natural or other disaster (like a truckers strike) stopped shipments?



Food dollars and cents

In terms of economics, there is some data about the market valuation of locally-produced food in the United States, although it is limited. In 1994, the annual value of produce from all U.S. gardens was roughly equal to that of the annual U.S. corn crop, about $18 billion a year, and agriculture, horticulture, and food-related activities accounted for 25 percent of a local economy.[39] Researchers at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture estimated that Iowa farmers would gain $54.3 million in sales if even a small portion (ten percent) of the fruits and vegetables Iowans eat were purchased from Iowa farmers.[40]

In Toronto, food choices account for about 20 percent of all retail sales, 20 percent of all service jobs, 10 percent of industrial jobs, 20 percent of all car trips and traffic, 20 percent of chronic diseases, 25 percent of fossil fuel energy and air pollution, 40 percent of all garbage, and 80 percent of sewage.[41] While these numbers have obviously changed over time and are not representative of Native communities – that's still a lot of lettuce. Even if these statistics were to be downsized for better comparison with Indian Country, the amount of food resources produced and the extent of the waste generated would be astounding – and both represent opportunities for economic development and natural resource management.

According to Wayne Roberts of the Toronto Food Policy Council, food is full to busting with opportunities to nurture the collaborative, win-win relationships and institutions essential to economic success today. All residents win when the community becomes more self-reliant in its food sourcing and reduces imports because the additional local purchases increase the multiplier effect – the same dollar goes further simply because it didn't go farther away. Likewise, no one in the community wins when some go hungry: the problem of under-nourishment just crops up in higher medical bills (and social costs) that everyone pays for. On top of that, food is particularly well-suited to community economic development. What economists call "the barriers to entry" are relatively low in the food industry (i.e., it can be easier to get into the food business than other businesses), and many food products don't need a full-fledged marketing machine: good local networks and word of mouth advertising are often enough.[42]

39. Dahlberg, K. A. (1994, February/March). Localizing food systems. *The Neighborhood Works.*
40. Pirog et al. (2001).
41. Roberts (2001).
42. Ibid.

exercise

1. Do you know the economic potential of agriculture and food resources in your community?

2. Do you know the economic value of what is produced in your community? Do you know who receives that value (through sale of products)?

3. How many agricultural jobs exist in your community? What is the economic contribution of those jobs? Who holds those jobs?

4. How many jobs could be created for community members if they had more control over agricultural and food resources?

5. Do you know the difference in costs between starting up a food-related business versus other means of economic development?

A holistic view of food sovereignty

Over the past ten years there has been much talk of and research about food systems issues, and advocacy for a more integrated, or holistic, approach to how communities nourish themselves and survive generally. While common ideas emerge in community projects throughout America, such as the sustainable use of resources, support for local farmers and ranchers, and health benefits to eating local foods, most of the work to date has focused on limited-resource communities in cities. Fortunately, there are a few examples to be found in these projects and in the research that appear very relevant to Native American communities seeking improved food systems and food sovereignty.

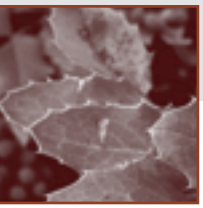
What makes food unique among human needs is that it is connected, at its heart, to the land, to health, and to the community. In a survey of community planners, however, Kameshwari Pothukuchi and Jerome Kaufman found that food access has yet to be defined as an "essential service" – like roads, schools, water and sewage plants – by planners.[43] While everyone acknowledges that air, food, water, and shelter are among the essentials of life, food is a necessity that is chronically ignored by planners. What they also found was that even though most planners don't currently include food in their community models, they do understand that to improve human settlements, food issues must be taken into consideration, and that:

- There is a need to recognize that food is an important aspect of our local economy.
- Food is a critical part of community revitalization.
- There is a need for greater involvement in nutrition issues – it's important for healthy residents in healthy communities.

In thinking about ways in which food systems could be improved by the planning process and decision-makers, some of the areas for further consideration immediately mentioned by the planners surveyed were:

- Agricultural land preservation.
- Land use rules and zoning related to food access (especially the location of grocery stores in low-income and/or remote neighborhoods).

43. Pothukuchi, K. and Kaufman, J. (2000, Spring). The food system: A stranger to the planning field. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 2, 66.



- Inclusion of food issues in economic development plans (such as creating jobs and income through food processing facilities, development of specialty products unique to the community, etc.).
- Documentation and mitigation of the environmental impacts of the food system (for example, the use of pesticides and fertilizers).

Without food sovereignty that takes into consideration all of the ecological, social, economic, and cultural variables that respond to the unique circumstances of a community, other efforts to provide an improved standard of living will be more difficult to achieve. As stated further by the National Congress of American Indians:

"A critical aspect of long-term economic capacity building for tribes is ensuring a healthy, well-educated, and well-supported work force…Development will be impossible if our people are preoccupied with financial crises, health dilemmas, or poor living conditions. …The most vital component of any stimulus plan is to provide for the well-being of our people. No economy can thrive when its people are not healthy."

~ Weaving Our Future: A Proposal for Economic Stimulus in Indian Country, National Congress of American Indians (February 2003).

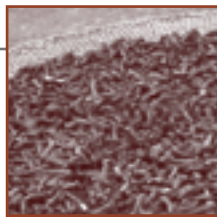
exercise

1. Does planning in your community preserve agricultural lands as agricultural lands instead of as commercial or other development land?

2. Is agriculture considered on an even basis with other options for community development, such as retail space and casinos?

3. Is money the only consideration in decision-making about how to use community resources?

4. In your community, is healthy, nutritious, and/or traditional food considered a "right," like clean air, water, and an education?



5. Are the environmental impacts of agricultural production considered by decision-makers in your community?

"Whole" foods

Wayne Roberts, current Project Co-Coordinator for the Toronto Food Policy Council, states that community planners assume that food exists only as a commodity that can be bought. By contrast, we don't make the same assumption with regard to medical care, or schools, or water. Schools and water are considered basic needs – basic rights – and aren't delivered through market mechanisms, because too much harm could be done if they weren't affordable. Food is more essential to survival than schools and roads, but, for some reason, we assume food is only available on payment of cash,[44] or, as is the case on many reservations, via charitable or government distributions.

However, like many others, Roberts believes that systems of food security are as amenable to design, planning and management as any other systems governing community life, and that planners also need to engage in a dialogue with food security experts about the best ways to foster healthful food choices – not just healthful in terms of the physical nutrients every body needs, but healthful in terms of the social nutrients every community needs. The community has the means to help recover the skills and culture of self-reliance and mutual support that are central to an "informal economy," and that can help reduce hunger. That such resources remain untapped when hunger and under-nourishment (and diet-related diseases) are commonplace speaks to the fact that governments as well as citizens have lost their bearings and capacities when it comes to self-reliance and mutual support.[45]

Ultimately, Roberts states that "quality of life" has become a priority for which we must plan. He believes that it's no longer good enough for community planners to turn themselves inside-out for economic development, then cross their fingers that it will still be a nice place to live. Like most Native Americans, Roberts agrees that it's almost impossible to imagine a rationale for leaving the environment out of any discussion about food, since how our communities eat and how our food is grown are intimately connected to the environmental problems we face.

44. Roberts (2001).
45. Ibid.

A successful example of the integrated, holistic approach discussed above is the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS). Initiated in 1994 to address development issues associated with poverty and health programs on the Oneida reservation, the goal of the program is for the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin to become self-sufficient in terms of their food. As a result of diverse partnerships among multiple government agencies, business associations, the University of Wisconsin, and the community, the tribe has incorporated elements into OCIFS that address multiple needs within the community. There is a cannery, and a cooperative grocery which stocks bison meat from the tribes' herd, apples from the tribes' orchard, and a special section of diabetic foods. The co-op's lights and coolers are powered by solar energy generated by panels out back. There is a farmers' market featuring fresh, locally-grown produce and a newly-organized 4-H club that trains young people in agricultural and conservation practices. The Tsyunhe'hkw^ ("joon-henk-qua") Center integrates traditional Oneida agricultural and holistic processes in and around traditional wellness, commercial and community agriculture, commercial food production, and community food preservation based on principles of sustainable development, including economic, ecological, and cultural factors.

news from OCIFS

WELCOME community members to the Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS) newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to pass on useful information about the OCIFS members and the products and services that they provide. But first, what does food and a food system mean to us the community members?

Food comes to most of us now through a global food system which is destructive of both natural and social communities. In this unstable, post-modern world, our food can be one vehicle through which we reassemble our fragmented identities, reestablish community and become native not only to a place but to each other. We find this vision of people living well and responsibly with each other and with the land on which they are *placed* to be deeply appealing.

We need the recovery and reconstitution of community generally, not simply in relation to food. But though we may be able to think like mountains, we must act as human beings. To begin the global task to which we are called, we need some particular place to begin, some particular place to stand, some particular place in which to initiate the small, reformist changes that we can only hope may some day transform our world.

We start with food. Given the centrality of food in our lives and its capacity to connect us materially and spiritually to each other and to the earth, we believe that it is a good place to start. (Adapted from: Coming Into The Foodshed, 1996, by Jack Kloppenburg, John Hendrickson & G. W. Stevenson).

The OCIFS Members are trying to reconnect our community members and our youth back to the land and the food that we eat. Some of the ways we are trying to accomplish this are through the Falling Leaves 4-H club, Oneida Farmers Market and the Tower Foods Coop grocery store.

By now you are thinking, "just who or what is OCIFS? The Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (OCIFS) was established in 1994 and began with the assembling of an initial task force to address the developmental issues associated with poverty and health problems on the Oneida Reservation. There were initially four operations that were immediately identified as "food related":

- Oneida Nation Farm and Apple Orchard
- Oneida Tsyunhe'hkw^ and Cannery
- Oneida Food Distribution Program, and
- Oneida Centralized Food Purchasing

The OCIFS group has made some member changes the past couple of years, but their goals and objectives have stayed the same. Centralized Food Purchasing is no longer a member of OCIFS, but they have gained two new members in the Oneida Grants Office and the Oneida Health Center.

Primary Goals of OCIFS:

I. Develop a strong managing core
II. Intertribal market development & expansion
III. Extended expansion (National/Global)

Secondary Goals of OCIFS:

- Employment opportunities for Native Americans
- Improve health through food
- Educate about diet and healthy foods
- Produce meats, fruits, and vegetables not only for profit, but to promote lower prices

OCIFS News, July-September 2003

The Toronto Food Policy Council

The Toronto Food Policy Council (TFPC) was created in 1990 in response to the association between the existing food and agriculture system and health risks for Toronto residents. While this project is an urban model, Native communities will likely find much that is useful in the TFPC's analysis of their food system, wherein the conventional view of community nourishment was based on the assumptions that:

- The food system provides, almost de facto, nourishing food and that all food system actors are interested primarily in nourishing the population.
- Food is cheap for consumers.
- Hunger is a problem largely of insufficient income, and that the structure of the food system is not itself part of the problem.
- The food system is capable of addressing any problems of environmental degradation without significantly redesigning its structure or activities.

Proponents for the creation of the TFPC felt strongly that these were false premises, and that existing institutional activities at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels either ignored or were inadequate to address underlying realities.[46] The TFPC thus set out to create a healthier, more viable city with a mission to end hunger and the need for a food distribution system based on charity and with a goal of a "food system that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health."[47]

As in Canada, it is arguable whether or not the food system is primarily interested in nourishing the population of Native communities in the United States. While treaty and trust obligations may require that the U.S. government provide tribes with something to eat, what that "something" is, how often it's received, and the nutritional quality and appropriateness for Native communities often belie the idea that the primary goal is to nourish the population. As stated by former director of the TFPC Rod MacRae, "the dominant system is not really interested in servicing low-income people, and rarely designs distribution systems that ensure their access to affordable, nourishing food."[48]

46. MacRae, R. (1994, Winter) So why is the city of Toronto concerned about food and agricultural policy? A short history of the Toronto Food Policy Council. *Culture and Agriculture*.
47. "The Toronto Food Policy Council partners with business and community groups to develop policies and programs promoting food security. Our aim is a food system that fosters equitable food access, nutrition, community development and environmental health." (Last accessed on February 18, 2004 at http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm.)
48. MacRae (1994).

"Wellness is never just a physical condition. Wellness is the healthy interconnectedness of the environmental, spiritual, social, and cultural. Our people have been disconnected from the source of their food. Today food is an industry. Even nutrition programs, like some of those offered at schools, are run like assembly lines, getting people in and out as fast as possible."

~ Eric Enos, Ka'ala Farm, Inc. Wai'anae, Hawaii

For those who purchase food, when there are few if any full-size grocery stores (i.e., a lack of competition), and when food must be shipped long distances, the cost of food rises. As is the case in Knoxville, Tennessee, the relative cost of food for limited resource consumers rises as income drops, and opportunities for comparison shopping are eliminated.[49]

In a 1994 article in *Culture and Agriculture*, former director of the TFPC Rod MacRae asked the question, "So why is the City of Toronto concerned about food and agricultural policy?" His short answer – we all eat. His longer answer – the food and agriculture system in Canada (and most everywhere else) was not designed to provide opportunities for optimal nourishment and, consequently, was contributing to a host of health problems for Toronto residents.[50] On top of that, the city (you can insert "the tribe" here), home to the people who were suffering from the ill effects of a system that was failing them, was the first institution that had to cope with the resulting problems of poor health.

MacRae further suggests that the dominant system is not really interested in servicing low-income people, and has rarely designed distribution systems that ensure their access to affordable, nourishing food.[51] More than any other rural communities, Native Americans rely on rural development and farm and business supplements to foster conditions that encourage and sustain economic investments. However, insufficient funding has limited the success of development programs and perpetuated unstable economies. Poor economic conditions have exacerbated food shortages and hunger, and Native Americans are more than twice as likely as the general population to face hunger and food insecurity at any given time.[52] Furthermore, unemployment and poverty have continuously plagued the vast majority of Native communities, with unemployment twice the rate of the national average and with levels reaching 85 percent on some reservations. Native Americans are twice as likely as other Americans to be living in poverty, and almost three times more likely if they live on a reservation.[53]

49. Becker, G. (1982, March/April). Nutrition planning for a city. *The Community Nutritionist.*
50. MacRae (1994).
51. Ibid.
52. United States Commission on Civil Rights (2003, July). *A quiet crisis: Federal funding and unmet needs in Indian Country* at p. xi.
53. Six Killer Clark, A. (2002, January). *Social and emotional distress among American Indian and Alaska Native students: Research findings.* Eric Digests - Special Edition, EDO-RC-01-11. Last accessed February 18, 2004 at http://www.indianeduresearch.net/edorc01-11.htm. According to the 2000 census, average unemployment on reservations was 13.6 percent, more than twice the national rate; 31.2 percent of reservation inhabitants live in poverty, and the national average rate for Native Americans is 24.5 percent. By contrast, the national poverty rate in the United States between 1999 and 2001 was 11.6 percent [U.S. Census Bureau (2002, September). *Poverty in the United States: 2001 Current Population Reports*].

Why "localize?"

Did you know that:

- Native Americans discovered and cultivated food crops that currently account for more than 52 percent of all foods now consumed by people worldwide?[54]
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs estimated that, as of 1986 (the last year for which data are available!), more than 65 percent of Indian-owned farmland was leased to non-Indians?[55]
- Approximately one-third of all grazing permits on Native-owned land are also awarded to non-Indians?[56]

Given that Native Americans are not only first peoples, but first farmers, that they possess vast resources that are providing wealth to others outside their communities, and based on the ideas and projects discussed above, it only makes good sense to take a much broader view when considering your community's food sovereignty.

Beyond the economic benefits derived from Native agricultural assets, long-term food security provides better health for all, creates a cushion of self-reliance against distant (and often less healthful) supplies, and provides new and continuing jobs for local farmers, horticulturists, and food workers. This increases self-reliance, achieved by making more land and employment available throughout the food system, strengthens local economies and food systems, and can reduce dependence on emergency hunger and feeding programs.[57]

Assuming power to localize your food supply affords opportunities to regain control of the most significant assets possessed by Native communities. Conscious management of food supplies affords opportunities for tribal use of land, deliberate control of health, sustainability of the environment, and maintenance or revitalization of cultural integrity.

54. Smitman, G.E. (1998). Intertribal Agriculture Council perspectives on the history and current state of American Indian agriculture. *American Indian and Culture Research Journal 22(3)*, 173. Los Angeles, CA: University of California.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Dahlberg, 1994.

exercise

1. Are health problems in your community caused, or exacerbated, by a lack of healthy, nutritious foods?

2. Do people in your community receive adequate food on a daily basis?

3. How many people in your community are chronically hungry?

4. Have Western models of agricultural development failed in your community? What were the reasons?

5. Have other models of agricultural development succeeded in your community? What made them successful?

Assessments

Taking back control of the food system is, of course, no small undertaking and it requires a rediscovered knowledge of what it means to be food sovereign. In order to get where we want to be, we need to know where we are – and even where we've been. Not only do assessments draw a picture of a community and its potential, they also offer opportunities to build capacity within the community. By taking the lead in design and implementation of Food Sovereignty Assessment Tools, community members set out on the venture on an equal footing with their partners, not as "samples" in an outsider's research. Tribal members themselves learn to design their own research projects and do their own field studies. They ensure that a project takes into account tribal perspectives, goals, and needs. *They* become the experts on their community's food and health, and not an anonymous federal agency. Community members already know their physical environment better than anyone else and can often provide the best information about how to practice sustainable management of their resources. By taking the lead in developing and conducting assessments, communities already begin the process of regaining control of their destiny.

appendices

The following appendices are provided as examples of different processes to implement a food sovereignty assessment in your community.

Appendix A, the "Circle of Life" exercise, looks at the various ways in which Native communities have traditionally planned for their food security.

Appendix B, "How to Facilitate a Vision Workshop," is an exercise that allows participants to envision the healthy future of their community.

Appendix C provides "Key questions to get you thinking about the assessment."

Appendix D, "Community Member Profile," provides a sample survey to gather information from the members of your community about their actual circumstances, and what they would like to see changed in their food system.

Appendix E, "Asset Mapping," is a more concrete depiction of your community's assets and will require more in-depth collection of "hard" facts from specific people. For example, to find the answers to questions in this section you may need to ask school administrators or the WIC coordinator about how many people participate in a federal program or what federal programs are available. You may have to go to the tribal economic development office to find out how many community members are full-time farmers, or how many food-related businesses are owned by community members.

Finally, Appendix F addresses "Process" and provides examples of how to start to think about assessments, the structure of mapping and analysis of your community's assets, and existing or potential food sovereignty.

Appendix A: *The circle of life exercise*

Native people have always managed resources wisely. This exercise is intended for you to share your community's resource management stories. It is to help remind us of our communities' traditional harvest schedules and that the quantities of goods produced, preserved, saved and traded reflect insight into managing a sustainable economy. Native people were self-reliant and embraced the concepts of producing and preserving, processing and distributing, in order to provide for their community's needs throughout the year. Native people have a rich and long history of practicing these skills.

Our communities have traditionally demonstrated tremendous skill in managing resources to support the community on an ongoing basis.

For years, our people have understood and practiced the present-day concepts of resource management by planning so that food resources lasted throughout the year. We put aside food resources for future use.

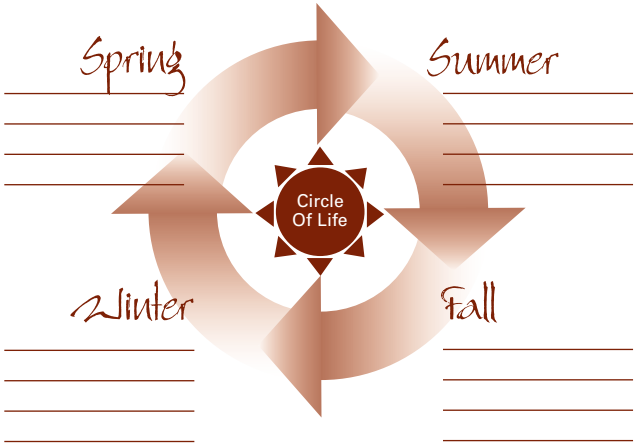
Consider the planning done by the Canadian Bands, Nit Nat and Sooke, when they prepared for one of their women to marry. They saved for a year to provide a feast and gifts for all of the guests at the ceremony. Traditionally, gifts included blankets, canoes, dried fish, and many kinds of animal skins. If the woman's family was high status, the man's family or community provided them with a number of canoes to demonstrate that they could take care of her. The wedding ceremony required a lot of preparation and planning.

Our people saved for the purpose of acquiring goods that we could not produce ourselves. By producing more than the community needed, we had goods to trade. For instance, the Northwest Coastal Indians traded a wide variety of products, including smoked or dried fish and venison, as well as tools made from elk, deer, fish, or other indigenous animals.

Planning is a core skill that enables individuals and families to contribute to the economy. In the modern economy, having these skills allows you to make informed decisions about food security.

Our people have successfully practiced planning and resource management skills for generations. Now we call upon their example to strengthen our own abilities.

Take a look at this diagram and think about what your ancestors would harvest throughout the year:



Example: (Tlingit Indian Tribe – Southeast Alaska)

The changing seasons were/are the most common source of variation in food resource abundance and availability.

Autumn – time to harvest and shorter days were spent in preparation of the winter's food supply. September, October, November, Tlingit people are content and happy – it is harvest time! Deer, goat, sheep, bear, king salmon, herring. The salmon are fat and plentiful. Streams are full of fish and gardens ready for filling the storehouses. Men bring the bright salmon to the women to cut up and prepare for smoking and drying.

Winter – people draw stores from their caches.

Spring – winter stores are running low, the dry fish nearly gone, weather is bad, food supplies are low. Time to go and gather fern roots, seaweed.

Summer – Gathering of foods in season – fish, berries, etc.

Appendix B:
How to facilitate a vision workshop

Dr. Trevor Hancock, HEALTHCARE FORUM JOURNAL (May/June 1993)

Next time you have a 15-minute break, try this exercise: Find a quiet place, take a moment to relax, close your eyes, and take a journey into the future:

It is the year 2024 and you are hovering in a balloon above your own community. During the past 20 years, it has transformed itself into an ideally healthy community.

Imagine yourself floating down to the center of this place, where you climb out of the balloon and move around the community. Take your time as you go into and out of stores ... workplaces ... streets ... parks … .neighborhoods ... houses ... healthcare and educational settings.

In what way are the places you visit and the people you see healthy? What makes them healthy?

Notice the colors and shapes and textures around you. What sounds do you hear? What smells do you notice?

Pay attention to how people move from place to place.

Observe the settings where ill people receive care and the places where people learn.

Take the time to experience this community at different times of day and night. At different seasons.

Try to imagine yourself as an elderly person living in this environment ... as a child ... as a woman ... as a man ... as a disabled person.

Now spend a few minutes revisiting places you have seen that struck you most forcibly or that you liked the best, then re-enter the balloon, ascend back into the sky, and return to the present.

This is the core exercise in vision workshops conducted in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Organizing such a workshop provides one of the most powerful ways to answer the question, "What is a healthy community?" The workshop is a "futuring" exercise specifically adapted for use with participants drawn from the general public.

It requires only the simplest of equipment—pencil and paper, flipchart or other large sheets to drawn on, colored markers or crayon—and one trained facilitator (additional facilitators can be trained on the spot).

A vision workshop is best organized by a steering group presenting many sectors of the community, including hospitals. It can involve anywhere from 20 to more than 100 people. Participants should represent a diverse cross-section of the community. The vision workshop itself takes a half-day, but it is useful to have another half-day to begin to develop priority action plans.

Here are the steps you might take if you were facilitating such a workshop:

- ***Begin the workshop with a minimum of introduction about your concept of a healthy community.***
  The idea is to demonstrate to participants that they already know what a healthy community is – not to give them your ideas and have them feed those ideas back to you.

- ***Ask participants to reflect back on the past few months and recall something they have personally experienced that strikes them as an example of a healthy community.***
  Don't allow people to give you examples they've heard from someone else or examples of what makes an unhealthy community: Insist on personal and positive experiences. In large groups, ask for volunteers and take 15 or 20 examples. In small groups, use this exercise as an "ice breaker" by asking people to introduce themselves and give their example.

- ***Write the answers on a flipchart.***
  Unless you have a high proportion of healthcare professionals in the group (which you shouldn't), you will find that people seldom talk about or give examples of the healthcare system. Rather, they will talk about parks and green spaces, street fairs, neighbors helping neighbors, bicycle paths, recycling campaigns, school and community events, good transit, and anti-litter initiatives.

After filling a couple of flipcharts with experiences, point out, first, that the participants already know what a healthy community is and, second, that they know that it is not primarily the result of the activities of the healthcare system. (This second point may surprise them once they realize what they've said.)

- ***Facilitate a guided imagery exercise like the one above.***
  Have people take a "trip" through their own community at some point in the future, say 15 or 20 years hence, when it is an ideally healthy place. It may be useful to explain that guided imagery is not some strange "way out" experience but is used frequently, especially in sports psychology and increasingly in business, to help people improve their performance and achieve clarity about their goals and plans.

  The exercise should take about 15 minutes. Remember to use value-free language that leaves it up to the participants to specify what they see. Don't, for example, talk about cars, buses, and bicycles; just ask them to notice how people move around. Don't use words like "school" or "hospital"; participants' images of an ideally healthy community may not include what we now call hospitals and schools.

- ***Ask participants to write down a list of the images that they found most powerful, surprising or enjoyable.***
  If you are dealing with a non-literate population, and we have done workshops for homeless men and for students in English-as-a-second-language classes, ask then to make a list in their head.

  This is perhaps the most magical moment of the workshop. For five minutes or more, you can hear a pin drop! Once people have completed their lists, take a coffee break.

- ***Divide people into groups of six or eight, keeping the groups as mixed as possible.***
  Ask each group, together with a facilitator, to move to one of the blank flipcharts that are pinned or taped to the wall. They will use these sheets to draw their picture of the ideally healthy community.

- ***Ask all members of the small group to briefly describe one item from their list.***
  This could be their favorite, the one that surprised them most, or whatever. This allows for a quick exploration of the range of ideas among the group and gives some sense of what themes will have to be portrayed in the picture.

- ***Take 30-40 minutes to do a group drawing.***

  Encourage people to draw anything they like. Others can add to it or amend it if it doesn't fit with their vision, but they can't delete it. The aim is to arrive at something that reflects a shared vision within each small group.

  Encourage all members of each group to participate in the drawing. Inform them that no adult can draw better than a seven-year-old child, so they shouldn't be embarrassed by the child-like nature of their collective enterprise. (A golden rule here is that architects, planners, engineers, and professional artists are not allowed to draw first, since they don't draw like seven-year-old children and will intimidate the others.)

  Avoid the use of words as much as possible. Urge people to use symbols instead (dollar signs, for instance, instead of the word "money" or "wealth"). About 20 minutes into the exercise, encourage people to took at their lists and see if there are important themes or issues from their image that are missing. Participants usually find this a lively and often amusing exercise.

- ***Have each group present their drawing.***

  The presenter should be selected by the small group and should not be that group's facilitator. It is useful to videotape this section of the workshop for future reference, to be able to recall accurately what was said and to present the results to other interested groups in the community.

- ***Ask participants to identify the common themes that recur in the pictures***

  Write these on a flipchart at the front of the room. If there are a lot of themes, try and group them without getting too broad and vague. These themes become the basis for identifying priority actions and even for establishing work groups for follow-up, which can take place as another half-day session on the same day, or as a separate half- or full-day workshop.

Appendix C: *Key questions to get you thinking about the assessment*

1. What would you (and community members) like to see happen in the community (i.e., better food access, less farmland lost)?

2. What will it take to get there (projects, policies, public education)?

3. Based on those purposes, what information would be most important for you to include in your Food Sovereignty Assessment?

4. Think ahead about what might be key statistics or bits of information that might make good press, or help make your case. Make sure you include a process to find out that information.

5. What resources do you have or could you realistically procure for the assessment? Are there university or other institutional resources that can be tapped through a partnership with the community?

6. How long do you have or would you like to take to complete an assessment?

7. Based on the purposes of the assessment, how "quick and dirty" versus scientific will it need to be?

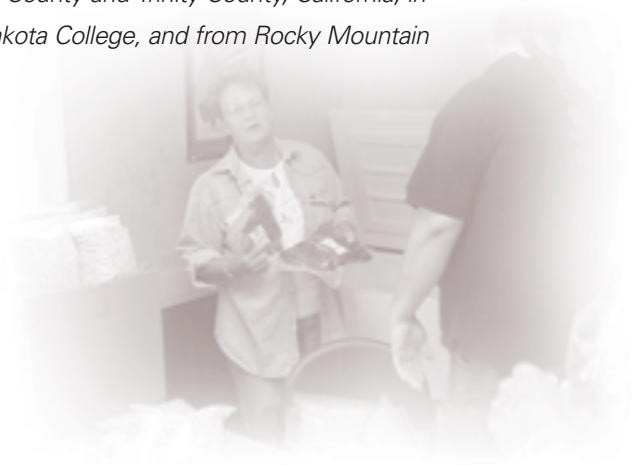
8. Who might you need to involve in moving the process forward from concept to action?

Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

Appendices C and D are intended to be used to create a profile of your community and available resources. Responding to some or all of these questions should provide your community with a better picture of what your current food system looks like in terms of the foods you eat and where they come from, individual and tribal economies, and how your resources are managed. Once you have undergone the process of using this tool and thinking critically about your food system, you can begin to work toward regaining control of your food system assets and improving the physical and economic health of your community.

This survey can be used in a variety of ways and is offered as guidance in creating your own survey, methods, and projects to achieve food sovereignty. It can be used "as is" or questions can be added or eliminated to suit the unique circumstances of your community.

Questions in this survey were derived in part from assessments conducted by communities at the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana, in Calaveras County and Trinity County, California, in Iowa, in Fresno and Hollywood, California, at Oglala Lakota College, and from Rocky Mountain Institute.



Appendix D: *Community member profile*

I. Community food resources

A. How important are the following sources of food for people in your community? That is, how much does your community rely on them as a main source of food?

Please use a check mark to indicate whether it is "very important," "somewhat important," "not very important," or "not at all important." If a source does not exist in your community, please check that column.

Source	very important	somewhat important	not very important	not at all important	does not exist in my community
1. Grocery store	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
2. Convenience store	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
3. Trading post	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
4. Family garden/farm	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
5. Farmers' market	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
6. Food co-op	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
7. Community garden or farm	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
8. School garden or farm	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
9. Tribal farm	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
10. Hunting/gathering	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
11. Trade/barter	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
12. Sharing	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
13. FDPIR/ Commodities Program	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
14. Food Stamps	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
15. Food bank(s)	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
16. Others: _____	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
_____	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
_____	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

B. Who do you consider to be the leaders in solving food problems in your community? Check all that apply.

- ❑ Tribal government
- ❑ Community or nonprofit group(s)
- ❑ Volunteers
- ❑ Religious groups
- ❑ Federal or state health agency staff
- ❑ Federal or state cooperative extension staff
- ❑ Schools/Universities
- ❑ None
- ❑ Others/Comments:

C. Are there certain foods that you need or would like to eat that are difficult to get, or are not available, in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

If yes, what are those foods – and why are they difficult to get or not available:

D. Which of the following equipment or methods for food storage and preparation do you use in your home (check all that apply)?

- ❑ gas/electric stove
- ❑ wood stove
- ❑ microwave
- ❑ refrigerator
- ❑ food drying/dehydrator
- ❑ root cellar
- ❑ hotplate
- ❑ gas/electric oven
- ❑ open fire
- ❑ freezer
- ❑ food canning
- ❑ ice house
- ❑ Other: _____

II. Food assistance

A. Which of these programs do you take part in (check all that apply):

- ❑ Food Stamps
- ❑ Women, Infants, and Children Program
- ❑ National School Lunch Program
- ❑ School Breakfast Program
- ❑ CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)
- ❑ Summer Food Service Program
- ❑ TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)
- ❑ WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- ❑ Commodities programs (FDPIR)
- ❑ Meals on Wheels
- ❑ Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)
- ❑ None
- ❑ Others/Comments:

_____

_____

_____

B. How many days in the past month did you use one of these food assistance programs?

- ❑ 0 days (If you did not use any program in the past month skip to question II. C.)
- ❑ 1–2 days
- ❑ 3–5 days
- ❑ 6–8 days
- ❑ 9–12 days
- ❑ 12 or more days

1. What were the reasons that you used food assistance in the past month?
   Check all that apply.

   - ❑ Unusual expenses this month
   - ❑ Ran out of food stamps
   - ❑ Recent job loss
   - ❑ Continued unemployment
   - ❑ Separation from spouse
   - ❑ Aid temporarily discontinued
   - ❑ Delay in receiving aid/supply shortage
   - ❑ Money/food stamps stolen
   - ❑ Traditional sources of food (fish, game, etc.) not available
   - ❑ Other/Comments:

   _____

   _____

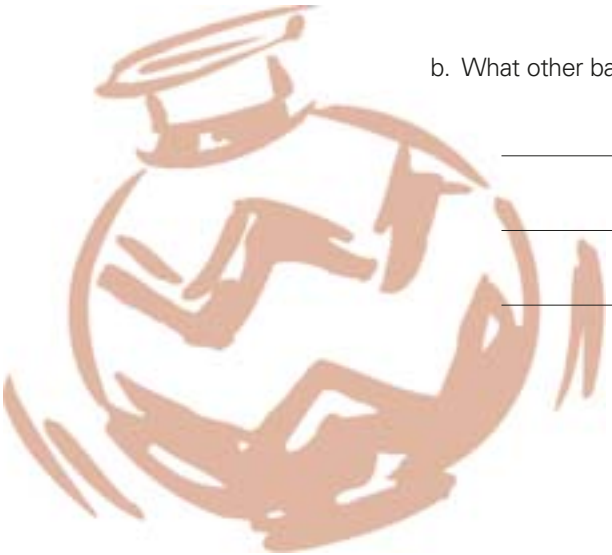
   _____

2. How many days in the past month did you need food assistance but didn't receive it?

   - ❑ 0 times
   - ❑ 1–2 times
   - ❑ 3–5 times
   - ❑ 6–8 times
   - ❑ 9–12 times
   - ❑ 12 or more times

a. What were the reasons that you did not receive food assistance (check all that apply)?

- ❑ Don't think I'm qualified
- ❑ I applied but was turned down
- ❑ It's too much trouble/red tape to apply
- ❑ I'm afraid to apply
- ❑ I don't have any transportation to apply
- ❑ The distance was too far
- ❑ I didn't have gas money
- ❑ I don't know about Food Stamps or other programs
- ❑ Health problems prevent me from applying
- ❑ I don't have child care to go and apply
- ❑ A family member did not want me to come
- ❑ Embarrassment
- ❑ Other/Comments:



b. What other barriers exist, if any, that prevent you from using these programs?

C. Which of the following do you think are useful, or would be useful, in improving your food resources?

Please use a check mark to indicate whether it is "very useful," "somewhat useful," "not very useful," or "not at all useful."

Resource	very useful	somewhat useful	not very useful	not at all useful
Tips on getting the most for my money at the grocery store	❑	❑	❑	❑
Information on nutrition and healthful eating and cooking	❑	❑	❑	❑
Information about government programs for which I might qualify	❑	❑	❑	❑
Help with reading, filling out or understanding forms and applications	❑	❑	❑	❑
A "one-stop" application process for all food assistance programs	❑	❑	❑	❑
Access to transportation	❑	❑	❑	❑
Access to child care	❑	❑	❑	❑
Help with budgeting	❑	❑	❑	❑
Information on how to grow a garden	❑	❑	❑	❑
Information on how to grow traditional foods	❑	❑	❑	❑
Recipes and information for using commodities foods	❑	❑	❑	❑
Recipes and information for preparing traditional foods	❑	❑	❑	❑
Information in my native language	❑	❑	❑	❑

III. Diet and health

A. How would you rate the nutritional quality of your diet?

- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ Very good
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Fair
- ❑ Poor

B. Would you say your health, in general, is:

- ❑ Excellent
- ❑ Very good
- ❑ Good
- ❑ Fair
- ❑ Poor

C. Is information about diet and nutrition available in your community? If yes, please list your three primary sources of information (school, family member, nutritionist, etc.).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. How many times a week do you participate in physical exercise or recreation?

- ❑ 0
- ❑ 1-2
- ❑ 3-4
- ❑ 5 more times per week

E. Have you been told by a health care provider that you are overweight?

❑ No ❑ Yes

IV. Culture

A. How many people do you know in your community who are skilled in traditional farming, hunting, and/or the collection and uses of traditional foods? _____

B. Do you think that young people in your community are interested in food traditions? If not, why do you think this is so?

_____

_____

_____

1. If yes, please explain why you think young people are interested.

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you have suggestions about how to get young people interested?
   If yes, what are they?

_____

_____

_____

C. What traditional agriculture or food-related practices, if any, continue to be used in your community today? Please describe:

_____

_____

_____

1. How many members of your community participate in these activities? _____

2. How are these skills being passed on to others?

_____

_____

_____

D. Where did you learn how to get and prepare food?

- ❑ From a relative
- ❑ In school
- ❑ In 4-H
- ❑ From an extension agent
- ❑ From a dietitian/nutritionist
- ❑ Other

_____

E. Does your community continue to celebrate traditional ceremonies?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, are foods that are required for those ceremonies still available in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

2. If not, please explain why.

F. If you could tell your tribal leaders anything about food and hunger issues in your community, what would you tell them?

G. If you could tell the federal government anything about food and hunger issues in your community, what would you tell them?

Appendix E: *Asset mapping*

V. Organizations and governance

A. Does your community have active groups, including tribal government, working to solve food problems for community members?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, who are these groups and what are they doing:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Do these groups effectively coordinate efforts with each other in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If no, how could they be more effective? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Have any of these groups applied for a state, federal, or other grant?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, please specify which program(s):

_____

_____

4. Have any of them received a federal or other grant?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, please specify which program(s):

_____

_____

B. Do any of the following institutions or programs in your community or region buy food locally – that is, from local community farmers/ranchers, gardeners, food processors, or the tribal farm? Check all that apply.

❑ Grocery stores
❑ Convenience stores
❑ Schools
❑ Elder services/homes
❑ Hotels
❑ Casinos
❑ Government food programs (please list which ones):

_____

_____

❑ Other:

_____

_____

VI. Food and agriculture-related business enterprise

A. Approximately how many people (percentage) in your community earn their income from food and agriculture businesses (including grocers, farmers, implement dealers, etc.)?

Full time: _____%
Part time: _____%

B. How many farms and ranches operate in your community? _____
What number of these are owned/operated by:

Tribal members (or other Natives): _____
The tribe: _____
Non-Natives: _____

C. How many food and farm businesses (such as groceries, farmers' markets, roadside stands, restaurants, co-ops, implement dealers, and others) operate in your community?

_____

1. What number of these are owned/operated by:

Tribal members (or other Natives): _____
The tribe: _____
Non-Natives: _____

D. Do local farmers and ranchers have easy access to production inputs, i.e., seeds, tractors, implements, fertilizers (manure, compost), fuel, etc.?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. What inputs do local producers import from outside your community?

_____

_____

_____

E. Are there any local enterprises that are producing food in your community? If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

F. What happens to locally-produced food? Check all that apply.

- ❑ Given to community members
- ❑ Bartered within the community
- ❑ Sold to community members
- ❑ Sold to local businesses
- ❑ Sold off-reservation
- ❑ Other:

G. Do you have the ability and/or facilities to store food in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

H. Does anyone in your community have experience in:

- ❑ Marketing
- ❑ Traditional foods (growing and/or preparation)
- ❑ Gardening
- ❑ Organic farming
- ❑ Composting
- ❑ Holistic management

1. If yes, who are these people?

_____

_____

_____

2. If these skills exist in your community, how are they being passed on to others?

_____

_____

_____

I. What are the three primary food crops (based on volume and including livestock and fish) grown or harvested in your community?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

J. Do any growers in your community focus on traditional foods?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, please list what those are:

_____

_____

K. Do any growers in your community focus on specialty crops?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, please list what those are:

_____

_____

L. In your community, are there any food processing facilities or other ways for community farmers and ranchers to "add value" to their products? Examples include meat-processing plants and incubator kitchens where you can make jam or salsa.

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

_____

_____

2. If not, how far away are the nearest facilities? _____

M. What support is provided by tribal/government policies and/or services for local food producers in your community (check all that apply)?

❑ None
❑ Financial support (grants, loans, etc.)
❑ Technical assistance (agricultural planning, weed management, etc.)
❑ Donations of land, or the use of land
❑ Donations of water rights, or the use of water
❑ Purchasing or permit preferences
❑ Policies encouraging schools and/or other institutions buy local food if possible

❑ In-kind contributions, such as the use of tribal staff time, use of tribal equipment, seed, etc. (please describe)

_____

_____

❑ Codes or ordinances that favor community farmers/ranchers (please describe)

_____

_____

❑ Other (please describe)

_____

_____

N. What services are available in your community to help new businesses learn effective business practices (examples might be special loan rates, mentoring programs, etc.)?

_____

_____

O. Are there school programs that encourage potential food and agricultural entrepreneurs?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

_____

_____

P. Do local schools or other institutions offer their facilities for economic uses, such as canning, farmers' markets, labeling, etc.?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, please list them and give a brief description.

Q. Do you have a Cooperative Extension or Extension Indian Reservation Program (EIRP) office or agent in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, have you ever used the services of Extension or EIRP?

❑ No ❑ Yes

2. If yes, please describe the services received.

VII. Natural resources and environment

A. What is the geographic size of your community?

Square miles: _____, or
Total acreage: _____

B. How many total acres are under cultivation (i.e., producing crops or livestock)? _____

1. Who owns these acres?

The tribe	_____ (number of acres)
Individual tribal members	_____ (number of acres)
Non-Natives	_____ (number of acres)
Federal, state, or local government	_____ (number of acres)

2. How many acres owned by the tribe are leased to others? _____
3. How many acres owned by individual tribal members are leased to others? _____

C. Please list the top three crops produced on lands in your community. You can list them by number of acres (for example, 150 acres in alfalfa or cotton) or the amount produced (for example, 200 bushels of beans).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. What do farmers and ranchers in your community produce for themselves that might be mass-produced and marketed?

_____

_____

E. Are there good agricultural lands on your reservation that are being used for other things?

❏ No ❏ Yes

1. If yes, what are those lands being used for:

_____

_____

2. What is preventing these lands from being used for agriculture? (For example, they're leased out, they're earmarked for commercial development, etc.)

_____

_____

F. Do farmers and ranchers in your community irrigate?

❏ No ❏ Yes

1. If yes, what is their water source?

_____

2. Who has the rights to this water?

_____

G. Do farmers and ranchers in your community practice "sustainable" agriculture? That is, do they use best management practices for pest control, water conservation, buffers, etc.?

❏ No ❏ Yes

1. If yes, please describe:

_____

_____

H. Does your tribe/community have a land use plan?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, is there a section that plans for agricultural activities and enterprises?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, please describe:

_____

_____

2. Is there a section that plans for the community's food supply?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, please describe:

_____

_____

I. Do you have access to a USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office or employee in your community?

❑ No ❑ Yes

1. If yes, have you ever used the services of NRCS?

❑ No ❑ Yes

a. If yes, please describe the assistance received:

_____

_____

J. What do people in your community believe to be the three main barriers to full tribal/member control and use of agricultural lands in your community? Please describe them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

IX. Community demographics and employment

A. What is the approximate population of your community? _____

B. What is the average household income per year in your community? Please circle one line in the chart below.

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States & D.C.	Alaska	Hawaii
1	$9,310	$11,630	$10,700
2	$12,490	$15,610	$14,360
3	$15,670	$19,590	$18,020
4	$18,850	$23,570	$21,680
5	$22,030	$27,550	$25,340
6	$25,210	$31,530	$29,000
7	$28,390	$35,510	$32,660
8	$31,570	$39,490	$36,320
Each add'l person add	$3,180	$3,980	$3,660

2004 HHS Poverty Guidelines

C. What is the unemployment rate in your community? _____ %

D. Please list the three largest employers in your community, including an estimate of the percentage of the community members who work there:

1. Employer: _____
   Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

2. Employer: _____
   Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

3. Employer: _____
   Percentage of tribal members employed there: _____ %

E. Approximately what percentage of people in your community move away to find work elsewhere? _____ %

F. Approximately what percentage of people in your community move away to go to school? _____ %

G. Approximately what percentage of those living in your community:

Graduated from high school: _____ %
Attended some college: _____ %
Graduated from college: _____ %
Completed an advanced degree: _____ % (Master's, law school, Ph.D.)

Appendix F: *Process – Developing and implementing your own local plans*

(Ken Dahlberg and Tom Hemingway, 1995)

This section was developed by Ken Dahlberg, with the help of Thomas Hemingway, a graduate student at Western Michigan University at the time. The attached detailed outline gives an overview of how to develop an overall planning process. Obviously, it needs to be adapted to your local conditions, something that the above materials on doing a preliminary assessment of your local food system should help you with. Clearly, this is only one of a number of different ways to develop your own local plans and is meant to help you make sure that you have included most of the relevant factors and developed a planning strategy.

A. Phase I: The creation phase

In this phase a small group develops the background and strategy needed to create a new organization or to transform and broaden an existing organization.

1. *Develop an initial vision and set of goals based on a broad concept of local food systems.*
    a. Identify and bring together a small core group to help identify resources, challenges, and opportunities.
    b. Discuss your long-term goals and objectives.
    c. Consider doing a vision exercise. (See Appendices A and B.)

2. *Do a preliminary assessment of your food system.* This involves the identification of resources, challenges, and opportunities by doing an initial inventory of resources related to your local food system. Briefly consider the following to identify the main issues, actors, challenges, and opportunities.

3. *Begin organizing.*
    a. Identify key stakeholders – existing and potential. Establish which are politically and economically important now. Establish which are needed in the longer term to build a healthier system.

b. Arrange a meeting of these key stakeholders to see if they are willing to participate in an effort to create a food policy organization.

B. Phase II: Implementing your organizing strategy

In this phase your larger group goes through the same process as above, but in greater depth and with more specific focus on policy needs and opportunities.

1. *For this larger group, develop an initial vision and set of goals based on a broad concept of local food systems.*

   a. Discuss long-term goals and objectives.
   b. Consider doing a vision exercise.

2. *Develop a deeper understanding of the resources, challenges, and opportunities of your particular food system by going beyond your preliminary inventory to a more in-depth assessment.* Again, consider the main issues, actors, challenges, and opportunities. In addition, have each participating group prepare a brief history of food policy issues of importance to them and then jointly discuss the longer-term policy needs of your community.

3. *Determine what type of organization or network you are going to be.*

   a. Discuss your organizational strategy: what will work best for you? A network, a forum, a coalition, a clearing-house type organization, or an action organization or network?

4. *Build your organization/network.* This includes getting your organization formally established (by-laws, tax-exempt status, officers, etc.) and launching it – hopefully with lots of attendant publicity. During this process also start organizing for the longer-term as well, by planning how to:

   a. Obtain funding and staff support.

   b. Structure your committees and/or taskforces.

   c. Structure an annual cycle–meetings, workloads, retreats, etc..

   d. Develop procedures for running meetings that include both mechanics (location, minutes, etc.) and group dynamics.

e. Develop a resource base - data, research, reports, a history of your efforts, etc.

f. Create and distribute publicity.

5. *Develop policy goals, policy targets, and specific policy campaigns.* This includes:

   a. Examining the interactions between long- medium- and short-term policy goals and objectives to come up with realistic policy targets by (1) assessing bureaucratic feasibility, and (2) assessing political feasibility.

   b. Developing specific policy campaigns.

6. *Establish an ongoing set of procedures for operation and evaluation.* The above cycles of goal-setting, research and analysis, and policy action can be repeated as the organization and/or conditions change. It is important to build into your annual cycle a formal time to assess successes and failures in order to guide planning for the future. An annual report and retreat is useful here. Also, some sort of outside evaluation can be very helpful.

Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool

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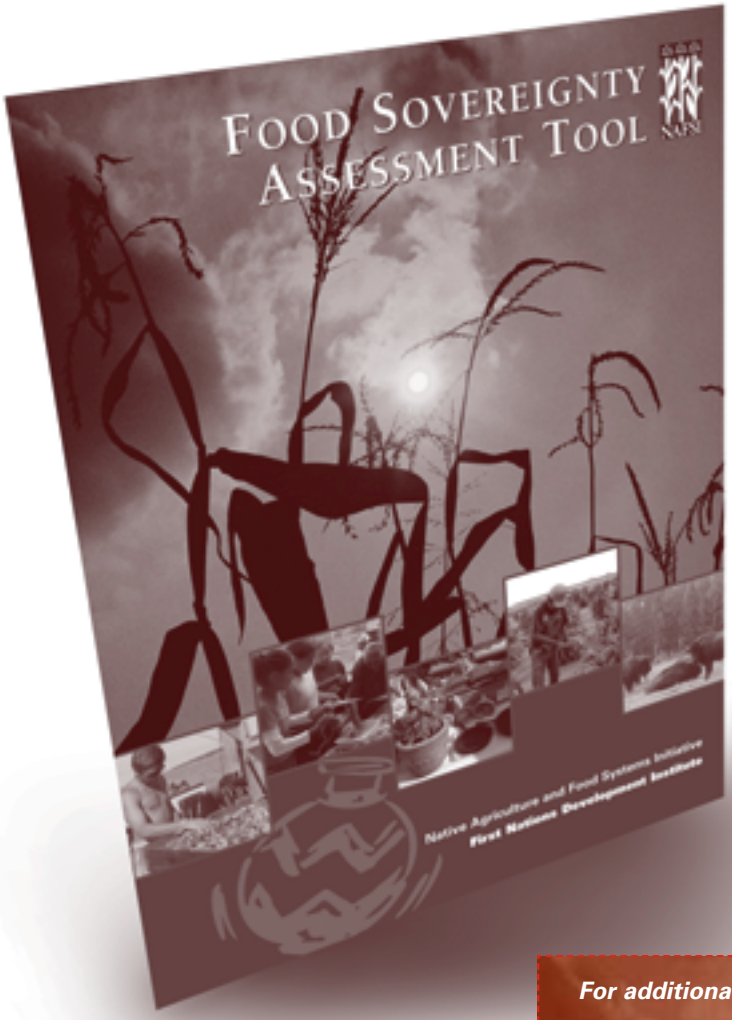

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Would you be interested in attending a training session on how to implement the Food Sovereignty Assessment Tool and learning more about Native American food systems?
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Alaska bison herd.
Photo: Alicia Bell-Sheeter, (2004).

Morgan Yazzie in his cornfield.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001).

Santa Fe Farmers' Market.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001-2003).

Jared Hammond at Menemsha Pond, Wampanoag Aquinnah Shellfish Hatchery on Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.
Photo: Rob Garrison (2003).

Mary Ann Morris and students from the Little Singer Community School in Birdsprings at a Food Workshop.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001).

Gloria Murphy in her corn field.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001).

Alaska bison herd.
Photo: Alicia Bell-Sheeter, (2004).

Photo: Jerry Reynolds (2002).

Photo: Jerry Reynolds (2002).

Pat Cornelius, Oneida Nation Farm (Wisconsin).
Photo: Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (2002)

Manuel Purcel, Tribal Elder, cleaning and sorting single Pacific oysters at Agate Pass, Puget Sound.
Photo: Vivianne Barry.

Wayne George, Suquamish Tribe Executive Director, and other tribal members at shellfish bake during the annual canoe journey celebration.
Photo: Vivianne Barry.

Diné Community Food Project.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001-2003).

Morgan Yazzie.
Photo: Hank Willie (2003).

Diné Community Food Project.
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Photo: Hank Willie (2001-2003).

Diné Community Food Project.
Photo: Hank Willie (2001-2003).

John Oleyar, fisheries biologist, loading tank with Pacific oyster clutch at Suquamish Tribal Center.
Photo: Vivianne Barry.

Ed Carriere, Tribal Elder, sampling shellfish during the traditional bake at the Suquamish Tribal Center.
Photo: Vivianne Barry.

Oneida Nation Farm.
Photo: Oneida Community Integrated Food Systems (2002)

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