



Recipe for the Future of Food in New York City

Working Document
June 2013



About Food Systems Network NYC

Food Systems Network NYC (FSNYC) is a membership organization dedicated to fostering communication and cultivating collaboration amongst stakeholders to achieve a food system that provides healthful, safe, and sustainably and regionally produced food to all New Yorkers and treats food producers and workers fairly. Our members and supporters include professionals, academics, students, advocates, and other individuals from community groups, not-for-profit organizations, and government agencies with interest and expertise in nutrition, hunger, health, urban and rural agriculture, and our regional farm and food economy. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.foodsystemsnyc.org/> or e-mail us at info@foodsystemsnyc.org.

Contributors

Michael Addison
Hilary Baum
Amanda Berhaupt
Gabrielle Blavatsky
Sarah Brannen
Mary Cleaver

Mark Dunlea
Margaret Dunn-Carver
Erika Eitland
Fern Gale Estrow
Stacey Flanagan
Thomas Forster

Noah Isaacs
Caitlin Salemi
Ed Yowell
Carolyn Zezima



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
Our Vision.....	4
Why We Need a Recipe Now	4
RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD IN NEW YORK CITY.....	7
A New Public Partnership for Food	8
Better Health and an End to Hunger	10
A Strong Food Economy with Good Jobs	12
Support for Regional Agriculture through Smart Procurement and Protection of our Working Land and Water Resources	13
New Farm-to-Plate Distribution Infrastructure.....	15
Better Food Waste Reduction and Nutrient Recovery	16
APPENDIX I: Summarized List of Recipe Ingredients	18
APPENDIX 2: Endnotes	22



INTRODUCTION

New York City is a food town, perhaps THE food town in the United States. What better way to call for a better food future for our city than in the context of a Recipe? And so, Food Systems Network NYC offers this *Recipe for the Future of Food in New York City* as our vision for food systems change in New York to inspire policy change by our city's leaders. It is our hope that this Recipe will provide the basis for conversations throughout communities and across sectors to help others find their voices, become engaged, and collaborate for food systems change. FSNYC invites all to use this Recipe for planning, discussion, and advocacy, as we all consider the future of food in New York City.

Our Vision

New York is in a time of transition and now more than ever, we need a real food plan for our city. The recent events of Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 brought the importance of our food system and our interdependence on one another into sharp relief. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, many City neighborhoods went without grocery stores, having to rely on under-resourced, over-burdened emergency food providers. And, even two growing seasons after Tropical Storm Irene, many upstate farmers still have not recovered economically while, according to American Farmland Trust, our state is losing farmland at the rate of one farm every 3½ days. We are confronting the realities of climate change and discussing the costs of recovery, rebuilding, resilience, and adaptation. All the while, we are still climbing out of the Great Recession and hunger persists in our city, with a record number of residents on some form of assistance. New York is now in an election year when we must choose our city-wide leadership. Electing leaders who understand the importance of our food system is critical.

Our health, our economy, and our environment have always been inextricably tied to our food system. There has been much progress in New York City in the past decade to raise awareness and to implement new policies to improve it. Yet our work is not done and there is across this city and state a resounding call to action. The upcoming city-wide and City Council elections present an important opportunity to draw public attention to key food policy issues and options that will help New York City achieve a more sustainable, resilient, economically stronger, and fairer food system to benefit every New Yorker.

Why We Need a Recipe Now

New York City has taken significant steps in recent years to build a stronger food system, benefitting from strong leadership on food policy issues from Mayor Bloomberg and his administration, City Council Speaker Quinn and City Council members, Manhattan Borough President Stringer, and other elected officials and City staffs. Key initiatives of these offices include: the FRESH (Food Retail Expansion to Support Health), Health Bucks, Green Carts, and Shop Healthy NYC (formerly Healthy Bodegas) programs, the appointment of a City Food Policy Coordinator, the FoodWorks strategic plan, a cross-cutting food section in PlaNYC, and, recently, the Food Waste Challenge program. As we consider a Recipe for the Future of Food in New York City, we first call upon the next administration to sustain and enhance the important food-related initiatives undertaken during the past few years.



City and grassroots efforts have made positive change, but hunger, lack of physical and economic access to ample, healthy food, lack of fairness to food system workers, loss of farmland, and inefficient waste management remain challenges to be met.

Action by communities and organizations like the New York City food and farm bill working groups,¹ convened around the 2008 and the present Farm Bill efforts, the NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization,² the Brooklyn Food Coalition,³ the Partnership for a Healthier NYC,⁴ School Food FOCUS (a program of Public Health Solutions,⁵ and urban farming and community garden groups⁶ demonstrate the significant degree of present grassroots awareness and action around food system issues. This recent momentum, among both policy makers and City residents shows that the time is ripe to empower and advocate for greater change in our food system.

Despite this positive and inspiring momentum, there are still many problems that must be addressed. For example, newly released data from the USDA shows that the number of households struggling to put food on the table is increasing. Between 2009 and 2011, over 13% of state residents were food insecure, a 2% increase over the prior four-year period.⁷ Paradoxically, food insecure and low-income individuals are especially vulnerable to obesity and diet-related diseases.⁸ Obesity among food insecure and low-income people is high, partially due to the broad-based trend in America toward increased calorie intake, but also because they face unique environmental challenges related to food access -- both geographical and financial.⁹

A widespread shortage of neighborhood grocery stores and supermarkets in New York City affects nearly three million people, and low-income neighborhoods have the highest need.¹⁰ Healthy food is often more expensive than refined and processed foods, which are cheaper and more readily available. Households with limited resources in low-income communities therefore often try to stretch their food budgets by purchasing foods that often have low nutritional quality and high caloric content, circumstances that have been linked to obesity.¹¹

Workers all along the food chain face challenges, from farmworkers to processors to retail and restaurant workers. Most food system workers lack access to benefits and disproportionately rely on public support,¹² and food retail jobs are often either part-time or temporary.¹³ Adding to these difficult working conditions is the risk of wage theft. A 2009 report found that approximately \$18.4 million in employer wage theft occurs in New York City each week – almost \$1 billion taken from low-wage employees each year.¹⁴ Also, in May 2013, the New York State Attorney General’s Office launched an investigation of allegations of massive wage theft among fast food retailers. This investigation came at the heels of the issuance of a report by Fast Food Forward, a coalition of workers rights groups, called “New York’s Hidden Crime Wave: Wage Theft and NYC’s Fast Food Workers,”¹⁵ in which 84 percent of New York City fast food workers surveyed reported that their employer had committed some form of wage theft over the previous year.

What’s more workers in New York’s agricultural industry often fall outside the protection of national labor laws and confront immigration policies that affect not only their livelihoods but also the long-term viability of our agricultural economy. For example, it is estimated that 50% of agricultural workers in the United States are undocumented immigrant workers, some of whom are employed in guest worker programs and who often work long hours with no overtime pay and no right to collective bargaining.^{16,17,18} Across all sectors of the food system workers are especially



susceptible to labor abuses, as they have limited leverage or means to seek better working conditions.¹⁹

The regional working lands that produce our food face challenges as well -- including loss of farms, farm consolidation, and environmental degradation. Our state has been losing farmland at a rapid rate -- the equivalent of one farm every three and a half days -- to development over the last 25 years, which is threatening food security and local economies.²⁰ Food shortages after Hurricane Sandy are one example of how the distribution system that supplies food to the City is vulnerable, outdated, and in critical need of attention.

Before the food that our regional farms produce is even consumed, as much as 27% of it is discarded and, after it is prepared and eaten, leftover food scraps make up 21.4% of residential waste.²¹ New York City produces an immense amount of waste -- an average of 5.15 pounds of garbage every day per person -- a considerable portion of which comes from the food system.²² As our landfills fill and more waste must be exported from the City, the cost of disposing our waste increases. From 1999 to 2011, the cost of waste disposal increased from \$110 million to \$310 million.²³ This organic material breaks down in landfills and creates methane, a greenhouse gas that is 23 times more potent than CO₂ and represents 1.8% of GHG emissions nationally.²⁴ These high levels of waste, upstream and downstream, in the food system create inefficiencies that have negative economic and environmental impacts.

The institutional framework needed to optimize our food system is complex because the sectors that operate to provision New York City are disparate and often remain uncoordinated, though their roles and contributions are essential. Many City agencies are involved in food, from production to food service to waste recovery. As noted above, significant actions have been taken by the City in the last decade to build a stronger food system. Yet, there is no entity that clearly links and integrates the many food-related operations of these agencies and activities. A more comprehensive approach is necessary with more expansive coordination across all sectors of the food system. And, beyond simply involving City offices and agencies, future food system governance must include more citizen engagement and greater transparency.



RECIPE FOR THE FUTURE OF FOOD IN NEW YORK CITY

Every recipe has ingredients. So it is with this recipe, from the staples that are essential to the success of any recipe to the good, local, New York City ingredients that will make a more secure, just, and healthful food system.

We invite the next Mayor of the City of New York, and other officials, to lead the way towards a more resilient, economically robust, fairer, and sustainable food system, one that ensures greater food and nutrition security for all New Yorkers. With this *Recipe for the Future of Food in New York City* -- recognizing the magnitude and complexity of the economic, environmental and health problems the City faces -- Food Systems Network NYC members and friends advocate for an integrated approach to address interrelated challenges.

“Policy Staples” ...from the Pantry

This Recipe, like all recipes, must start with important staples. We believe that New York City must:

- *Value and support the role of food and agriculture in our region’s human, economic, and environmental health and in food security;*
- *Support businesses and organizations that produce, process, and distribute local and healthful food;*
- *End hunger through universal access to ample, affordable, local, healthful, sustainably produced, and culturally meaningful food;*
- *Support communities suffering high incidences of food insecurity and diet-related disease;*
- *Provide for inclusive community participation in food system policy and program development and synergistic, inter-departmental and inter-governmental action on food issues; and*
- *Create a resilient regional food system that will better withstand the effects of climate change.*

This *Recipe for the Future of Food in New York City* calls for ingredients from six categories:

- **A New Public Partnership for Food**
- **Better Health and an End to Hunger**
- **A Strong Food Economy with Good Jobs**
- **Support for Regional Agriculture through Smart Procurement and Protection of Working Land and Water Resources**
- **New Farm-to-Plate Distribution Infrastructure**
- **Better Food Waste Reduction and Nutrient Recovery**

For a summarized list of ingredients, see Appendix I.



A New Public Partnership for Food

The next administration should develop, as the centerpiece for achieving food and nutrition security in New York City, a new, integrated management structure, that engages both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, to inform the creation, implementation, and evaluation of food policies and programs and a real food plan for the City.

A New City Food Policy and Management Structure: Food-related responsibilities of government -- including planning, distribution, food assistance, education, procurement, preparation, service, and waste recovery -- should be examined with a view to better integrate their food-related functions to achieve greater effectiveness. A food policy coordinator position was created in the Bloomberg Administration, as was, subsequently, an interagency task force. However, this task force is not integrated with a citizen participation mechanism, making it difficult to assess its effectiveness. To address this issue, the City should create a new management structure within government to better coordinate the food-related activities of City agencies and engage citizens through a City of New York Department of Food, or a similarly empowered mechanism for enhanced inter-agency coordination and reporting. A fully resourced and authoritative Department of Food that reports to the Mayor could:

- Further increase access to food support programs through closely coordinating agency outreach and education activities across agencies (HRA, Health, Planning, EDC, DoE, etc.);
- Continue to make the food served by publicly funded agencies healthier by facilitating the purchase of whole, minimally processed, and regionally produced food;
- Link regional food producers, rural and urban, with urban food processors and promote food grown and processed in New York City and the region; and
- Facilitate governmental and non-governmental efforts to increase and expand healthful food production through investment in processing and access infrastructure.

Whichever form the new structure takes, it should be authorized to integrate food and farm policy engagement throughout every office of government and stage of the food cycle to influence State

The City must create new, integrated food system management structures, engaging both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, to inform the creation, implementation, management, and evaluation of food policies and programs through a Department of Food and a Food Systems Council.

and federal food and farm policy to benefit of the City. The process for selecting and implementing the new structure must be transparent, inclusive, and participatory. FSNYC recommends that to ensure a process that has mandatory public participation and the force of law, the City should create and adopt a formal food plan pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter, which authorizes community boards and borough boards, as well as the Mayor, the City Planning Commission, the Department of City Planning, and any Borough President, to sponsor plans for the development, growth, and improvement of the City, its boroughs and communities. Promulgation of new City governance mechanisms should authorize and reference a parallel New York City Food Systems Council.



A New York City Food Systems Council: An independent New York City Food Systems Council should be created and supported as a permanent, funded advisory body that:

- Fosters discussion and learning among diverse stakeholders;
- Identifies food system related challenges and recommends solutions; and
- Provides program and policy recommendations and guidance to the City.

This Council, working with and advising the City, will focus on reaching across the spectrum of public and private entities active at each stage of the food system to help create and maintain access to ample, healthful, affordable, culturally meaningful, and sustainably and regionally produced and distributed food. This Council would work towards building a food system that is economically strong, fair to producers, processors, distributors, workers, and eaters and resilient in the face of climate change.

The ultimate structure and composition of the Council should not be dictated by an individual entity. Rather, it must be the result of a democratic and collaborative process between the City, community organizations, and citizens. There are multiple ways that such an advisory body can be structured, in terms of its relationship to government, its membership composition and selection, and its mechanisms for engaging community and citizen voices. Food Systems Network NYC recommends that the Council be funded and supported by the City and philanthropic organizations and provide for active citizen participation and leadership and capacity building, building on existing, strong community-based food movements in the City.

To develop a model for a Council that will serve as a transparent, public institution, the next Mayor should provide funding for an eight- to twelve-month planning phase during which a steering committee of leaders from different food systems perspectives will conduct research and host a series of educational and listening sessions to inform the creation of a New York City Food Systems Council and propose options that incorporate high levels of ongoing citizen participation. New York could look to the example set by Edmonton, Canada, with a population of 817,000, budgeted \$1 million for a food planning process that engaged citizens.

Input gathered in this planning phase should inform the mission, vision, goals, functions, and structure of the Council. Because of New York City's size and diversity across sectors, the steering committee should explore the option of creating representative borough sub-councils. Funding should be allocated within this council for training, education, and recruitment events to bring citizens into the policy making process both during the initial planning stages of the council and after it is established.



Better Health and an End to Hunger

City leaders should ensure that all residents have physical and financial access to ample, nutritious, affordable, and culturally meaningful food and encourage New Yorkers to be healthier through better integration of efforts across City agencies.

Physical Access: Numerous agencies are responsible for providing food assistance programs such as SNAP and school meals, as well as smaller, but equally important programs for feeding children in day care settings and seniors. Innovations like Health Bucks and Green carts provide food access as well. City offices are also responsible for increasing the presence of full service food markets (including small and medium-scale markets), farmers markets, community and school gardens, and increasing the availability of good New York City tap water in public spaces. As described above, through a new management structure, the City should better coordinate and integrate all of the programs intended to increase access to healthy food.

The agencies managing these programs must strengthen connections between community demand for healthy, regional, and sustainably grown food and the agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations that provide such food. City agencies that plan community and economic development should do more to incorporate both urban and rural food supply in city planning and program implementation, leveraging the public treasury through expanding and streamlining existing and future food-related incentives, and grants across programs in various markets to support a more sustainable, economically stronger, and fairer food system.

Access to healthy food is more than grocery stores. The City must support and expand programs that make healthy food the easy and affordable choice for families at home and children at school.

Financial Access: The greatest underlying cause of poor health, malnutrition, and hunger is poverty.²⁵ While the City of New York has put in place several programs to help improve residents' physical access to food, having a vendor in close proximity to one's home that sells healthy food is little help if one is unable to afford that food. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Health Bucks program is the largest City funded and coordinated nutrition incentive program of its kind in the country. The incentives provided through the program are valid at farmers markets in the City. These markets not uniformly accessible to City residents because of changing locations and days and times of operation, are extraordinarily important to regional agriculture and the sustainable availability of fresh, local food in the City.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) is the only program of its kind in the United States. While this is remarkable, the program has not had a funding increase since 2007, despite dramatic increase in need. Human Resource Administration funds emergency food for distribution at hundreds of soup kitchens and food pantries throughout the boroughs. The City has successful outreach programs to enroll those persons eligible, but not participating in SNAP. More can be done to reach this vulnerable population.²⁶

While these programs have been important in helping to address hunger and access to healthful food, they are not long-term solutions for families looking to get out of poverty or improve their



food security. The cost of living in New York City is incredibly high and the current minimum wage is not enough for a family of two or more to afford to purchase the basket of food recommended by the USDA for a healthy diet.²⁷ In 2013, full time minimum wage workers in New York earn a total of \$290 per week, approximately \$15,080 per year (based on 8 hour days and a 260-day work year) before taxes. This annual salary is just barely above the federal poverty threshold for a household of two, \$14,570 per year.²⁸ Thus, in order to help reduce hunger and food insecurity and the underlying poverty at the root of these problems, the City of New York should work with the Governor's Office to raise the minimum wage in New York State to a living wage to ensure that all City residents can afford nutritious, healthy food for themselves and their families.

School Meals: Citywide, approximately 75% of public school children in New York City are eligible for free and reduced price lunch under federal definitions.²⁹ However, only approximately 29% of children eligible for this program receive breakfast.³⁰ Children who eat a healthy breakfast at school have been shown to perform better throughout the day, have improved attention and attendance, and have fewer discipline problems. Despite these demonstrated nutritional and educational benefits, the school breakfast program is not well utilized.³¹ Unlike school lunch, this program is at the discretion of school principals. We applaud the City of New York for its school food efforts to date and ask that the Department of Education take full advantage of the reimbursable cost of breakfast for lower income students by mandating breakfast in the classroom at high needs schools. This way, students that need the program most will be able to utilize it with minimal, additional cost to the City.

In addition, as the largest school food meals provider in the county, with over 860,000 meals per day, we encourage the Department of Education to testify on the federal level as to the importance of increased funding for school meal programs and to determine the feasibility of offering universal free school meals. Increasing funding for these programs in the next federal Child Nutrition Reauthorization process could help improve the quality of the food provided to students in schools around the City and expand meal programs for low-income students. New York's Office of School Food has been a pioneer among larger city school districts in advancing more healthful, more regionally sourced and more sustainably produced food. New York should be among largest school districts in the US to adopt new specifications and standards to significantly reduce the use of antibiotics in meat products served in school meals, starting with chicken, the largest source of protein in school food.

Food System Education: Food system education is critical. The next Mayor must use the bully pulpit afforded by the office, much as First Lady Michelle Obama has, to help our children become more food literate and expand interdisciplinary food literacy curricula in schools from kindergarten through high school. The City should expand upon innovations already found in its garden-to-cafeteria, urban farm, and teen chef projects. In elementary schools, food literacy curricula should be instituted using classroom-scale gardens and healthful food taste education. In middle and high schools, curricula should include healthful food choice and preparation, the cultural connections of food to communities, and food justice. And, of course, food education must be accompanied by physical education. These efforts should be supported by public nutrition education spending and matched by a Mayor's Healthy Kids Fund sponsored by philanthropic donors. Also, the City should initiate an integrated school garden support mechanism to help develop and maintain school gardens that support the connection between the benefits of growing and eating healthful food. Finally, ingredients of school meals and the sources of those ingredients, including the presence of



any genetically-engineered (GE) foods, should be published by the Office of School Food as positive outreach and education.

Federal Food and Farm Safety Nets: New York City has a vital role to play in upholding the federal food and farm safety nets. This includes, but is not limited to, the City using its unique position to ensure strong and adequately funded Farm and Child Nutrition Bills, that will be enacted on the next administration's watch. Although there are structural barriers impeding the City's ability to interact directly with the federal government on these issues, better relations and coordination with the New York State on these matters is possible, and such cooperation could help ensure better access to healthful food for underserved communities.

A Strong Food Economy with Good Jobs

The City should recognize, reward, and protect and expand food related employment across the food chain.

Food and farm jobs extend from production through distribution, processing and manufacturing, wholesale and retail sales, and restaurant and food service and should be a focus for the City's new green and fair jobs agenda. According to the New York Department of Labor, non-farm, food-related jobs comprise about 15% of New York City's workforce.

Food Chain and Farm Workers: Ironically, the workers who put food on our tables are among those least able to put it on their own tables. Many workers in the City's food industry, whether in markets or restaurants, earn low wages, work only part-time or temporarily, lack access to benefits, and rely disproportionately on public support. The next administration should adopt several policies to address these economic issues. The City should support a living wage for all workers that will enable them to afford food for themselves and their families, along with other necessities like housing, utilities, health care and transportation. Additionally, the City should ensure that all

The City must encourage a thriving food economy by supporting a living wage for food system workers, advocating for farmworkers' rights, lowering barriers to food processors, and encouraging the purchase of food made in New York City.

companies that receive economic development incentives -- not just those that contract with the City - - pay a living wage to their workers. Among the most vulnerable food workers are farmworkers, who tend the fields that produce the food on New Yorkers' plates. The next Mayor should support state legislation to protect the rights of farmworkers and seek reform of federal guest farmworker policy, as part of comprehensive immigration reform, one that is market driven and mutually beneficial to farmers and farmworkers alike, providing employers with an ample supply of skilled labor and employees with a safe and secure source of fairly compensated work.

Food Processing: The federal government is considering new standards to improve the safety of our food supply through the Food Safety and Modernization Act. However, these rules could potentially cause undue financial burden to smaller and mid-scale producers, which comprise the majority of regional farm and New York City processors. The Mayor should work to insure that the Food Safety Modernization Act does not become an obstacle to the regional supply of food for, and produced in, New York City.



Promotion: With over 8 million food-buying residents, \$30 billion in food spending, 24,000 restaurants, 5,500 supermarkets and grocery stores, over 1700 food distributors, and “an institutional food budget second only to the United States military,”³² local food production could have a strong impact on New York City’s food economy. The Mayor should proclaim a city-wide “Eat Right New York” day, focused on calling attention to the benefits of eating local, healthful, sustainably, and fairly produced food and drinking and enjoying good, clean New York City water. To further support local foods, the City should create a “Made in New York City” brand to promote and highlight foods and beverages produced in New York City using principal ingredients grown and raised in New York City and State. An associated marketing program that partners with New York City urban farmers, food processors (including canned, frozen and dried products, juices, pickles, baked goods, prepared meals, etc.), retailers, distributors, and restaurants could highlight the benefits of fresh, locally-produced food products and build a brand and consumer awareness of food that is “Made in New York City.”

Support for Regional Agriculture through Smart Procurement and Protection of our Working Land and Water Resources

The next administration should support regional agriculture by focusing on and supporting urban-rural linkages and through smart food purchasing and protection of agricultural resources.

Procurement: Farmers markets and CSAs, community gardens growing food, and “local” being the “hot trend” in food marketing attest to the fact that increasing demand for source-identified, sustainably and humanely produced, local food is here to stay. This trend includes institutions, like schools and hospitals, and a growing proportion of the general public, all around the City. New York City government agencies spend over \$175 million annually on food procurement for its food programs, such as senior meals, hospitals, schools, summer and after-school programs.³³ The food buying power wielded by the City to provide 270 million meals and snacks each year must act as an engine for both City and regional economic growth and Mayoral Executive

Order 122 sets nutrition requirements for City agencies and New York City Law 50 implements guidelines that encourage the purchase of New York State produced foods. The City should build on these two laws by more fully employing local price preference, by valuing the healthfulness, and environmental sustainability and economic benefits, of serving food produced in the City’s regional, New York, foodshed.

To achieve environmental, economic, and public health benefits, the City must support regional agriculture through enhanced urban/rural food system linkages, the procurement of more regionally produced food, the protection of our working land and water resources, and the development of new farmers.

Farm and Farmer Preservation: New York City boasts one of the most comprehensive, innovative, and effective approaches to protection of its water supply in the world. A key to this approach is City funding of the Watershed Agriculture Council that helps farms in the City’s watershed protect our water resources. The City’s 16-year-old program to conserve lands within its one million acre



watershed has protected more than 96,000 acres through the purchase of conservation easements and fee acquisitions. The program increased the percentage of protected land in the watershed basin from 24 percent to 34 percent. The City contributes about \$6 million annually to support Purchases of Development Rights (PDRs) in the watershed.² Similar measures are needed for the City's "foodshed," Beyond support for State farmland protection programs, the City should enact a new program, built on the concept of creating a "New York City Food Security Zone," recognizing the importance of sustaining our regional foodshed to ensure that an increasing proportion of the City's food supply is always available within one day's driving distance. Strategically focusing on the most effective farm preservation opportunities, as determined by, for example, farm productive capacity, size, and proximity to critical masses of other productive farms, the City, as a participant in a larger partnership, including governmental (other local, state, State and foodshed, federal) and philanthropic organizations, land trusts, and impact investors (focusing on social, environmental, and economic objectives), could be a "game-changer" in preserving farmland in the face of development and, thereby, helping ensure the continued availability of a sustainable, near-by, source of the food it needs.

While protecting regional farmland is critical to a continued supply of regionally produced food, ensuring that there are farmers to farm it is equally important. The Mayor should support State and federal programs that encourage new, beginning, and disadvantaged farmers, both rural and urban.

The surest way to preserve family farms is to keep them profitable. In addition to increasing markets, reducing costs are an important bottom line factor. New York's farms, mostly small and family owned, producing extremely labor intensive products, including dairy, apples and other fruits, and vegetables, have among the highest labor costs of production in the nation, \$13.82 per \$100 of product sold, compared to \$8.88, nationally, and pay among the highest property taxes in the nation, about \$26.21 per acre, compared to \$6.75, nationally. The next Mayor should support State legislation that would help lighten the financial burden borne by New York farmers, including legislation that would reduce farm property taxes and estate taxes, that would help the next generation of farmers stay on their family farms, and that would reduce fees and assessments for State services and compliance with State regulations.

To increase knowledge about the origins of the food the State serves and, thereby, facilitate future decisions regarding State food purchase policies that would support our regional food economy, the City should support State legislation, modeled on FoodWorks, to facilitate local food purchase and require agencies to collect and report on the origins of the food purchased and served by the State.³

Environmental Stewardship: Critical also is the Mayor's engagement on the State level with risk mitigation for New York City's food and water from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas, so this rapidly growing industry does not undermine the health of our region. This form of drilling is widespread in 34 states, including Pennsylvania, where it is wreaking havoc on farms and water supply. In states where fracking occurs, leaks and spills have stunted and killed crops and livestock and sickened humans. Abundant evidence has shown that fracking is hazardous to air, water, and land. Contamination occurs from methane and toxic fracking chemicals, as well as from the transportation and disposal of toxic -- and at times radioactive -- wastewater.

Genetically Engineered (GE) foods, transgenic foods derived from plants and animals that have



been modified through genetic engineering, are a source of controversy regarding their long-term effects on environmental health, human health, and our food chain. The ubiquity of GE foods, the lack of GE food labeling, and the power of corporate GE food proponents infringe on the rights of farmers to farm traditionally and sustainably and of eaters to eat as they choose. The City should support sustainable agriculture and the rights of farmers and eaters alike by requiring its food suppliers to provide information about GE content in the food it procures and serves and by supporting federal and State legislation requiring GE food labeling.

Urban Agriculture: Urban food production has become a vital part of the New York City food environment. The next Mayor should link green city jobs and economic development more directly to urban gardens, farms, and orchards and the protection of biodiversity. The role of food growing landscapes in low-income communities is clearly a vital benefit on many levels -- social, public health, and economic. The new metrics for evaluation of the City's food production environment should be improved upon to better reflect urban food production and we must secure tenure for lands used for food production and biodiversity-protection.

New Farm-to-Plate Distribution Infrastructure

The next administration should enhance the City's food distribution infrastructure to provide a safe, secure, ample, and healthful supply of food, well into the future.

The City's investment in food distribution infrastructure, both physical and human, will help meet the growing demand for local food while yielding social, economic, and human and environmental health benefits.

Hunts Point and Food Distribution:

Redevelopment of the wholesale food market at Hunts Point, through which as much as 60% of the City's supply of produce flows, is just one aspect of New York City's food distribution and wholesale market system. This redevelopment, including a place for regional foods in new market planning, should be approached with a comprehensive investment in New York City's market infrastructure, including wholesale,

retail, and processing infrastructure in all five boroughs, as recommended by the City Council in FoodWorks and as contained in the Mayor's PlaNYC.

Physical Infrastructure and Human Resource Development: The City should create a Food Infrastructure Investment Fund, structured as a private-public partnership, to support the development of food production and distribution infrastructure, both physical and human. This partnership should include government, business, and nonprofit organizations seeking to support and enhance the physical infrastructure and human resources necessary for the future of food production and distribution in both New York City and the region.

In light of the impacts of Hurricane Sandy, the City should ensure that climate resilience is a priority and a part of the soft infrastructure (human resource development) investment of the City. A primary goal for the public sector contribution to a Food Infrastructure Investment Fund should be disaster risk reduction. This goal should be pursued through collaboration between public and private sectors to plan for emergency food preparedness. Such an investment in human resources



will help assure timely distribution of healthy foods following severe weather events, with an emphasis on serving vulnerable and low-income populations.

Moreover, with demand rising for supplies of regionally produced, source-identified products, including dairy, fruits and vegetables, meat, and grains, the City, in a coordinated initiative, should designate a healthy and sustainable Food Procurement Specialist position in each Agency purchasing food, to be coordinated and guided by the Department of Food (or other inter-agency food management structure), and create Regional Food Distribution Teams, to be guided and coordinated by the New York City Food Systems Council, to assist, respectively, City agencies and institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to integrate the added values of human, economic, social, and environmental health into the purchase of food and to link rural production more directly to urban markets.

Refreshing FRESH: A reinvention of the FRESH program, to reinstate retail markets in underserved, low income neighborhoods, should include investments in good paying food jobs in small- and medium-scale food retail operations, reduction of redundant food transport, and reduction of bottlenecks in the aggregation, processing, and storage of regionally produced foods that compete with commodity foods imported from outside the region.

Better Food Waste Reduction and Nutrient Recovery

The next administration should address the third of the City's food supply that goes to waste by making food waste and nutrient/resource recovery a priority for the food and nutrition security of the City.

Food Recovery: Proposals to expand food recovery across the food chain, from regional farms to markets, restaurants, and homes, have been made, but not formally implemented, as city-wide policy. Food loss in production, transport, and processing can be addressed through incentives and distribution programs of City and nonprofit agencies.

Composting and Nutrient Recovery: Recent experience with household composting at farmers markets can be expanded to capture nutrients from food waste that is unfit for human consumption but that is an important source of nutrients for regional agriculture. Current stockpiles of non-toxic, organic waste exported from the City should be redirected to regional farms for fertilization needs. With

A comprehensive plan to reduce and recover food system waste will redirect resources to healthier, more productive uses that can feed people and enrich soil and environmental health risks will be reduced by eliminating the effects of dangerous plastics in the food system.

global attention to recovery of food loss and food waste, New York City can set an example for megacities, much as the City's watershed programs are model best practices. The City should support composting facilities and expand municipal programs, such as the NYC Compost Project in Staten Island and the DSNY's compost programs at public schools and institutions to compost solid waste city-wide.



Plastic Water Bottles: The City should discourage the use of bottled water by educating residents as to the high quality and superior taste of New York City tap water, restricting the use and sale of bottled water in City facilities, increasing the sales tax on bottled water, and eliminating the sales tax on canteens and home water purification systems. Furthermore, fixing and installing water fountains in public schools and City buildings can further reduce reliance on bottled water.

Dangerous Plastic in Food Service: The City should prohibit the use of single use plastic bags and dangerous plastic food service and storage ware and require the use of biodegradable/compostable or recyclable bags and disposable food service and storage ware in restaurants and by food retailers, City agencies, and City vendors and contractors. Three plastic types in particular have been implicated in ill effects on human health, including reproductive and genetic abnormalities, disruption of the endocrine system, liver and kidney damage, obesity, and pre-cancerous conditions. The City should prohibit the use of these dangerous plastics in food service and storage ware³⁴:

- #3 Polyvinyl Chloride or PVC, used for cling wrap, some plastic squeeze bottles, cooking oil and peanut butter jars, and detergent and window cleaner bottles, is the least recyclable plastic.
- #6 Polystyrene or Styrofoam, used in food trays, egg cartons, disposable cups and bowls, carry-out containers, and opaque plastic cutlery, is also difficult to recycle.
- #7 Polycarbonate (Bisphenol A), used in plastic baby bottles, water bottles, metal food can liners, clear plastic cups, and some clear plastic cutlery.



APPENDIX I: Summarized List of Recipe Ingredients

Our food policy recommendations for the next administration, presented as ingredients, are summarized here.

A New Public Partnership for Food

Develop, as the centerpiece for achieving food and nutrition security in New York City, a new integrated management structure, that engages both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, to inform the creation, implementation, and evaluation of food policies and programs and a real food plan for the City.

- 1) Create a new management structure to better coordinate the food-related activities of City agencies either through a City of New York Department of Food or similar mechanism for enhanced inter-agency coordination and reporting.
- 2) Adopt a formal food plan pursuant to Section 197-a of the New York City Charter to give the Mayor, any Borough President, and city planning entities authorization for the development, growth, and improvement of the City as it relates to food system planning.
- 3) Institute a permanent, adequately funded, independent New York City Food Systems Council -- an advisory body that engages citizens, fosters discussion and learning among diverse stakeholders, identifies food system related challenges and recommends solutions, and provides program and policy recommendations and guidance to the City.

Better Health and an End to Hunger

Ensure that all City residents have physical and financial access to ample, nutritious, affordable, and culturally meaningful food and encourage New Yorkers to be healthier through better integration of efforts across City agencies.

- 4) Through a new City government management structure, better coordinate and integrate the programs intended to increase access to healthy food.
- 5) Ensure that City agencies engaged in planning community and economic development do more to incorporate both urban and rural food supply in City planning and program implementation.
- 6) Continue funding for and strengthen the City's Emergency Food Assistance and Health Bucks programs.
- 7) Work with the Governor's Office to raise the minimum wage in New York State to a living wage to ensure that all City residents can afford nutritious, healthy food for themselves and their families.
- 8) Mandate a free breakfast in the classroom program, determine the feasibility of offering universal free school meals throughout all New York City schools and reduce the use of antibiotics in meat products used in school meals.
- 9) Develop interdisciplinary food literacy core curricula in schools, from kindergarten through high school, and initiate an integrated school garden support mechanism to help develop and maintain school gardens that support the connection between the benefits of growing and eating healthful food.
- 10) Advocate for strong and adequately funded federal Farm and Child Nutrition Bills.



A Strong Food Economy with Good Jobs

The City should recognize, reward, and protect and expand food related employment across the food chain.

- 11) Build a stronger food economy by supporting a living wage and guaranteeing health benefits and ensure that all companies that receive economic development incentives pay a living wage to their workers.
- 12) Support State legislation to grant collective bargaining rights to farmworkers and seek reform of federal guest farmworker policy, as part of comprehensive immigration reform, to better support farmers and their workers.
- 13) Help insure that new national food safety rules being developed under the Food Safety Modernization Act do not become obstacles to the regional supply of food produced in and for New York City.
- 14) Proclaim a city-wide “Eat Right New York” day focusing attention on eating and drinking local, healthful, sustainably and fairly produced food and drink and enjoying good, clean New York City water and create a “Made in New York City” brand to highlight foods and beverages produced in New York City using principal ingredients produced in New York City and State.

Support for Regional Agriculture through Smart Procurement and Protection of our Working Land and Water Resources

Support regional agriculture by focusing on and supporting urban-rural linkages and through smart food purchasing and protection of agricultural resources.

- 15) Build on Mayoral Executive Order 122, regarding the healthfulness of the food the City serves, and Local Law 50, encouraging the purchase of food produced in New York State, to more fully employ local price preference, by valuing the healthfulness and environmental and economic benefits of food produced in the City’s regional, New York, foodshed.
- 16) Build, as part of a new public/private partnership, on the concept of creating a “New York City Food Security Zone,” strategically focusing on the most effective farm preservation opportunities, to help ensure that an increasing proportion of its food supply is always available within one day’s driving distance of the City. Build, as part of a new public/private partnership, on the concept of creating a “New York City Food Security Zone,” strategically focusing on the most effective farm preservation opportunities, to help ensure that an increasing proportion of its food supply is always available within one day’s driving distance of the City.
- 17) Support State and federal programs that encourage new, beginning, and disadvantaged farmers, both rural and urban.
- 18) Link green city jobs and economic development more directly to urban gardens, farms, and orchards and the protection of biodiversity.
- 19) Engage at the State level with risk mitigation for New York City’s food and water from hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for natural gas.
- 20) Support State legislation that would lighten the financial burden borne by New York family farmers, including reductions in farm property and estate taxes and in certain State fees and assessments.



- 21) Support State legislation, modeled on FoodWorks, that would facilitate the State's purchase of food produced in New York and require State agencies to report on the origins of the food purchased and served.
- 22) Require the City's food suppliers to provide information regarding GE content in the food they provide and support federal and State legislation requiring GE labeling.
- 23) Improve metrics for evaluation of the City's food production environment to better reflect urban food production.
- 24) Secure tenure for City lands used for food production.

New Farm to Plate Distribution Infrastructure

Enhance the City's food distribution infrastructure to provide a safe, secure, ample, and healthful supply of food, well into the future.

- 25) Include in the redevelopment of the wholesale food market at Hunt's Point a place for regional foods and complement the Hunt's Point redevelopment with comprehensive investment in New York City's market infrastructure, including wholesale, retail, and processing infrastructure in all five boroughs.
- 26) Create a New York City Food Infrastructure Investment Fund, a private/public partnership of government, business, and nonprofit organizations, to support the development of food production and distribution infrastructure, both physical and human.
- 27) Following the impacts of Hurricane Sandy, ensure that climate resilience is a priority and a part of the soft infrastructure (human resource development) investment of the City and increase, through the Food Infrastructure Investment Fund, emergency food preparedness to assure improved distribution of healthy foods following severe weather events, with an emphasis on serving vulnerable and low-income populations.
- 28) Designate a healthy and sustainable Food Procurement Specialist position in each Agency purchasing food, to be coordinated and guided by the Department of Food (or other inter-agency food management structure) and create Regional Food Distribution Teams, to be guided and coordinated by the New York City Food Systems Council, to assist respectively government agencies and institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to integrate the added values of human, economic, social, and environmental health into the purchase of food and to link rural production more directly to urban markets.
- 29) Reinvent FRESH to include investments in good paying food jobs in small and medium-scale food retail facilities that integrate with the existing food distribution infrastructure to minimize carbon miles, reduce redundant food transport, and reduce bottlenecks in aggregation, processing, and storage of regionally produced foods.

Better Food Waste Reduction and Nutrient Recovery

Address the third of the City's food supply that goes to waste by making food waste and nutrient/resource recovery a priority for the food and nutrition security of the City.

- 30) Address food loss in production, transport, and processing through incentives and City and nonprofit agencies' distribution programs.
- 31) Re-direct current stockpiles of non-toxic, organic waste, presently exported by the City, to regional farms for fertilization needs.
- 32) Support private composting facility projects in the City and expand municipal composting programs and facilities to compost food waste citywide.



- 33)** Discourage the use of bottled water by educating residents as to the high quality and superior taste of New York City tap water, restricting the use and sale of bottled water in City facilities, and increasing the sales tax on bottled water and eliminating the sales tax on canteens and home water purification systems.
- 34)** Prohibit the use of single-use plastic bags and dangerous plastic food service and storage ware and require the use of biodegradable/compostable or recyclable bags and disposable food service and storage ware in restaurants and by food retailers, City agencies, and City vendors and contractors and prohibit the use of three plastic types (PVC, polystyrene, and polycarbonate) that have been implicated in having ill effect on human health, as well as the environment.



APPENDIX 2: Endnotes

¹ The NYC Food and Farm Bill Working Group was formed to organize around the 2012 farm bill reauthorization. It is a group of diverse organizations and individuals from multiple sectors, including the anti-hunger, public health, faith, agricultural, and food justice communities, organized to give New York City, and its region, a voice in shaping the next Food and Farm Bill. For more information, visit: <http://foodbillnyc.wikispaces.com/>. Leading up to the 2008 Farm Bill, there was also a working group similar in structure to the one described above.

² The NYC Alliance for Child Nutrition Reauthorization, a coalition of groups in New York who came together to advocate for changes to the 2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization to: 1) End child hunger and food insecurity, 2) Ensure that all children have access to nutritious foods, 3) Reduce childhood obesity and ensure healthy children, and 4) Support regional farm and food economies while creating jobs and protecting the environment.

³ The Brooklyn Food Coalition is a grassroots organization dedicated to the vision of a just and sustainable food system in Brooklyn. The Coalition works primarily in three areas: community organizing, public awareness and education, and research and advocacy. Examples of activities and efforts by the coalition include establishing the Brooklyn School Food Network, training parents in school food advocacy, mapping food sources and community gardens via foodcensus.org and staging its biannual Brooklyn Food Conference. For more information, visit: www.brooklynfoodcoalition.org.

⁴ The Partnership for a Healthier New York City is an umbrella of borough coalitions that brings together community groups, organizations, and individuals to significantly reduce chronic disease in New York City—for everyone—by supporting proven, community-level efforts to change the environments in which people make decisions that impact their health, including healthy eating and active living. For example, the Manhattan Coalition’s members are working on active design, social justice, food access and how they intersect and are creating a toolkit featuring cases studies of diverse models of urban agriculture and community gardens. The toolkit will identify successful models that are replicable in Manhattan and address barriers, successes, resources, key stakeholders, and progress steps. For more information on this effort, visit: <http://manhattanctg.org/>, or the Partnership’s website at: <http://healthiernyc.org/>.

⁵ School Food FOCUS is a national collaborative that leverages the knowledge and procurement power of large school districts to make school meals nationwide more healthful, regionally sourced, and sustainably produced. For more information, visit: www.schoolfoodfocus.org.

⁶ The organizations working in urban farming and community gardening are too numerous to list in full, but examples include: NYC Community Gardening Coalition, www.nycgcg.org/, Bronx Green-Up, www.nybg.org/green_up/, Horticulture Society of New York, www.hsnyc.org, Just Food (City Farms and Farm School NYC programs), Green Guerillas, www.greenguerillas.org, GrowNYC (Grow to Learn and Open Space Greening programs), www.growNYC.org, BK Farmyards, www.bkfarmyards.com, Added Value Farm, www.added-value.org, Battery Urban Farm, www.thebattery.org/projects/battery-urban-farm/, Edible School Yard NYC, www.edibleschoolyard.org/program/edible-schoolyard-nyc, Brooklyn Grange (and its educational nonprofit, City Growers), www.brooklyngrangefarm.com, and Eagle Street Rooftop Farm, www.rooftopfarms.org.

⁷ <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/FoodInsecuritybyState2009-2011.pdf>.

⁸ <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/why-are-low-income-and-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-to-obesity/>.

⁹ <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/why-are-low-income-and-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-to-obesity/>.

¹⁰ http://www.nyc.gov/html/misc/pdf/going_to_market.pdf.

¹¹ <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/why-are-low-income-and-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-to-obesity/>.

¹² <http://foodchainworkers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Hands-That-Feed-Us-Report.pdf>.

¹³ FoodWorks, http://council.nyc.gov/downloads/pdf/foodworks_fullreport_11_22_10.pdf.

¹⁴ http://nelp.3cdn.net/990687e422dcf919d3_h6m6bf6ki.pdf.

¹⁵ See, e.g., <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/16/nyregion/state-said-to-be-reviewing-pay-for-fast-food-workers.html>, <http://www.thenation.com/blog/174375/84-percent-nyc-fast-food-workers-report-wage-theft-new-survey#ixzz2Ui059DXd>, <http://money.cnn.com/2013/05/16/news/companies/fast-food-ny-attorney-general/index.html>.

¹⁶ <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-labor/background.aspx#legalstatus>.

¹⁷ <http://grist.org/food/will-farmworker-rights-improve-in-2013/>.

¹⁸ <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/minwage.htm>.

¹⁹ <http://grist.org/food/will-farmworker-rights-improve-in-2013/>.

²⁰ <http://newyork.farmland.org/our-work-in-new-york-state>.

²¹ FoodWorks.

²² FoodWorks.

²³ FoodWorks.

²⁴ FoodWorks.

²⁵ http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/Learn/us_hunger_facts.htm.

²⁶ For more detailed information about the complex layering of food security programs and ways the City could ensure an adequate nutrition assistance safety net for all residents, see, “A Food Secure NYC 2018: Building a



Hunger-Free NYC with a Food System that Improves Nutrition, Creates Jobs, Supports Workers, and Protects the Environment,” New York Coalition Against Hunger, May 2013.

²⁷ <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/FoodPlans/2013/CostofFoodJan2013.pdf>.

²⁸ http://www.minimum-wage.us/states/New_York.

²⁹ FoodWorks.

³⁰ FoodWorks.

³¹ FoodWorks.

³² Foodworks.

³³ New York City Council. Finance Division. “Fiscal Year 2010 New York City Budget.” Chart. October, 2010; Foodworks.

³⁴ For more information and links to studies on the dangers associated with these plastics, and alternatives and solutions to their use, visit: <http://www.nrdc.org/living/shoppingwise/food-storage-containers.asp>.