

# THE EXCHANGE

DEDICATED TO SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES

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## Local Food Systems and Urban Rural Linkages for Food Security and Vibrant Markets

By Arthur Getz Escudero,  
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for Heifer International

Heifer International is engaged in numerous activities and initiatives, working with small farmers, community organizations and other project partners in the United States and elsewhere around the world to:

- Support underserved communities of the poorest neighborhoods in large cities through urban agriculture projects.
- Provide training to new immigrant farmers and support for access to affordable land on which to grow food for local markets, connecting people with an agricultural background to economic opportunities in their newly adopted homeland.
- Link schools to farms, supplying fresh, local fruits and vegetables.
- Stimulate the formation of community supported agriculture (CSA) partnerships; promote farmers' markets.
- Revitalize small-scale food processing and stimulate agricultural enterprise development.

*Q: How can we combine so many distinct activities into a larger, more coherent approach to reform the food system? What are concrete actions we can take that will impact reform of the industrialized food system's monolithic structure and vulner-*

*ability to risk? In other words, how do we implement aspects of food sovereignty?*

While there is a great deal of innovation going on, especially at the grassroots level, a constant disconnect remains between the grassroots players and the decision makers, who create laws and policies that shape what goes on at higher levels and dictate circumstances at lower levels. This is especially evident in what some consider the "pinnacle" of intergovernmental decision making - the United Nations.

Delegations from the member countries, representing ministries of agriculture, planning, environment and foreign affairs, recently assembled for a multi-year process known as the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). They were joined by civil society representatives on specially organized bus tours of New York City to see, firsthand, examples of issues they had debated inside the United Nations regarding how to respond to the forces constraining our food system.

Heifer International staff teamed up with project partners and food networks in Brooklyn's urban gardens, at markets, on small Hudson River Valley farms, and other places, both urban and rural, to demonstrate



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grassroots innovation in the “foodshed” – the myriad sources, relationships, markets and pathways food takes to reach the people of New York’s metropolitan region.



Vibrant Markets Tour announcement flyer

The first stop on one tour in May 2009 was the N.Y.C. Terminal Market at Hunts Point, across the river from LaGuardia. This market’s revenues exceed \$2 billion annually, which is more than any other Produce Terminal Market in the world. The facility receives produce deliveries daily by rail, tractor trailer and air cargo from every part of the globe, handling nearly 10 percent of the nation’s produce flows. Designed and built in the 1960’s to meet the infrastructure requirements of the era, the Hunts Point market is deteriorating and strains to function. The food system it needs to serve has evolved in significantly different ways. Supermarket chains have vertically integrated around the market with their own supply and distribution chains. Public support for a scale-diverse system that meets the needs of a diversity of producers is being advocated for and actively redesigned; as a result, Hunts Point may soon get a sorely needed upgrade that responds to small- and medium-scale producers’ and retailers’ needs.



Hunts Point tour group

On their tour, delegates witnessed different levels and aspects of the food system, as well as some of the challenges in the various supply chain models that connect producers to distributors, retailers and consumers. They met different actors in the chain that extends from the farm all the way to the dining table and discussed the barriers to smaller scale and locally produced food, and where private sector and public sector responsibilities and roles intersect.



An open-air farmers’ market just outside Prospect Park in Brooklyn—where regional farms’ stands, information booths, entertainment and urban consumers meet.



This experience allowed them to see firsthand how linkages between urban and rural actors can provide sustainable solutions to serious food security and nutrition challenges. When small-scale producers harvest locally grown, fresh produce and value-added

products and engage in newly developed market channels and relationships, through which nutritious, affordable food is offered to consumers in the city’s impoverished and neglected areas, they can enjoy enhanced livelihoods.

Delegates visited a public school cafeteria in Brooklyn that increasingly features locally produced foods. The New York public school system, which produces 850,000 meals each day, is the second largest central food service system in the United States. Only the Defense Department serves more daily meals. The school’s meal program is designed and administered under the supervision of a professionally trained chef, Jorge Collazo. Collazo was our host and key informant about the power the system has over food quality, the source and methods of production, and the ability to negotiate prices and shape purveyors’ standards. This is referred to as the “power of public procurement.”

The “School Food Revolution” is underway in numerous cities in both developed and developing countries and has been at the forefront of a new agricultural model, bringing back “home grown” feeding on a larger scale. This scaling up of school food connections with regional agriculture through the power of public procurement results in increased healthy food for children who are at risk for hunger and nutritional diseases, such as diabetes and obesity, and restores economic opportunity to depressed rural communities. Experiences with home grown school feeding provide a new framework for the food system, with farmers, educators, local authorities and community-based organizations confirming the need for research and policies in order to replicate these experiences elsewhere.

Home grown school feeding and a sustainable supply chain infrastructure for food provisioning to schools and other public establishments also

KAZARI GETZ-KRUCHI

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contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions and food miles, which is the distance food travels from source to consumption. Responsible agricultural production and procurement practices support regional farms, and the school food revolution can be a positive catalyst for change.



School cafeteria lunch with Chef Jorge

KAZARI GETZ-KIKUCHI

Local level action emerging from school food programs has helped lead the revolution around the world. From Johannesburg to Rome, New York to London, and in countries such as Ghana, Malawi and Nigeria, among many others, lessons are being learned to guide the way forward.

During the time building up to the negotiating sessions in May, Heifer and partners lodged policy messages with government delegations and anticipated the favorable inclusion of these messages in the final outcomes of the Commission on Sustainable Development. This advocacy used inside and outside panels and events to create an understanding of the importance of urban rural linkages in concise language for later insertion by governments into the final text.

The working group's complete document is titled "Urban Rural Partnerships Working Group Input to CSD 17." An electronic version is available

online at the Sustainable Food Monitor's Web site:

<http://sustainablefoodmonitor.org/2009/05/12/urban-rural-partnerships-working-group-input-to-csd-17/>

*Q:*

*How do you adapt what happens inside the United Nations to the people outside who face multiple crises and food system challenges and make those actions matter to them, especially those who do so much to adapt and innovate?*

*A:*

- ◆ *Connect them as directly as possible.*
- ◆ *Enable them to learn from each other.*
- ◆ *Connect good practice to good policy.*

The challenge of linking of good practice to needed policy reform was precisely the aim of Heifer's advocacy team during the last two rounds of a U.N. system-wide, global effort to examine how the current food system can be made more sustainable and better prepared for a wide range of current and foreseeable challenges, from an increasing demand for food and price volatility to drought, flooding, soil degradation and other climate change pressures, as well as energy shortages and productivity declines.

**Supporting local agriculture doesn't have to neglect the global dimensions of food security, economic development and social justice.**

Among the policies needed to strengthen the resilience of communities and countrysides, governments can promote an enabling environment for increased urban rural linkages in all regions.



**Editors**

Erin Simpson  
Rebecca Hill

**Guest Editor**

Arthur Getz Escudero

The Heifer International Exchange Newsletter is the quarterly publication of Heifer International dedicated to sharing knowledge and resources on sustainable small-scale agriculture and appropriate technologies in developing areas.

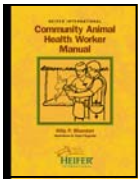
The ideas and opinions expressed are those of the authors, not those of Heifer International as an organization.

All readers are invited to contribute. We welcome your sharing of ideas and experiences with us. Subscriptions are free; donations are greatly appreciated.

The exchange of good practices and needed policy at local, national and international levels requires networking between communities pursuing urban rural linkages. Civil society advocates representing farmers, women's organizations, trade unions, NGOs, indigenous peoples and others are calling on governments for these kinds of policy support. Such support is especially important for developing countries, but also needed in developed countries, where past decades have emphasized larger-scale production for international export markets, rather than strengthening local and sub-national markets for strong farming systems everywhere.



# RESOURCES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Community Animal Health Worker Manual

By Dilip P. Bhandari

A comprehensive manual for community-based animal health care, this new publication from Heifer International includes all aspects of Community Animal Health Worker (CAHW) training. There are 20 chapters including CAHW selection guidelines to an action plan for making the CAHW program sustainable. Each chapter consists of a learning guide, session plans and basic lessons with numerous illustrations. This manual covers all aspects of animal health and zoonosis, animal husbandry, animal breeding, basic animal nutrition and animal housing and also includes general management practices. It covers a majority of the food animal species in rural settings. Available in English. 212 pages, 2009.

Copies may be purchased from Heifer International for \$20.00 USD, plus shipping and handling.

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## Training for Permaculture

*Excerpt adapted from Spore, no. 141, June 2009.*

The Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre in Zimbabwe runs training sessions for smallholder farmers, extension workers and NGO staff, teaching them how to grow organic crops for income generation, food

security and health improvement. Courses available to farmers include permaculture design, introduction to permaculture, organic nutrition gardening, nursery management, bee-keeping, organic herb production, dryland farming, leadership skills, food processing, participatory rural appraisal, agroforestry, procedures for organic certification and mushroom production.

**Write to:**  
Fambidzanai Permaculture Centre  
Box CY 301, Causeway  
Harare, Zimbabwe

**Email:** [fambidza@yahoo.com](mailto:fambidza@yahoo.com)

## Farmer Information on DVD

*Excerpt adapted from Spore, no. 141, June 2009.*



Farmers in remote Kenyan villages where the Internet cannot reach can now find out about plants, animals, pests, disease vectors and methods to counter them. Swiss NGO, Bio-Vision Foundation, has developed a database called Infonet BioVision, available on DVDs that are distributed free by the "Organic Farmer", BioVision's magazine for farmers. Farmer's mainly use Internet cafes to watch the DVDs, paying a small fee to print out any material they wish to keep. The plan is to expand the service to the whole of East Africa.

**Write to:**  
Anne Bruntse  
BioVision Office  
P.O. Box 30772-00100  
Nairobi, Kenya

**Web site:** [www.biovision.ch](http://www.biovision.ch)

**Email:** [a.bruntse@biovision.ch](mailto:a.bruntse@biovision.ch)

## Rural Finance Learning Centre

*Excerpt adapted from LEISA, no. 25.2, June 2009.*



This Web site is dedicated to providing access to the best materials for capacity building in rural finance. Managed by rural finance specialists in FAO, the content of the site is freely available to everyone. If you register, you will receive the monthly Rural Finance Update and have the opportunity to suggest resources to the editors. There is an impressive range of capacity building materials available, such as a reference library, training and study materials, online videos, and distance learning opportunities. All are clearly labeled and the site is easy to navigate.

**Web site:** [www.ruralfinance.org](http://www.ruralfinance.org)

## Climate Change and Food Security: A framework document

*Excerpt adapted from Urban Agriculture Magazine, no. 22, June 2009.*

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2008

This document provides background information on the interrelationship between climate change and food security, as well as ways to deal with the new threat. It also describes opportunities for the agriculture sector to adapt and explains ways in which it can contribute to mitigating the climate challenge. The report can be downloaded from the FAO.

**Web site:**  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/k2595e/k2595e00.htm>

# MATERIALS FOR EXCHANGE READERS

Some, Salibo.

**“Helping Credit do its Job.”**

LEISA.

June 2009. no. 25.2, p. 36-37.

Providing financial services to rural areas can present challenges, but also numerous opportunities to improve livelihoods. Select this article to learn about the African Sustainable Development Council's (ASEDEC) success in extending credit to women's groups in Burkina Faso.

■ **Request No. 13501**

Jacobi, Johanna, et. al.

**“Agricultural Biodiversity Strengthening Livelihoods in Periurban Hyderabad, India.”**

Urban Agriculture.

June 2009. no 22, p. 45-47.

Rural livelihoods are often vulnerable to outside factors beyond their control, such as urban growth, pollution, climate change, and food insecurity. This article explores the role of crop diversity in increasing sustainability of small-scale agriculture, and in turn, improved livelihoods that can mitigate and withstand change.

■ **Request No. 13502**

Van Eaton, Cliff.

**“Controlling American Foulbrood Without Antibiotics.”**

Bees for Development.

June 2009. no. 91, p. 4-7.

Use of antibiotics can sometimes do more harm than good—when they are administered improperly or too frequently. This article provides an analysis of the New Zealand beekeeping industry and alternative methods they use to control American Foulbrood.

■ **Request No. 13503**

**“Working to Improve the Ground.”**

Far Eastern Agriculture.

May/June 2009. p.21-22.

Healthy soils boost crop productivity and increase food security. This article focuses on two soil management techniques that can improve fertility — balancing pH levels and composting.

■ **Request No. 13504**

Berkelaar, Dawn.

**“Income and Other Benefits from Using Worms to Make Compost.”**

ECHO Development Notes.

July 2009. no. 104, p. 1-6.

Worms and compost can provide benefits to small-scale farmers through the use of two slightly different processes: Vermiculture and Vermicomposting. Select this article to read about experiences from others around the world.

■ **Request No. 13505**

Dreyer, M. and ECHO Staff.

**“Neem.”**

ECHO Technical Note. 7 pages.

<http://www.echonet.org/>

Neem trees grow in tropical regions and boast many beneficial properties, including medicinal and insecticidal. This paper outlines the practical uses of Neem, production information, as well as harvesting and processing techniques.

■ **Request No. 13506**

Mumero, Mwangi.

**“Going for Goats in Upland Kenya.”**

African Farming.

May/June 2009. p. 12-13.

Goats can be a viable option for farmers with limited resources to increase their income and improve

their well-being. Select this article to learn how others are reaping the benefits from raising goats.

■ **Request No. 13507**

**“The Lowdown on Pig Breeding.”**

Far Eastern Agriculture.

March/April 2009. p. 19-20.

Good breeding practices can mean greater success for pig farmers.

This article provides practical tips on selecting quality animals and production management, as well as culling and stock replacement.

■ **Request No. 13508**

**“Fighting Back.”**

Spore.

August 2009. p. 8-10.

Diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis are negatively impacting developing countries in many ways, including a weakened labor force and worsened food insecurity. However, through aid, training and education, solutions to these problems are on the horizon. Select this article to learn more.

■ **Request No. 13509**

Maatman, Arno and Ted Schrader.

**“Enhancing Farmers’ Entrepreneurship: Creating Conditions for Growth.”**

LEISA.

June 2009. no. 25.2, p. 6-8.

Some small-scale farmers are turning to entrepreneurship as a means for building sustainable livelihoods. This article addresses potential challenges and risks that come along with it, but also strategies and opportunities for success.

■ **Request No. 13510**

# HEIFER MATERIALS REQUEST FORM

**PLEASE PRINT PLAINLY** your name and address in the space below.  
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- 13508 "The Lowdown on Pig Breeding."
- 13509 "Fighting Back."
- 13510 "Enhancing Farmers' Entrepreneurship."

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