

Pen Loh, Building a More Sustainable, Just, and Democratic Community Food System, Tufts University

Pen discussed strategies to support our economy and suggested that Urban Agriculture is actually a radical act, bucking the trends of the globalized economy, such as Walmart, an extreme example of an economic model. It was controversial that Will Allen accepted a \$1 million grant from Wal-Mart, but he said that the retailer is in a good position to bring food into urban food deserts and fast-food swamps.

What kind of economy are we really trying to create? What are the implications if we move towards Walmartization? A new Walmart in town brings in lower prices, which may make local grocery stores close down. Walmart is now targeting cities. Their low prices are carried on the backs of thousands of farm workers. They depress prices even within their own system. Food is trucked in thousands of miles and burns large amounts fossil fuels. The profits get squeezed out of our communities and end up in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Is another food economy possible? Urban Ag is making this a reality. We don't have to wait for the revolution - it's happening. We started our own food economy by taking back the land in Roxbury and Dorchester. How do we grow for the market and create good jobs? The Food Project has community projects out of the Dudley Street Greenhouse, which would not have been possible if it hadn't been for neighbors agreeing to take back the city. They developed their own community trust program. Local enterprises are also processing and distribution, for example, City Fresh and the upcoming Pearl Food Production Small Business Center. Their anchor tenant will be the Crop Circle Kitchens. Eating is one of the best parts of the community. Haley House is also a good example of a training ground for folks coming out of prison. Dorchester Community Food Coop is trying to create their own community worker owned business. And CERO returns waste to the land with a goal of turning all the food scraps back to compost. The ban on commercial food waste will help this business grow. The outcome will be a more just, sustainable and democratic model. With this we can take on Walmart!

Hugh Joseph, PhD, Tufts. Urban Farming without soil? It's amazing - and it's not about hydroponics!

Urban soils require a lot of remediation, so soilless growing is critical. Growing Power in Wisconsin uses aquaculture, permaculture and on the roof with bee condos. The garden is on land that has been covered by a combination of compost and woodchips, mostly in wide beds with 12 - 18 inches of matter, organically produced in hoop houses. Not a square inch is wasted. The production is very intense. City Farm, North Chicago, has a similar program with \$100,000 of sales generated from just one acre. Everything is done by transplants, instead of broadcast seeding. Cese, a refugee incubator in Chicago is developing a new market garden, one acre in size. The former refugees are doing all the work by hand with production mostly for themselves. Over a base of woodchips, two feet of compost are placed with a tarp on the bottom to seal off the soil for no chance of contamination. The basics of these operations is to seal the soil and then use 100% compost and wood chips. The rows are four feet on top and six feet wide on the bottom, and these raised beds stay in place. More wood chips and soil are added annually. There is little infrastructure cost. The city should work on creating compost, and keeping chipped wood for these gardeners. Use your imagination!

Julian Agyeman, Food Justice, "Cultivation Food Justice, Race, Class and Sustainability."

Julian Agyeman's new book goes into great detail on all of these topics. Food has performance, refuge and re-imagination. Performance: we perform it, not just eat it. Our food practices are manifestations of our culture. This is not just about nutrition. The growing and food and creation of gardens as autotopography. It's about place making. About 50 farms around the country are devoted to refugee agriculture. A new wave of farmers who are more likely to be found around small and medium sized cities. Food as re-imagination: Problematizing "the local" to grow ethnically diverse food. What is local? The African's want to eat what they consider local. We need reflexivity. For example, there are parallel local food networks in Vancouver where 15% of farmers are Chinese Canadian. They have tried to re- imagine local foods so they have their own food network. The food movement will continue to be incomplete unless we are broad in our thinking. The workers who are growing food in CA cannot even afford to buy the food and need to be a part of a larger food justice system.