

FACILITATOR GUIDE



2 | HOW SHOULD WE GROW? COMPARING FOOD SYSTEMS

Summary

This session introduces different approaches to organizing a food system, and provides a framework for defining and evaluating a “sustainable food system.” Through the “life stories” of two strawberries, learners view a snapshot of different food systems, and generate traits of a system that nourishes people, the environment, and the economy (a “sustainable” system). Learners will then review trends on food production, consumption, prices, health, and the environment, and assess the implications of the trends. By the end of the session, learners will have a framework for evaluating food systems that will be applied throughout the rest of the curriculum.

Guiding Questions

- What are different ways to organize a food system? What are the similarities and differences in terms of approaches and outcomes?
- What are key trends in food production and consumption? What do these trends tell us about U.S. food system?

Big Ideas:

- There are different approaches to organizing a food system. Approaches differ in terms of inputs, growing methods, processing, transportation, and other elements of the overall food system.
- A sustainable food system is “a collaborative network that integrates food production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in order to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a particular place” (UC Davis, 2008).
- Trends in nutrition, food production and consumption paint a mixed picture of whether we are headed towards a sustainable food system or not.

Time and sequence

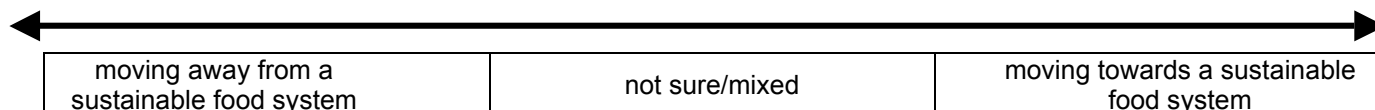
Activity	Overview	Minutes
Review “homework” from Session 1	Learners share community trends to serve as an introduction to the session.	10
1) A Tale of Two Strawberries	Learners compare different approaches to organizing a food system through the stories of two strawberries.	20
2) Defining Possibilities for Sustainable Food Systems	Learners review traits and “design principles” of a sustainable food system, then discuss underlying assumptions and challenges of assessing what is really “sustainable.”	15
3) Where Are We Headed?	Working in groups, learners review global trends in food production, food security, nourishment, and community well being; and assess implications for the trends.	30
4) Before the next session	Learners attempt to trace the path of foods from a recent meal, and identify resources/energy used, and wastes produced.	5

Materials

- Learner packet, Session 2
- Flipchart paper, markers, tape, and a wall to post information for Activity 3
- Pens/pencils for learners; have at least two colors available for each pair of participants (i.e., a pencil and a blue pen, or a blue and red pen)
- Accompanying slides for Session 2
- Optional: sticky or pens notes in two colors and wall map of the world

Preparation

- Review all session materials.
- For Activity 3, draw the following spectrum on the board, or create a spectrum on an available wall by marking the two poles:



Procedure

Review “homework” from Session 1 (Activity assigned at the end of Session 1)

Overview: Participants were asked to identify several trends they believe affecting their community’s food system. Trends can be gleaned from experiences, observation, newspaper articles, etc.

- Ask participants to share the community trends they discovered; take 5-8 responses. As participants share, have them state whether they think the trend is positive, negative or neutral. Record each response on a separate piece of paper (8 ½ x 11), with a “+”, “-” or neutral/undecided next to each.
- Explain that this session will examine trends and practices in food systems, and that community trends will be revisited later.
- Review guiding questions and sequence for the session as presented in the learners’ guide.

Activity 1) A Tale of Two Strawberries

Overview: Learners compare different approaches to organizing a food system through the stories of two strawberries.

Directions:

- Directs participants to the appropriate pages in their handout packets. As noted, have participants work in pairs and assign one person to Strawberry A, the other to B.
- Review the directions, pointing out the steps/pages needed:
 1. two-part poem (with illustrations on the following page)
 2. mapping the strawberry journeys (map follows the illustrations)
 3. Venn diagrams for recording similarities/differences (Venn diagram is on the same page as the map)
- Choose two people to read the poem, alternating voices as noted, as others follow along. Point out (and show on the slides) the illustrations of the strawberries’ journeys.
- As described in point 2 of the directions in learner packet, have participants work in pairs and use the maps to record key stages of each strawberry’s journey. Each pair should work on the same map, recording key locations of each strawberry in a different color. If desired, have participants write responses on sticky notes and post them on the wall map. (Use a different color sticky or pen for each strawberry.) Again, ask participants to state major similarities and differences.
- As described in point 3 of the directions, have participants record similarities and differences in the strawberries’ stories Venn diagram using at least three of the aspects provided. Have one group create their diagram on large paper to present.

Note: To save time, assign some pairs of participants to the map activity, and others to the Venn diagram activity. Then have one pair from each activity present their work.

- Finish the activity by leading a discussion using the questions provided:
 - What aspects of the strawberries’ lives did you already know about? What were new?
 - In what ways are the strawberries’ lives most similar? How are they most different?
 - How is the community and environment impacted differently in each one?
 - What needs and goals were served in each system?
 - Describe the relationship between the people producing the food (farmers, farm workers, factory workers) and the consumers in each system.
 - What other foods can you think of that could have different stories such as these?

Activity 2) Defining Possibilities for Sustainable Food Systems

Overview: Learners review traits and “design principles” of a sustainable food system, then discuss underlying assumptions and challenges of assessing what is really “sustainable.”

- Direct participants to Activity 2 in the booklets. Have someone read the introduction and directions at the top of the page. Suggested methods for the activity:
 - Participants read the page silently, then work in pairs or small groups to discuss which traits are new, and which they were already familiar with.
 - Participants work in groups of four, with each person silently reading one of the categories (maintains health, sustains the environment, preserves cultural fabric, benefits the regional economy). Participants then explain the traits in their category to other group members, and discuss which were new and which they were already familiar with.
- Continue by leading a full-group discussion using the questions provided:
 - What other traits would you add to the list above?
 - How are the traits in each category related?
 - Review the community trends you’ve identified it thus far. In what ways do these trends reflect the traits above? What are areas for improvement?
- Use the accompanying slides to present and summarize the “big ideas” of a sustainable food system. Participants should then read the page “Sustainability: Assessing systems, not isolated practices.” This page provides greater depth on the ideas presented in the slides.

Activity 3) Where are We Headed?

Overview: Working in groups, learners review global trends in food production, food security, nourishment, and community well-being; and assess implications for the trends. Before the activity, draw the spectrum as shown in the booklet on the board or available wall.

- Have a volunteer read the introduction aloud.
- Have participants read the directions silently, then review as needed. As described, participants will work in pairs/groups to review facts and trends about the food system. Model the activity by taking one of the community trends the participants identified and asking the group where it should be placed on the spectrum. (Ex: “James reported that attendance is up at the community farmer’s market. Do you think this is moving us towards or away a sustainable food system? Where should we put it on the spectrum? Why?”)
- Assign trend sets to pairs/groups or let people choose (as long as all sets are represented):
 - Set A) Global trends in food production and consumption
 - Set B) Global trends in nourishment and hunger
 - Set C) Global trends in fertilizer and energy use, and the environmental impacts
 - Set D) Global trends in food prices for consumers and producers
 - Set E) Global trends in trade policies and workers’ rights
 - Set F) Trends in US farming

- Before participants begin reading and reviewing their trend, point out the pages where the trend sets can be found. Remind participants that they are to review all the items in their trend set, and then select a few individual items that are significant in some way. Participants should write each trend on a separate sheet of paper (8 ½ x 11” paper is fine; instruct participants to write large and fill the page so that trends can be read from a distance.)
- Pass out paper and markers and then allow groups to start working. Allow ten minutes. As groups are working, circulate to provide assistance as needed.
- Have groups come up and post their trends on the appropriate point on the spectrum. Then have participants present their work, explaining 1) why they selected the specific items, and 2) why they placed the items where they did on the spectrum.
- After everyone has presented, lead a full-group discussion using the questions provided:
 - What overall picture does this data describe?
 - How are the different trends related?
 - Review your community trends. How do they compare with the ones presented here?
 - What trends do you think most need to be changed in order to promote a more sustainable food system?

4) Before the next session

- Review the “homework” to complete before the next session. Participants will select one food eaten at their last full meal, and without added research, record what they know about the journey the foods took from farm to plate, including materials/energy used to get the foods to their tables, and the wastes produced along the way. Prompts are provided in learner packet.
- In the next lesson, participants will learn more about these issues via the concept of the “food footprint”; tracing the meal without added research is a way to generate thinking and assess previous knowledge of this area.