TITLE: Trace The French Fry

OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce the fact that there are different kinds of food systems
2. To explore different types of food systems and the costs and benefits of each
3. To show participants that their decisions affect what happens on farms and to farmers, and that what happens on farms effects their health and quality of life
4. To help participants understand that as informed consumers they have the power to choose what kind of food system they want to support.

TIME REQUIRED: 1-1.5 hours

MATERIALS: Flip chart, markers, food system cards, role play cards, two potatoes (one local, one from Idaho).

DIRECTIONS:

Activity 1: Compare Spuds

Show participants the two potatoes and ask them to brainstorm the differences that they can observe. Now tell them where each of the potatoes is from. What do they now know or assume about these two potatoes just by knowing where they were grown? Hard to say- even though they look different it's hard to know much about them by looking at them. Now tell them that the two potatoes are from two different kinds of food systems.

Activity 2: Create a Glossary of Key Words

In order to make certain everyone is familiar with all the food system terms, ask them to define consumer, producer, processor, distributor and food system. Fill in any gaps.

Activity 3: Create Maps of Food Systems

Divide the participants into three groups. Hand out a lot of the food system pieces and ask each group to create one of the following food systems: the most simple one they can think of, one that represents locally-grown produce sold at the farmer's market, and a complex industrial/global system that ends at a fast food restaurant. The most simple is a subsistence farm that is both producer and consumer – it has no supplier (it grows its own seeds) and all that is grown is consumed on the farm (no transportation involved). Ask each group

to explain each food system they come up with. Tape the pieces as they have them arranged to a piece of flip chart paper on the flip chart.

Activity 4: What's Missing?

Looking at the food system maps they have come up with, ask them to identify what component is missing from each of the food systems they designed. It is the waste stream. How would a conventional system deal with waste? (landfill) How would a sustainable system do that? (compost, recycling). Ask someone to point draw arrows to show where waste is generated in each system. In addition to waste there are inputs to the systems that are not represented on the maps. What is that? (energy). Which system requires the most inputs of energy? Where? Add more arrows to the drawings.

Activity 5: Impact Assessment

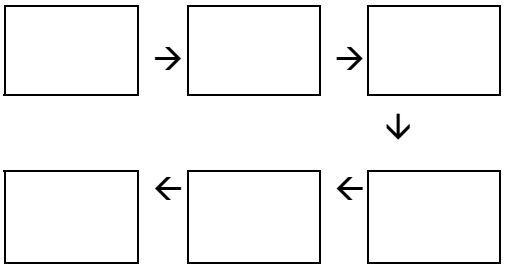
Tell the group that each of the food systems that they have designed have both benefits and costs (negative impacts) associated with them to the environment, people (farmer, neighbors, consumer) and the economy. Divide crew workers into pairs and give each pair a role-play card that identifies a role in the food system. Ask them to read the card and identify what positive and/or negative impacts to the environment, people and the economy might be associated with their role in the food system. Model this for them since it can be confusing because some of the roles generate impacts and some are impacted.

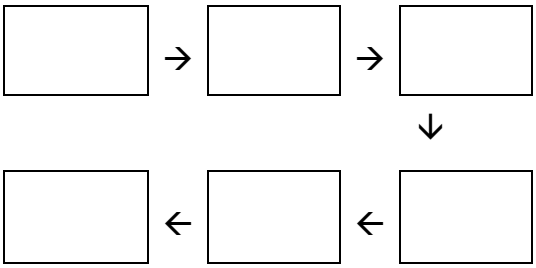
Once the pairs have had a chance to decide on the impacts, ask them to read their card out loud and then report back the impacts. Write these up on a flip chart that is divided into quarters with the two food systems on the x-axis and positive and negative on the y-axis. Putting aside their roles, can they think of any other costs of benefits that aren't on the flipchart?

After they have made a list of the costs and benefits of these two food systems, write "Industrial/ Global" above the fast food map, and "Local/ Sustainable" above the locally-grown map.

Food System Comparison

Step 1:





Step 3: Write: "Global/ Industrial" ***Write: "Local/ Sustainable"***

Step 2:

Benefits	*Benefits*
Costs	*Costs*

Food System Comparison- role play cards

Supplier of seeds and chemicals. Industrial farmers buy large amounts of cheap fertilizers, pesticides and seeds from you. They usually buy only one kind of seed. The fertilizers and chemicals you sell use petroleum in their manufacturing.

T**rucker**. You transport seeds and chemicals to the farmer in the industrial food system. Then you take the produce to the processor, the processed food to the distributor and then to the retailer. You don't work for the local food system because the farmers transport their own food to the market.

C**onsumer who lives downstream from an industrial farm**. Whenever the wind blow you can smell pesticides. You have noticed that when it rains the stream that goes by your house is full of soil runoff and that recently there haven't been many fish in it.

I**ndustrial farmer** who grows 200 acres of potatoes in Idaho. You are married and have three young children who have to stay indoors whenever you are spraying herbicides on your fields. You employ 10 migrant workers for three weeks a year during the potato harvest.

F**armer in a sustainable/local food system** in Massachusetts. You employ two people throughout the growing season. You have two children.

C**onsumer** who lives in Boston. You like to eat bananas and pineapples all year round.

Farm worker. You look for farm work wherever you can find it. You are supporting yourself and three family members.

P**otato buyer for MacDonalds**. It is your job to negotiate contracts with farmers and make sure that there is a constant supply of high quality potatoes that will fit in the French fry cutting machine.