

Putting Food on the Green New Deal Menu: A 7-Point Plan

A Green New Deal offers an opportunity to elevate the role of food production, land access, public procurement, and anti-hunger and nutrition policies and regulations as levers to fix our wasteful and inequitable agri-food system. Earlier this year, the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute convened a group of academics, practitioners, and activists to imagine how a Green New Deal at the city, state, and federal levels could take stock of this opportunity. This plan is based on that discussion and focuses on changes in New York City, New York State and federal policies.



PRINCIPLE #1: ALL PUBLIC MONEY SPENT ON FOOD, INCLUDING FEDERAL PROGRAMS LIKE SNAP, SCHOOL FOOD, AND TEFAP AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT, SHOULD CONTRIBUTE TO REDUCING GREEN HOUSE GASES (GHGS) BY SHIFTING RESOURCES TO AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING, MAKING HEALTHY FOOD AFFORDABLE FOR ALL, REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY, AND STRENGTHENING FOOD WORKERS' RIGHTS.

Public Money in Food and Nutrition Programs

SNAP is public money and it should be used for the public good. Supermarkets and food retailers redeemed approximately \$63.3 billion in SNAP benefits in 2017.

1. Change the stocking standards for supermarkets to be able to participate in SNAP to encourage purchasing of agroecologically produced food (i.e. food that is produced by applying ecological principles to agricultural systems) that supports workers' rights, regional agriculture, and supply chain development for small food retailers, particularly those owned by historically marginalized groups.
2. Provide SNAP incentives for consumers who shop at retailers (e.g., SNAP stretch) that meet these new stocking standards.

3. Develop specific city and state agendas to reduce consumption of ultraprocessed foods – an important contributor to GHGs and an industry extensively relying on fossil fuels – in institutional food programs, through SNAP incentives (not penalties), and through retail incentives such as New York City's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) program.
4. Protect and expand the food and nutrition safety net: eliminate the SNAP Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWD) restriction, the SNAP exclusion of full time post-secondary students, rules deterring enrollment by eligible immigrants, and other efforts to undermine the safety net.
5. Establish a universal free school lunch and breakfast program integrated with food education.

Public Money in Food Purchasing and Procurement

1. Give priority to agroecologically produced food, preferably from nearby producers, in all public procurement including schools, childcare centers, senior centers, and hospitals.
2. Identify and reduce purchasing of foods with a higher carbon footprint, through initiatives like Meatless Mondays and others.

3. Increase farm-to-food bank tax credits, farm-to-school reimbursement rates and other financial incentives for more local dairy and protein donations and procurement channels.

Public Universities and Extension Services

Public universities must serve the public good.

1. Increase state funding for CUNY and SUNY to provide education and technical assistance through land grants and extension services to assist urban and regional farmers in transitioning to agroecological growing practices, support new farmers, and develop the technical expertise and a workforce capable of creating supply chains between small and medium sized farmers, public institutions, and retailers.

PRINCIPLE #2: HEALTH, FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL POLICY SHOULD SEEK TO REDUCE THE SIZE, INFLUENCE, AND SUBSIDIES PROVIDED TO THE ULTRAPROCESSED FOOD INDUSTRY.

Food Industry

Ultraprocessed foods are high in calories, unhealthy fats, sugar and salt. They are becoming the leading cause of premature death and preventable illness in New York City, State and the world. The food system that produces and promotes these products is a prime contributor to global warming.

2. Reduce the subsidies provided to large multinational agricultural, food manufacturing, food service, and food retail corporations that invest in and market ultraprocessed foods.
3. Enlarge, strengthen and support alternative systems based on agroecology and smaller scale urban and regional agriculture.
4. Public food programs should avoid purchase of ultraprocessed products.

PRINCIPLE #3: CREATE LIVING-WAGE JOBS IN THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS THAT BUILD AND SUSTAIN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CARBON REDUCTION, AND IMPROVE FOOD SECURITY, COMMUNITY WEALTH, AND NUTRITION.

Food Jobs

5. Equalize labor laws to provide farmworkers with full legal rights and ensure that all food system workers have a voice in food production, access to healthy food, and the freedom to organize and unionize without retaliation by passing and

enforcing the New York Fairness for Farmworkers Act.

6. Use public money to support the creation of food hubs and food processing facilities for New York State produced foods that can be purchased through school food and other public programs and can offer value added processing to small and mid-size regional farms.
7. Integrate climate and health perspectives into food workforce development programs to increase the number of entry level food workers with activist perspectives and concrete skills.
8. Ensure fair, family-sustaining living wages and safe, humane working conditions for farmworkers, fishers, and other food industry workers.
9. Increase TEFAP administration funds to create federally funded, living wage jobs in food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens.
10. Invest in good food jobs: upgrade cooking skills (and compensation) for school food, childcare, and home health care workers and institutional food providers.

PRINCIPLE #4: EXPAND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF LAND FOR URBAN AND REGIONAL AGRICULTURE AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ORGANIC WASTE REDUCTION.

Land Ownership

1. Invest in and support centralized community ownership of renewable energy infrastructure used to power local food production.
2. Promote community garden preservation, creation, and ownership. Community gardens have an important role in stormwater capture and retention, helping mitigate drainage issues in certain communities and build greater climate resiliency.
3. Invest in a community land trust model to ensure open access to land that can be used for cultivation.
4. Create green jobs using commercial composting facilities that utilize farmland to process food scraps locally, including at community gardens, and reduce GHG emissions from landfill.

PRINCIPLE #5: TRANSFORM AGRICULTURAL SUBSIDIES AND STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING TO MAKE SMALL/MEDIUM SCALE AGROECOLOGICAL FARMING ECONOMICALLY VIABLE AND ENSURE THE PROSPERITY OF REGIONAL FOODSHEDS.

Agricultural Subsidies

The largest, and only remaining, “sink” for carbon on Earth is the soil and regenerative farming increases soil carbon.

1. Demand a complete end to the fossil fuel regime—no coal, oil, gas, synthetic fertilizers, and no more new fossil fuel infrastructure—and substitute these with 100% renewable energy and regenerative agriculture.
2. Structure federal, state, county, and local funding programs—including in New York City—to ensure a reliable and adequate stream of funds and resources for the protection of farms and farmland in New York’s foodshed.
3. Include incentives and training for farmers to become the true managers of the solar power that photosynthesis makes possible.
4. Enact policies in supply management to provide financial stability for farmers and prevent agro-industry overproduction and boom-bust cycles.
5. Provide structural incentives for agroecology and disincentives to discourage large-scale monocropping and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).
6. Protect US fisheries and waterways through implementing policies like the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, Gulf Coast regeneration, and utilization of regenerative ocean farming, such as oysters and mussels.
7. Provide tax credits or incentives for farms and businesses generating a low carbon footprint including waste to energy/zero waste goals.
8. Create a comprehensive state soil health program with enforceable, detailed benchmarks that requires all state agencies that touch on food, agriculture and land management to consider soil health.
9. Provide living wages to farmworkers for a normal workweek and allow them to access land and the resources to farm should they want to become farm managers.

10. Provide just and not overly burdensome loans for specialized equipment.
11. Earmark Community Food Projects funds and additional federal funding streams as line items to support community-designed sustainable agricultural practices.

PRINCIPLE #6: REGULATE AND REDUCE FOOD WASTE BY REQUIRING PRODUCERS TO TAKE FINANCIAL AND PHYSICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE POST-CONSUMER LIFE OF THEIR PRODUCTS.

Food Waste

1. Implement mandatory source-separation of organic waste by businesses.
2. Incentivize businesses to implement food waste prevention techniques.
3. Increase regulations on corporate food waste that make food retailers and producers financially responsible for wasted food and for redistribution of surplus food to community meal programs and/or emergency food programs.

PRINCIPLE #7: ENSURE DEMOCRATIC FOOD AND AGRICULTURE GOVERNANCE AND DECISION MAKING.

Food Democracy

1. Participate in broad Climate Justice coalitions so that the GND will include agriculture, food and land in all discussions and proposals.
2. Expand educating, organizing and agitating for GND, including food justice issues, on a grassroots level – in schools, community organizations, community gardens, faith organizations, unions, community boards. Food justice advocates should be leaders in this work.
3. Demand community-based democratic planning to implement a GND so that communities can decide on the projects, developments, and clean-ups that will take place in their neighborhoods, towns, cities, and states.
4. Demand environmental justice principles be included in the GND and local planning so that those most harmed by the present environmental and economic crises will be first served by and participate in developing the solutions to address them.