

Keeping the Food Sovereignty through the Local Food Movement

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1. Food crisis and the industrial model of agriculture

1-1. Food prices have been soaring since 2006, and food riots had broken out in nearly 40 countries, especially in Egypt, Indonesia, Cameroon, Peru and Haiti. Although there is enough food produced globally to feed twice the world's population, one in every six people is seriously undernourished, and the number of hungry people in the world has increased every year. Seventy percent of undernourished people are women and girls, and 50 percent are farmers (FAO).

1-2. Neo-liberal policies haven't contributed at all to hunger eradication in the world. Rather, they have increased the peoples' dependence on agricultural imports, and have strengthened the industrialization of agriculture. They have forced hundreds of millions of farmers to give up their traditional agricultural practices. International institutions, such as IMF, IBRD, and WTO, have implemented those policies dictated by the interests of large transnational companies and superpowers.

1-3. Neo-liberal policies have prioritized international trade, and not for the food. They have increased the peoples' dependence on agricultural imports, and have accelerated the industrialization of agriculture.

1-4. In today' s agri-food system which ranges from the agricultural consumer products to the agricultural input materials, even farmers, who are consumers of agricultural products themselves, are not aware of where and how the raw materials of these products are made and processed. Since the late 1980s, the liberalization of the agri-food sector has been rapidly taking place on a global scale in both developed and developing countries. As a result, economic power has been transferred from a particular region or the national economy to transnational corporations and multinational organizations(Philip McMichael ed., 1994).

1-5. In the modern global agri-food system, the agri-food complex plays a major role in linking farmers and consumers(William H. Friedland, 1991). The foundation of modern agriculture is increasingly under the control of transnational agri-food conglomerates (TNACs), such as Cargill, ConAgra, ADM, and Monsanto(Byeong-Seon Yoon, 2006). TNACs are actually leading the integration of the modern agri-food system. They are doing business by transcending national borders in all areas of agricultural production, including grain processing, mixed feeds, meats, dairy products, canned fruits, cereals, and condensed drinks; they are also entering the agricultural production materials industry, such as seeds, fertilizers, and agricultural chemicals.

1-6. By promoting specialization in the agriculture, TNACs are destroying the environmentally balanced farming, reducing the diversity of genetic resources, expanding the supply of standardized production, and imposing uniformity on agricultural production. These are undermining the sustainability of the agriculture in the long term. Rather than developing a rich local food culture, we are moving in a seriously distorted, uniform direction..

1-7. Today's agri-food system has broken the balance of the farming system, and has led to undermining the unity of the components of the farm due to ecological problems and large-scale agriculture systems. It also has reduced the efficiency of the inputs through single-crop production that resulted in the use of large amounts of pesticides and fertilizers. In short, industrial agriculture is leading to the misuse of agricultural chemicals, threatening the rural community, reducing the diversity of crops, and promoting inequality in the agricultural community. It is destroying the traditional agricultural community setup and reducing family farms. The foundation of a country's agriculture is increasingly becoming under the control of TNACs, thereby destroying food diversity and paving the way for a cheap junk food culture.

1-8. United States, the share of the consumer's food dollars that trickles back to the farming community plunged from over 40cents in 1910 to just above 7 cents in 1997, while the share going to an ever-shrinking number of processing, shipping, brokerage, advertising, and retailing firms continued to expand(Brian Harweil, 2004, p.45). Today farmers receive an average of less than 10 cents of every dollar spent on food. The rest of money goes to processing, packing, and distribution. At farmers market, 90 percent of the profits go straight to the farmers(Robbecca Spector).

1-9. TNAC's dominance of the agriculture and agri-food products is increasing on a global scale, to the point of subsuming the entire agricultural production, from the production of raw materials to processing, and distribution. Agriculture is being subsumed by vertical integration and diversification of TNACs in both agricultural exporting countries and the agricultural importing countries.

2. From food security to food sovereignty

2-1. In terms of the corporate food regime, 'food security' is to be achieved through trade, rather than through a strategy of self sufficiency (Philip McMichael, 2004). Food sovereignty represents an alternative principle to the industrial model of agriculture and 'food security'. In order to guarantee the independence and food sovereignty of all of the world's peoples, it is essential that food should be produced through the farmer-based diversified production system. Food sovereignty does not reject the trade; rather it redefines the trade in terms of democratic conditions of food production and distribution.

2-2. The concept of food sovereignty was developed by Via Campesina and brought to the public debate the World Food Summit in 1996 and represents an alternative to neo-liberal policies. "Food Sovereignty is the RIGHT of peoples, communities, and countries to define their own agricultural, labor, fishing, food, and land policies which are ecologically, socially, economically, and culturally appropriate to their unique circumstances. It includes the true right to food and to produce food, which means that all people have the right to safe, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food and to food-producing resources and the ability to sustain themselves and their societies(Food Sovereignty: A Right For All, June 2002).

2-3. Therefore, the concept of food sovereignty is related to the respect and exercise of right by peoples and nation states to determine the food and agriculture policies that are suited to their specific economic, social, cultural and political circumstances and are explicitly oriented towards achieving national development goals and strategies.(*Food Sovereignty Framework*, December 2005).

1. Food sovereignty puts priority on enhancing domestic food production and protecting domestic markets to ensure food and livelihood security in developing and poorer countries
2. Regulating international trade, particularly curbing agriculture dumping and TNACs control on agriculture and food
Curbing TNACs power in agriculture would also require the development, review and strengthening of national and international frameworks or system for recognizing biological diversity, traditional knowledge and community innovation
3. Increasing men and women's access to and control of their land and productive resources
4. Access to adequate, nutritious, and safe food for all
5. Women account for more than 50% of the food grown all over the world
6. Food sovereignty promotes sustainable agricultural practices.

2-4. Food sovereignty encompasses a set of principles and policies that present an alternative to and directly challenges the dominant neo-liberal trade dogma of WTO and the international financial institutions(www.peoplesfoodsovereignty.org).

3. Local food movement

3-1. One of the best ways of promoting food sovereignty is to support local and regional farmers. Buying local food cuts the need of middleman, and eliminates the cost of food associated with packing, and distribution. One survey showed that local food sold through a delivery scheme cost an average of 30 to 40 percent less than similar foods purchased in supermarkets(Brian Halweil, 2002, p. 64). "Buying local" re-invigorates local economies by keeping money re-circulating through the community, creating new jobs, and boosting farmers' income.

3-2. According to the Foundation for Local Food Initiatives, in the broadest terms, the advantages of a local food sector are community development, access to fresh produce, and producer ownership of product/process. Thus the concept of the local food sector encompasses the three dimensions of sustainability: the environment, economy, and society. The holistic nature of the concept has meant that composite measurements of development and success are required. Indicators provide evidence for a socio-economic developmental impact of the local food sector, such as every \$10 spent in a local food business adds \$25 to the local economy, or 55% of local food sales are through existing local shops and markets, for example (Georgina Holt).

3-3. In order to understand the types of food and associated projects that should be prompted for the development of sustainable local food systems, it is necessary to determine what is meant by 'local food'. A definition based purely on geographical distance of food sourcing is inadequate for encapsulating the fundamental features that must characterize truly local food. It is important to consider the social, economic and other environmental attributes of food, rather than simply the distance over which it is transported between field and plate(Helen La).

3-4. The 'local food sector' is increasingly seen as encouraging many economic, social, environmental and health benefits. The recent increase in farmers market is a good example of the contribution that sector can make(*Feeding the Interest*).

For example:

- A wider range of foods produced in a sustainable way can increase biodiversity and maintain the countryside
- More people can access fresh food, particularly fruit and vegetables
- More local employment and less leakage from the local economy
- More physical activity associated with local food production
- Promotion of public health in its widest sense

3-5. The effects of Local Food System

- * ecological aspects
 - reduced reliance on external and non renewable inputs
 - increased reliance on local resources
 - resource conservation
- * economic aspects
 - greater local control
 - farmer earns a fair living
 - diversified local economy
 - alternative marketing options : cooking class
 - build synergies with other sectors(education, tourism)
- * social aspects
 - building relationships and trust
 - increasing knowledge and trust
 - building self-efficiency

3-6. Local suppliers in Northumberland(England) re-spend on average 76 percent of their income from contracts with local people and businesses, while suppliers from outside Northumberland spent only 36 per cent in the area. This means that every £1 spent with a local supplier is worth £1.76 to the local economy, and only 36 pence if it is spent out of the area. That makes £1 spent locally worth almost 400 per cent more.(<http://www.neweconomics.org>)

3-7. A growing number of people in their region are committed to building a healthy local food economy. This is not an easy task. A significant part of the challenge is to show that developing strong local economic linkages is crucial to the economic success of their region' s food producers, manufacturers, and distributors.

3-8. In Korea, the local food movement is in the beginning stage. Farmers and consumers organized farmers' market on occasional basis. In some areas, farmers' association has promoted building the local food system and processing locally grown agricultural products. For example, Both Asan Producer Association in which 500 organic agriculture farmers participate and Pureundeul Farming Association which processes and distributes the local food have organized local food system in Cheonan and Asan Province. Pureundeul Farming Association has grown the bean sprouts first, and produced bean curd. Also, In Hoengseong, women peasants formed the association for processing locally grown organic soy. They have been producing and distributing bean curd in the local area.

3-9. These days, consumers are spending much money on the processed food, therefore farmers should process the locally grown agricultural products to revitalize rural economy. For example, at Yecheon in Korea, 20 farmers established the cooperative organization for selling the beef directly in a local market. They built the cooperative ranch first, opened the

store and restaurants to provide the consumer with beef directly. The farmers can sell not only the beef, but also many different kinds of vegetables. They can make the some amounts of the feed with the waste from the field. This local beef store and restaurants have contributed to create the new jobs and the receiving prices for the farmers has increased.

3-10. Local food movement in Japan, Chisan-Chiso, has been prosperous since 1990. The ratio of locally grown agricultural products in the sales reached 64% at the direct sales store(farmers' market). In Japan, other types of local food movement, such as school lunch, processing of the locally grown agricultural products, and shop in shop, have been practiced. In Hukusima, some members of Life Improving Group formed the organization for processing locally grown agricultural products in 1987. They have processed the cabbage in salt and soybean paste. This movement has made another important income source.

3-11. Modern global food system is on the verge of a great transition. Although agribusiness has unprecedented control over the world's farmers and food supply, the realities of climate change, resource depletion, and the human suffering caused by industrialized farming have led more people to start thinking about the links between food, the environment, and social justice. Around the world, demands for food sovereignty?peoples' right to control their own food systems?is at an all-time high(Yifat Susskind). It is the right to eat healthy produced food according to their culture and preferences. Food sovereignty is the right for consumer to eat food with the better quality, preferences of taste. It means that consumers should have the right to healthy and desirable food items, and producers should have the right to grow what they want to grow.

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