

### Questions for Individual/Group Reflection

- 1) In what ways is my relationship with food part of my spiritual practice?
- 2) What was the environmental cost of getting my most recent meal to my table (production, distribution, and purchase)? e.g. What is my food footprint? See [www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator](http://www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator).
- 3) Where should I look in our community for the most sustainable, humane food. Do I consider seasonal availability when making a food choice? Can I get this product through a fair trade co-op, farmers' market, or local producer or retailer?
- 4) How do my food choices impact those who produce and distribute it? What are their working and living conditions? Was land that previously was used to raise food for indigenous people converted to raising food for Western countries?
- 5) Do I consider packaging when making purchases and choose that with the least environmental impact?
- 6) What support do I need to move toward a more just, environmentally friendly diet?

### Individual Actions

- **Compile a collection of recipes using compassionate and sustainable foods.** Make copies easily available to the congregation
- **Encourage local restaurants to offer sustainable and/or animal friendly choices.** Thank them. If you are concerned about animal welfare, call ahead to the chef regarding menu options. Have available at your congregation a list of restaurants that offer sustainable/animal friendly choices. Visit restaurants of different cultural and ethnic traditions.
- **Choose whole foods.** With little or no processing, whole foods are as close as possible to their natural state. Most if not all of their original nutrients and fiber are retained. The marketing of whole foods uses less energy, water and packing than more highly processed foods.
- **Learn about food labeling.** With the current interest in sustainable, just and compassionate food, an array of product labels have appeared in the market place. Some of these creatively worded labels are misleading and require a closer look
- **Display bumper stickers that reflect your values.**
- **Use reusable bags.** Save resources. Many stores will give a discount to customers who bring their own canvas or other reusable bags to carry groceries.
- **Support sustainable agriculture and farmers' markets.** Every time we buy a product, we vote with our dollars for what kind of future we will create.
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### Group Actions

- **Plan congregational potlucks and holiday meals around the theme of sustainable food,** or on one of the many other themes of this guide. Measure your waste after the meal with the goal of reducing it next time.

- **Donate the best; compost the rest.** Most local soup kitchens and food pantries are happy to accept food that the churches and fellowships don't use, so develop a regular donation plan. Many Unitarian Universalist congregations produce enough coffee grounds to develop pretty respectable compost piles. Have participants bring their own storage containers to church functions so they can share leftovers.
- **Publicize local farmer's markets, food co-ops, and organic markets and restaurants in the congregation.** Check out [www.localharvest.org](http://www.localharvest.org) to find opportunities near your zip code. Locate pick-your-own farms at [www.pickyourown.org](http://www.pickyourown.org). Take Religious Education classes there for a field trip. Come back and cook a meal.
- **GROUNDWORK**
- [www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/groundwork/index.shtml](http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/groundwork/index.shtml) A critical part of ethical eating is addressing underlying systems that perpetuate racial injustice. One tool for learning more is *GROUNDWORK*, an Anti-Racism training and organizing program for UU youth and young adults. *GROUNDWORK* trainers are available to facilitate dialogue, education, training and organizing in congregations, schools and community groups.
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### **CC5: SLOW FOOD**

The Slow Food movement is a cultural movement to preserve traditional social customs around food and eating, including preserving regional cuisines and cultural diversity

### **CC4: ORGANICS**

Consumer Reports. **"When it Pays to Buy Organic."**

[www.consumerreports.org/cro/food/diet-nutrition/organic-products/organic-products-206/overview](http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/food/diet-nutrition/organic-products/organic-products-206/overview). Timely article address when it pays to buy organic, threats to the integrity of organic food from "big players" and suggestions for purchasing low cost organic food.

### **CC3: HUMANE LABELING**

**"The Humane Myth"** [www.humanemyth.org/mediabase/1016.htm](http://www.humanemyth.org/mediabase/1016.htm). 2008. Discusses troubling issues related to the promotion of humane animal products

### **CC2: GOING LOCAL**

Science Daily. **"Organic Food Miles Take Toll On Environment."** 7 June 2007.

[www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070606113311.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/06/070606113311.htm) Article indicates "organically grown is not the only consideration when choosing just, sustainable food. Sometimes local" food is best .

### **CC1: FAIR TRADE**

The Unitarian Universalist Service Committee [www.uusc.org](http://www.uusc.org) has made fair trade practices a centerpiece of their economic justice work, and has created a number of resources, activities and programs addressing fair trade practices and living wage. See "Promoting Fair Trade," which describes UUSC's three-pronged effort to promote and strengthen Fair Trade: [www.uusc.org/content/promoting\\_fair\\_trade](http://www.uusc.org/content/promoting_fair_trade)