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#FOODFORTHOUGHTFILM
#PROTECTWHATISPRECIOUS
I have always felt a connection to the world around me. Nature can heal us and provides us with everything we need to thrive. However, we’re putting tremendous pressure on our planet’s resources and I’m aware of the many challenges we face.

I made **Food for Thought, Food for Life** because I know that global awareness is paramount to bring about significant change. My goal is to start a conversation about the things I’m most passionate about and empower people like you to take small actions that produce big changes. I hope that each of the people in the film will inspire you as much as they have inspired me; with you as a guide, your community can figure out how to follow their lead or adapt their solutions to meet community needs.

I’m convinced that conversation leads to collaboration, and together we can find local and global solutions that help the planet and ourselves. Thanks for joining me in that search. I’m honored to be part of your work.

**SUSAN ROCKEFELLER**
*Director, Food for Thought, Food for Life*

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InsightersEducation.com*

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**FOOD FOR THOUGHT, FOOD FOR LIFE**

Co-produced by **Beth Poague**

Co-produced & edited by **Jackie French**

Featuring the music of **Cloud Cult**

Music score by **Craig Minowa**

Featuring **Dan Barber, Wendell Berry, Ron Finley, Michel Nischan, Stephen Ritz, Cheryl Rogowski, Eliot Coleman, Daphne Miller** and **Fred Kirschenmann**

Produced in association with **Louverture Films**

Funding provided by **Candescent Films** and **GRACE Communications Foundation**

#FOODFORTHOUGHTFILM  #PROTECTWHATISPRECIOUS
WELCOME

FOOD FOR THOUGHT, FOOD FOR LIFE is a 20-minute film, companion website, and outreach campaign designed to spark conversation and inspire us to think differently about what we eat. In the hands of leaders like you, it can help cultivate a revolution in the food system that will improve and sustain our health, our earth and our communities.

START A CONVERSATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

The national outreach and engagement campaign for Food for Thought, Food for Life includes hundreds of screening events around the country. These events use the film to spark vibrant conversations. They bring people together to discuss, learn and take action, by taking small steps in their own lives or by supporting work already happening in their communities.

We will provide all of the tools that you will need to put on a successful, fun and engaging screening event, from a panel discussion to a cooking demonstration. The film starts the conversation; in our experience, the audiences take it from there! Whether you are a nonprofit, an educator, or just someone interested in the issues who gathers a group in your living room, you can use Food for Thought, Food for Life to convene, engage, and inspire people in your community.

We are especially interested in giving this film to Farmers to use to educate their local communities about eating local and supporting farmers. Get a conversation going in your community and help grow a small farm near you!

A Screening Toolkit with more detailed information is available at:
http://foodforthoughtfilm.com/screening-kit/

THE FILM

We want our food fast, convenient and cheap, but at what cost? As farms have become supersized, our environment suffers and so does the quality of our food. Susan Rockefeller’s short film, Food for Thought, Food for Life (20 min.) explains the downsides of current agribusiness practices, and also introduces us to farmers, chefs, researchers, educators, and advocates who are providing solutions. The film is both poetic and practical; its powerful examination of the connections between our planet and our well-being is accompanied by specific strategies that protect both. With an eye towards a sustainable and abundant future, it offers inspiration for communities that are ready to make a difference.

#FOODFORTHOUGHTFILM #PROTECTWHATISPRECIOUS
The film’s short length makes it perfect for events, groups, classes, and meetings with public officials that address any of these issues:

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*Find out more about FOOD FOR LIFE, FOOD FOR THOUGHT: [www.foodforthoughtfilm.com](http://www.foodforthoughtfilm.com)*
DISCUSSION PROMPTS

This section addresses a wide range of interests, settings and groups. If a question doesn’t work for you, move on to an option that better matches your circumstances and audience – no need to cover them all. Typically, you’ll only need a couple of prompts to get a discussion going.

GENERAL

These questions work well as conversation starters. The final two prompts can also help you transition into a wrap up.

• Imagine going home and telling a friend or family member about this film. What would you say?

• Did anything in the film surprise you?

• Describe a moment from the film that you found particularly inspiring or troubling. What was it about that moment that moved you?

• What is the significance of the film’s title?

• What is one lesson you learned from the film that you wish everyone in your family or community knew? What do you think would change if everyone knew it?

• What did you learn from the film that you could apply in your own community or life?

TRY THIS

1 Compose a tweet or post for your favorite social media site summarizing the main message of the film.

2 Compare your message to others in the room. What do you think accounts for the differences?

3 At end of event, look again at your initial tweet or post. Would you write anything different now?

4 Tweet or post your reaction to the film.

#FOODFORTHOUGHTFILM

#PROTECTWHATISPRECIOUS
UNDERSTANDING THE CONNECTIONS

These prompts address comprehension and shared understanding. They may be especially important for groups who are new to the core content of the film.

What did you learn from the film about the connections between:

- a living wage for farm workers and sustainable farming?
- soil quality and human health?
- seeds bred for universal use and the need for pesticides?
- monoculture farming and energy use?
- farm subsidies and the widespread availability of cheap, processed food?
- food deserts and the proliferation of dialysis centers?

TRY THIS

1  Make a set of cards with each of these phrases on a separate card: soil quality; availability of water; food’s flavor; food’s nutritional value; the need for pesticides and herbicides; plant and seed variety; climate change; crop yield

   soil quality    availability of water    food's flavor
   food's nutritional value    the need for pesticides and herbicides
   plant and seed variety    climate change    crop yield

2  Pose one of these sentences:

   Name a connection between industrial agriculture and...

   AND/OR

   Name a connection between diversified, resilient, system-based farming and...

3  Invite volunteers to pick a random card and suggest an answer.

4  As time allows, invite the group to offer additional responses for each card.

5  Repeat until all the cards have been used.
FACTS AND STATS

Questions about the statistics cited in the film can be used to reinforce content and help people reflect on where their ideas come from.

Consider these facts from the film:

- More than 40%...of Earth’s land has been cleared for agriculture.
- Agriculture uses 60 times more land than urban and suburban areas combined.
- Irrigation is the biggest use of water on the planet.
- The Colorado River no longer flows to the ocean.
- Agriculture is the biggest contributor to climate change. It generates 30% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- There are more than 7 billion people on earth and the population continues to grow.
- The U.S. provides $60 billion in farm subsidies. Ten percent - the largest operators – receive 74% of the money.

Did anything in this list surprise you?

Explain how each of these is linked to your current approach to agriculture and what, if anything, needs to change?

TRY THIS

1. Before viewing the film, ask people to answer these questions:
   - What percentage of the earth’s land has been cleared for agriculture?
   - Which of these activities accounts for most water consumption: mining & fracking, agriculture, or beverage bottlers?
   - What percentage of greenhouse emissions is contributed by agricultural activities?
   - How much does the U.S. pay in farm subsidies?
   - What percentage of those farm subsidies go to the ten largest farm operators?

2. Invite participants to listen for the answers as they view.

3. After viewing, review initial responses and compare them with the information provided in the film. Survey the group to see which questions were most frequently answered incorrectly. Discuss why initial perceptions might have been wrong, including asking people where they get their information about these issues, whether their sources are reliable, and what makes a source credible.
Themes

These questions help people explore specific content from the film.

Voting for Better Food: Policy Questions

Fred Kirschenmann reminds us that years ago we said “that we wanted our food fast, convenient and cheap.” Who has benefitted from the resulting policies and in what ways? Who has been harmed?

Ken Cook talks about supporting a farm bill that’s a “food bill.” What’s the difference? What would you like to see in the next major farm bill? What would your recommendation be on subsidies?

Chef Michel Nischan asks, “So wouldn’t it be a perfect world if everybody could just get their hands on a really great tomato?” Why can’t they? Why is processed food so inexpensive and a great tomato so expensive? Why are there food deserts where it’s tough to find any fresh produce at all? What would an economic model look like that incentivized the production and distribution of “great tomatoes” (and other high quality unprocessed, nutritious food)?

Ron Finley talks about the food deserts of South Central Los Angeles. Where do food deserts exist in your city, county, or state? What could you do to change that?

Matt Goldfarb and Petra Page-Mann (Fruition Seeds) talk about the importance of developing seeds that suit conditions in their particular region. If you could write patent law governing seeds (or genetically modified plants), to protect and stimulate region-specific, organic, diversified farming, what would the law say?

Chef Michel Nischan suggests that we make food affordable for people on food stamps by doubling their money “if they want to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.” As a matter of public policy, would you support this, even if it meant paying higher taxes? Why or why not?

Sustainable Farming Practices

How did current monoculture farming practices – with huge farms growing single crops – get to be the way they are? What keeps the status quo going? Why is continuing the status quo a problem?

Jonathan Foley points out that “We have to provide food for something like seven billion people in the world today.” As the population continues to grow, global food production will need to double or even triple. What do you think are the best strategies to ensure that, going forward, everyone has access to nutritious food and potable water? What evidence supports the strategies you favor?

Wendell Berry suggests that instead of asking what nature will do for you, we ask what “she’ll allow you to do and what she’ll help you do.” In practical terms, how is this different from a “mastering the land” approach or “dominion over the land and animals” relationship with nature? What did you learn from the film about soil depletion, how to preserve healthy soil, and the relationship between healthy soil and human health?
Farmer Cheryl Rogowski reports that she has been labeled “an outlaw” because she saves and sows her own seeds. How and why do industrial farming practices interfere with the practice of saving seeds?

Compare and contrast the methods used by industrial agriculture and diversified food system farming to increase yields. Which makes the most sense to you and why?

Chef Christeta Comerford observes, “Things that are right for our environment, they actually taste the best.” Why is that the case? Why has breeding for flavor and nutrition often been cast mutually exclusive with breeding for high yield or affordability? Why does the film reject this dichotomy?

Several people in the film make a special point about using rather than opposing technology. Why the concern about being perceived as Luddite? How does/can tech help in transforming agriculture? What are the potential caveats for embracing technology-based strategies?

Fred Kirschenmann observes that, “The era of cheap energy is over. We’re depleting our fresh water resources [and] our soil health, [and] we’ve got to add climate change into the equation.” Compare the ways that diversified food system farming and industrial agriculture address the realities that Kirschenmann describes. Include the energy use, water use, and amount of waste produced by each farming method.

Dan Barber describes our current approach saying, “We eat ‘high on the hog’—eating that center cut of meat. What we need to look at is the whole animal – the nose to the tail philosophy of cooking – [and apply that] philosophy in the entirety of the farm. In your view, what is the most important thing that would change if all farms operated using a “nose to tail” philosophy of farming?

Eating Healthy for Ourselves and the Planet

Fred Kirschenmann says that “Paying attention to the uniqueness of regional ecologies is going to become extremely important as we move into a new future.” Why?

Dan Barber urges, “We need to become closer to what a particular place is demanding that we grow and then supporting that with our diet...We all have to learn the genius of our place and then we have to cook with it.” What is the “genius” of your place?

What did you learn from the film about the role that chefs can play in creating a sustainable food system? What are chefs in your community currently doing that fosters or obstructs organic, small, diversified farming? What could you do to publicize their actions?

Chef Dan Barber says, “I think chefs play a huge role in this future because these lowly cuts of meat, these lowly grains, you end up requiring an expertise, a craftsmanship.” How would you convince chefs, who often take a competitive and proprietary approach to their recipes, to share their expertise using local, seasonal, “lowly” foods with home cooks?

Estimate what percentage of the produce, meat, or dairy that you purchase or farm is: in season, locally grown, and organic. What could you do to increase the percentage and/or to help others in your community increase their percentages?
TRY THIS

1  Brainstorm a list of fruits and vegetables that are currently in season in your area.

2  Give people a reason to get together again after your event by hosting a potluck where everyone has to bring something on the list. You might even ask people to bring their seasonal food recipes to swap.

Building Community

Did you see anything familiar in the film? What do people in your community have in common with the people featured in the film?

Ron Finley planted a garden in front of his house and says he witnessed it become a tool for education. Stephen Ritz created an “edible wall” in his Bronx school and it not only changed what students ate, it changed the entire school. What do you notice about how these actions transformed communities and people? What sorts of transformational projects would work where you live?

Who in your community is working on the issues raised in the film? What are they doing to “seed” change? What could you do to support them?

What did you learn from the film about how locally focused farming helps build community?

TRY THIS

Ron Finley says, “Growing your own food is like printing your own money.” Using that as a headline, write a news or feature story that explains or illustrates the quote.
Digging Deeper / Finding Inspiration

The film asks, “So where do we go from here?” What’s your answer?

The film says, “There is nothing we do that transforms the world more than agriculture. And there’s nothing we do that is more crucial to our survival.” How would your city, town, or region be different if everyone took that message to heart? What would change?

Dan Barber suggests that, “The most diverse farms have the best resilience.” Can you think of other societal systems that benefit from diversification (e.g., multiuse buildings and diverse housing options used to build a walkable community)?

Musician and farmer, Bennett Konesni says, “You can create the world you want to live in.” What does the world you want to live in look like? What could you do tomorrow (or this week) that would help create that world?

QUOTES

The literary quotes integrated into the film can be used to spark creativity and help people share what's in their hearts as well as what's in their heads.

Consider the quotations included in the film.

Is there one that you find particularly inspiring? Explain why you are drawn to that quote. How does each quote illustrate or relate to a major message in the film?
Be still and listen to the voices that belong to the stream banks and the trees and the open fields. Find your hope, then, on the ground under your feet.

–Wendell Berry, “A Poem on Hope”

A cloak of loose, soft material, held to the earth’s hard surface by gravity is all that lies between life and lifelessness.

–Wallace H. Fuller, Soils of the Desert Southwest

Though I do not believe that a plant will spring up where no seed has been, I have great faith in a seed. Convince me that you have a seed there, and I am prepared to expect wonders.

–Henry David Thoreau, Faith in a Seed

Eat well. Bring the same consideration to the preparation of your food as you devote to your appearance. Let your dinner be a poem...

-Charles Pierre Monselet

To a man with an empty stomach, food is God.

-Gandhi

...how and what we eat determines to a great extent the use of what we make in the world – and what is to become of it. ...The wonderful thing about food is you get three votes a day. Every one of them has the potential to change the world.

-Charles Pierre Monselet

TRY THIS

Use one or more quotes as a prompt for a free-write, a song, or an artwork. Alternatively, allow people to ponder a “freeze frame” of one of the film’s featured paintings or sculptures and use that as a spark for participants’ own artwork.
TRANSFORMING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Grappling with tough issues can evoke feelings of depression, frustration, and anger. One of the best ways to shift the mood and ensure that people leave your event feeling hopeful and energized, is to leave time at the end of your event to plan for action.

BRAINSTORMING

As a facilitator, you can empower participants by helping them:
1. Brainstorm a list of possible actions.
2. Narrow the list and choose a focus.
3. Plan specific next steps.

Initial brainstorming can be done in small groups or with everyone together, and it can focus on individual or collective actions (or a combination of both).

If the group is having trouble getting started, you can offer some possibilities:

- Join in the work of the event’s sponsors or speakers.
- Create an artwork that communicates your vision of sustainability, farming, or health, and, together with other artists in the group, host an exhibit of your works. At the exhibit, distribute information from the film about what people can do to help “grow” a healthier food production system.
- Have a community-wide book read, or form a book club and devote the next several meetings to reading works by people in the film: Daphne Miller’s Farmacology, Dan Barber’s The Third Plate, Wendell Berry’s What are People For? or The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture, Fred Kirschenmann’s Cultivating an Ecological Conscience, Eliot Coleman’s The New Organic Grower, etc.
- Start, join, or support a local community garden and/or farm share. Or follow-up on the film’s suggestion to create a regional food hub.
- Ron Finley says, “I want us all to become ecolutionary. Renegades. Gangster gardeners.” Make “Gangster Gardner” or “Ecolutionary” t-shirts (giving Finley credit, of course), or come up with your own tag.
- Take kids on a grocery store or farmer’s market “treasure hunt” to find one thing, grown local, that you haven’t ever tried. Find out how to prepare it, cook together, and enjoy! You might also have children hunt the produce section for “in season” fruits and vegetables and make a list of where everything else on display comes from. Talk about what it took to get those non-local, out-of-season products to the store.
VOTING

Use the list provided at the end of the film to help people think about individual choices and actions:

VOTE WITH YOUR MONEY
Where do you buy food (and where do the restaurants you go to buy their food)?

VOTE WITH YOUR QUESTIONS
Who are you talking with about what you want?

VOTE WITH YOUR FORK (or CHOPSTICKS)
What are you eating?

VOTE WITH YOUR HANDS
What could you grow? Could you compost?

VOTE WITH YOUR VOICE
What policies would you like to see enacted and how will you let your elected representatives (and other voters) know?

VOTE WITH YOUR LIFESTYLE
Which of your daily routines support your own and the planet’s health and well-being?
Thinking about your answers, what is one thing you might do differently in the next month?

ROUNDTABLES

Divide into small groups, each addressing one of these work areas posed in the film.

- restore soil health
- regional crop varieties
- breeding for flavor and nutrition
- incentives for small farmers
- diversified organic farming
- regional cuisine
- a fair farm bill

Invite participants to join the group that most interests them. Have each group brainstorm possible actions. For fun, suggest that they might also come up with a bumper sticker slogan related to their topic. Reconvene and allow each group to summarize their discussion and present their most viable ideas. Identify ideas around which there is general consensus and take some time to plan specific next steps to implement those ideas.
BACKGROUND

FACILITATION TIPS

People who feel safe, encouraged, respected, and challenged, are likely to share openly and thoughtfully. Here’s how a facilitator can encourage that kind of participation:

Be clear about your role.
Being a facilitator is not the same as being a teacher. A teacher explains and helps people learn specific information. In contrast, a facilitator remains neutral, moving the discussion along without imposing his or her views on the dialogue.

Model your tone on the film.
Use strategies and language to create a space that is welcoming, respectful, optimistic, and joyful as well as serious. Note that the film never demonizes those with opposing views or practices. Rather, it invites everyone into a conversation about how we best achieve shared goals like providing affordable, nutritious food for a growing population and preserving an environment that will sustain life.

Remind people of the difference between dialogue and debate.
A debate is about staking out a position and trying to convince everyone else that you are right and they are wrong. A dialogue is about exchanging ideas in order to learn from one another. That means actively listening as well as talking.

Remind participants that everyone sees through the lens of their own experience.
Who we are influences how we interpret what we see. So each person in the audience may have a different view of the film, without anyone being wrong. Asking speakers to identify the evidence on which they base their opinion can help people to understand others’ perspectives.

Also keep in mind that issues can play out very differently for different groups of people. Factors like geography, age, race, religion, and socioeconomic class, can all have an impact on comfort levels, speaking styles, and prior knowledge. Take care not to assume that all members of a particular group share the same point of view.

Establish language ground rules.
Encourage everyone to speak only for themselves and not generalize or presume to know how others feel. Reinforce a climate of respect with the language you use to pose questions. For example, when addressing an issue, you can ask what people think. But when speaking about a person, avoid appearances of being judgmental by asking “What did you learn from [insert name]?"

Ensure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard.
Be clear about how people will take turns or indicate that they want to speak. Plan a strategy for preventing one or two people from dominating the discussion (e.g. using go-rounds, small group breakouts, etc.).

Prepare yourself.
Understand your own “hot-button” issues. View the film before your event and give yourself time to reflect so you aren’t dealing with raw emotions at the same time that you are trying to facilitate a discussion.
**Be knowledgeable.**
You don’t need to be an expert on farming or health to lead an event, but knowing the basics can help you keep a discussion on track and gently correct misstatements of fact. Prior to your event, take time to explore the film’s website and this guide’s Resources section.

**Anticipate controversies.**
It isn’t always possible to know exactly who will attend a screening, but it is possible to be familiar with controversies common in discussions about the issues raised by the film. In this case, controversies might include:

- claims that only industrial agricultural methods can produce enough to feed the world
- doubt that small farms can produce food that is affordable
- defending the use of GMOs as a way to provide added nutrition, better appearance, or improved resilience against pests or poor growing conditions
- predictions of widespread disease or food shortages if pesticides or herbicides are eliminated.
Because you are a facilitator and not a teacher, you don’t want to position yourself as the room’s “expert” by answering or challenging speakers’ claims. You can correct obvious misstatements of fact (e.g., misquoting a person in the film), but nothing shuts down a discussion more quickly than a participant and facilitator getting into a one-on-one debate. Instead, you might try one of these responses:

- "Say more about how you know that."
- "What do others in the room think?"
- "Why do you suppose that the people in the film don’t recommend that practice?"
- "That’s interesting. I wonder if that’s always the case. Are there also other possibilities?"
- "Can you help me identify the common ground between what you just said and what was in the film?"

Assume that each speaker has good intentions.
A participant may be belligerent, condescending, or defensive because the discussion hit a nerve. Be aware that, for some people, the suggestion that they change their farming practices can evoke guilt or be heard as an accusation that they are bad people for using their current methods. Beyond the overt issues, the ideas in the film might challenge a person’s pride in their work, or generations of family farming traditions, or deeply held beliefs about the nature of science. You can counter negative responses by

- remaining calm,
- appreciating that the speaker’s perspective is important to include in the discussion,
- thanking them for sharing, and
- looking for ways to use their comments to expand everyone’s thinking.

Take care of yourself and group members.

If the intensity level rises, pause to let everyone take a deep breath. To change the “vibe,” try using a discussion prompt that requires some brief writing or drawing before people start speaking again.
RESOURCES

Your First Stop: The Food for Thought, Food for Life Website
www.foodforthoughtfilm.com – Discover the artists and musicians whose work is included in the film, along with links to related resources, ideas for action, links to outreach partners, and details about the production.

People, Places, & Groups Featured in Food for Thought, Food for Life

- **Dan Barber**, Chef (Blue Hill) and Author of *The Third Plate*
- **Wendell Berry**, Poet, Author, Farmer, and Environmentalist
- **Eliot Coleman**, Farmer and Author of *The New Organic Grower*
- **Christeta Comerford**, White House Executive Chef
- **Ken Cook**, President, Environmental Working Group
- **Ron Finley**, Founder, The Ron Finley Project
- **Jonathan Foley**, Director, *University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment*
- **Matt Goldfarb & Petra Page-Mann**, Founders, Fruition Seeds
- **Steve Jones, Ph.D.**, Plant Geneticist, Washington State University
- **Fred Kirschenmann**, Farmer; President, Stone Barns Center; Distinguished Fellow at Iowa State University’s *Leopold Center*. Author of *Cultivating an Ecological Conscience*
- **Daphne Miller, M.D.**, author of *Farmacology* and Associate Clinical Professor at the University of California San Francisco
- **Bennett Konesni**, Farmer and Musician
- **John Navazio, Ph.D.**, Sr. Scientist, *Organic Seed Alliance*
- **Michel Nischan**, James Beard Award-winning Chef and Co-Founder & CEO, *Wholesome Wave*
- **Stephen Ritz**, Founder, *The Green Bronx Machine*
- **Cheryl Rogowski**, Farmer and 2004 MacArthur Fellowship Winner
- **Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture**

Additional Outreach Partners

- **The Berry Center** – resources that help further the work and vision of Wendell Berry
- **Food Day** – find out how to organize a Food Day (Oct 24) event focused on education and policy issues related to better diets and better farming
- **Grace Communications Foundation** – Aggregates multimedia resources (often very entertaining resources!) on topics related to sustainability
- **National Young Farmers Coalition** – resources designed to mobilize and engage young farmers to ensure their success
- **National Farm to School Network** – an information and networking hub for people working to link schools and preschools with local farms and fresh, healthy food
- **New York Botanical Garden** – this Bronx-based institution offers education and sustainability resources, especially to promote good horticultural practices and encourage gardeners

The outreach for *Food for Thought, Food for Life* is dynamic and evolving, with new partners joining in all the time. For a complete, up-to-date list, visit the “Get Involved” and “Resources” section of the website.