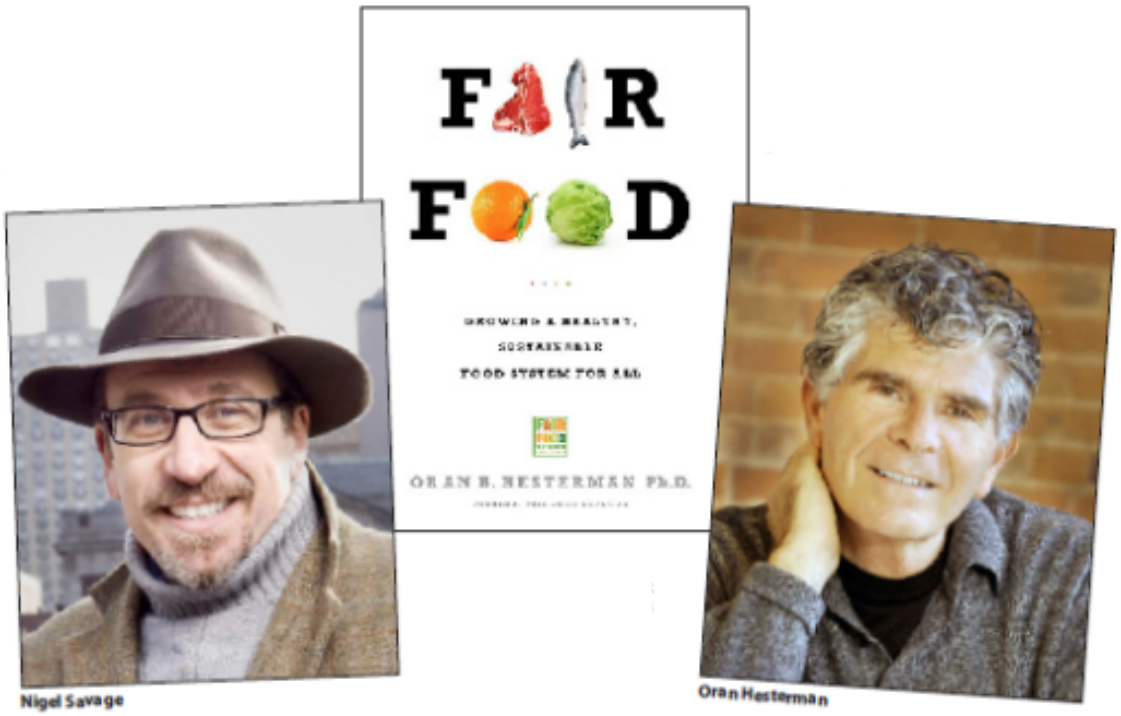

Hazon CSA Book of the Year

Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All

By Oran Hesterman

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LEADER NOTES

We hope this guide serves as an easy-to-understand, flexible, and compelling way for your CSA members to connect to one another and your broader community. Our leader tips and conversational framework follow.

How to organize the book club

- **Review the handout, Select an Organizer/Group Leader, and Invite participants**
  - Consider the Group Dynamic - While it's often easiest to gather like-minded friends, we suggest gathering a group with a wide range of Jewish background and involvement in the community; a range of familiarity with the subject matter (i.e., in this case, not all "foodies"); a balance of ages and genders. Learning involves a certain risk, and the more people who feel that everyone there is committed to the group, and that "they aren't the only one who disagrees," the more they'll be able to engage.

- **Structure your meetings**
  - Decide how many meetings you'd like to organize and how long each session will run. There is plenty of material in this book to fill an evening nicely—you may also want to plan a 2- or 3-part series to discuss each section in more depth. If you're unsure, we suggest you start by planning one evening and see how it goes; if there's momentum to continue, set a date for a follow up session!
  - Choose dates at least 4 weeks ahead of time to maximize attendance. Decide if you'd like to assign any specific homework / questions to consider, and make sure to send this out at least a week before your first session.
  - When you plan your session, allow amply time to learn together, schmooze, and eat. Here is a suggested schedule for a 7 – 9 pm gathering assuming about 15 people attend.

7:00 – 7:15	Welcome Guests/ Enjoy Snacks/ Schmooze
7:15 – 7:20	Introduce yourself as the host and the plan for the rest of the night
7:20 – 7:35	Opening Circle
7:35 – 8:10	Introduce the topic, then break into small group discussion
8:10 - 8:45	Conversation with the whole group
8:45– 9:00	Closing Circle / More snacks / Homework for next time (if applicable)

- **Organize food**
  - We think it makes sense to serve food when you are learning about food. In practice, it is often complicated to do so. People might have different definitions of kashrut or commitments to local, seasonal or organic food. Food for a whole meal can be expensive and also take up a significant amount of time to allow people to properly sit and eat. However, food can also provide the opportunity for people to try something new. Even if people don't keep kosher at home, maybe the gather should be kosher, as a way to experience through doing (not just talking). Same holds for organic or seasonal. Even if you're not advocating that everyone who attends the gathering suddenly eats only organic produce grown within 100 miles of where they live for every meal of their life, it can be a powerful educational experience to try it out.
  - If the event runs approximately during dinner time, the food served should be substantial enough that people who haven't eaten dinner yet won't feel unnourished or unsatisfied. Hummus & pita, carrot sticks, chips & salsa, cheese, crackers, grapes, etc.
  - Set aside time to eat. To make sure everyone has enough food, you might pass the food around once more just before you start the learning then put it aside for later.

Notes for the leader, continued

Here are some suggestions for how to structure your Book Club gathering.

- Leader introduces the author, book layout, and goals
- Use the media sample from *The Forward* to tie our reading into the broader picture and paint a portrait of why we are having these conversations
- Small and Large Group Discussions
    - Divide into small groups (3 people or so) and take 5 min to discuss the first bullet point
    - Bring the group together and ask them to share what came out of their talks; what was interesting? Did these subjects connect with other groups conversations?
    - Are other connections you made while reflecting? Perhaps ask, "did anyone see this xxx in the book or feel this way? One of the things I noticed was xxx"
- If you choose to break this into 2 or 3 sessions, wrap up some of the highlights and thank the group for joining you
- If it's the first session of 2 or 3, close with: "For next time, please focus on Oran's principles of Equity, Diversity, Ecological Integrity and Economic Viability and think about the ways these do or do not play out in your CSA community. "
- If it's the second session of three, close with: "For Next Time: What indeed are our roles in all of this? How can you effect change politically?"
- If it's the final session, close with an emphasis on how this builds community. Page 212 has a great closing to read aloud and wrap up.

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Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All

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About the Author

Oran is president and CEO of Fair Food Network, a national nonprofit working at the intersection of food systems, sustainability and social equity to guarantee access to healthy, fresh and sustainably grown food, especially in underserved communities. For fifteen years he co-led the Integrated Farming Systems and Food and Society Programs for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, during which time the Foundation seeded the local food systems movement with over $200 million. A native of Berkeley, California, and a former professor of agronomy at Michigan State University in East Lansing, he currently lives in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Book Layout

***Fair Food* is divided into 3 parts:**

- **Part I:** offers an **introduction** to our current food system, how and why it evolved as it did, and the ways in which it no longer serves us well.
- **Part II:** describes **four key principles** a redesigned food system should embody
- **Part III:** shares a **practical guide** to how you can participate

Why host a CSA Book Club?

Purpose:

- To learn together as a community and gain more expertise on our current food system, eventually applying what we learn here to our own lives as Jews and more

Outcome:

- Great conversation
- Opportunity to hear everyone's voices
- Feel more comfortable talking about our food systems and sharing what we've learned with others
- Understand Community-Supported Agriculture within the broader context of the American Food System

Process:

- Assign reading ahead of time
- Opening circle (if less than 12 people; minis if more)
- Discuss questions as a whole group or in small groups
- Assign recorder / action steps
- Publish notes and/or write up of the event in CSA newsletter

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Questions for conversation

Part I: Our Broken Food System

- How is your CSA helping to address any of the issues on page 22-40? Which ones, and how?
- What other issues could your CSA community get involved with? How? (for instance, you may want to consider an educational program, outreach effort, work on an institutional food policy, etc. etc.)
- Why do you think more people aren't engaged with these issues? How might you start some of these conversations?

Part II: Principles of a Fair Food System

CSAs and Community Building

See: Lindentree Farm, p. 81-84

- Oran writes: "*The diversity of customers and the diversity of crops all contribute to healthier soil and food and a healthy lifestyle for the farmer*." How does the CSA model build community, according to Hesterman? How else does it build community in your own experience?
- Are there aspects of this CSA that are different from yours? Anything you can learn from or adapt?

Looking at the Finances

See: "In the field," p. 61-64

- Do you know how much money your CSA farmer earns?
- What responsibility does the consumer have to consider this when making purchases?
- How does this section affect the way you think about the cost of your CSA share?
- Consider this story from CSA farmer Elizabeth Henderson. How does it affect the way you think about your relationship with your farmer?

> *"From the beginning, we were transparent about our finances, and it worked to our advantage. We shared the entire budget of the farm with our members. When they saw that we the farmers weren't earning enough to pay for our own healthcare, they voted to increase the cost of the vegetable shares."*
>
> Adapted from Elizabeth Henderson, CSA pioneer farmer and author of "Sharing the Harvest: A Guide to Community-Supported Agriculture"

Making Change on a Global Level

See: Sysco p. 104-109; Costco, p. 122-128

- What do you make of these stories?
- Why do you think more people don't know about them?
- What do you think your CSA farmer would think of these practices?
- What can your CSA do to encourage further policies like this?

Part III: Practical guide

This section explores ways to participate in collective action to precipitate big changes in our food system- from your kitchen to your community to your state house and the White House. The "menu for change" (beginning on page 132) provides questions to ask at farmers' markets, tools for starting buy-fresh/buy-local campaigns, advice for forming buyer's clubs that purchase food directly from farmers and fisherman, and guidance about legislation to support at the local, state, and federal levels.

- What indeed are our roles in this? How can you effect change politically?
- See Washtenaw Jewish News "Call to Action" for some concrete ideas
- What ideas are within your reach? What steps might you take to get there?

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(Kosher) food for thought: Hazon–Fair Food Network partnership

Lucinda Kurtz, special to the WJN

Our food system is failing many of us. Designed to produce abundant food at low cost, it now does this by destroying some of what we hold most precious—our environment, our health, and our future. Hazon, the largest Jewish environmental organization in this country and globally, understands this looming crisis and is addressing it head-on and in a uniquely Jewish way. Hazon means "vision" and their vision is "to create healthy and sustainable communities in the Jewish world and beyond." Jews from all backgrounds and

Nigel Savage

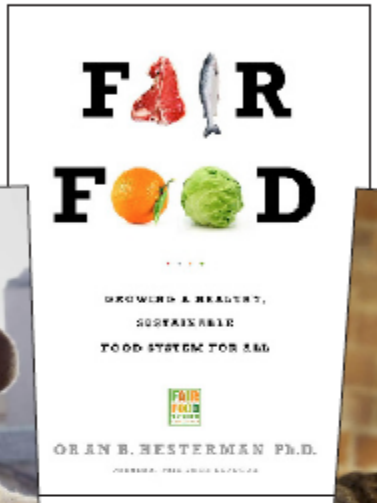
generations find Hazon's programs an inspirational way to connect with the environmental movement from a Jewish perspective and have an impact in their communities and the world.

A primary method of creating change is through their fast-growing food work. Certainly the Jewish tradition has addressed the issue of food and what is fit for us to eat—kosher—for 3,000 years. But now issues such as fair treatment of farm and restaurant workers, pesticide and hormone usage, industrial farming and food access have complicated the issue. Hazon created the Jewish Food Education Network to address these and other challenging topics through a Jewish perspective with innovative resources such as creative curricula on Jews, food, and contemporary life that are now being used in camps, homes, synagogues and Jewish day schools all over the country.

In addition, Hazon is the first and largest faith-based Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) network in the country with over 10,000 individual participants. Formed in 2000, by 2011 they had so sparked the energy of young Jewish adults and the community-at-large that 56 Hazon CSA's were up and running all across the county at synagogues, Jewish day schools, Hillels, JCC's and other Jewish institutions, funneling over $1 million of resources from Jewish families into very local and sustainable farms.

Anyone interested in initiating a CSA can contact Hazon at csa@hazon.org.

"The Jew and the Carrot," a partnership between Hazon and the *Forward*, at www.jcarrot.org, is another exciting Hazon activity that supports the dissemination and exchange of ideas between interested community members about what is kosher—"fit" for us to eat from different perspectives.



And it is at the annual Hazon Food Conference that all the CSA activists, food writers, chefs, nutritionists, rabbis, farmers, foodies, educators, families and their children come to learn, enjoy, taste and share excitement about food. When Nigel Savage, the articulate and dynamic president of Hazon read the review copy of Oran Hesterman's upcoming book, *Fair Food: Creating a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All*, he knew he had found his keynote speaker for the Hazon Food Conference, to be held this year August 18-21 at University of California Davis.

Dr. Oran Hesterman is president and CEO of Fair Food Network, a national nonprofit organization in Ann Arbor working at the intersection of food systems, sustainability and social equity to guarantee access to healthy, fresh and sustainably-grown food, especially in underserved communities. Hesterman has been an active member of the Jewish community from his early days in North Pacific Coast Young Judaea and Temple Beth El in Berkeley, California, to his present participation in Pardes Hannah, the Jewish Renewal community in Ann Arbor, and his co-founding of Or Tzafon, the Jewish Retreat Center in Northern Michigan.

Nigel Savage was in Ann Arbor on March 30 for one in the series of presentations in the Jewish Communal Leadership Program at the University of Michigan. When Savage and Hesterman had lunch that day, there were sparks flying and a powerful "*shtuh*" was created—a partnership between two leading visionaries in food systems change work who understand the importance of joining forces to address the broken food system for our children and future generations. Both Savage and Hesterman understand that change in the food system requires thoughtful and intentional actions to shift people from being conscious consumers to engaged citizens. They sense the powerful complimentary strengths each organization brings to the other.

With Hesterman's background as a professor of agronomy and Extension Specialist at Michigan State University followed by his 15 years as program director of the Food and Farming Systems Program at the Kellogg Foundation, he and Fair Food Network offers thought leadership and policy advocacy strategy to Hazon. Under Savage's ten years of leadership of Hazon, he offers strong and respected leadership and large cadres of Jewish activists eager and ready to move forward on these issues.

Oran Hesterman

Born in Manchester, England, Savage was a professional fund manager for the Rothschilds for nine years before founding Hazon in 2000 by organizing and participating in a 3000-mile Cross-USA Jewish Environmental Bike Ride. Participants taught and spoke along the way, ending at the White House where they received a national award from the EPA. This initial event has evolved into three annual bike tours in New York, California, and Israel. And it has led to Hazon's core strategy of providing "transformative experiences for individuals and communities" as a way of creating meaningful and collective change.

Together Hazon and Fair Food Network, Savage and Hesterman have embarked on an exciting partnership to create change. What follows is "A Call to Action for the Jewish Community" that will be launched this summer and at the Hazon Food Conference.. ■

A Call to Action for the Jewish community, from Hazon, In partnership with Fair Food Network

Fair Food Network is excited to be partnering with Hazon on the following three calls to action. You can learn more about all of these issues by reading Oran Hesterman's *Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All. Together*, we can move from being conscious consumers to engaged citizens and transform our food system!

• The first call to action is in your kitchen. Make a commitment to spend an additional $10 per week on food the source of which you can trace and trust. It may be $10 at the farmers' market where you've just had a discussion with the grower; it may be $10 toward a buying club or a CSA. This $10 is not just for you and your satiation. It is a transformative $10 spent with intention, or *kavannah*, toward a fair food system.

• The second call takes place in YOUR Jewish community, whether it be a synagogue, *havura*, Hebrew school or even where you volunteer. Make a commitment to engage the leadership of that institution (maybe it's you!) to view food as a critical issue in the development of your community (because it is). Find one way you can make a change in the way things are done. This may mean exclusively seeking out caterers who source locally for your celebrations, partnering with a farm to provide produce for school lunches, setting up a Sunday Farmers' Market, or laying out an expanded set of kosher guidelines for the types of foods you will serve at your institution's events.

• The third call takes place at the policy level. With discussions around the 2012 Farm Bill beginning soon, it is important to let your elected representatives know that as their constituent, you want THEM to engage with food policy issues. Start by familiarizing yourself with the issues that will be up for discussion. It is too early to make hyper-specific political demands, but it isn't too early to tell your representatives that you want them to be involved. Contact your senators and representatives and ask the following:

"My name is _____ and I want Senator/Representative _____ to know that as a voting constituent, it is important to me that he/she is engaged with issues of access to healthy food and the 2012 Farm Bill. I want him/her to hear my concerns that the Farm Bill safety net include small and mid-size family farmers and that it pay attention to reestablishing a regional food systems infrastructure."

Find out more about Hazon at hazon.org and more about Fair Food Network at fairfoodnetwork.org. Hesterman's book will be in bookstores beginning this month, with more information at fairfoodbook.org

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The Way We Eat

Published June 08, 2011, issue of June 17, 2011.

Two images of America's children this summer illustrate the sharp divide over the way we eat: The first is from one of the growing number of Jewish summer camps with a fresh emphasis on healthy diet and helping youngsters make informed choices about food. These camps are raising fruits and vegetables, reducing the amount of soda and sweets that are served, and purchasing ingredients from local and organic sources. Goodbye bug juice, hello salad bar.

The second image comes from the depressing statistics contained in a June 7 report detailing how participation in Summer Nutrition Programs has continued to erode because of recession-driven budget cuts. The Food Research and Action Center, an advocacy group working to end hunger in America through changes in public policy, reported that the number of poor children receiving free meals during the summer dropped by 90,000 from July 2008 to July 2010.

"Our choices about food should not depend on where we happen to live," writes Oran B. Hesterman in his new book, "Fair Food." But they do. As Hesterman argues with uncomfortable clarity, America's broken food network is not apparent if you happen to live and shop near abundantly-stocked supermarkets and fabulous restaurants. But if you happen to live in Detroit, the 11th largest city in the country, you have to leave town to find a major supermarket. Most of the nearly $500 million in food stamps pumped into the city last year was spent at gas stations, dollar stores, pharmacies and the like — not because the poor of Detroit are irresponsible, but because they have little choice.

Hesterman's message represents an important evolution in the increasingly popular trend of growing and consuming healthier food. He takes nothing away from the backyard garden or the organic restaurant — change has to start somewhere, and every bunch of broccoli purchased at a farmer's market adds up.

But it can't just be about Berkeley and Brooklyn. It also has to be about Detroit. "My concern isn't only about bringing back heirloom tomatoes to farmers' markets," he writes. "My concern is making sure that those living in inner-city neighborhoods have access to tomatoes in a form other than a ketchup packet at a fast food joint."

Real political engagement is key. It's the only way to realign the billions of dollars in public monies spent to prop up a food network that produces lots of cheap eats at low cost, but to damaging consequence to our diets, farmland, environment and safety.

This is a Jewish issue every bit as much as it is an American issue. With a tradition that puts a premium on how meat is slaughtered and meals are prepared, in which food consumption itself is a holy act, we have an obligation to look beyond our own table to work for a healthier, more equitable system.

There are many Jewish institutions doing that work; the Forward is fortunate to partner with Hazon on our popular blog Jew and the Carrot, and together we aim to raise consciousness about these issues and to map out ways that Jewish schools, synagogues and summer camps can respond.

Hesterman encourages a shift from conscious consumer to engaged citizen. If that can happen, then the campers growing their own lettuce this summer in plentiful gardens will one day work to reform a system that consigns other children their age to a desert stripped of sustenance.

Read more: http://www.forward.com/articles/138466/#ixzz1Q1PW113P