

2022 Vision

7-Year Goals for the Jewish Food Movement

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Leading up to our second Jewish Food Conference, in December 2007, a few of us wrote a first-draft of "7-year goals for the Jewish Food Movement." These were then publicly amended, and they were published in the fall of 2008 – at the start of the 7-year shmita cycle in Jewish life.

One of the original goals was indeed that we would "consciously prepare for the next shmita year." Now we're in that seventh year, and so it's now time to look back at the last cycle, and time also to start visioning for the next seven years.

Below is a brief synopsis of where we are 7 years later and a draft of the next "7-year goals for the Jewish Food Movement - September 2022". ***Please email your comments, questions, or suggestions to foodeducation@hazon.org.***

Looking Back – 2007

In 2007 there were fewer than 10 Jewish CSAs; today there are more than 60 in Hazon's CSA network alone, now the largest faith-based CSA network in North America. Our very first – the Tuv Ha'Aretz at Ansche Chesed in Manhattan, launched in 2004 - is still going strong, and the farm we partnered with for what was *their* first CSA is now supported by a large number of CSAs in the region.

In 2007 we were hosting only our second Jewish Food Conference. Our vision for 2014 was that 2,000 people would be attending it. We failed in that goal – but in a very fascinating way. It gradually became clear that the barriers to entry in relation to the Jewish Food Conference were not inconsiderable, in time and money and location – and half-way through the cycle we decided also to launch a series of local Jewish Food Festivals. We were inspired by Gefiltefest, in London; they, in turn, had been inspired by our Food Conference. Today we're going into our 11th Jewish Food Conference; and there are also now Jewish Food Festivals in Boston, Denver, London, Palo Alto, Philadelphia and San Diego.

In 2007, the year when we first schechted [slaughtered] three goats at our Food Conference, the Agriprocessors plant in Postville Iowa was still open – and Grow & Behold, KOL Foods and other local ethical kosher meat producers had not yet been envisaged.

In 2007 Adamah was just three years old. Urban Adamah hadn't been founded. *Kosher Nation* and *Soil and Sacrament* hadn't been published. Artisanal and sustainability-focused Jewish food businesses and restaurants weren't yet launched. That was the year we first talked about putting the Farm Bill on the agenda of the Jewish community - the Jewish Working Group on the Farm Bill was a few years away. We hadn't yet produced – or imagined – an Israel Sustainable Food Tour.

The story of the last seven years is a fascinating study in the interplay between ideas and action; between organizations and individuals (and individuals within organizations); between planning and serendipity. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? It is an endless regression backwards, but it plays forwards with choice and volition: what do I decide to do or not do, this coming year? Which book do I read, which conference do I attend, which vision do I choose to try to bring to fruition?

These are some of the key framing questions:

How, by September 2022, will our relationship to food have helped to create a more sustainable world for all?

How will our relationship to food have strengthened Jewish life, or deepened the relationship between Israeli and diaspora Jews, or helped to build interfaith partnerships in this country?

Which existing ideas or projects need to be strengthened?
What new ideas or projects need to come to fruition?

2022 Vision: Draft 7-Year Goals for the Jewish Food Movement for September 2022, at the end of the next shmita cycle in Jewish life.

By 2022, we hope for – and intend to work for –

- An American Jewish community that is measurably healthier and more sustainable;
- An American Jewish community that is demonstrably playing a role in making the world healthier and more sustainable for all;
- An American Jewish community in which Jewish life has been strengthened and renewed by the work of the Jewish food movement;

And these are some specific goals. Note that some of these represent building on what is clearly already underway; some represent new focus or inflection; and one or two are quite new.

By 2022, there should be:

Stronger relationships connecting the food system to Jewish life, and vice versa. We need to build connections and relationships between farmers, farm workers, consumers, distributors, rabbis, Jewish leaders, business leaders and other faith leaders, among others. There should be more Jewish farmers, more Jewish CSAs, farmers markets at our synagogues and JCCs, local food sourced by Jewish summer camps should all continue to expand.

Deeper and more extensive interfaith work. This is a time of friction in American life; and also a time of great opportunity. What we first conceived as "the *Jewish* food movement" has gradually taken its place – to some extent a leading or pathbreaking place – in what may now be thought of as "the *faith-based* food movement." The next seven years offers an opportunity to build relationships with other faith communities through the prism of food, both nationally and locally. Wouldn't it be cool if, by 2022, it were clear that a/ food was strengthening the relationships between different faith and ethnic communities? b/ that faith communities and ethnic communities were strengthening food systems in this country? And c/ that the Jewish Food Movement had played a significant and catalytic role in helping all of this to happen?

Clear recognition that JOFEE – *Jewish Outdoor, Food & Environmental Education* – is a vital discipline in strengthening Jewish life. That in turn will involve a strong and growing network of JOFEE- certified educators and JOFEE program alumni, and mechanisms for JOFEE leaders to interact with each other and with other key Jewish institutional leaders. There should be a growing number of JOFEE educators working with schools, synagogues, JCCs, and camps to integrate teachings about food in relation to health, ethics, Jewish tradition, and Jewish history. That in turn should lead to more synagogue gardens; taking students out of the classroom and into the forest; baking challah in Hebrew school; students conducting Food Audits at their synagogues; and so on. These activities should be seen not as niche programs but as core to how we transmit Jewish values into practice. JOFEE leaders should

have a significant voice at major annual or biennial gatherings of the American Jewish community – the GA, JFN Conference, RA, RRA, URJ, etc.

More Jewish farmers and more sharing of Jewish farming wisdom. By 2022 Adamah, Urban Adamah, Pearlstone, Amir, the Jewish Farm School and other equivalent programs should continue to grow and strengthen – providing hands-on knowledge about food, farming and Jewish tradition, and equipping young adults to move on to become leaders and role models within American Jewish life and in the wider Food Movement.

Taking on sugar as an issue. Sugar consumption has grown immeasurably in the last 40 years, and this is doing immense damage to our health. Here's a [factsheet from the Harvard School of Public Health](#) providing some stark statistics. By 2022 we should have started to take on sugar as a significant issue in Jewish life: raising questions about the sugar we serve in Jewish institutions; connecting diabetes campaigns in Israel and the US; and having the Jewish community take a lead-role in allying with other faith-communities to start to challenge the ubiquity of sugar.

A related topic: Healthier choices should become the easier choices in Jewish life. By reducing the amount of sugar, processed food and heavily packaged food that we serve during kiddush or at our organization's meetings, by removing bottles of soda and other sweetened beverages from our tables, and by increasing the selection of seasonal, fresh fruit and vegetables we serve at our functions, we should be making it easier for everyone to fuel their body and minds for health and wellness. Our motto should simply be *"Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."* (Michael Pollan.)

American Jews will eat less meat and fewer animal products generally. The meat that we do eat should be from animals that have lived animal-like lives; animals that have eaten foods those animals traditionally eat; animals that have lived within mixed-use farms; and animals whose deaths have been consonant with the highest standards of shechitah and of Jewish ethics. Sales of ethical, local kosher meat should continue to grow as a proportion of kosher meat sales.

American Jews will engage seriously in issues of food security and hunger. The Jewish Working Group on the Farm Bill could/should become a platform for a wider and more sustained push for civic advocacy. As a community we should be supporting organizations like AJWS, Challah for Hunger and Mazon, so that American Jews are raising and donating more dollars to help people directly in need. And programs like Double Up Bucks should get the support of the Jewish community so that more low-income people can use their SNAP dollars to access more local produce. As a community we should be working with others to support those whose disadvantage is invisibly connected to our own food choices: low-wage farm workers, processing/packing house workers, truckers, hospitality/restaurant/hotel workers, etc.

We will re-learn the old rhythms of simplicity and feasting. If we're successful, we hope that American Jews will be a role model to other communities in celebrating Shabbat and holidays – Jewish and secular, national and personal – with great joy, gatherings, song and wonderful feasts; and that during the other six days of the week we'll eat more lightly and more simply.

This movement will exemplify celebration and inclusion. We'll do this work with joy, with good humor, and delight that people are different and legitimately make different choices in their lives. The Jewish food movement is about ethics, justice and environmental sustainability. It's also about family, memory, kashrut, culture, cooking, baking, davenning, food-writing, food photography, Israel, education, holidays, halacha... and the ancient rivalry of latkes and hamentaschen.

The Jewish Food Conferences and Festivals will grow significantly. These are significant and powerful events that enable local and national leaders within the Jewish food movement to inspire and to build relationships that will sustain this work throughout the year. **By 2029** there should be an annual Jewish Food Festival in most American Jewish communities; and by 2022 we should be well on-track towards that goal. And individual Jewish Food Festivals should be growing in size – not just a significant

event on a Sunday, but the local rabbis speaking on food-related topics the Shabbat before, and other events taking place before or after the main day itself.

Connecting to students. Teva works with a number of Jewish day schools – but only a minority of Jewish day schools, nationally, have clear JOFEE programs. Similarly there have been a few college initiatives, but no systematic connections between Hillels and the Jewish Food Movement. By 2022 there should be systemic work going on in and with colleges, dayschools and Hebrew schools. A clear majority of Jewish summer camps should be growing food and integrating that work into their core programs.

Building on the momentum of 5775, we will consciously prepare for the next shmita year 5782. The head of the American Academy of Religion recently told 9,000 AAR members at their annual conference that they should not meet in 2021 - [because of the shmita year](#). (And the NY Times article explaining her argument linked to Hazon's website to explain what shmita is.) This next seven year period in American Jewish life should be the first one in which a consciousness of shmita permeates all seven years of the cycle, and thus in which the period from 2015 to 2021 represents an extensive conversation and planning process for how the next shmita year – in 2021-'22 – could or should be honored across the community.