



Hazon Food Guide & Food Audit Toolkit



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“Being part of a religious community that includes composting as part of its regular habits is deeply meaningful. It integrates one set of values into another, as my environmentalism finds new expression as a Jewish act, and my Jewish community encompasses a behavior that aligns with my personal commitment to environmental stewardship. This seemingly small practice of composting enables me to feel more fully whole in my Judaism and more spiritually rooted in my work to connect with and care for the earth.”

— Shuli Passow

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Introduction

Why should my Jewish institution use this Guide?

“V’Achalta, V’Savata, u’Verachata”

You shall eat, you shall be satisfied and you shall bless G-d.

—Birkat hamazon, the traditional Jewish blessing after the meal.

Jewish meals unite us—whether it’s a Passover seder at home, a communal lunch in a JCC senior center or a Jewish summer camp, or a Shabbat dinner in your congregation. Food, rituals around food, distinctions about what’s “kosher,” whether defined according to Jewish law or to other ethical standards, is a defining feature of our religion, tradition, and culture. So, when a group of Jews sits down to eat in a JCC, a synagogue, a hospice program or a summer camp, what we serve and how we serve it matters.

Hazon’s Food Guide seeks to help us to approach the daily act of feeding ourselves and our communities with the kind of sanctity, satisfaction, and gratitude our tradition celebrates. And believe me, in the age of industrial agriculture and in our increasingly “flat world,” this is not as easy as it seems. We do our best to provide nutritious meals to our children, our families, and our seniors. And yet, when we hand over a Styrofoam plate heaped with steaming industrial processed red meat, slaughtered by underpaid laborers and stewed in tomatoes imported from who-knows-where, we can’t help but be nagged by the uncomfortable question, is this really “kosher?” If we determine that who grows our food, where it comes from, what it’s fed, what’s sprayed on it and what it’s served on matters to us,

to our health, to the earth, to our neighbors, children, and grandchildren, then it's time to begin asking ourselves a few tricky, but answerable, questions right now: Where does my agency get its food? How many "food miles" did it take to get from the farm to my mouth and how much petroleum does that represent? Who are the people growing my food and are they being paid enough to feed their families? Are there farmers nearby who are struggling to sell their crops who might supply our agency? As a Jewish communal agency, how might we supply our constituents and neighbors with healthy, locally grown food within our building and beyond?

Jewish agencies have begun to answer these questions in all kinds of exciting and innovative ways, from planting their own gardens to sponsoring local farm stands for their communities. As the gathering places of our people, the places where we

convene to learn, to pray to socialize, to heal, and yes, to eat—Jewish institutions have the opportunity to address these questions in meaningful and perhaps even game-changing ways. We represent formidable purchasing power and we can vote for a more sustainable and healthy world with our daily purchases. So use this guide to help you take the first steps, to ask yourselves the very real and very Jewish questions about where your agency is sourcing its food. Together we can work to sustain ourselves, our communities and our world.

Rachel Jacoby Rosenfeld is the Director of the Jewish Greening Fellowship, an innovative program of the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center that supports JCCs and Jewish camps in greening their facilities, operations, and programs.

Hazon and the New Jewish Food Movement

As Jews, we've been thinking about kashrut - about what is "fit" to eat - for nearly 3,000 years. And a growing number of people today realize that our food choices have significant ramifications—for ourselves, our families, and the world around us.

Hazon stands at the forefront of a new Jewish Food Movement, leading Jews to think more broadly and deeply about our own food choices. We're using food as a platform to create innovative Jewish educational programs to touch people's lives directly, to strengthen Jewish institutions, and, in the broadest sense, to create healthier, richer and more sustainable Jewish communities.

The majority of today's agriculture system relies primarily on chemical pesticides and fertilizers, large amounts of water usage, and concentrated livestock facilities. These practices, along with a multitude of others, pollute the environment, cause health problems for workers and consumers, and suffering for animals. Hazon's Food Guide is a way for your Jewish institution to adopt more sustainable practices when it comes to its food choices and to understand why making these changes is so critical to the Jewish community and world at large.

This guide is a comprehensive, go-to resource for any Jewish institution looking to change their food programs to be more sustainable. There are different sections within this guide that pertain to specific topics on how to alter your institution's food programs and policies to be more environmentally, socially, and spiritually conscious. Do not feel overwhelmed by the many different sections you see here; you do not have to do everything all at once! It is important to realize what your goals are for your specific institution and then take this greening food process step-by-step. Even a small change is better than no change at all.

Don't forget to let us know as you make changes within your institution. We want this guide to be a forum for all Jewish institutions to share their sustainable food practices. If you want to learn more about Hazon's work, visit www.hazon.org. If you have questions, email foodguide@hazon.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Nigel Savage and the Hazon Food Team

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Healthy, Sustainable, Kosher: Food “Fit” to Eat

The word “kosher” means “fit” – and Jews have been evaluating what food is “fit” for them to eat for thousands of years. Jewish institutions generally have policies around kashrut observance; you’ll want to find out what the policy is at your institution if you don’t already know. These policies set the standard for what food may be served to the community at that institution.

While kosher is important, we see an opportunity to expand your consideration of what food is ‘fit’ to eat based on how and where it was grown, and the effects of its production on the people who do the work and the land where it is produced. Just as there are a range of *hechshers* (kosher labels) indicating different levels of kosher supervision, there are a number of different ‘eco-labels’ and terms used today to tell you about how a certain food was made.

We explain these terms and labels here, to guide you in your food choices. And we remind you that, in working with your institution to incorporate more sustainable food into its practices, you will have a lot of choices. Our food system is imperfect, and we don’t suggest that you set out hoping to serve exclusively local, sustainable, fair-trade, kosher, handmade, ethical, recycled everything on your first go. While you may always strive to bring your institution to greater heights of sustainability, be satisfied by incremental steps towards your goal.

Organic

“Organic” refers to a set of farming practices regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture. To be certified organic, farmers must use only approved fertilizers and pesticides on their crops, and ensure that there is no potential for contamination from neighboring, non-organic fields.

The USDA regulates a few different uses of the word “organic” on packaged goods:

- 100% organic - must contain (excluding water and salt) only organically produced ingredients and processing aids. The USDA seal may appear on the packaging.
- Organic - must consist of at least 95% organically produced ingredients (excluding water and salt). Any remaining product ingredients must consist of nonagricultural substances approved on the National List including specific non-organically produced agricultural products that are not commercially available in organic form. The USDA seal may appear on the packaging.
- Made with organic ingredients - must contain at least 70% organic ingredients and list up to three of the organic ingredients or food groups on the principal display panel. The USDA seal cannot be used anywhere on the package.

Organic labels tell you that chemical fertilizers and pesticides were not used on your crops; this is a great step in the right direction, as these substances damage soil structure, poison farm workers, and may potentially cause damage to consumers as well.

There are a whole host of other considerations around how vegetables are produced that fall under the “sustainably-grown” category—a name that is not regulated by the USDA. To really understand how your food is grown, it’s best to ask the people who grow it. Farmers at farm stands or farmer’s markets will tell you about how they grow their vegetables: they may not choose to be certified organic (for economic or logistical reasons), but may in fact follow practices that are even stricter than USDA organic guidelines. Some of these farmers make a voluntary, non-regulated pledge to follow certain farming practices: for example, the Northeast Organic Farming Association Farmer’s Pledge includes the following commitments, among others:

- Reject the use of synthetic insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and fertilizers.
- Reject the use of GMO’s, chemically treated seeds, synthetic toxic materials, irradiation, and sewage sludge.
- Treat livestock humanely by providing pasture for ruminants, access to outdoors and fresh air for all livestock, banning cruel alterations, and using no hormones or antibiotics in feed.
- Support markets and infrastructures that enable small farms to thrive.
- Maintain and build healthy soils by farming practices that include rotating crops annually, using compost, cover crops, green manures & reducing tillage.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN EAT MORE ORGANICALLY:

- Avoid the “dirty dozen”. These are foods that are ranked by the Environmental Working Group as having the highest levels of chemicals and pesticides. The EWG estimates that you can reduce your exposure by 80% by only buying organic: apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, nectarines, grapes, bell peppers, potatoes, blueberries, lettuce, and kale.
- Look for organic brands of popular Jewish foods such as grape juice and matzah
- Purchase organic dairy products

Local

Being able to talk to the people who grow your food is just one reason to buy your food from people who grow it or produce it nearby. Here are a few others:

Taste the freshness! Local food is more likely to be picked when it is ripe, as it does not need to travel over several days to arrive at the market. Additionally, producers who sell locally can choose to grow varieties of vegetables that are known for their flavor and health qualities, rather than just their ability to hold up over long-distance shipping (“heirloom tomatoes” are one such crop;

the standard 'beefsteak' tomato common in supermarkets was actually bred to be able to travel long distances, sacrificing flavor for convenience. Heirloom tomatoes bruise easily and do not keep for long—but their flavor is out of this world!

Cut down on the carbon. Nearly one third of all greenhouse gasses emitted come from the production and transportation of food. When a farmer can drive a few hours to deliver their food—rather than ship it thousands of miles—the carbon footprint of your food shrinks dramatically.

Eat your view. Buying local produce means you're creating a market for people who farm in areas near your city to make a living. If you don't buy their products, they can't continue to do what they do. Family farms all over the country are giving way to subdivisions and abandonment, as farmers can get higher prices for selling their land for houses than for vegetables. This means that food has to travel even farther to get to cities, and those rolling green hills you love to drive through on your way out of town are quickly disappearing.

Enjoy the seasons. The Jewish calendar gives us at least one or two holidays each season that call for a feast, and several are in fact tied to agricultural cycles. Using local foods to celebrate means that you'll have different foods for the holidays because different crops ripen at different times. Eating with the seasons is a great way to notice the passing of the year. When people complain about not having strawberries on the Kiddush fruit platter in the winter, tell them that they'll really appreciate them when they're available locally in June!

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN PROMOTE LOCAL FOOD:

- Shop for ingredients at a farmer's market
- Make a connection between the food and your region (i.e., "New York State is the second largest apple-producer in the country, and we're serving apples grown just a few hours away...")
- Invite a farmer or local food producer to come speak at your institution (then organize a trip to go visit their farm!)

Food for Thought

A typical carrot has to travel 1,838 miles to reach your dinner table.

Farmers' markets enable farmers to keep 80 to 90 cents of each dollar spent by the consumer.

Globally, an estimated 1/3 of all human-caused greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) are from our food system and land use changes, which include GHGs emitted to grow, process, package, transport, store and dispose of our food.

GE or GMO Free

Genetic engineering (GE) is the process of transferring specific traits, or genes, from one organism into a different plant or animal. The resulting organism is called transgenic or a GMO (genetically modified organism). 70% of processed foods in American supermarkets now contain genetically modified ingredients—mostly soybeans or corn.

According to Sustainable Table, a consumer education group, "many concerns have been raised over the inadequate testing of the effects of genetic engineering on humans and the environment. Genetic engineering is still an emerging field, and scientists do not know exactly what can result from putting the DNA of one species into another. In addition, researchers do not know if there are any long-term or unintended side effects from eating GE foods."

From a Jewish perspective, a few concepts help to shed light on questions about GMOs:

- Might the laws of *shatnes* and *kilayim* (prohibitions against mixing species, say, by planting flax and linen in the same field) apply to GE crops, where mixing occurs on a molecular level?
- What about the concept of '*shmirat haguf*' (taking care of one's body)? When the health effects of new technologies haven't been fully tested, what is our obligation as Jews to take precautions with our health?
- Are we playing God? While farmers have been breeding plants and animals for thousands of years, selecting for desirable traits (i.e.,

chickens who lay eggs frequently, or wheat that doesn't drop its seed when it is ripe), the process of actually combining different species that can't mate on their own (spider genes and tomatoes, for example) seems dangerously close to tampering with the wisdom of the natural world. There is a fine line between *letaken ha'olam b'malchut shadai* (perfecting the world for the sake of heaven), and playing with the biological building blocks of life in ways that may have unforeseen and dramatic consequences.

We're not sure about the answer to these questions, but we do strongly caution against GMO crops for the unknown health risks to people and other species, as well as the dangerous interplay between corporations and the public good. GMO seeds are patented, copyrighted intellectual property. However, seeds are designed to spread with the wind, and mingle with other seeds. When this happens with GMO seeds, the owners of their patents can sue unwitting farmers for 'stealing' their property. In case after case, large seed companies have intimidated farmers, patented seeds which were once common property, and consolidated their power. We see this as an affront to local food security and democracy, and as such recommend that you avoid GMO crops whenever you can.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN AVOID GE/GMOs:

- Look for foods that are labeled "GMO-free".
- Avoid foods that contain high-fructose corn syrup, other corn products or soy products; nearly all of the conventional soy and corn crops grown in the US are from GE seeds.
- Eat organic foods. Genetically-modified fruits and vegetables cannot be certified organic by the USDA, and organic meats cannot come from animals that were fed genetically-modified crops.

Fair Trade

It is also important to support the workers who are picking, packing, and serving our food. Part of what makes food so cheap is that the people who actually do the work to produce it are paid very little for their hard work. Additionally, many who work with

the toxic pesticides used in commercial agriculture develop cancers and other health problems. Even if studies show that agricultural chemicals don't linger in the food—they linger in the air and the soil of the fields where people are working, and can make them very sick.

Buying food from a farmer you trust is one way to ensure that the people producing your food are treated fairly and paid adequately. But for crops that are produced in other climates—notably coffee, bananas and chocolate—there are a few different certifying agencies who can do your homework for you.

"Fair Trade" labels, such as "Fair Trade Certified" and "Fairtrade" (UK), ensure that farmers are paid an adequate price for their products. Fair Trade also helps farmers organize into collectives to increase their bargaining power and make capital improvements to their community, including building schools and hospitals.



Look for the Fair Trade label on: Bananas, Chocolate, Tea, Rice, Coffee, Cocoa (chocolate), Fresh Fruit, Honey, Juices, Sugar, Spices/ Herbs, and Wine.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN PROMOTE FAIR TRADE PRODUCTS:

- Promote Fair Trade products for your kiddush, such as fruits and wine.
- Hang Fair Trade fruit in your sukkah.
- Switch to using Fair Trade tea and coffee.
- Use Fair Trade as a theme when fundraising.
- Produce a Fair Trade cookbook.
- Hold a Fair Trade tasting event so people can see the range of Fair Trade products and decide which Fair Trade tea, coffee, or chocolate is their favorite.
- Ask caterers to use Fair Trade ingredients (be sure to tell the guests on the invitation that you will be serving Fair Trade products).
- Hold a film showing or educational program on the issues surrounding Fair Trade.
- Hold a Fair Trade bagel brunch and serve Fair Trade tea, coffee, sugar, and fruit.
- Ask your gift shop to carry Fair Trade products
- Buy food with the United Farm Worker's label, which indicates that workers were paid fair wages.

Buy Fairtrade Products

Since embarking on my current role as the Jewish Social Action Forum Campaigns Coordinator I have come to realize how fundamental the concept of fairtrade is to build and sustain a just world. Buying Fairtrade is a practical way of expressing an opinion on trade justice and is concurrent with Jewish values.

When we purchase something in the United States that carries the Fairtrade mark it guarantees that farmers in the developing world are paid a fair price for their product. Furthermore, a premium is given back to the farmers and their communities by being part of a Fairtrade co-operative. This premium is often spent on building schools, hospitals and better road systems. For those living in extreme poverty, powerless in the global economy, Fairtrade has come to mean an education for their children, clean water supplies, electricity and a level of health care they could never have dreamed of. It is the difference between being stuck in a permanent cycle of poverty and having the chance to build a better future.

You may be asking “Why should I purchase Fairtrade products for my Jewish institution? Is it really necessary for our community to be involved in a campaign about these things?” The root of the word Tzedaka is ‘Tzedek’,

meaning justice or righteousness. So when we are obliged to give Tzedeka we must do more than put loose change in a charity box. In our act of Tzedeka we must seek justice to create a fairer world. As Jews we should be buying fairtrade produce and dedicate time and resources to ensuring this happens.

There are more and more fairtrade products that are certified kosher, so whether it is at home, at a simcha or in your synagogue, it is easy to change to fairtrade. It is not just food—clothing can also be fair-trade. It is now even possible to purchase Fairtrade Kippot, made in India from Fairtrade cotton.

We have a chance to change the lives of the world’s poorest people through what we choose from the shelves of our supermarkets. So next time you go shopping, choose Fairtrade. As consumer, we do not need to accept trade injustice. By making the simple decision to switch to Fairtrade products we can, while shopping, help create a more just society for those who produce our goods.

Adapted from “Why Buy Fairtrade” by Poppy Berelowitz, on The Big Jewish Green Website—a fantastic resource that includes facts, Jewish texts, and Jewish programming ideas, based in the United Kingdom.

Look for Eco-Kosher Heckshers

These encourage consumers to buy from kosher food producers who care for the environment, animals, and their workers.

- **Earth Kosher** certifies a range of food, clothing, and health products.
- Natural Food Certifiers offers an **Apple K Kosher** label for kosher food that is also healthy.
- **Wholesome kosher (WK)** certifies healthy and kosher food in the U.S.

Organizations Working on Fair Labor issues in the Jewish Community

In recent years, a number of different projects have launched in the Jewish community around fair labor practices. We list these organizations here, so you can familiarize yourself with their work and to show the breadth of the Jewish sustainable food movement. Jews from all walks of life are starting to pay attention and make a difference:

- **Uri L’tzedek**, an orthodox social justice organization, has created an ethical seal for kosher restaurants called Tav HaYosher. This seal is a local, grassroots initiative to bring workers, restaurant owners, and community members together to create just workplaces in kosher restaurants.
- **Ma’aglei Tzedek** is an Israel-based certification for businesses and restaurants that indicates workers are fairly treated and the facility is accessible to people with disabilities.
- **The Hekhsher Tzedek Commission** is working to bring the Jewish commitment to ethics and social justice directly into the marketplace and the home. The Commission’s seal of approval, the **Magen Tzedek**, will help assure consumers that kosher food products were produced in keeping with the highest possible Jewish ethical values and ideals for social justice in the areas of labor concerns, animal welfare, environmental impact, consumer issues, and corporate integrity.

Food from Farm Animals

Customer demand for cheap food doesn't stop with vegetables: in fact, meat, dairy and eggs are one of the largest components of the commercial agricultural system. As with "organics," there are a lot of terms used to describe feeding and handling practices used. It's important to understand these terms when you're considering what eggs to use for your egg salad, cream to use in your coffee, and meat to serve (or not serve) at a special event.

Chicken & Eggs: Chickens are originally from the jungle. They like to scratch in the dirt for bugs, and "dustbathe," which is how they stay cool and clean. Chickens are omnivores, and need a significant amount of protein in their diet (whether they are being grown for meat or eggs). Poultry products that are labeled "**pastured**" or "**raised on pasture**" mean that the animals had a chance to run around outside, eat grass and bugs (and likely a supplemental feed as well, which may or may not be organic or GMO-free).

Poultry products labeled "**free-range**," "**cage-free**," or "**free roaming**" are all raised indoors in a factory, albeit with somewhat more room than those products that carry none of these labels.

Chicken are never given hormones in the U.S.

Dairy products: Cows are routinely fed growth hormones to increase their milk production. The effects of these hormones on people are not fully known, but many people seek to avoid them. The dairy industry has also seen massive consolidation, with low milk prices causing the near collapse of a once-thriving family farm sector in the Northeast. Buying milk from "**grass-fed**" or "**pasture-raised**" cows "**never treated with rBST**" means that you're avoiding extra hormones, and supporting farmers who are taking good care of their animals.

Beef: As with dairy cows, conventionally-raised meat cows are routinely fed hormones to increase their growth rates. They are raised in feedlots with thousands of other cows, in conditions that promote disease; to combat this, preventative antibiotics are added to their food. Antibiotics fed to livestock can cause resistance to these antibiotics in people, reducing their effectiveness in treating human illness.

Cows are ruminants, and their series of four stomachs are meant to digest grass and other forage crops. However, they put on more weight (and fat) when fed grain, and commercial meat cows are fed mostly corn and soybeans. This can cause acid to

How do you make kosher meat?

Kosher Animals The first step in kosher meat is the actual species of meat. Chicken, turkey, duck and geese are all kosher species; there are varying traditions regarding the kashrut of other fowls, such as quail, pheasant, squib and pigeons. Birds of prey are generally not kosher. For larger animals, kosher laws permit the consumption of species that chew their cud and have split hooves. This includes, cows, sheep, goats, bison, deer, elk and even giraffe, though beef and lamb are generally the most common meat in the kosher marketplace.

Kosher Slaughter (Shechitah) To make kosher meat, a kosher animal must be slaughtered in a very specific manner, according to the laws of *shechitah* (kosher slaughter), which Jews have followed for generations. The *shochet* (slaughterer) is highly trained in both the act of the slaughter and all the specific laws that must be followed, and must have a high level of *yira'at shamayim* (awe of heaven). The training process for

shochtim is long and arduous, in order to ensure that only individuals with the skills and temperament can perform this holy task, because the act of slaughter occurs with the utmost level of respect for the animal and the laws of kashrut.

The *shochet* uses a perfectly sharp knife that is at least twice the length of the animal's neck and checked against the *shochet's* fingernail for nicks. Any nick at all would tear the flesh of the animal, causing great pain and rendering the slaughter invalid. After making a blessing, the *shochet* uses a very fast, continuous cutting motion to quickly sever the trachea, esophagus and major blood vessels in the neck. This causes the animal a minimum amount of pain and ensures a quick drop of blood pressure to the brain and nearly immediate loss of sensibility.

Kosher inspection The lungs and innards of kosher slaughtered animals must be inspected by a trained *bodek* (inspector) for imperfections that might render the animal *traif* (non-kosher, literally "torn") and unfit for kosher consumption. The *bodek* inspects for adhesions, both between the lobes of the lungs and between the

build up in their stomachs, which aren't designed to digest these foods. Interestingly, outbreaks of E.coli that have been fatal to people can be linked to this acid build up in cows: People have naturally high-acid stomachs, and bacteria that develop in a low-acid environment (such as the stomach of a grass-fed cow) can't survive. However, when cows' stomachs become highly acidic, bacteria strains that develop there can also live in human stomachs.

Another reason that grain-fed cows pose health problems for people is the high fat content of the meat they produce. Americans love "marbled" meat -- this is achieved by feeding cows grain. Meat from cows raised on pasture is much leaner overall.

The environmental effects of large-scale animal agriculture are huge. While cow manure can fertilize a well-managed pasture, creating a balanced closed-loop ecosystem, manure from cows raised in feedlots has nowhere to go. Giant sewage lagoons of animal waste pollute waterways and cause unpleasant odors for miles around.

Finally, the conglomeration of commercial animal facilities mean that outbreaks of E.coli, salmonella or other harmful bacterias can spread to millions of people across the country, and be very hard to trace back to their source. Buying meat, chicken, eggs

and dairy from producers that you know—on farms you could, in theory, actually visit—is one way to ensure that your food is safe to eat.

Food from the Sea

According to Leviticus 11:9-12, any fish that has fins and scales is kosher. These criterion rule out seafood such as eels, shellfish, and catfish. Fish is considered parve and can be eaten with either milk or meat. There is no particular method of slaughter required for fish and, therefore, any fresh fish with fins and scales is kosher.

Fish are the last group of wild animals that are hunted for large scale consumption. As worldwide demand for fish has increased, wild fish populations can't keep up with our appetites, and find themselves threatened by overfishing (harvesting at faster rates than the population can reproduce) and by-catch (accidental death caused by trawls, dredges, long-lining, purse seining, and gill-netting). Scientists suspect that due to overfishing and by-catch, 90% of the large predatory fish populations have been depleted.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch is

lobes and ribcage. The lungs are inflated with air and submerged in water to check for any bubbles that would indicate a perforation. Animals with lungs that are free of perforations and major adhesions can be ruled "glatt" kosher, literally, "smooth".

"Butt" Wait, There's More In North America, only the front half of the red meat animals are used for kosher consumption, due to the presence of forbidden fats and nerves in the rear of the animal that are very difficult to remove. After separation of the hind from the fore, there are a number of major blood vessels that must be removed from the meat in a process known as *nikkur*, or traiboring (deveining).

Soaking, Salting, and Labeling Jewish law prohibits the consumption of the lifeblood of the animal. All kosher meat and poultry must undergo a special process to remove it. The meat or poultry is soaked in clean water for thirty minutes, then removed to drip dry. The meat is then salted and left to hang for sixty minutes to further draw out any remaining blood. The meat is washed three times in cold, clean water to remove the salt. Finally, the result: clean, fresh, and kosher meat. After the final

washing, the meat is dried, further butchered into retail cuts, and packaged and sealed for both consumer safety and kashrut.

What Kosher Doesn't Necessarily Mean With the exception of the processes noted above, the kosher meat industry generally resembles the conventional meat industry. Animals come from a range of different kinds of farms, but generally the farms are large. Animals have limited room to move around and eat mostly corn and soybeans. Meat factories are expensive to run and operate at a furious pace; a one minute delay could cost thousands of dollars. As a result, conditions for workers are at best unpleasant and often unsafe. And although the soaking and salting process is an excellent sanitizer, the volume of production in large-scale factories creates the potential for the spread of pathogens that can make people sick.

This section adapted from a piece by Naftali Hanau, founder of Grow and Behold Foods

one of the leading organizations working to protect our oceans and fish populations. Seafood Watch has created several portable resources to help consumers make educated choices. Their “sustainable” certification for fish is based on the concept of “ocean friendly,” which assesses damage to the environment during the fishing/ fish farming process, health and abundance of the fish population, the amount of by-catch from the fishing process, and how well the fishery or fish farm is managed. Look for the Marine Stewardship Council label while you are shopping to ensure that you are purchasing sustainable fish.

Tuna that is labeled “dolphin safe” means that no dolphins are intentionally harmed during the fishing process. This certification still allows fishermen to lower nets around schools of tuna and dolphins but they must lower the nets enough to allow dolphins to escape. Although the dolphin safe label has improved conditions for dolphins, research indicates that dolphins face health risks due to the stress of the fishing process: including being temporarily captured, which often results in heart problems, miscarriages, and mothers being separated from their calves, which results in the death of the calves. Therefore, Seafood Watch recommends purchasing hook and line caught canned tuna, instead of “dolphin safe” tuna.

Aquaculture, the process of farming fish in either fresh or saltwater, is the fastest growing method of animal food production. Nearly 50% of the fish consumed worldwide come from fish farms. Depending on the type of fish, location of farm, and farming practices, aquaculture can offer either a sustainable option or one that is equally problematic to wild caught fish. Farmed salmon is one such example. These salmon are raised in coastal waters and, therefore, the pollution generated by the farm flows into the coastal water. Large numbers of salmon are kept in a pen, resulting in diseases and parasites, which can easily spread to wild salmon swimming nearby. It is not uncommon for the farmed salmon to break out of these pens and compete with wild salmon populations. Additionally, farm raised salmon require approximately 3 pounds of wild fish to produce 1 pound of farmed salmon, which is an unsustainable ratio. The most sustainable options for farmed fish include those which are herbivores or omnivores. Some of the best farm raised options include: arctic char, striped bass, and U.S. raised barramundi, cobia, tilapia, and rainbow trout.

Seafood Watch's Super Green List

Fish that are good for you and good for the earth, the Super Green List includes fish that meet these criteria:

- Low levels of contaminants (below 216 parts per billion [ppb] mercury and 11 ppb PCBs)
- The daily minimum of omega-3s (at least 250 milligrams per day [mg/d])*
- Classified as a Seafood Watch “Best Choice” (green)

The Best of the Best: September 2010

- Albacore Tuna (troll- or pole-caught, from the U.S. or British Columbia)
- Freshwater Coho Salmon (farmed in tank systems, from the U.S.)
- Pacific Sardines (wild-caught)
- Rainbow Trout (farmed)
- Salmon (wild-caught, from Alaska)
- Arctic Char (farmed)
- Barramundi (farmed, from the U.S.)

Nearly all fish contain some amount of mercury, a chemical which can be dangerous for small children and women who are pregnant, nursing, or thinking of becoming pregnant. Larger fish, such as swordfish and mackerel, have higher levels of mercury, because the fish have been exposed to mercury for longer. The EPA recommends avoiding large fish that are high in mercury and limiting fish consumption to two meals a week consisting of fish with lower levels of mercury such as pollack, salmon, or canned light tuna.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN SOURCE SUSTAINABLE DAIRY, EGGS, MEAT, AND FISH:

- Switch to organic milk and cream.
- Buy milk in recyclable glass jars.
- Use local eggs.
- Source your meat from one of the new sustainable kosher meat companies that have launched in the past few years.
- Serve less meat.
- Print a sustainable fish pocket guide from Seafood Watch and use this guide before purchasing fish.
- Serve Pacific sardines, which reproduce quickly

and are currently abundant.

- Purchase fish that has the Marine Stewardship Council certification.
- Make your tuna salad with pole/troll caught albacore tuna from the U.S. or Canada.
- Make sure the lox on your bagel is wild-caught from Alaska.

Healthful

Keeping your congregation healthy is just another part of having a sustainable community. There are many different aspects of staying and eating healthy, but here are some to keep in mind:

Vegetarian: Consider making some of your events vegetarian events, or have at least one vegetarian/ meatless/vegan option at all meals and events. Necessary nutrients can be found in vegetables, grains, nuts, soy products, eggs, and dairy. Vegetarian diets have lower levels of saturated fat, cholesterol, and animal protein, while having higher levels of carbohydrates, fibre, magnesium, potassium, folate, and antioxidants and vitamins. Check out Veguary (www.veguary.org) for more information.

Whole Grains: A whole grain contains all parts of the original plant, and therefore will not lose any of its nutrients after processing/cooking. The benefits of eating a diet heavy in whole grains includes reduced risk of stroke, diabetes, heart disease, and weight gain. Serving whole grains, such as brown rice, wheat berries, or quinoa, at your events will help to keep your whole congregation healthy and active. Check out the Whole Grains Council (www.wholegrainscouncil.org) for more information.

Low Sodium: Sodium is a periodic element that is water soluble, and necessary in small quantities to help maintain a fluid balance, transmit nerve impulses, and contract/relax your muscles. But too much sodium can be dangerous, leading to fluid retention, high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney failure, and stroke. Many processed foods contain more sodium than foods you would make at home, so make sure to check the labels on the pre-packaged foods that you are buying, and always look for “Low-Sodium” alternatives. If people want to add more salt, let them do it on their own.

Serve Water: Everyone knows that drinking

enough water is crucial to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, but that doesn’t mean that they actually drink the suggested amounts. The U.S. government recommends 3.7 liters of water per day for a male over the age of 18, and 2.7 liters of water per day for a female over the age of 18. Providing water at all of your events, especially when food and other drinks are served, is an easy way to make sure that people are reaching their daily intake needs and cutting back on sugar-filled sodas and juices. Invest in pitchers or a water cooler rather than providing disposable plastic bottles at events.

High Fructose Corn Syrup: High fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is any corn syrup that has been processed in order to turn some of its naturally occurring glucose into fructose to make it sweeter. In the US, HFCS has become one of the most widely-used sweetening methods for commercially produced foods. The use of HFCS in foods has been linked to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. An easy way to avoid HFCS is to avoid buying processed and pre-packaged foods. Additionally, stock up on kosher-for-Passover items such as ketchup and salad dressing— while made with HFCS year round, the Passover versions are made with regular sugar.

Different Kinds of Fat: There are many different kinds of fats in the world, some that are good, and some that are very bad. Trying to serve as little of the “bad” fat is an important step in keeping your congregation healthy. Serving low-fat foods is a good place to begin. Home-cooked foods often have less fat than their store-bought alternatives because you can control what goes into them.

- **Trans fats** – Also known as unsaturated fats, trans fats are not essential, and provide no known benefit to human health. Because of this, the National Academy of Sciences has concluded that there is no safe level of trans fat consumption.
- **Hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated oils** – Hydrogenation is a process through which oils are heated and hydrogen is passed through them in order to make them denser. Fully hydrogenated oil is actually a solid fat and partially hydrogenated oil has a consistency like that of butter. These have high levels of trans fats and are very closely linked to obesity.
- **Saturated fats** – Saturated fats are naturally found in certain foods, especially animal products (such as butter, cheese, and meat), as well as

certain vegetable products (such as coconut oil). While it would be nearly impossible to cut saturated fats completely out of your diet, it is highly recommended that you cut back as much as possible.

- **Essential fatty acids** – Also called EFAs, these fats are necessary for your body’s biological processes, but they can’t be produced by your body. These important fatty acids can be found naturally in many common foods, such as fish, flaxseed, soya oil, canola oil, leafy vegetables, and walnuts (although more of the good fatty acid is absorbed from meat than from vegetable sources). EFAs are crucial for heart health.

Juice/Soda: While juice and soda might be the most popular beverage options for your group, they often contain high amounts of processed sugars or high fructose corn syrup and add extra calories that no one needs. If you do want to serve juice or soda at your events, make sure to get juices that have high contents of “real fruit juice” (the basic recommendation is at least 50%); and in terms of soda, try serving flavored seltzer instead, or try a less processed soda, such as GUS: Grown Up Soda. Other healthy drink options

include water, unsweetened iced tea, and non-fat/1%-fat milk.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN START TO SERVE HEALTHIER FOODS

- Use brown rice instead of white, or whole grain salads (such as wheat berries) instead of cous cous.
- Serve flavored seltzer rather than soda.
- Make sure plain water is available whenever drinks are served.
- Choose to have home-cooked food whenever possible.
- When purchasing foods, buy low-fat or low-sodium products if they’re available.
- Use canola oil instead of butter.
- Serve fish that’s high omega-3 fatty acids.
- Have at least one vegetable/vegetarian option at every meal.

Prices: Can we afford to do this?

You can’t afford not to! Buying sustainable products may be a little more expensive, but once you know what you are (or aren’t) paying for, the benefits of sustainable foods on the health of your community and the environment outweigh the slight price increase. It may mean that you will have to adjust your institution’s budget to spend more on food, but it is an important adjustment.

Tips for buying sustainable foods with price in mind:

- **Beware of the markup.** Many grocery stores add 150%-200% markup on organic products. A coop or farmers market will likely have lower markups, or none at all. When you buy closer to the source, less of your money goes to middlemen (the costs of running the supermarket, for example) and more goes right to the farmer.
- **Buy in bulk.** Buying in bulk will keep costs down. Look for pantry staples often available in bulk, such as beans, legumes, rice, flour, nuts, chocolate chips, and much more. Many local co-ops have extensive organic bulk sections. At a farmers market, you may get a good price for a whole case of fruit for your Kiddush fruit tray.
- **Buy in season.** When foods are locally abundant, they may be lower in price (although premium products may always be more expensive, even when they are in season, especially if the season is short, as it is for strawberries or sour cherries). Again, when you’re buying local foods, your money is going all to the local farmer, rather than the shipping and packaging companies.
- **Be selective.** You may wish to pick a few foods to focus on at first. Make the switch to fair trade coffee, or locally-produced milk, or fruit from a local farmer. Big change starts with small steps.

2

Eating Together: Planning for Meals, Kiddush, Simchas, and Holidays

When we eat together, we can connect on many different levels. We connect to the food, and if you have the chance to serve food from a local farm or a producer you know, then the stories of the people and the land that grew the food can be just as nourishing as the food itself. We connect to each other around a table, too; food gives us the chance to have longer conversations with folks we may regularly just see in passing. And we have the chance to learn and celebrate together, in a long chain of Jewish tradition.

Planning communal meals can be complicated by people's busy schedules, institutional kashrut polices, space and time challenges, and so on. The tips in this section will help you navigate some of these challenges and help you create a memorable feast—whether the occasion is simply bringing your community together, giving your weekly kiddush table a sustainable-upgrade, celebrating life-cycle events, or planning for big holidays like Rosh Hashanah and Passover.

Advance Planning

There are a number of different questions you want to ask when you're contemplating a communal meal:

- How many people am I expecting? What is the ideal number for achieving my goals (intimate conversation, bringing the whole community together, etc.)? Will this be kid-friendly or geared more towards adults (hint: a 40-min speech by a guest speaker, not so kid-friendly)? Be clear about your expectations to your guests.
- Should we use the institution's kitchen/social hall? (You may wish to explore this option if kashrut is an issue, if you're expecting a lot of guests, or if you don't wish to open up your home.) Other advantages include guests feeling comfortable in a familiar space, access to large-scale kitchen equipment, janitorial staff (though you should confirm that they will be available to help you).
- Or maybe a picnic in a park? The obvious challenge to this option is weather: a park with a covered picnic location is a great way to ensure success regardless of the elements. If you do plan an outdoor event, consider: can everyone find the location? Do you need a permit for a large gathering? Will other activities in the park contribute to or hinder the atmosphere you're trying to create?
- Hosting at home? Great for smaller gatherings and building community. Navigating kashrut concerns can be a challenge - see the note below with some suggestions for helping to make all your guests feel comfortable.

Sourcing Your Food

Use the tips in Chapter 1 to help you decide what food to serve. Remember, you may not be able to serve a 100% kosher sustainable meal. Rather, aim to choose elements that really stand out, and make sure that people notice them. Signs on tables or an announcement to point out the local flower centerpieces, the donated chocolate from a sustainable chocolate company, or the seasonal fruits on the fruit platter will start to educate your community about the available options.

So we can all eat together

Communal meals pose some challenge for folks with strict dietary concerns, whether this is kashrut, allergies, or other food choices. Here are some suggestions to help guests navigate the options with grace:

- Have labels and pens available, and encourage guests to write out ingredient lists to label their dishes. You may wish to have them indicate the kind of kitchen where the food was prepared (kosher, vegetarian, prepared on Shabat, etc.)
- Set aside one table for kosher food, one table for vegetarian food, one table for everything else.
- Have a conversation with your guests ahead of time to find out about special dietary needs. Let them know what you expect to be able to accommodate, and where they may wish to simply bring their own food.

Planning Moments for Connection

A good meal has a good start and a good ending. People should feel welcomed and included. They should understand that there is a focus to your meal, and know what that focus is. Here are some suggestions for bringing mindfulness to your meal:

- **Food Blessings:** Jews have been saying blessings over food for over 2000 years. Pausing before a meal to offer thanks can be a profound moment of connection--with the growers, producers, and chefs; with the people around your table; with God and with creation. Jewish food blessings offer an accessible entry point into Jewish tradition, but if the traditional wordings are a challenge, consider inviting people to articulate their own blessings, or offer a *kavanah* (intention) before the meal in addition to saying traditional blessings.
- **Opening Circle:** An opening circle lets people get a sense of who they are going to be eating with. It lets them share a piece of themselves that may not come up in ordinary dinner chit-chat, which helps deepen relationships. It helps to focus the group on a particular question that will be discussed during the evening learning, and it lets everyone be heard. People might already be chatting in small groups, so gently ask for everyone to quiet down. Introduce

yourself and explain what is going to happen first, then pose the question, then indicate a person to start.

- **Learn Some Texts Together:** Later in this chapter, some texts from Food For Thought: Hazon's Sourcebook on Jews, Food and Contemporary Life have been included to help you think about your relationship to food and Jewish tradition. You may want to use these texts as a conversation starter at a communal meal.

TIPS FOR HOSTING A SUSTAINABLE MEAL AT YOUR INSTITUTION:

- Pick one part of your meal to source from local food producers, and tell your guests about it (i.e. your dessert course could be all local berries or fruit, or Fair Trade chocolate).
- Buy from companies listed in the Producers Guide, and highlight their company values on menu cards or in a program.
- Serve grass-fed meat. If sustainably-produced meat isn't available, make your meal vegetarian, and tell your guests why.
- Plan for thoughtfulness: hold an opening circle, set a *kavanah*, have discussion questions prepared for every table, hold a guided food meditation and/or say a grace after meals together.
- Use reusable, recycled, or compostable plates and silverware.

Hosting a Sustainable Kiddush

The weekly Shabbat kiddush table is a place of blessing, schmoozing, and *simcha* (happiness). But it also has the tendency to generate a lot of waste and unhealthy eating habits. The list below offers a few resources and ideas for making your kiddush table healthy and sustainable. The same ideas can easily be transferred to your next synagogue social event, Hadassah meeting, book club, or canned food drive.

- **Start a Kiddush Committee at Your Synagogue.** Get together a group of people who like to cook and give your usual caterer

a break. Try offering a "homemade kiddush" once a month where everything is cooked by volunteers and is locally-sourced and organic.

- **Go Free Range.** Egg salad is a staple of the kiddush table. Try making egg salad from cage-free eggs.
- **Veggie Cholent.** Serve vegetarian cholent at your kiddush. Try featuring a new grain like brown rice, barley, or millet.
- **Feature Seasonal Fruits.** Fresh fruit platters are commonly found at kiddush tables and are both beautiful and healthy. But if you live outside of California, it can be next to impossible to source these fruits locally during the winter months. Focus on fresh fruits when they're in season in your area, and when they're not, consider dried or canned (if dried and canned locally!).
- **Can the Soda.** Avoid sugary sodas and fruit punches – instead, serve seltzers, 100% real fruit juices (and scotch, of course!). A grape juice to try: if you live in the Northeast, try serving the kosher grape juice from Glendale Farms.
- **Family Style.** Try serving kiddush family style – with the food on small platters on tables, rather than vast quantities at a long buffet. This allows people to see what's available and encourages them to take healthy portions.
- **Hummus!** Hummus is relatively simple to make fresh in large batches and tastes amazing.
- **The Salatim.** Try serving pickles, dilly beans, or other value-added products from local farms. Invite the farmers to speak to the congregation about their farm during Shabbat lunch.
- **Leftovers.** "If you run out of food, or there is none left by the end of kiddush, then the amounts were perfect," Edith Stevenson comments. "The idea that we must have LOTS of food at a kiddush is a Jewish tradition that I think is just plain wrong!" If you do have leftovers, consider donating them to a local Food Bank or other food recovery organization. Another option: freeze your leftovers and deliver them to families with a new baby or someone recovering for surgery or illness.

Sustainable Simchas

It seems that there is always a reason to celebrate in the Jewish community. While the Jewish calendar is packed with holidays, lifecycle events offer additional opportunities to sing, dance, and eat great food! Use the following tips to ensure that your next simcha reflects your commitment to living a sustainable life. The following suggestions can be applied for any holiday, event, or occasion!

- **Serve a Vegetarian or Vegan Meal.** Serving a vegetarian meal is often healthier and less expensive and certainly more environmentally friendly. If you are serving a dairy meal, look for recommendations on kosher, sustainable dairy products in the Producers Guide. Make your meal even greener by serving local and seasonal produce.
- **Serve Produce that is Grown Locally and in Season.** Connect to the season that your simcha falls in by serving seasonal foods that are grown locally. Often you can save money buying this produce at a farmers market. If you are catering your simcha, ask the caterer where they get their produce. If they don't source from local vendors, ask them if they would make an exception.
- **Serve Meat or Fish that is Sustainable** If you decide to serve meat at your simcha, you will find recommendations for kosher, organic meat in the Producer Guide. Look for fish that is certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council or select "Best choice" or "Good" options from the Seafood Watch pocket guide.
- **L'Chaim!** What would a simcha be without a good L'chaim. You can find recommendations for organic, kosher wines in the Producer Guide. Consider serving beer or alcohol that are brewed or distilled in your area.
- **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Compost!** Get a clear idea of how many people you will be expecting at your simcha so that you don't purchase unnecessary food. If you have leftover food, think about freezing leftovers, giving it away to your guests, or donating it to a local shelter or emergency food provider. Try to use reusable dishes, cutlery, napkins and table cloths. If you need to use disposables, avoid plastic and look for more sustainable plates and cutlery made of corn, sugar cane, and bamboo. Make sure that

all recyclable products end up in the appropriate recycle bins. Instead of filling landfills, turn the leftover scraps from your simcha into nutrient rich soil by composting! If you don't have your own compost bin, find a friend, farm, or community garden where you can donate your compostable scraps.

Suggestions for a Healthy and Sustainable Rosh Hashanah

The holiday of Rosh Hashanah is the perfect time to open up to new possibilities and be grateful for everything you have. It's a time to let the blasts of the shofar shake you awake to the world around you. And more than anything, Rosh Hashanah offers the opportunity for *tshuva* (returning/repentance) – to return to our best, most full versions of ourselves. As we turn inward, we have the chance to ask, "what impact do our actions have on our friends and family, our communities, and on the earth?" Here are some suggestions for a healthy and sustainable Rosh Hashanah:

- **Go Apple Picking!** Find a pick-your-own farm at pickyourown.org.
- **Avoid the Honey Bear.** Apples and honey are two of the most recognizable Jewish holiday foods. Meanwhile, the emergence of "colony collapse disorder" (the mass disappearance of bees from hives) indicates that something is awry in the bee community. But the ubiquitous honey bear that sits in most of our cabinets tends to be filled with industrially-produced (and not particularly flavorful) honey. This year, dip your apples in delicious, raw honey produced by a small-scale apiary. Try Bee Raw Honey, Marshall's Honey (raw, kosher) or Tropical Traditions (raw, kosher).
- **Make it Maple.** Hazon's favorite Orthodox maple syrup farmer, Rabbi Shmuel Simenowitz, celebrates the New Year with his family by dipping apples into maple syrup from his own trees. Join him in this sweet twist on traditional apples and honey by switching to maple syrup.
- **Seasonal Centerpieces.** Instead of fresh-cut flowers that will wilt after a few days, create a sustainable centerpiece that will impress your

guests. Place 12 heirloom apples or pomegranates in a glass bowl, or place potted fall flowers (chrysanthemums, zinnias, marigolds, etc.) around the table to add seasonal color.

- **Highlight Local Flavors.** Rosh Hashanah comes at a time of abundant harvest in most parts of the world. Celebrate your local harvest by offering dishes made from your CSA vegetables or from a farmer's market.
- **Celebrate the Non-Local Food.** Pomegranates are an important symbolic food on Rosh Hashanah, but are not necessarily local to most regions in America. Instead of eschewing them entirely, take the moment to recognize why you are including this food and how it fits into your celebration. Ask someone at your dinner table to prepare a few words (like a poem or fact sheet) about pomegranates, or whatever other food you'd like to highlight.
- **Cast Away Cleanup.** Tashlich is one of the most beautiful moments of Rosh Hashanah where we head towards a flowing body of water and toss in bread to symbolically cast away our sins. As part of your Rosh Hashanah preparation, take a day in the week leading up to the holiday (and bring your friends and kids) to "clean up" the river or watershed where you will perform the tashlich ritual. Collect any garbage or bottles lying about and walk around to get a lay of the land. When you come back the next week, note if you feel a different connection to the space.

Healthy, Sustainable Passover Resources

Also known as "*Chag Ha-Matzot*" (possibly a holiday celebrating the new barley harvest) and *Chag Ha-Aviv* ("holiday of spring"), Passover is a time to notice and celebrate the coming of spring. The seder plate abounds with seasonal symbols: the roasted lamb bone celebrates lambs born in spring, *karpas* symbolizes the first green sprouts peaking out of the thawed ground, and a roasted egg recalls fertility and rebirth.

Passover offers a perfect opportunity to combine the wisdom of a traditional Jewish holiday with our contemporary desire to live healthily and sustainably in our world. For example, some families put an orange

or olive on their seder plate to recognize women's rights and solidarity with Middle East peace. In the same spirit, we offer these suggestions to help you celebrate the holiday in sustainable style.

BEFORE PASSOVER

- **Get Rid of Your Chametz – Sustainably.** You don't have to douse your house in poisonous chemicals—noxious to both you and the people who work in the factories that produce them—to get rid of your chametz (bread products and crumbs which are literally, and ritually, cleared before Pesach). Try using natural, non-toxic cleaning products such as Seventh Generation and Ecover.

SUSTAINABLE SEDER PLATE

- **Every Charoset Tells A Story.** Charoset's mixture of apples and nuts is already healthy and delicious and, when made with local apples and/or nuts, sustainable. Charoset also offers you the chance to explore other cultures within the Jewish Diaspora. Google the word "Charoset" to find recipes from Russia, Spain, Holland, Yemen, Turkey, Surinam... – or ask your guests to bring their own favorite charoset recipe and have a taste-test.
- **Fairly Traded Pecans.** Equal Exchange recently launched a new line of fairly-traded pecans grown by an agricultural co-operative in Southwest Georgia. Infuse your charoset with the taste of justice, or offer as a pre-dinner nibble for hungry Seder guests.
- **Sprout Your Own Karpas.** If you can't find locally grown greens to dip for karpas, sprout your own! Although many sprouts come from corn, soybeans, and other chametz or *kitnyot* (species not eaten on Passover) in just 2-3 days, you can have fresh, delicious quinoa sprouts that you "grew" yourself!
- **Buy and Grate Fresh Horseradish Root for Your Seder Plate.** When it comes time for the Hillel sandwich, hold up an ungrated root so your guests know where that bitter stuff comes from.
- **Free-Range Betza (egg).** Buy organic, free-range eggs and be willing to pay slightly more for them. They taste better, didn't cause suffering to the animals who laid them, and support farmers who are making it possible for you to eat good food.
- **Roast a Beet.** If you're going vegetarian for your

seder (see below), substitute a roasted beet for the roasted lamb shank. Or follow The Jew & The Carrot reader, Sarah Fenner's suggestion: "In place of the shankbone in my home, we have often roasted a 'pascal yam' instead!"

THE SEDER TABLE: FOOD & DECORATION

- **Enjoy Your Flowers on Pesach—and All Spring.** Fresh bouquets make beautiful centerpieces, but only last a few days and are often grown with pesticides. Try a sustainable alternative like potted tulips or potted herbs.
- **Bring on the Hors D'oeuvres.** After you bless and eat the karpas, vegetables and dip, fruits, and cheese are all permitted. Save your table from starvation and distraction with a few snacks – everyone will have a better time.
- **Host a Vegetarian or Vegan Seder.** Even if you regularly eat meat, Pesach is a great time to eat lower on the food chain. Think of it as getting rid of your "gastronomical chametz." Menu ideas: almond quinoa salad (quinoa is Kosher for Passover!), matzah lasagna, vegetarian matzah ball soup, roasted new potatoes with rosemary, Israeli salad, borscht, garlic sautéed fiddleheads...
- **Host a Potluck Seder.** Or at least accept offers of help with the preparation. A sustainable seder also means not wearing out the host!
- **Buy Vegetables at Your Farmer's Market.** Go a few weeks early and chat with the sellers to see what they'll have available the first week of April. In many parts of the country, green options will be slim, but you may find salad greens, cabbage, fiddleheads, spinach, as well as root vegetables in cold storage (carrots, potatoes, onions, squash, beets) and apples and pears. Consider making at least one dish all local, and feature it at your Seder.
- **Serve Local, Organic Wine.** Find out ahead of time what your local wine store has in stock—especially if you plan to buy a lot of bottles. If they don't have anything, ask them to order a case on your behalf. There aren't many kosher organic wines available, but one or two are Kosher for Passover. Consider paying a little more at a locally-owned store—sustainable means supporting local businesses, too.
- **Use Recycled or Plant-Based Disposables.** Pesach is a time when many families break out the fine china and heirloom silverware. But if

you're using disposable plates this year, use post-consumer waste paper or plant-based ones.

Making Sukkot More Sustainable

The Jewish holiday of Sukkot celebrates the Fall Harvest. We are told to sleep, eat, and relax outdoors in our sukkah. On this holiday that is all about the environment, we should be more mindful of the impact that our celebrations have on the world around us. Here are some ideas:

- **Host a Sustainable Sukkot Meal.** It is a mitzvah to eat in the sukkah on the first night of Sukkot. Invite your guests to bring dishes that include local, sustainable ingredients.
- **Go Vegetarian.** Celebrate the bounty of the harvest by eating a vegetarian diet during the week of Sukkot.
- **Recycle and Reuse.** Commit to using only reusable or recyclable plates and cutlery in your Sukkah. In addition, you can recycle your lulav and etrog! For some creative ideas on ways to reuse your lulav and etrog check out- <http://jcarrot.org/shake-and-reuse-lulav-etrog>.
- **Host a Sustainable Kiddush During Sukkot.** Serve local apples and honey, salads made of seasonal produce, and egg salad made out of local, organic eggs.
- **Compost!** Start your parsley plants on Tu B'shevet with the soil you produce from your Sukkot scraps!
- **Take the Sukkot Locavore Challenge.** Eat only local foods on the Shabbat during Sukkot. Want a bigger challenge, include the first and last days of Sukkot. Want to take it a step further? Commit to eating only foods produced within 250 miles for the entire week of Sukkot.

Sign up for NOFA's Locavore challenge- <http://www.nofany.org/events/ny-locavore-challenge/>

For more ideas on hosting a sustainable simcha, check out the "Green and Just Celebrations" guide put out by Jews United for Justice <http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5483/signUp.jsp?key=1190>. This guide focuses on simchas in the Washington DC area but has ideas that can be used anywhere.

Texts on Food and Mindfulness

Seeing again, for the first time

Because we eat two, three or four times every day, it's easy to forget how wondrous that is. It's like the sunrise or the sunset. The sun rises and sets every day. If it's an especially beautiful sunrise, we may notice it. But if it's not "special" we may not even see it.

But if we can see it as if for the first time, each sunrise becomes very special and very beautiful. And so with each meal we create.

– Bernard Glassman, *Instructions to the Cook*

Radical Amazement

As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information; but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder.

Radical amazement has a wider scope than any other act of man. While any act of perception or cognition has as its object a selected segment of reality, radical amazement refers to all of reality; not only to what we see, but also to the very act of seeing as well as to our own selves, to the selves that see and are amazed at their ability to see.

– Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man*

Eating a Tangerine

I remember a number of years ago, when Jim and I were first traveling together in the United States, we sat under a tree and shared a tangerine. He began to talk about what we would be doing in the future. Whenever we thought about a project that seemed attractive or inspiring, Jim became so immersed in it that he literally forgot about what he was doing in the present. He popped a section of tangerine in his mouth and, before he had begun chewing it, had another slice ready to pop into his mouth again. He was hardly aware he was eating a tangerine. All I had to say was, "You ought to

eat the tangerine section you've already taken." Jim was startled into realizing what he was doing.

It was as if he hadn't been eating the tangerine at all. If he had been eating anything, he was "eating" his future plans.

A tangerine has sections. If you can eat just one section, you can probably eat the entire tangerine. But if you can't eat a single section, you cannot eat the tangerine. Jim understood. He slowly put his hand down and focused on the presence of the slice already in his mouth. He chewed it thoughtfully before reaching down and taking another section.

– Thich Nhat Hanh, *Miracle of Mindfulness*

Gratitude means noticing

Why is eating a vegetable one of the steps to freedom? Because gratitude is liberating. And how do we get there? We focus on the details.

Close your eyes: You are holding a piece of parsley, which you are about to dip into salt water. But before that – what things needed to happen to get this parsley into our hands? Who placed the parsley seeds into the ground? What sort of conditions did it grow in? Was it a hot summer? What did the soil feel like? How was the parsley harvested? What did it look like at that perfect moment when it was mature and ready to be picked? Who picked it? Where did the parsley travel next? Was it packed into cardboard boxes? How did it travel to the store or farmer's market? Who unloaded and unpacked it? Who placed it on a scale and weighed it so it could be purchased? Think for a moment about the number of hands that played a part in getting the parsley to this table and into our hands.

Now open your eyes: Look a little more closely at the parsley in your hand – what does it look like? How many leaves does it have? What does that specific color green remind you of? What does the stem feel like? Imagine what it tastes like...

Take a piece of parsley and dip it in salt water. Then we say the blessing together, and then we eat. Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who brings forth fruit from the earth.

– Leah Koenig (*Pesach 2006*)

3

Serving and Cooking the Food

You're going to need plates and utensils to serve all that delicious, locally-sourced food. This section will go through the best decisions you can make for your own Jewish institution and help you implement change where it matters most.

You may also wish to evaluate the pots and pans and appliances in your kitchen, in order to produce even more sustainable food at your institution. We don't suggest, however, that you go through your kitchen and discard perfectly good items. Rather, when you're in need of a new pan, or the old fridge breaks, consider making the investment in healthy and sustainable items.

Reusable Dishes—Nothing to Throw Away

When it comes to using plates and flatware at your institution, it is always better to use non-disposable, because even so-called “green” disposable products take a lot of energy and resources to produce.

Ceramics. Buying a set of glass or ceramic dishes is a good investment to make, but sometimes not always in the budget. If your budget is tight, consider purchasing used glass plates at a local thrift store (Check with your institution about their kashrut policy first, and find out what steps you’ll need to take to *kasher* (make kosher) used dishes. Note that ceramic and pottery generally can’t be *kashered*). If you’re buying reusable plates and utensils in large quantities, try a restaurant supply store for a good bulk rate. (Try restaurantwarehouse.com if there isn’t a local store in your area.)

Bamboo. Bamboo products are also a great alternative, whether they are reusable or disposable. Bamboo wins major sustainability points because of its ability to grow and spread quickly — in some cases three to four feet per day, without the need for fertilizers, pesticides or much water. A bamboo grove also releases some 35 percent more oxygen into the air than a similar-sized stand of trees, and it matures (and can be replanted) within seven years (compared to 30-50 years for a stand of trees). A growing number of companies are producing bamboo-based plates, silverware, and kitchen items, like salad bowls and cutting boards as well.

Disposable Dishes: Compostable, Biodegradable, and More

Using dishes and silverware that can be discarded after use have obvious benefits for your clean up crew. A growing number of disposable dishes are available that use recycled content and are designed to breakdown in composting facilities or landfills. Here’s what you need to know about these items:

Compostable Products. According to the International Standards of the American Society for Testing and Materials, compostable products will break down in commercial composting facilities at a specified rate (usually 180 days or less). The catch: the composting facility is not a backyard heap,

but an industrial-size facility that your city may or may not have. If it turns out your city does have the means to compost these dishes, add an extra bin labeled ‘compostable’ and set up a committee to help get the materials to the compost. More on composting and compost committees in Chapter 6.

Here are some brands that offer compostable dishes:

- Leafware / www.leaf-ware.com
- Go Green in Stages / gogreeninstages.com
- Let’s Go Green / letsogogreen.biz
- World Centric / worldcentric.org

Biodegradable Products. Manufacturers may make claims about biodegradable products that aren’t verified, because there is no regulation on them.

Recycled Products. If compostable dishes aren’t available, recycled products provide a good alternative to plastic. Look for the phrase “made with recycled post-consumer waste” to indicate that the product is made from materials already used once (many factories “recycle” waste materials from their manufacturing process, particularly since it saves money). However, this definition of “recycled” doesn’t mean that the product is diverting material that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

For recycled paper dishes, consider

- Earth Shell / earthshell.com
- Seventh Generation / seventhgeneration.com
- Preserve (recycled plastic products) / preserveproducts.com

Sustainable Math

Sustainable plates and utensils are most likely going to cost you more than standard products. A case of 1,000 compostable 12-ounce NatureWorks cold cups averages \$0.97/cup, whereas a 1,000 pack of 12-ounce Solo cold cups comes out to about \$0.13/ cup.

However, the price of these products is continuing to go down as demand increases. When looking at price, it is important to keep in mind a “systems perspective”, understanding the long term benefits for the greater whole—your community’s health, protecting the environment, and helping to move toward a more sustainable future. When you consider the costs cleaning up landfills, an extra \$0.84/cup starts to sound like a good deal! Also, try partnering with other institutions to buy in even larger quantities to even further minimize the price per piece.

Corn-Based Products. Some new companies are making disposable dishes from corn. In some ways, it's a great alternative to plastic, and they do breakdown in landfills much faster than plastic (which never actually fully disappears). Some of these products are heat sensitive, so be careful if you're serving soup or hot coffee! Corn-based products are an interesting development, but corn production in the US is one of the most environmentally-damaging processes of conventional agriculture. The processing required to turn the corn into plastic is also energy intensive.

No Styrofoam! Really.

You have probably heard this over and over by now, but just in case you forgot, Styrofoam is one of the absolute worst things for the environment and your health. Not only does it leach toxic chemicals into foods, it's made from petroleum, our #1 non-renewable energy source and pollutant. Further, styrofoam never really breaks down, so it ends up sitting in our landfills indefinitely. If you take even one small step at your institution, replacing styrofoam with any of the above-mentioned options is a great first start!

Get Rid of all that Plastic

Plastic's convenience comes from being lightweight and from its ability to absorb impact shock without breaking, which on its own merit, is hard to argue with. It comes in an endless range of colors and finishes, is pliable, and is easily formed and molded. Most would say it's a perfect material, right?

Wrong. The long term negative health and socioeconomic effects of plastic at the local and global scales far outweigh the benefits realized by the use of plastics. Its inexpensiveness is the result of a large portion of the costs associated with its life — production, use, and disposal — being put onto society as a whole.

The harmful chemical typically found in plastic items with a recyclable symbol number 3 is Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC), which leaches into food and liquids that we consume. Another chemical in plastic, Polycarbonate, which contains Bisphenol A (also known as BPA), has also been found to leach into the contents/liquids that

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN USE SUSTAINABLE DISHES

- Use reusable dishes. It will save you money, and create a lot less waste. If you can, purchase used glass dishes from a thrift store.
- Use recycled, compostable, or biodegradable dishes and napkins.
- If you can't overhaul your entire disposables budget, consider starting with the coffee mugs. Put a sign next to the coffee station explaining about how the coffee cups are made, and how they can be recycled after use. Make sure to label disposal bins appropriately!
- Have markers and tape available for people to put their name on their cup so that they can reuse it throughout a longer event.

At Hazon...

Hazon purchased a set of glass dishes and utensils for our own meetings and office events. Hazon spent over \$500 on compostable plates, cups, and flatware in 2008 from World Centric 9 for our board meetings and office events. This year, we ordered a set of 12 glass bowls, 12 glass plates, and 45 piece flatware

a plastic container is holding. When you eat or drink things that are stored in plastic, it is incorporated into your body. You quite literally "are what you eat" and in this case, it's not a good thing.

Transitioning your plastic plates and utensils over to the more sustainable options is the best choice when it comes to serving your food. If you absolutely need to buy plastic plates for some reason, make sure they are BPA-free and never microwave food on them. It's hard to avoid plastic, especially at an institutional level. If this is the case, an alternative can be to re-use safer plastics for storage around the institution. For example, if you are a synagogue that receives large plastic containers of food, these containers can then be used to keep materials for pre-schools, religious schools, and for office storage.

Adapted from "Get Plastic Out of Your Diet" by Paul Goettlich

Good plastic? Bad plastic?

Find out what's what:

<http://abunchofgreens.blogspot.com/2008/03/good-plastic-bad-plastic.html>

Napkins and Tablecloths

Cloth napkins and tablecloths are not only better for the environment; they can also be more cost-effective because you don't have to buy new ones for every event. Investing in a set of napkins and tablecloths is worthwhile for any institution. If you don't have laundry facilities, consider starting a volunteer laundry rotation. Check out these providers:

- Bambeco (www.bambeco.com)
- Rawganique (www.raqganique.com)
- Green and More (www.greenandmore.com)
- Green Home (www.greenhome.com)

Cookware

The types of pots and pans you cook your meals in are an important aspect to think about when considering your institution's health.

Stainless Steel. Stainless steel is really a mixture of several different metals, including nickel, chromium and molybdenum, all of which can trickle into foods. However, unless your stainless steel cookware is dinged and pitted, the amount of metals likely to get into your food is negligible.

Anodized Aluminum. These days, many health conscious cooks are turning to anodized aluminum cookware as a safer alternative. The electro-chemical anodizing process locks in the cookware's base metal, aluminum, so that it can't get into food, and makes for what many cooks consider an ideal non-stick and scratch-resistant cooking surface. Calphalon is the leading manufacturer of anodized aluminum cookware; All Clad has recently joined the market as well.

Cast Iron. Consider that old standby, cast iron, which is known for its durability and even heat distribution. Cast iron cookware can also help ensure that eaters in your house get enough iron—which the body needs to produce red blood cells—as it seeps off the cookware into food in small amounts. Unlike the metals that can come off of some other types of pots and pans, iron is considered a healthy food additive by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Note that most cast iron cookware needs to be seasoned after each use and as such is not as worry-free as other alternatives. Lodge Manufacturing is the leading

American producer of cast iron cookware.

Ceramic Cookware. For those who like the feel and heat distribution properties of cast iron but dread the seasoning process, ceramic enameled cookware from Le Creuset, World Cuisine, and others is a good choice. The smooth and colorful enamel is dishwasher-friendly and somewhat non-stick, and covers the entire surface of such cookware to minimize clean-up headaches.

Copper. One other surface favored by chefs for sauces and sautés is copper, which excels at quick warm-ups and even heat distribution. Since copper can leak into food in large amounts when heated, the cooking surfaces are usually lined with tin or stainless steel.

Teflon. According to DuPont, the finished product of Teflon does not contain any of the production-process chemicals linked to health problems in factory workers. Further, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency says that ingesting small particles of Teflon flaked off into food is not known to cause any health maladies. However, others aren't as sure. The nonstick coating is supposedly safe up to 450 °F, at which point it starts to break down and emit carcinogenic gases. However, stoves generally heat the pans to a much hotter temperature than 450 °F. If you're concerned about Teflon, use the pans on a lower heat, and replace them with one of the alternatives listed above when the coating starts to wear down.

"Green" Cookware options

- Cuisinart Greenware Cookware Set: Ceramic-based cookware; handles are made from 70% recycled stainless steel. Cuisinart believes so much in their eco friendly cookware that they offer a lifetime warranty.
- Starfrit Eco Friendly Cookware: Made from 99% recycled aluminum, with bamboo handles (and even though you remove it, the label is made from 100% recycled paper, too).
- Pristine Planet: Find other eco-cookware options at pristineplanet.com.

Efficient Energy Use

Preparing and storing food takes up a lot more energy than you realize. Here are some tips for reducing energy use in your institution's kitchen:

- Unplug small appliances when they are not in use
- Minimize the use of appliances with electrical heating elements such as toaster ovens and coffee makers
- Replace high energy-eaters (refrigerators, dishwashers, dryers and HVAC systems) with Energy Star models

HOW TO MAKE YOUR INSTITUTION'S KITCHEN MORE SUSTAINABLE:

- Replace old appliances with newer, energy-efficient models.
- Order buttons and stickers from Canfei Nesharim to help you remember to turn off the lights, etc.
- Unplug appliances when they are not in use.
- When you have to purchase new pots and pans, consider ecological options.
- Consider an energy audit to evaluate the entire building's energy use. While beyond the scope of Hazon's Food Guide, here are several organizations that can work with your institution on overall greening:
 - UJA Greening Guide** (www.ujafedny.org/greening-initiative)
 - COEJL** (www.coejl.org/greensyn/gtsoc.php)
 - Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center Greening Fellowship** (<http://isabellafreedman.org/environment/greening>)

4

Food Waste: Making Less of It, Doing More with It

Reducing the amount of waste we produce is a core Jewish environmental value. Even though over-consumption and waste production are relatively recent environmental issues, Judaism has been tackling these problems since Talmudic times. The Jewish concept of *Bal Tashchit*, which prohibits us from being wasteful or unnecessarily destructive, is based on a text from the Torah that urges us to consider our relationship to the natural world.

This section shares some innovative tips on reducing your food waste from the Teva Learning Center. And, when you've cut down all you can and still have leftover food, we cover the basics of composting: how it works, how to start your own pile or work with a facility in your area. Considering the entire food chain—not only what happens before the food gets to our plates, but what happens after it leaves—is a key component of shifting your institution toward sustainable food choices.

Reduce your food waste

When it comes to food waste, most of us have all fallen into the trap of cooking too much food or taking too much on our plate. Before we even discuss how to manage our food waste, it's important to plan on reducing the waste to begin with.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN REDUCE FOOD WASTE:

- Try not to cook too much food. If you're not sure how much to make for a gathering of 20 or 30 or 50, think about how much food you would serve a family of 4...and then just multiply it.
- Resist the urge to cook way more food than you actually need.
- Encourage people to only take what they will eat by making an announcement before the meal or putting signs on the tables.
- If there are leftovers, find a place to donate them or come up with creative ways to reuse the leftovers for the next day instead of tossing all of it into the garbage.
- Easiest of all, encourage people to take home leftovers if they'll eat them!
- Freeze leftovers and organize a community to

deliver leftovers to families in mourning, people dealing with illness, or homes with a new baby.

- Serve whole fruit rather than cut-up fruit—it's easier to reuse later if it doesn't get eaten.
- Offer people smaller plates. When you don't have too much room on your plate, you're less likely to take more than you can eat.

Composting

Composting is a process that helps organic matter to break down into a nutrient-rich, soil-like substance that is used in organic gardening.

Nearly all organic matter (that is, plants, meat, fish, milk, cheese, eggs, flower stems, etc.) can be composted, but the actual items that are accepted at each composting facility may vary. The reason for this? Some materials need a lot of heat to break down, and a given composting site may not have enough volume to generate the necessary heat. Other compost sites are concerned about pests; although meat and fish are perfectly compostable, they also can attract unwanted animals, and so many sites stick to vegetables only.

What are your options? If you have room on your property, starting a composting project can be a great educational opportunity for your community,

Lessons from *Psolet* (food waste)

Before the kids' first meal at Teva [a week long Jewish environmental education program for 6th graders], the students are told they can eat as much as they want. They can come back for seconds or thirds even, but they should try not to create too much *psolet*. After each meal, the leftover food is collected in a bucket and ceremoniously weighed. ... The goal is to have the kids produce less *psolet* [each day.] By the last lunch at a session this fall, 45 kids produced less than a pound of waste collectively, a new record.

—http://www.plentymag.com/magazine/monkeying_with_the_message_1.php

Psolet on my plate

OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO (X2)
Each day I go to breakfast

Put oatmeal in my bowl
Fill up my glass with O.J.
Eat half my jelly roll.
I can't believe I took more than I ate
That's why I have so much *psolet* on my plate.
OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO
Take two bites of an apple
Drop raisins on the trail
Pull breadcrusts off my sandwich
I say it's cause they're stale.
Each night I ask the stars in the sky (Hey stars)
Why does the food on my plate pile up so high?
OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO
But now I'm feelin' happy
I'm peaceful and serene
I'm a *ba'al bal tash'chit*
Because my plate is clean!
It's true, I took no more than I ate
That's why you'll never find *psolet* on my plate.
OO WA OO WA OO WA OO OO (X2)

and an extremely convenient way to compost your leftover food waste. However, you'll need someone (or a committee) to devote some energy to it.

Alternately, you can bring your food waste to a public composting facility. This may be run by your city government or a non-governmental agency. Many community-gardens offer public composting as well.

Resources for Institutional Composting

- The EPA has an extremely comprehensive website of resources on composting, including: what can and can't be composted, regional composting programs, laws and statutes, environmental benefits of composting, the science and technology behind the process, and a list of publications with more information.
- Connecticut State developed a manual for composting in schools.
- The Jewish Farm School has a Jewish composting guide, including instructions on building a compost bin and thoughts on the nature of cycles in Jewish tradition.

- Vermiculture (composting using worms) is a fun and effective way to handle small amounts of compost, a great educational opportunity for a classroom setting.
- If your institution has a CSA, find out if your farmer could pick up your compost.

HOW TO START COMPOSTING AT YOUR INSTITUTION

- Evaluate: how much food waste is produced, and when?
- Find out if your institution would be willing to start composting on-site. Use information from Connecticut State and the Jewish Farm School to explain what will be involved.
- Recruit a committee to help you put your plan into action. You'll need to work on the infrastructure (or on a rotation schedule if you're bringing compost to a facility off-site), and on people's habits, getting them to remember to put food waste in a separate bin from trash.

Composting at synagogue

Altshul, an independent minyan in Park Slope, Brooklyn, has been composting since 2009. About seven or eight Altshul members take turns collecting the compost after kiddush and bringing it to farmers markets and community gardens in Brooklyn and Manhattan that have public compost drop-offs sites.

Education is important – there was a lot of support and interest in the idea, but also some trepidation about what items could actually be composted (the answer: all food items!). To increase awareness and facilitate the process, the group has made a set of reusable signs that they put above three different bins in the kiddush hall: trash, compost, and reusable/rewashable (for the Kiddush cups and plastic utensils that can be used again). The biggest challenge is getting people to commit to actually take the compost—but the group has a strong core of volunteers and is hopeful that as awareness grows, so will the number of people who get involved.

One member of the team, Shuli Passow, told us about her experience:

“Being part of a religious community that includes composting as part of its regular habits is deeply meaningful. It integrates one set of values into another, as my environmentalism finds new expression as a Jewish act, and my Jewish community encompasses a behavior that aligns with my personal commitment to environmental stewardship. This seemingly small practice of composting enables me to feel more full whole in my Judaism and more spiritually rooted in my work to connect with and care for the earth.”

Advice from the group's founder, Leah Koenig, on starting your own composting program:

- Research your compost drop-off options. Gardens within walking distance are ideal.
- Talk about the idea with your community to gauge interest, then recruit people to help you. Don't go at it alone!
- If you can't compost right away, at least switch to compostable plates! It's a step in the right direction. This is how Altshul got started.



Recycling

If your town or municipality offers recycling, your community may still need some reminding when it comes to putting bottles, cans, and paper in the right bins. Make sure there are always recycle bins next to trash bins, and make sure they are clearly labeled (this could be a good project for your Hebrew school). At the Hazon office, we label the trash bins with a sign that say “landfill” – a somewhat in-your-face reminder of where our non-recyclable trash ends up.

If your town doesn’t recycle, find out if there are organizations that can take your recyclables, and organize a drive in your community.

In addition to making sure your materials get recycled, encourage your institution to purchase products made from recycled materials. Newspapers, paper towels, aluminum, plastic, glass soft drink containers, steel cans, and plastic laundry detergent bottles commonly contain recycled materials. As consumers demand more environmentally sound products, manufacturers will continue to meet that demand by producing high-quality recycled products.

HOW TO INCREASE RECYCLING AT YOUR INSTITUTION

- Find out what the local recycling laws are and evaluate your institution to see if they are in compliance.
- Encourage recycling by making bins available everywhere food is eaten (classrooms, offices, social hall, outside, etc.)
- Engage your community in a poster campaign: the winning entry will be displayed throughout your institution to encourage recycling.
- Organize “drives” for specialty recycling items, such as electronics and batteries, and bring them to a facility in bulk. Make sure to feature your efforts in your institution’s newsletter!
- Buy recycled paper, dishes, and napkins.

Recycling gets a lot more air time than the other two of the “3 Rs”—yet reducing the waste we generate, and lengthening the shelf life of the products we do use, must become as routine as recycling. Here are some tips for Reducing and Reusing:

- Buy in bulk
- Use pitchers and glasses for water, or a water cooler, rather than individual-sized water bottles

5

Food Education

Changing the food you eat is one part of the equation; changing the way you think about it and talk about it is equally important. Food offers a wonderful starting point for diving in to Jewish tradition, and some of our ancient Jewish texts and practices offer remarkably relevant insights into the way we eat today.

It's amazing how Jewish tradition can come to life when you have a hands-on learning experience. In this chapter we offer you a variety of different educational programming ideas, including movie nights, field trips, cooking classes, and speakers. We invite you to explore the possibilities of Jewish food education!

Go on a field trip

Getting out of the synagogue/community center and going to a different location automatically makes something more exciting. Taking a field trip to a local farm, or even a museum, is a great way to get people thinking more about the outside world and less about their computer screens, homework, and day-to-day tasks.

- **Go to a local farm or farmers' market.** This is a great way to see a sustainable food system in action, as well as munch on some yummy snacks.
- **Go to a food processings facility.** If there's a big factory in your city/town, find out if they offer tours. This can be a great way to see industrial food production first hand and learn about what is in your "backyard."
- **Go to a museum exhibit.** Visit a museum about local food history, farm workers, economic justice, or other food-related topics. See if you can arrange for a special guided tour for your group by one of the docents.

Invite a speaker

Bring in someone from your community (or outside your community) to teach about food justice issues, sustainability, or some other topic that you think your community members would find interesting. Sample topics include:

- **Sustainability.** Talk about ways to improve sustainability both at home and in the community.
- **Food justice issues.** Talk about the Farm Bill, ethical kosher meat, or hunger in your community.
- **A farmer's perspective.** Have a local farmer talk about the work that she/he does.

Host a *Beit Midrash* / Learning Series

Hosting a *beit midrash* (literally, "house of study" – in practice, a one-time or multi-week series of learning classes on a given topic) is a great way to get people talking about food, faith, and agriculture. Having a text in common is an excellent way to get a conversation going, while also having a framework around which to center the discussion. A number of organizations have assembled collections of texts on these topics, including Hazon's "Food For Thought: Sourcebook on Jews, Food & Contemporary Life." For a full list, see the Resources section in the Appendix.

Cook together!

Bringing people together for a cooking demonstration, or to cook a meal together, serves as a great opportunity to talk about the importance of using local /organic/sustainable ingredients, the benefits of cooking at home, and new, exciting ways to make old and familiar dishes.

- **Cooking demos.** Host one at your community CSA. Even if you don't belong to a CSA, cooking demos are great ways to showcase a new and interesting food. Bring in a chef from outside or just have someone in your community share one of their favorite recipes!
- **Potlucks.** Interact as a community in a fun way through a potluck. Have everyone bring a dish for a picnic/dinner and make sure to encourage people to share what ingredients they used/where they came from.
- **DIY Food Preservation.** Give people the skills to eat locally year-round by teaching pickling, canning, fermenting, and preserving!

Meet your Meat: Organizing an on-farm *shechita* (slaughter)

The do-it-yourself food movement is growing: people are braiding challah and making pickles in numbers not seen for at least three generations. Learning these new-old skills is a way to connect to older generations—and also a way to take back some control over the food we eat, which is increasingly grown, produced, and packaged behind closed doors or in places too far away for us to ever see. Learning about how Jewish tradition prescribes the transition from living animal to meat is a something that few people ever imagine to see, but more and more people are yearning for. “If I’m going to eat meat, I ought to be able to look the animal in the eye before it dies on my behalf,” said one participant at the chicken slaughter before the 2009 Hazon Food Conference.

This is a feeling shared by many, and an educational shechita actually gives people access to see the process— from the cut of the knife through the plucking of feathers and soaking and salting (part of the process of making kosher meat). Viewing an educational shechita can be a very powerful experience for participants.

For logistical reasons, we recommend organizing a poultry shechita, rather than a larger animal. Cows, lamb, and goats must have their lungs checked after slaughter, and there is a 30-70% chance that this will reveal that animal is unfit for kosher consumption. Even if the animal is kosher, only the front half is

used for kosher meat in the United States, so you will have at least half an animal (if not the whole thing) that will need to go to non-Jews. The infrastructure requirements for butchering a cow or lamb are very complex as well. For these reasons, we suggest you stick with chickens!

There are several organizations that can help you organize a chicken shechita:

- **Grow and Behold Foods** (New York area) www.growandbehold.com
- **Loko (“Local Kosher”)** (Boston area) www.lokomeat.com

Hazon may also be able to connect you with individuals in your area with some experience in this kind of project, who can help you. Contact foodguide@hazon.org for more information.

Slaughtering, plucking, eviscerating, and butchering a turkey is disgusting.

No, it’s not. It’s beautiful. If animal meat makes you squeamish, go see the Bodies exhibit or find yourself an illustrated anatomy book. Our lives depend on our intricate series of tubes and containers, a central distribution system, waste collection... the “*asher yatzar*” (bathroom blessing) comes to mind: if but one of these openings or hollows was closed where it should be open, or open where it should be closed, we could not function. Ditto with animals. Putting my hand inside the carcass of a dead turkey and pulling out the still-warm entrails was an AWE-some experience. Meat comes from a living animal, and if you can’t hear that – you shouldn’t eat meat.”

– Anna Hanau, after the turkey shechting at the 2008 Hazon Food Conference

6

Community Agriculture and Gardens

The increasing popularity of Jewish gardens and Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects makes it even easier to bring healthy food and awareness of local food and farming issues to your synagogue, community center, or institution. Hazon's food work began with the launch of the first ever Jewish CSA in 2004. Since then, the Hazon CSA program has expanded to include over 50 sites across the US, Canada, and Israel. We've seen firsthand how a CSA can bring a community together, inspire new programs and learning, and have a very real effect on supporting sustainable agriculture. Collectively, Hazon CSAs have put nearly \$5 million in Jewish purchasing power behind sustainable agriculture since 2004.

If you want to go beyond a CSA, what better place to learn about the miracles of growing food than in a garden where you can actually watch the process happen? People of all ages can learn something new in a garden, finding joy and intrigue in the unfolding drama of growing plants. A garden at your institution can connect your community to the growing cycle. It can also, if it's big enough, grow enough food to feed you, or perhaps even supply a soup kitchen in your area. And it can become a living laboratory where you can learn about Jewish agricultural laws and food blessings with an entirely fresh perspective.

This section uses material from the Jewish Farm School's Jewish Gardening Workshop from June 2009. Download the entire document at hazon.org/foodguide/ch9

Start a Hazon CSA!

Hazon's CSA program is the first ongoing effort in the American Jewish community to support local, sustainable agriculture. Founded in 2004, our CSA program now includes over fifty CSAs in the US, Canada, and Israel, and over 2,300 households. The Hazon CSA program has helped the Jewish community to put over \$4.5 million dollars behind sustainable agriculture and supported Jewish institutions such as synagogues and JCCs to create innovative educational programming around the intersections of Jewish tradition and contemporary food and environmental issues.

Hazon's CSA program will help you through your first year of planning, marketing, organizing, and running your CSA project. We'll also help you create engaging, high-quality adult and family Jewish education around food and agriculture.

"I have struggled connecting with the Jewish community because I have not found myself in it. Joining a Jewish CSA was a great way for me to connect my Jewish identity with things I am passionate about, such as food politics and sustainable living. I am glad that the Jewish community recognizes that food issues are Jewish issues. Thank you for creating a space in which people like me who struggle with connecting to the Jewish community can feel welcome and invited."

Esty, Brooklyn NY

Host a Farmers' Market

A farmers' market is a great way to support local farms, as well as give your community easy access to wonderful, fresh produce. You may want to invite a few farmers or local vendors to an event you're already planning (i.e. Sukkot fair, Lag B'omer picnic) or set up a weekly or monthly market. Make sure you think about what kind of traffic you'll have— you want to make sure your vendors sell enough to make it worth their time!

For suggestions on starting a farmers' market, including signage, management, by-laws, budgets, and fees, visit: http://www.organic-growers.com/start_a_farmers_market_1.htm

Start a Jewish Garden

Gardening is an activity that can rejuvenate Judaism and Jews on many levels. For one, gardening serves to reconnect the Jewish spirit to the earth. Two thousand years of Jewish urbanization has forged an estrangement from nature that reaches to the core of the Jewish psyche. Gardening restores familiarity with our local ecologies and deepens our understanding of where our food comes from. Even more consequential, intimacy with nature deepens the Jewish sense of wonder and heightens our consciousness of God's countless miracles.

This sense of wonder, the sensitivity to the web of life that supports us both physically and spiritually, is an integral aspect of Jewish consciousness and thus a prerequisite for Jewish living. The famous verse from Breishit 2:15 states, "And the Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to till it and to tend it." The Torah's notion of human responsibility to steward the earth, as well as the rest of our tradition's rich collection of teachings concerning the relationship between humanity and the natural world, become irrelevant and, even more, incomprehensible to the Jew who is not in relation to nature. Jews must reacquaint themselves with the earth. Gardening suits such a noble and formidable task. There is little else that reminds a person of the feeling and smell of nature quite like placing one's hands directly in the earth. Gardening reawakens our dulled senses to the lifeblood of our planet.

The Jewish connection to the earth emerges from our people's agricultural roots. As we cut Judaism off from its own heritage, we in turn lose our connection to our agricultural history and the ecological themes in our holidays. For example, the agricultural themes inherent during the growing and harvest season from Tu B'Shvat, the beginning of the budding of trees through Sukkot, the final harvest, lose their meaning without our continued intimacy with the cycles of nature. By reconnecting with the natural world through gardening we allow these aspects of our tradition to speak to us in new ways and to bring greater meaning to our lives.

Finally, gardening can also be used to bring Jewish text to life. Even for Jews for whom the world of Jewish texts is already familiar and accessible, Jewish gardening offers us rich opportunities for opening up the world of the Torah, Rabbinic texts, and the siddur to in new, vibrant, and creative ways.

Themes for Your Jewish Garden

While a garden lends itself to all kinds of different programs, you may wish to create a garden that has a specific focus or educational goal. Here are a couple suggestions, with program ideas:

A Garden for Jewish Rituals: Havdalah. A Havdalah garden consists of plants that can be used for the Havdalah ceremony and allows gardeners to connect the act of gardening with religious practice. Not only does it give a deep and spiritual framework for the physical labor, it can also foster a deeper connection to the Jewish ritual. One major advantage of a Havdalah garden is that many fragrant herbs, such as lavender, sage, mint, rosemary, thyme, marjoram, are hardy perennials and will come back year after year. Additionally, these plants will grow more robust with the weekly harvesting of leaves for Havdalah.

Program suggestions:

- Dry herbs and make Havdalah kits
- Make Havdalah in the garden
- Learn the *brachot* (blessings) related to smell

Israel and Biblical Gardens. Many people are interested in biblical plants. A biblical or Israel garden can serve as a great tool when teaching about Israel, both ancient and modern. Seeing the numerous plants that are mentioned in the Torah can really help young gardeners connect with the sometimes distant text. The plants you grow in an Israel garden can be limited to the seven species, or you could expand it to include as many biblical plants as you can find and grow.

Program suggestions:

- Tour of Israel through the garden
- Prepare a biblical meal
- Construct a biblical agricultural calendar

A Year in the Life of a Jewish Garden

This section by Daron Joffe, Former Director of Gan Chaim

January-February

- Tu B'Shvat fruit and nut tree planting and garden seder
- Groundbreaking community celebration
- Garden design and build workshops
- Nutrition, preservation, and cooking workshops
- Seed planting in local greenhouse
- Indoor gardening for schools, vacation camps, and after-school programs
- Horticultural therapy activities for seniors and people with special needs
- Adult Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) education programs
- Start seed planting indoors
- Primary activities: Designing, mulching, planting trees, pruning, and building

March-May

- Spring gardening workshops for adults and families
- Spring garden programs for day schools, camps, volunteer groups, and families
- Passover seder in the garden
- Community planting party
- Primary activities: Tilling, composting, planting, transplanting, and watering

May-June

- Open house tours
- Staff training
- Summer garden activities for campers, students, and people with special needs
- Summer garden workshops and programs for adults and families
- Activities: Planting, transplanting, weeding, transplanting, and mulching

June-August

- Intensive camp gardening activities: about seven sessions day, five days/week
- Summer gardening workshops and programs for early childhood, teens, adults, seniors, and people with special needs
- Weeding, trellising, planting, transplanting and harvesting

August-October

- Fall gardening workshop
- Food preservation workshop

- Theater in the garden
- Intergenerational activities and family day programs
- Volunteer groups to the garden
- After-school programming
- Field trip to a local farm
- Plant garlic, onions, spinach, collards, and kale
- Plant seasonal color and cover crops
- Fall plantings of bulbs, perennials, and over-wintering crops
- Winter gardening classroom science projects

October-November

- Sukkot arts and crafts workshops
- Sukkot harvest celebration in the garden
- End-of-season Sukkot festival at the farm

- Nutrition workshops
- Home landscaping workshop
- Volunteer groups to the garden
- After-school programming
- Early childhood programs
- Family and intergenerational programs
- Winter garden classroom science projects

December

- Volunteer groups at the garden
- After-school programs
- Early childhood programs
- Family and intergenerational programs
- Special needs horticultural therapy programs
- Winter garden classroom science projects
- Expand and evaluate programs and curriculum

Great Gardens All Around the Country!

The Greenpoint Interfaith Food Team Garden Project

Congregants at the Greenpoint Shul wanted to take unused land behind their synagogue and build a garden to grow produce for the soup kitchen at the nearby Greenpoint Reformed Church. The organizers were able to get most of their supplies donated. They found seeds for free at a farmers' market festival and used Craigslist to find topsoil and a person to deliver it. A volunteer got rainwater barrels donated. Plants came from local garden shops and one member's own yard.

Initial work to prepare the space included clearing the brush, cleaning out the garbage, and leveling the ground. Once that was complete they brought in the soil. The soil went down on July 4th, and the garden had its first harvest in August. The garden is completely organic, and it has seven beds complete with tomato plants, cucumbers, zucchini, eggplants, basil, thyme, and plenty of other vegetables.

The produce will be donated to the soup kitchen. It took a combined effort and a combination of skills from people who were willing to devote their time and energy to really get this project off the ground. Rabbi Appelbaum is part of the regular watering crew, and the community seems to be enthusiastic about this new project that simultaneously makes their Jewish institution greener, connects them to people from other faiths, and helps to feed a much larger community of people in need.

Improving the World Around Us One Tomato at a Time

"Beginning this Fall our facility will be home to a new community garden. In addition to providing daily educational opportunities for our students, the garden's fresh, organic produce will also give our children a chance to physically experience Tikkun Olam by feeding those in need at SOVA: Community Food and Resource Program, and PATH (People Assisting The Homeless). More than donating cans of food or dollar bills, it is our hope that the garden will show our students the impact every action can have and that even the smallest tomato or berry can help heal the world.

Moreover, the garden is intended to unify our community in the pursuit of helping others. Serving as a sacred space (*makom kadosh*), the garden will become a source of pride for the entire community, providing us all a chance to physically work together to help our broader Los Angeles community.

We hope to slowly shift responsibility for the garden away from our staff and to our volunteers. Each year new students and families can add to our garden just as they do to our community as a whole and we will be able to watch with joy as the garden grows from a few plants to an expansive preserve."

- Cassie Weinstock, Los Angeles, CA

Beans & Tomatoes in New Rochelle

About a year ago, I read about a church in Maryland that set aside some of its property for a garden and donated the produce to its local food kitchen. I thought that would be a wonderful mitzvah project for our shul (Temple Israel of New Rochelle sits on a 15-acre plateau at the north end of New Rochelle). I approached our senior rabbi, Scott Weiner, and our president, Marji Karlin. Both of them were enthusiastic and approved the project.

The TINR's Brotherhood and Sisterhood each contributed \$300. Individual members of the Brotherhood donated another \$70 for plants. Children in TINR's Early Childhood Program started tomato seeds, planted the tomato plants in the garden, and brought in black and white newspapers for mulch. They enjoyed the opportunity to pet the worms before I placed them in the garden. I did not use any fertilizer or herbicides in the garden.

I had consulted with our local food pantry about what types of vegetables they wanted and they requested green beans and tomatoes. We started harvesting green beans on June 30 and tomatoes on July 13. For most of the summer, we harvested twice a week early in the morning and there were anywhere from 2 to 5 TINR members at each harvest. Then one person would take the produce to be weighed at Cherry Lawn Farm in New Rochelle and then take the produce to the HOPE Community Food Kitchen in downtown New Rochelle. In our first year, we harvested over 114 lbs. of green beans and over 183 lbs. of tomatoes, a total of over 316 lbs. of fresh vegetables!

- Richard Grayson, New Rochelle, NY

7

Food Justice

Our current industrial-based food system does not adequately give equal access to healthy, nourishing food and many do not have access to food at all. However, Jewish tradition, firmly rooted in texts from the Torah, sees a direct connection between social justice, agriculture, and religious obligations. This section will explore the issues of food justice and explain why it is important that as a Jewish community we not only work on spreading awareness, but that we do something to help create a just and sustainable food system for everyone.

What is Food Justice and Why Does it Matter?

Food justice is communities exercising their right to grow, sell, and eat healthy food. Healthy food is fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and grown locally with care for the well-being of the land, workers, and animals. Practicing food justice leads to a strong local food system, self-reliant communities, and a healthy environment.

Until recently “food security” has been a more common term used to describe a similar, if not broader, area of social concern. Government bureaucrats and international non-governmental organizations have been using the term “food security” to call attention to a whole host of agriculture and hunger related issues. Activists have also used it to focus on creating community-based ways of producing food in an affordable, sustainable, and environmentally-friendly manner. Along the way they have sought to create local jobs, promote good health, and stress the importance of small, local farmers.

With the use of the term “food justice” this activism hasn’t changed so much as it has taken on fresh new political energy. In an increasing number of grassroots efforts in New York, local people are re-imagining their collective relationship to food. Food justice starts from the conviction that access to healthy food is a human rights issue—it goes beyond advocacy and direct service. Food justice calls for organized responses to food security problems—responses that are locally driven and owned.

HOW YOUR INSTITUTION CAN GET INVOLVED IN FOOD JUSTICE:

- **Host a gleaning trip on a local farm.** Go to the farm towards the end of harvest season and collect the excess produce. Make arrangements to donate the food to a local food pantry or soup kitchen. Tie in some learning about agriculture and tzedekah.
- **Link up with a local shelter or food bank to donate your excess food.** Your partnership could include donating food, organizing a field trip for members of your community to volunteer at the shelter, or partnering on events (see the “Food Bank Cooking Demo” sidebox).
- **Start a Hazon CSA.** Implement flexible payment options to allow people of all income levels to participate.
- **Start a Peah Garden.** *Peah* is the biblical commandment of leaving the crops in the “corners of your field” for the poor. Create a garden where you use some or all of the space to grow solely for the purpose of donating to community members who do not have access to healthy, nutritious produce.

Food Bank Cooking Demo

Eating fresh, organic produce through a CSA is a blessing – but the blessing of healthy, sustainable food is not equally accessible to everyone. The Hazon CSA in Elkins Park, PA, held two separate cooking classes at the Stiffel Center in South Philadelphia, which is part of Philadelphia’s Mitzvah Food Pantry network. Approximately 25 participants attended each class. Each class was focused around preparing two or three different recipes and incorporated health and nutrition information about the vegetables being prepared. The program allowed CSA members to share some of their passion for healthy, organic food with members of a low-income community.

Gleaning in Milwaukee

“I coordinate the Surplus Garden Harvest project of Tikkun Ha-Ir of Milwaukee. This project started three years ago as a way to encourage gardeners to donate their surplus garden bounty to meal sites and food pantries. In the first year, the donations were minimal. In the second year, we donated 1,000 pounds of fresh produce during the course of the Midwest gardening season (Produce came primarily from unclaimed CSA boxes). We now encourage donations from home gardens, the Jewish Community Garden (located on the grounds of our local JCC), CSA boxes, and also from local farms with surplus edible, but not salable, produce. The latter is providing the majority of the donations so far this year – at just halfway into the growing season, we are at 1,060 pounds and are on track to triple what we donated last year.”

- Pam Frydman-Roza

Food Justice Organizations

- **Just Food** is a NY-based non-profit organization that has been the leader in connecting local farms to NYC neighborhoods and communities since 1995. Their food justice program increases awareness and action around food and farm issues and advances policies for a thriving local food system.
- **Growing Power** is a national non-profit organization and land trust that supports people from diverse backgrounds and the environments in which they live by helping to provide equal access to healthy, high-quality, safe, and affordable food for people in all communities. Growing Power implements this mission by providing hands-on training, on-the-ground demonstration, outreach, and technical assistance through the development of Community Food Systems that help people grow, process, market, and distribute food in a sustainable manner.
- **Second Harvest** is the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. Its mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage our country in the fight to end hunger.
- **Ample Harvest** diminishes hunger in America by helping backyard gardeners share their excess garden produce with neighborhood food pantries.
- **People's Grocery** is a community-based organization in West Oakland, CA that develops creative solutions to the health problems in our community that stem from a lack of access to and knowledge about healthy, fresh foods. Its mission is to build a local food system that improves the health and economy of the West Oakland community.
- **Community Food Security Coalition** is a non-profit organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local, and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. The coalition seeks to develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food and to create a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, making available, and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy, and sustainability.

Other Important Aspects of Food Justice

Members of your community may be eligible for government support from various food and nutrition programs. Make sure your institution has information available about these programs. You can request brochures at <http://snap.ntis.gov/>.

- **SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)** used to be known as the Food Stamp Program, and is a Federal assistance program that provides low and no-income families with money with which to buy food.
- **WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)** is a federal assistance program for providing healthcare and nutrition for low-income pregnant/breastfeeding women, infants, and children under the age of five.
- **SNFMP (Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program)** is a Federal program which gives grants to governments in order to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for certain foods (such as fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and CSAs.

Food Justice, Then and Now

In 2004, Hazon launched the first Community Supported Agriculture project in the Jewish community. The preceding winter, we talked about food charity and *peah* at our Beit Midrash, a 12-weeks series on “How & What Should a Jew Eat?” We were new to the idea of CSA, and so we asked: if we are no longer farmers with fields where we could leave gleanings for the ‘poor, widow, and orphan,’ then what is our responsibility to food charity, as Jews and as twenty-first century city-folk?

Dr. Phyllis Bieri said, “Well, with a CSA, there are always leftovers!” We realized that, indeed, it was inevitable

that some members would not pick up their share every week, and that therefore, built into the system of the Hazon Community Supported Agriculture Project (which met a series of other contemporary food issue concerns, being fresh, local, mostly organic, minimally-packaged, etc.) was also a mechanism that enabled us to “observe *peah* and *shikecha*” as well. It made us even more excited to begin the CSA project at Ansche Chesed that summer. The leftovers that year were taken every week to a soup kitchen on the Upper West Side.

Hazon’s CSA program has since grown to over fifty sites in the US, Canada, and Israel. In 2011, we estimate that this meant over 35,000 lbs of leftover produce was donated to emergency food providers.

Shikhecha: Leaving sheaves

¹⁹ When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf in the field, do not turn back to get it; it shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow — in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings.

²⁰ When you beat down the fruit of your olive trees, do not go over them again; that shall go to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow. ²¹ When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not pick it over again; that shall go to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. ²² Always remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore do I command you to do this thing.

– Deuteronomy 24:19–22

Peah: The corners of your field

⁹ When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest.

¹⁰ You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God.

– Leviticus 19:9–10

בִּי תִקְצֹר קִצְרֶיךָ בְּשֹׂדֶךָ וְשִׁכַחְתָּ עֹמֵר בְּשֹׂדֶךָ
לֹא תָשׁוּב לְקַחְתּוֹ לְגֵר לִיתּוֹם וְלֵאלֵמָנָה
יְהִיָּה: לְמַעַן יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכֹל
מַעֲשֵׂה יָדֶיךָ.

כִּי תִחַבֵּט זֵיתֶיךָ לֹא תִפְאֹר אַחֲרָיֶךָ: לְגֵר
לִיתּוֹם וְלֵאלֵמָנָה יְהִיָּה. כִּי תִבְצֹר בְּרִמְךָ
לֹא תֵעוּלֵל אַחֲרָיֶךָ: לְגֵר לִיתּוֹם וְלֵאלֵמָנָה
יְהִיָּה. וְזָכַרְתָּ כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם;
עַל כֵּן אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֵת קִצְרֵי אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה
פְּאֵת שְׂדֶךָ לְקֹצֵר; וְלִקְטַת קִצְרֶיךָ לֹא תִלְקַט.
וְכִרְמֶךָ לֹא תֵעוּלֵל וּפְרֹט בְּרִמְךָ לֹא תִלְקַט:
לְעָנִי וְלְגֵר תַּעֲזֹב אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

Appendix I

Working with Your Institution

Your decision to read this guide shows that you've already taken the first step by deciding to make a difference at your Jewish institution. This section will guide you through the conversations you will need to have and the steps you will need to take to make changes. Keep in mind that every Jewish institution is unique, with their own set of values and priorities. The more you are able to show that you understand your institution's values, and that the changes you are proposing will benefit your community, the more successful you will be.

The material in this section is adapted from Oxfam's "Farm to School Toolkit" and The Sustainable Food Policy Project's "A Guide to Developing Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy."

Set the Stage for Success

Be realistic. Start with something small. Once you have accomplished something small, you will be more confident to go onto bigger things. Make sure you go into this with a positive attitude. Expect to have bumps along the way and unless you believe that you can make a difference, you never will.

Form a “Green Team”

Don’t go at it alone. Find other people in your institution who are passionate about environmental issues and changing your Jewish institution’s food environment. You can assess volunteer interest by sending a survey through your institution’s listserv, newsletter, or other form of communication. Hold an information meeting allowing people to meet each other and hear what changes they want to make.

Hazon Food Audit

You have your idea, and you have a Green Team of people who support you, but where do you go from here? How do you go about figuring out exactly where your institution needs to change, and how to do that? Take the Hazon Food Audit (attached at the back of this Guide, and also available at www.hazon.org/foodguide). The Food Audit sections match up with chapters in this Food Guide. Once you have your institution’s score, you can go back and look at which areas are in good shape, which areas are on the road to success, and which areas really just need a new beginning.

Research

As you begin to consider where to start, it’s important to have a full understanding of how your institution purchases food and where it is sourced. This will allow you to shape your goals and next steps, as well as make you more educated on these issues for when you present the new idea to the person(s) in charge. This research process is also a relationship building process. The very people who you might need to convince to go “green” are usually the same people who have the information you’re looking for.

Some important questions to ask: (depending on the institution, you might need to pose these questions to the Rabbi, an office manager, or a kitchen staff person)

- Who manages the food and supplies purchasing?
- Where does the food at your Jewish institution come from now? Is it from a kosher caterer? A larger food vendor? A local, kosher restaurant?
- What are your kitchen’s resources/restrictions? What is the *kashrut* policy and how will this affect what you will be able to purchase?
- What is your budget? How much money is your institution currently spending on food? How much money is your institution spending on plates, cups, utensils?

Get Organized

Organize a meeting of your Green Team. Set goals using the information you have gathered. Think big, but act small. Take into consideration your Jewish institution’s limitations and also its potential.

Develop a Plan and a Timeline

Break down your plan into small steps to help make it more manageable. Compile a list of resources and allies. If you have a larger institution, form committees to take on different tasks.

Take Action

Now you’re ready to talk to the person in charge. Having the conversation is usually the most difficult part in this process.

Set up a meeting. Meet with your rabbi, executive director, kitchen manager, or person(s) in charge of the food purchasing.

Consider the issues from your institution’s point of view. Place yourself in the shoes of the person you are meeting with and consider: What are their priorities? What are the limitations? What educational opportunities can your Jewish institution take advantage of from this, and how can you frame

sustainable food choices in the context of your institutions' Jewish values?

Share your vision. Consider writing a statement that inspires your institution's leadership to work with you on this project. Rather than a basic statement about sustainability in general, focus on your institution's concerns. Make it clear that adopting sustainable food practices at your institution will add value to the community and will not compromise traditional values. Here's an example:

"This could be a great way to get young adults, who tend to be passionate about environmental issues, involved in the synagogue. Changing our food will not compromise our traditional values of kashrut, but is a way for our synagogue to be a voice in addressing contemporary issues. It is also a fresh, innovative way to re-engage current members."

Know your facts, and share examples. Use the information and links in this guide to bring data to back up your points. You'll want to show that you have done your research and that you have looked up this topic from different angles. Whip out the facts you learned—prices, methods of distribution, opportunities. Use the examples of "what other synagogues have done" in this guide to show that the kinds of changes you're talking about are not only possible, they've been undertaken in other communities with great success.

Anticipate Challenges

You might be faced with criticism and skepticism. Don't get defensive or discouraged. It's important to show that you understand the institution's values and position. Do your homework and practice responses in a calm, collected way. You don't want to add stress to their jobs, rather, you want to offer an opportunity that that will benefit both your institution and the community. Here are some examples for how to address these concerns if your focus is on sourcing local foods:

Problem: Prices. "It sounds like this is going to be way more expensive. We need to keep our food costs down." Response: Buying local does not always mean higher prices. Remind the person you are meeting with that the higher price will reflect the higher quality and nutritional value of the food. If it is really out of the institution's budget, figure out where you

can make the most important adjustments—say by offering organic grape juice for kiddush.

Problem: Distribution. "This seems way too complicated. Right now we have one kosher caterer that can supply us with everything we need."

Response: Describe how important this is to you and your green team. Explain that there are people willing to make this happen—including working with the existing food providers to help them add sustainable foods to their repertoires.

Problem: Legal issues. "How can small farmers monitor their production and processing in terms of food safety issues?" Response: Most farmers have liability insurance. Come prepared with a few farms you have looked into and their information.

Problem: Labor/staff time. "We don't have enough staff to deal with the added labor of buying local. There's not enough time to chop, clean, etc." Response: Some farmers offer value-added products: locally-produced jams, jellies, or pickles will require little additional preparation than the products you're used to. You can also consider organizing the green team to help out with the food preparation.

Evaluate

Evaluation is key to see how far you have come in attaining your goals. You can decide to do this every few months or after a year. Assessing how far you have come will empower you to work towards higher goals.

Share your Success!

Spread the good news. Share all you have learned with members of your institution and the community by educating them about the changes you have made. Write an article for the local or institution's newspaper and hold an educational event such as a film night, panel, or potluck. In the process you can also gain more support and momentum for effecting change. Email foodguide@hazon.org so we can spread the word for you!

Crafting Institutional Food Guidelines or Policy

You've taken the Food Audit. You've done the research. Creating a food policy or set of food guidelines for your institution is one possible next step. Your guidelines should facilitate decisions about food choices and help determine a course of action. By establishing a formal policy or guideline, everyone in the community will be able to look to it when they are making food choices for your community.

As we've stressed all along, making sustainable food choices are often nuanced, gradual, and sometimes contradictory. As such, considering "guidelines" rather than "policy" may be more realistic for your community (see Andrea's comment below about including the words "to the best of our ability" in their synagogue guidelines). Even so, having a written set of values and/or guidelines can be an important milestone in your institution's food journey and a public signifier of institution-wide support for these issues.

Below you will find two examples, one from Hazon and one from a synagogue in Toronto, of possible food guidelines for your institution.

Hazon's Organizational Food Values

At Hazon, we often are required to prioritize one (or more) of our food values over another as we are planning our events. As we work towards a healthy and sustainable food system where we will be able to meet all our food values all the time, we want to be transparent about the food choices we are making along the way, where we are falling short in meeting all our values, and how we are working to do better next time. Hazon's food values are a work in progress as we grow and change as an institution. But the overall idea is there, and we follow it as closely as possible.

In all the food choices we make for the Hazon community, we aim to serve food that meets the following values (listed in alphabetical order):

- Cost effective – paying a little more isn't necessarily a bad thing, but we have to make sure that it fits overall into our budget.
- Delicious – food should be inspirationally delicious.
- Ethical – the circumstances of the people producing/preparing/serving the food are just as important as the food itself, as are the circumstances of any animals we might be eating.
- Healthy – Hazon believes in serving healthy, nourishing food that is pesticide free.

- Kosher – the meals we serve should be accessible to people across the Jewish spectrum.
- Low waste – we aim to serve food that does not waste our precious resources.
- Transparency/education – food can and should be used as a teaching tool and a conversation starter. Being transparent about the choices we make is critical to our food work.

The Sustainable Food Guidelines at First Narayever, Toronto, CA

First Narayever Congregation in Toronto, CA, recently passed a resolution regarding the food served at synagogue events. The resolution was the culmination of over a year of committee work, targeted outreach, and education. Andrea Most, project coordinator, reflects on the process of passing this resolution:

"So how did we get here? First, we approached and got support from the President of the Board who agreed to chair the Ad Hoc committee. We then spent over a year studying our own practices, and also outside practices (such as reading *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and watching *Food, Inc.*). We then put together a more formal committee, and started drafting recommendations. For a committee of 10 people, we identified 9 important areas to work on. Our final presentation to the Board was received very positively, and they voted unanimously to approve it. In the process, we decided that the words 'to the extent possible' were important to get the motion passed. But we feel confident that once we begin to implement these principles (and to educate people about them), they will quickly become 'the new normal.'"

The resolution reads:

Moved that the Food Committee (formerly the Kiddush Committee) oversee the delivery of all food served in the shul, encouraging the use of food that is, to the extent possible: healthy and nutritious, produced in a sustainable, environmentally sensitive manner, produced under fair labour and trade practices, produced according to a high standard of animal welfare, and produced locally, while maintaining a budget that is sustainable by the congregation and while encouraging as much community participation as possible in bringing out food practices more closely in line with our Jewish values.

Passed by the Board of the First Narayever Congregation, May 3, 2011

Small Steps for Success

Congregation Kol Ami in Elkins Park, PA, has made it their policy to serve fairtrade coffee and tea at all congregational events.

Appendix II

Producers Guide

We've collected information on a number of companies that make sustainable, kosher food products. Not all products may be available in your area; if not, consider organizing a bulk order to share the cost of shipping, and ask the company whether they have plans to expand to your area. If they perceive there is a demand, they will generally work to meet it.

*This is accurate as of September 2011. If you know of a company that you think should be listed here, please contact foodguide@hazon.org to let us know!

Kosher Sustainable Meat

Recent scandals in the kosher meat world have led many to reconsider what kosher meat really means. While we might have at one time assumed that kosher meat was healthier and more sustainable, in fact most kosher meat is raised the same as conventional non-kosher meat.

However, a small number of crusaders have launched companies to make sustainably-raised kosher meat available. Raising animals on pasture, the old fashioned way, produces meat that is delicious and sustainable, but is also complex and expensive. Adding on the layers of kosher production makes it even more complicated! Nevertheless, as more and more people are looking for meat that meets their standards of kashrut, as well as environmental sustainability, worker treatment and animal welfare, these companies are in the right place at the right time.

Grow and Behold Foods: Founded by Naf and Anna Hanau, Grow and Behold Foods offers pastured beef, turkey, veal, lamb, and chicken, shipped frozen nationwide.

KOL Foods: Founded by Devora Kimmelman-Block in the Washington, DC area. KOL Foods offers 100% grass-fed beef, lamb and poultry, shipped frozen nationwide.

Eco-Glatt: EcoGlatt offers an alternative to mass-produced kosher meat and offers their meat at Colorado CSAs. Eco-Glatt offers lamb and beef (especially kosher hind-quarters), that is available for home delivery.

Wise Organic Pastures: Wise Organic Pastures offers: Chicken, Turkey, and Beef, shipping available

Kosher Sustainable Cheese

Until recently, the world of kosher cheese was pretty bleak. On the one hand you had shrink wrapped, industrial-produced (but kosher-certified) brands like Miller's. On the other, hand you had artisanal, raw-milk and hand-crafted (but not kosher-certified) cheeses. These days the tide is turning. While not all certified-organic, the cheese companies below allow you to have your kosher cheese and eat ethically too!

Bonus! The biggest difficulty with making kosher cheese is finding a rennet (the milk coagulant) that does not come from an animal – traditionally a cow stomach. Here are some traditional vegetable rennets that are animal-free: fig leaf sap, melon, thistle flowers, safflower, lemon juice, and bay leaves.

5-Spoke Creamery: Starting with raw-milk from grass-fed cows that are free of hormones and antibiotics, hand-crafted artisanal cheeses are produced, including Cheddar, Herbal Jack, Colby, Tumbleweed, Talcott, and Browning Gold aged cheddar. Kof-K certified.

Mainland Grass-fed Organic: This New Zealand-based company now offers a grass-fed organic cheddar that is OK certified.

Organic Meadow Cottage Cheese: This Canadian company produces organic cottage cheeses as well as cheeses with a mild, creamy taste.

Organic Valley Cottage Cheese: The cottage cheese from Organic Valley is hand-crafted without preservatives or additives, free of animal byproducts, hormones, or antibiotics and comes from humanely treated cows.

Redwood Hill Farm: These artisanally crafted goat cheeses are delicious. They offer creamy chevres, goat feta, and several other varieties of goat-milk cheeses. While Redwood Hill Farm is not certified organic, they use almost exclusively organic practices.

Sugar River Cheese Company: This Wisconsin-based cheese company produces a wide variety of cheeses (everything from White Cheddar Chipotle to Prairie Jack with Parsley and Chive) all certified by the Chicago Rabbinical Council and the OK. All of their products are free of growth hormones (and some of the milk comes from nearby Amish farms). The company also has a charitable giving program.

Tillamook Kosher Cheddar: This Oregon-based company is actually a 98-year-old farmer cooperative. Like all of their cheeses, the milk used to make their cheddar is free of growth hormones. (For folks living in or visiting the Pacific Northwest, a visit to their factory is also a lot of fun!)

Narragansett Creamery: This Rhode Island-based company is a four-year-old venture is the only cheese company in the state, and, while not available in markets out of state, you can order their products online and they will be delivered straight to you!

Kosher Sustainable Chocolate

CHOCOLATE. Need we say more? Actually yes – because a run-of-the mill bar of Hershey’s pales in comparison to the sweet, cocoa ambrosia listed below. All of these chocolate snacks are kosher-certified and some combination of organic, fair trade, cane sugar-sweetened, and vegan.

Chocolove: Made in Colorado, these chocolate bars are organic, kosher (Scroll K, Denver), and come in a variety of different flavors from ginger to orange peel to toffee and almonds. They are also some of the most beautifully wrapped chocolate bars we’ve ever seen.

Dagoba: Dagoba chocolates are made by an Oregon-based company with organic, certified fair-trade and KSA kosher, and the bars come either plain (milk or dark chocolate) or infused with dried cherry, hazelnut, coffee, hot chili, or mint. Dagoba also makes amazing hot chocolate mix.

Equal Exchange: This Massachusetts-based fair trade organization sells chocolate bars and hot chocolate that are made with organic ingredients and are certified by the Kashrut Council of Canada.

Lake Champlain: This Vermont-based company makes both conventional and organic chocolates.

Late July Dark Chocolate Sandwich Cookies: The cocoa flavor in these cookies stands up to any bar of chocolate – and there’s even more chocolatey-goodness (in creme form) inside! These cookies are certified by the OU and are also organic.

Seeds of Change: These chocolate bars look and taste like treasures. Their Santa Caterina bar is filled with mango, toasted coconut, and cashews and, like all their chocolate bars, is certified kosher and made with organic ingredients.

Sunspire: These chocolate bars (and baking chips and candies) have it all. They are certified organic and kosher (OU), come in a variety of yummy flavors like raspberry, peanut, and peppermint pattie, are sweetened with natural cane juice and organic sugars, and offer vegan-friendly options.

Terra Nostra: Terra Nostra is a founding member of Equitable Trade, which gives farmers fair trade benefits with organic chocolate production and offers several vegan bars. Terra Nostra will soon introduce a line of truffles to go with their bars,

specializing in pomegranate and ancho chili flavors.

Kosher Sustainable Wine

Organic wine can be hard to find, but there is more and more of it available on the shelves. Additionally, many wines from Europe are completely or almost completely organic, even if they’re not certified. Ask your sommelier! Kosher organic wine is even more difficult to find – but it does exist! Here are several wineries that make kosher organic wine.

Four Gates Winery: California-based, organic, kosher for Pesach/year-round, not mevushal

Yarden Chardonnay Odem Organic: Israel-based, organic, kosher for Pesach/year-round, not mevushal

Hafner Winery: Austria-based, bottled under the name “Queen Esther,” organically-grown grapes, kosher for Pesach, mevushal

Baron Herzog: California based, Not certified organic, but many of Baron Herzog’s wines come from “sustainably grown/low spray” grapes, mevushal and many varieties

Appendix III

Education Resources

Hazon has developed a number of resources to engage people of all ages on issues related to eating, cooking, and making sense of the challenges of our contemporary food system. These include curriculums for students and families, an adult sourcebook, and the Jewish Food Education Network. In this section you will find Hazon resources, as well as a long list of other possibilities, including books, movies, and organizations.

Hazon Resources

Food For Thought: Hazon's Sourcebook on Jews, Food and Contemporary Life pairs traditional Jewish texts with contemporary writers to provide a basis for conversation and exploration of issues related to how and what we eat. Food for Thought contains a whole chapter on "Food and Ethics: The implications of our food choices" as well as a chapter on Kashrut.

Min Ha'Aretz. Hazon's Min Ha'Aretz student curriculum allows students from grades 5-9 to explore the question, "What is the relationship between Jewish texts, traditions, and practices and the food we eat?" Over the course of eighteen lessons, divided into five units, the students explore this question and develop a deeper understanding of both the question and its myriad answers.

Tu B'Shvat Haggadah This haggadah and sourcebook were put together to help people host Tu B'Shvat seders for their communities.

Birthright Israel NEXT Sustainable Shabbat Through a partnership with Birthright Israel NEXT, Hazon has put together a guide for hosting a Sustainable Shabbat.

Fair Food Book Club Hazon has put together a book club curriculum, including a leader's guide and participants' guide, to help people host a book club around Oran Hesterman's new book, "Fair Food: Growing a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for All."

Divrei Torah Over the years Hazon has compiled many divrei torah for all occasions.

All available at www.hazon.org/JFEN.

Books

Farming and Growing Food

Fields of Plenty: A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People who Grow It (Michael Ableman, Chronicle Books 2005) details a cross-country trip that Ableman made with his son in search of innovative and passionate farmers and food artisans who are producing sustainable nourishment.

The New Organic Grower: A Master's Manual of Tools and Techniques for the Home and Market Gardener (Eliot Coleman, Chelsea Green 1995) the

bible for organic vegetable growing.

Cooking from the Garden (Rosalind Creasy, Random House 1988) was a truly ahead-of-its-time work of art; this cookbook contains detailed information on growing and cooking a huge range of vegetables.

The Year of the Goat (Margaret Hathaway and Karl Schatz, Lyons Press 2007) tells the story of the journey that a couple made when they decided to quit their jobs in NYC and move to Maine to raise goats.

Food, Politics & Sustainable Agriculture

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals (Michael Pollan, Penguin 2006) is an introduction to the American food system, with discussion about mainstream fast food, large-scale organic, small-scale local, and foraging your own.

In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto (Michael Pollan, Penguin 2008) implores readers to follow a new philosophy of eating: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."

Diet for a Dead Planet: Big Business and the Coming Food Crisis (Christopher Cook, New Press 2004) is one of the best summaries of 20th century agriculture policy, the food industry and the environmental effects of our current food system.

Diet for a New America (John Robbins, Stillpoint 1987) is a book by Robbins, heir to the Baskin & Robbins fortune, who walked away from the ice cream industry to expose animal cruelty in factory farms and the health effects of animal-based diets.

Fatal Harvest Reader (Ed. Andrew Kimbrell, Island Press 2002) The images of farms and farmers in the full-color version are stunning; the paperback version contains the same essays on current agricultural challenges and solutions in a smaller format.

Stolen Harvest: The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply (Vandana Shiva, South End Press 1999) is an excellent introduction to issues of safeguarding traditional food knowledge and culture, and the effects of global corporations on Indian communities.

Food Fight: A Citizen's Guide to the Farm Bill (Daniel Imhoff, University of California Press 2007)

Fair Food: Creating a Healthy, Sustainable Food System for Everyone (Oran Hesterman, Public Affairs 2011) is a new book that discusses what we need to do to create a just food system.

Meat

Fast Food Nation (Eric Schlosser, Harper Perennial 2005) documents the rise of the fast food industry. There is also a teen version of the book called “Chew on This: Everything You Don’t Want to Know About Fast Food”, and a film.

My Year of Meats (Ruth Ozeki, Penguin 1999) tells the story of fictional protagonist Jane Takagi-Little, a Japanese-American documentary film maker commissioned by a beef lobbying group to make a television show that encourages beef consumption by equating meat eating with a happy family life.

Health

The Great American Detox Diet (Alex Jamison, Rodale International 2005) Morgan Spurlock, creator and star of the film “Super-Size Me,” nearly killed himself by eating nothing but McDonalds for an entire month. Luckily, his girlfriend was a nutritionist. This is the detox diet she put him on to get him back to health.

If the Buddha Came to Dinner: How to Nourish Your Body to Awaken Your Spirit (Hale Sofia Schatz, Hyperion 2004) explores why we eat, how food makes us feel, and how greater awareness of our bodies’ needs can make us happier and healthier. Includes a step-by-step food cleanse and other exercises.

Food, Ethics, & Spirituality

The Way We Eat: Why our Food Choices Matter (Peter Singer and Jim Mason, Rodale Books 2006) documents corporate deception, widespread waste, and desensitization to inhumane practices.

Food and Judaism: Studies in Jewish Civilization (Leonard J. Greenspoon, Ronald A. Simkins, and Gerald Shapiro, Chreighton University Press 2005) is a compilation of scholarly essays about food and Jewish culture.

Judaism and Vegetarianism (Richard Schwartz, Lantern Books 2001) is a comprehensive look at Jewish sources that support vegetarianism, as well as environmental, social and health reasons to adopt a vegetarian lifestyle.

A Wild Faith (Mike Comins, Jewish Lights 2007) discusses the role of “the wilderness” in traditional Jewish spirituality, and provides tools and activities for the reader to access feelings of awe in the natural world.

Jewish Culture and Food

A Blessing of Bread: The Many Rich Traditions of Jewish Bread Baking Around the World (Maggie Glezer, Artisan 2004) Tons of new ways to braid your challah, bake your pita, and feed your family, along with stories about Jewish breadmakers.

Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages (Rabbi David Kraemer, Routledge 2007) explores meat in ancient Israel, and kashrut in antiquity.

Miriam’s Kitchen: A Memoir (Elizabeth Ehrlich, Penguin 1998) is the story of how food can connect us both to family tradition and to a deeper relationship with Jewish life.

Comfort me with Apples: More Adventures at the Table (Ruth Reichl, Random House 2002) is the second part of Reichl’s autobiographical trilogy in which she recounts her life as a personal and professional foodie.

Cooking and Jewish Cooking

The Art of Simple Food: Notes, Lessons, and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution (Alice Waters, Clarkson Potter 2007) contains recipes that verge towards the gourmet, with seasonality and sustainable growing practices in mind.

Simply in Season (Mary Beth Lind and Cathleen Hockman-Wert, Herald Press 2005) is a beautiful cookbook with simple recipes, facts, stories, and poems; organized by season.

Olive Trees and Honey: A Treasury of Vegetarian Recipes from Jewish Communities Around the World (Gil Marks, Wiley Press 2004) this cookbook includes charts to show the evolution of some of our favorite Jewish vegetarian dishes.

The Book of Jewish Food: An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York (Claudia Roden, Knopf 1996) is a cookbook, a history of Jewish Diaspora through food, an incredible reference for Jewish dietary laws, cooking techniques and much more.

The Jewish Holiday Kitchen (Joan Nathan, Shoken 1987) The classic Jewish cookbook. C-l-a-s-s-i-c.

Jewish Cooking for all Seasons: Fresh, Flavorful Kosher Recipes for Holidays and Every Day (Laura Frankel, Wiley 2006) contains beautiful, tasty meals organized by what’s-ripe-when.

Poetry and Essays

In Praise of Fertile Ground: An Anthology of Poetry, Parable, and Story (Ed. Claudia Mauro, Whit Press 2003) is a beautiful collection of essays and poems about agriculture, cooking, hard work, and eating together.

The Unsettling of America (Wendell Berry, Sierra Club Books 1977) is a classic book of essays about agriculture and consumption in America; sadly still relevant although nearly forty years old.

Moral Grandeur & Spiritual Audacity (Ed. Susannah Heschel, Farrar/Straus/Giroux 1997) Reading Abraham Joshua Heschel's essays make me want to jump up with glee for being Jewish. Read for a little inspiration and good spiritual wrestling.

Jewish Food Text Study

Jewish Food Rules is the Jewish Farm School's curriculum which attempts to identify core values that can represent the contemporary Jewish food ethic. (<http://www.jewishfarmschool.org/store/jewish-food-rules/>)

On 1 Foot is American Jewish World Services' source for Jewish texts on social justice. The database can be searched and browsed by specific categories. (<http://www.on1foot.org>)

Movies

If you're interested in starting conversations about food issues in the Jewish community, movies can be a great place to start. Consider showing some or all of these films, and then use some of the texts or study questions from this book for a post-movie discussion. If you're going to show a film at an event, be sure to preview it yourself first! Make note of your reaction, and try to anticipate some of the conversations that might follow. If you can, provide additional information on related topics to further conversation. If you're looking for more independently-produced, environmental videos, check out Bullfrog Films (www.bullfrogfilms.com). Make sure to get permission for a public screening before screening your film.

An Inconvenient Truth (2006) Al Gore's Oscar-winning film contains a clear presentation of the science of global warming, and a call to action based on what Gore calls "the moral imperative." 96 min.

Beyond Organic (2000) Tells the story of the struggle to maintain a 12-acre farm, Michael Ableman's Fairview Gardens, located in Goleta, California, right in the middle of some of the most expensive real estate in the U.S. 33 min.

Broken Limbs: Apples, Agriculture and the New American Farmer (2004) Looks at the plight of apple growers in the age of globalization, and points the way to sustainable American agriculture. 57 min.

Fast Food Nation: The Movie (2006) A dramatized film that focuses on the experience of immigrants in the food industry, and the relationship between cheap food, environmental degradation, and illegal immigration. Contains graphic images of meat processing plants. 106 min.

The Future of Food (2004) A look at the GMO (genetically modified organisms) industry and the science behind GMO technology. 88 min.

King Corn (2008) A funny, lighthearted and informative film about how corn subsidies work, what life in rural Iowa is like, and how cheap corn products, especially corn syrup, are poisoning the nation. 90 min.

The Meatrix I, II (2003) The Meatrix films are short Flash animation productions that spoof The Matrix movie trilogy while educating viewers about the problems with industrial agriculture and today's meat supply.

The Real Dirt on Farmer John (2006) A personal documentary about John Peterson, a farmer, artist, and eccentric/innovative thinker cast in rural Illinois. 82 min.

Refugees of the Blue Planet (2006) A look at "environmental refugees," that is, folks who need to leave their homes because of environmental situations. Brings up the question of how responsible we are for the effects of the North American lifestyle on people in the rest of the world. 54 min.

Organizations

Global Food and Sustainability

American Jewish World Service (AJWS) is an international development organization motivated by Judaism's imperative to pursue justice. www.ajws.org

Via Campesina is an international movement of

peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers in 56 countries worldwide. www.viacampesina.org

Slow Food is an eco-gastronomic member-supported organization that was founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life. www.slowfood.com / www.slowfoodusa.org

Fair Food Network works at the intersection of food systems, sustainability, and social equity to guarantee access to healthy, fresh, and sustainably grown food, especially in underserved communities. www.fairfoodnetwork.org

Hunger

City Harvest works to end hunger in communities throughout New York City through food rescue and distribution, education, and other practical, innovative solutions. www.cityharvest.org

Hazon Yeshaya is a leading humanitarian organization that is fighting poverty and hunger by encouraging and supporting the projects of Hazon Yeshaya Soup Kitchens in Israel. www.hazonyesaya.org

World Hunger Year (WHY) advocates for innovative, community-based solutions to hunger and poverty. www.worldhungeryear.org

Mazon is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing and alleviating hunger among people of all faiths and backgrounds through a holistic approach that involves education and advocacy. www.mazon.org

Jews & the Environment

ADAMAH: The Jewish Environmental Fellowship is a three month leadership training program for Jewish young adults — ages 20–29 — that integrates organic farming, sustainable living, Jewish learning, teaching, and contemplative spiritual practice. www.isabellafreedman.org/adamah

Urban Adamah is a community organic farm and Jewish environmental education center located in Berkeley, CA. The farm is run by Jewish teen fellows, who participate in three-month residential leadership fellowships. www.urbanadamah.org

The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) works with synagogues and other local Jewish organizations to bring Jewish environmental

education, ecologically-conscious Jewish observance, and opportunities for environmental action to Jewish families and individuals, and brings a Jewish vision and voice to issues of environmental justice and sustainability. www.coejl.org

The Jewish Farm School is an educational organization comprised of farmers, builders, writers and educators whose mission is to practice and promote sustainable agriculture in order to cultivate just food systems rooted in Jewish traditions. www.jewishfarmschool.org

Kayam Farm at Pearlstone is an active Jewish educational farm that welcomes close to 3,000 participants annually for field trips, holiday celebrations, summer camp, volunteering, skills workshops, and more. www.kayamfarm.org

The Teva Learning Center is North America's Jewish Environmental Education Institute. By immersing participants in the natural world and providing structured activities that sensitize them to nature's rhythms, Teva helps them develop a more meaningful relationship with nature and their own Jewish practices. www.tevacenter.org

The Orthodox Union (OU) is the major kosher certifying authority in the US. Their websites have a lot of information about Jewish dietary laws and kosher products, as well as interesting information about the kosher food industry. ou.org and oukasher.org

Find Good Food

Eat Wild is a national online store for safe, healthy, natural and nutritious grass-fed beef, lamb, goats, bison, poultry, dairy and other wild edibles. www.eatwild.com

Just Food works to develop a just and sustainable food system in the New York City region. www.justfood.org

KOL Foods provides locally grown, organic, pasture-finished kosher lamb and beef along with heightened awareness and education. www.kolfoods.com

Kosher Conscience: The Kosher Ethical Meat Co-op works to provide kosher, humane, pasture-raised meat to the New York area. www.kosherconscience.com

LocalHarvest maintains a definitive and reliable "living," public, nationwide directory of over 9,000 small farms, farmers markets, and other local food sources. www.localharvest.org

The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) promotes responsible fishing practices. www.msc.org

Sustainable Agriculture & Environmental Information

Farm to Table promotes sustainable agriculture and cuisine by educating and assisting farmers, food industry professionals, policy makers and the public to facilitate the transition to sustainability. www.farmtotable.org

Environmental Working Group is a team of scientists, engineers, policy experts, lawyers and computer programmers who expose threats to public health and the environment, and try to find solutions. They have special sections on issues related to food and farming. www.ewg.org and www.foodnews.org

The National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) provides a voice for grassroots groups on farm, food, trade and rural economic issues to ensure fair prices for family farmers, safe and healthy food, and vibrant, environmentally sound rural communities here and around the world. www.nffc.net

Food Education

Sustainable Table offers resources related to food and education, including lesson plans, information on bringing sustainable food to cafeterias and dining halls, and school gardens. www.sustainabletable.org

Center for Environmental Education has a resource center that offers sample criteria for “green schools” and access to national curriculum databases. www.ceeonline.org

Green Teacher has a website for the curriculum magazine Green Teacher, which includes pedagogical articles and lesson plans. Back issues available online for free. www.greenteacher.com

Environment Protection Agency Environmental Kids Club has on their website games, pictures, and stories for fun ways to help your institution explore the environment, and take steps to protect it. www.epa.gov/students

Northwest Earth Institute offers educational resources to help engage your community in meaningful conversations about the way you live, work, create, and consume. www.nwei.org

Conclusion

Making Change

“Ma Tovu Ohalecha Ya’akov, Mishkenotecha Israel”
How lovely are your tents, O Jacob; your dwelling places, Israel.

—Morning Blessings, from Numbers 24:5

A midrash explains that the reason the prophet, Bilam, found the Israelite’s encampment so worthy of blessing was that each family had set up their tent so that their doors did not directly face any other tent, creating respectful privacy in the community.

Similarly, taking steps to change the food we eat, and the way we serve it, at our institution recognizes that the actions we take within our own community have an effect on the world around us. And there is no one way to go about it; the doubling in this verse suggests that there are many different tents, many different peoples, many ways to achieve our goal of a just and righteous food system. The important thing is that we take the steps that are right for our community.

Building a new food system—one that respects the health of ecosystems, animals and people, one that ensures all people are fed, one that emits no waste or greenhouse gasses and requires no toxic chemicals—will take a lot of people, and a lot of work at a lot of levels. By encouraging the Jewish community to add their voice to this project, Hazon is working towards creating healthy and sustainable communities in the Jewish world, and beyond. We thank you for partnering with us in this important work!

There are plenty of ways you can get involved with Hazon's work:

- Start a Community Supported Agriculture project at your synagogue or JCC. Hazon will help you find a farmer, set up your distribution location, and organize educational programming around local and sustainable food issues.
- Participate in one of Hazon's Bike Rides. The Rides bring together people of all ages and cycling abilities, to raise money for Jewish environmental projects in the US, Israel and beyond. Bring a team from your community to join us on our California Ride (May), Israel Ride (November) or New York Ride (September).
- Bring the Jewish Food Education Network to your community. Use our family education curriculum, Min Ha'Aretz, or our adult sourcebook, Food for Thought, to start a multi-week learning community group to explore issues related to Jews, food and contemporary life.
- Come to the Hazon Food Conference! Our annual conference brings together rabbis, educators, chefs, artists, families and more for four amazing days of exploration around the New Jewish Food Movement.

Hazon means "vision," and our vision is to create healthy and sustainable communities in the Jewish world and beyond. Hazon is the largest environmental group in the American Jewish community.

Find out more about Hazon at www.hazon.org, or contact us at foodguide@hazon.org.

Food Audit Toolkit

How does your institution rate on its sustainable food choices? The Hazon Food Audit Toolkit is designed to help you evaluate your institution and identify areas of focus for change or improvement. The sections on the following pages match the chapters in the Food Guide; use those chapters to help you understand the issues and decide what next steps you can take.

For each question, assign yourself the number of points that best represents your community's practices. Then total each section, and compile at the bottom to show your Food Audit Score!

An excel version of the Audit, which will calculate your score for you automatically, is available for download at www.hazon.org/foodguide.

1: Healthy, Sustainable, Kosher: Food "Fit" to Eat				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>How often do you serve....</i>	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Organic vegetables (fresh, dried, frozen, or home preserved)				
Organic fruits (fresh, dried, frozen, or home preserved)				
Organic milk				
Organic cream or half-n-half				
Organic cheese and other dairy products				
Organic coffee				
Organic tea				
Organic eggs				
Local vegetables (fresh, dried, frozen, or home preserved)				
Local fruits (fresh, dried, frozen, or home preserved)				
Local milk				
Local cream or half-n-half				
Local cheese and other dairy products				
Bread and pastries from local bakeries				
Local eggs				
Fair Trade Tea				
Fair Trade Bananas				
Fair Trade Coffee				
Fair Trade Chocolate				
Tav HaYosher certified catering				
Foods with the Magen Tzedek seal				
Foods with a sustainable Hechsher (Earth Kosher, Apple K kosher and/or Wholesome kosher)				
Grass-fed or pasture-raised meat				
Organic meat				
Local meat				
Free roaming/cage free eggs				
Pastured/Free Range eggs				
Sustainable fish				
Vegetarian (or meatless) events				
At least one vegetarian/meatless/vegan option at all meals and events				
Whole grain foods				
Low sodium options				
Water whenever food is provided				
Sustainable wine				
Subtotal				

	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you avoid....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
GE (genetically engineered) or GMO (genetically modified organism) ingredients				
High Fructose Corn Syrup				
Products with trans fats, hydrogenated, or partially hydrogenated oils				
Sweetened beverages (soda, juices, etc)				
Subtotal				
Total from "Food Fit to Eat" (out of 114)				

2: Eating Together: Planning for Meals, Kiddush, Simchas and Holidays				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Ask your caterer to source food from local, sustainable, and/or fair trade sources				
Ask members/participants preparing food to use local, sustainable, and/or fair trade ingredients in meals they prepare to share at events				
Place signs on tables indicating when food and drinks were purchased locally, are organic, fair trade, ethically raised, etc.				
Host a sustainable kiddush				
Promote healthy and sustainable Jewish Holidays (Rosh Hashanah, Passover, etc.)				
Encourage sustainable Simchas and provide resources to those who are celebrating Bar/Bat Mitzvahs or weddings in your community on how to do so				
Encourage food blessings / reflections during communal meals				
Subtotal				
Total from "Eating Together" (out of 21)				

3: Serving and Cooking the Food				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>How often do you....</i>	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Purchase products and supplies in bulk to help reduce packaging waste				
Use cloth totes for transporting groceries				
Recycle, reuse, or donate plastic grocery bags				
Use reusable plates and bowls (e.g. ceramic, glass, etc. that can be washed and used again)				
Use reusable silverware				
Use reusable cups and mugs				
Use plates and bowls made from recycled materials				
Use silverware made from recycled materials				
Use cups and mugs made from recycled materials				
Use recyclable or biodegradable/compostable plates and bowls				
Use recyclable or biodegradable/compostable silverware				
Use recyclable or biodegradable/compostable cups and mugs				
Use cloth napkins				
Use reusable or cloth table cloths				
Use napkins made from recycled materials				
Use table cloths made from recycled materials				
Use pitchers and glasses, or a water cooler, instead of individual plastic water bottles				
Purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products (e.g. dish soap, dishwasher detergent, all-purpose cleaner) or make your own				
Air dry or use cloth towels for drying dishes				
Purchase milk in reusable glass containers				
Unplug small appliances when they are not in use				
Replace high energy-eaters (refrigerators, dishwashers, etc.) with Energy Star models				
When purchasing new pots and pans, consider ecological options				
	Yes - 3 pts	x	x	No - 0 pts
Have you conducted a full-scale energy audit?		x	x	
Subtotal				
Total from "Serving and Cooking the Food" (out of 72)				

4: Food Waste				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Try to reduce the overall amount of food you purchase and use				
Try to reduce the overall amount of waste you generate (thoughtfully plan actual amount of food needed)				
Reuse leftovers in dishes if not donating them				
Recycle all recyclable materials (paper, plastic, glass, metal, etc)				
Collect food waste to be composted on-site or picked up and composted off-site				
Collect compostable dishware and utensils to be composted on-site or picked up and composted off-site				
	Yes - 3 pts	x	x	No - 0 pts
Do you have clearly labeled recycling bins set up in convenient areas?		x	x	
Subtotal				
Total from "Food Waste" (out of 21)				

5a: Food Education - Adults				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
For an adult audience, how often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Include information pertaining to food sustainability and justice issues in the bulletin/newsletter				
Include food sustainability and justice issues in a sermon and/or during services in general				
Post signs to educate members about food sustainability and justice issues				
Distribute recipes using local and seasonal foods				
Have books and films related to food sustainability and justice available to members				
Encourage members to play leadership roles in food sustainability and justice activities				
Recognize congregants/members for making changes related to food sustainability and justice in their own lives				
	At least 1x month	Every 2-3 months	At least 1x year	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Organize field trips to a local, organic farm and/or to local farmers markets to see sustainable food systems in action				
Invite speakers (e.g. farmers, food justice workers, etc.) to teach about food sustainability and justice issues such as the Farm Bill or ethical kosher meat				
Host a Beit Midrash to enable members to learn about food, faith, and agriculture through text study				
Offer cooking classes focused on local and seasonal foods				
Subtotal				
Total from "Food Education - Adults" (out of 33)				

5b: Food Education - Children & Teens				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<i>For a teen and/or child audience, how often do you....</i>	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Encourage youth and teens to play leadership roles in food sustainability activities				
	At least 1x month	Every 2-3 months	At least 1x year	Never
<i>How often do you....</i>	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Invite speakers (e.g. farmers, food justice workers, etc.) to teach about food sustainability and justice issues				
Invite speakers to teach about food policy (e.g. Farm Bill)				
Incorporate lessons and activities related to food sustainability and justice				
Teach songs and crafts related to these issues				
Organize field trips to a local, organic farm or farmer's market to see sustainable food practices in action				
Hold film screenings and make books and films related to food sustainability and justice available to youth and teens				
Host a Beit Midrash to enable youth and teens to learn about food, faith, and agriculture through text study				
Offer cooking classes focused on local and seasonal foods				
Offer food tastings for youth and teens highlighting a seasonal fruit or vegetable				
Subtotal				
Total from "Food Education - Children" (out of 30)				

6: Community Agriculture and Gardens				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Educate members about Community Supported Agriculture Programs				
Encourage vegetable gardening at home or in the community				
Do members/ congregants use the kitchen for cooking?				
	Yes - 3 pts	x	x	No - 0 pts
Do you host a farmers market or farm stand?		x	x	
Do you host a Community Supported Agriculture program?		x	x	
Do you have an herb/ fruit/ vegetable garden at your institution?		x	x	
Subtotal				
Total from Community Agriculture and Gardens				
6a: CSA bonus section (if you answered "yes" above)				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Dont produce from the CSA to a local food pantry				
Include low income/subsidized shares in your CSA				
Offer flexible payment options for your CSA				
<i>Total from "CSA Bonus Section" (out of 9)</i>				
6b: Gardening Bonus Section (if you answered "yes" above)				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Use organic/sustainable gardening practices				
Donate foods from the garden to a local food pantry				
Encourage children in planting/harvesting/cooking produce from the garden				
<i>Total from "Gardening Bonus Section" (out of 9)</i>				
Total from "Community Agriculture and Gardens" (including bonus sections)				

7: Food Justice				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Donate leftover food from events to soup kitchens/ shelters				
Incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into meals prepared to be donated				
Incorporate healthier substitutes into meals prepared to be donated (i.e. whole grains, low saturated fat, no trans fat/ hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, low sodium)				
Donate healthy nonperishable food items to food pantries				
<i>Bonus: Encourage eligible members to participate in WIC, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and SNAP</i>				
	Almost Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
How often do you....	3 pts	2 pts	1 pt	0 pts
Participate in a gleaning trip to a farm to help harvest food for those experiencing food insecurity				
Subtotal				
Total from "Food Justice" (out of 15, 3 bonus points possible)				

Scorecard				
	Earned	Possible	Percent	
1: Healthy, Sustainable, Kosher: Food "Fit" To Eat				
2: Eating Together				
3: Serving and Cooking the Food				
4: Food Waste				
5a: Food Education - Adult				
5b: Food Education - Children				
6: Community Agriculture and Gardens				
6a: CSA Bonus Points				
6b: Garden Bonus Points				
7: Food Justice (includes 3 bonus points)				
GRAND TOTAL				

Food Audit Worksheet

Use the following questions to help you determine your next steps for making positive food changes at your institution.

1. Review your score for each question, and the score for each section overall. According to these scores, what are the strengths and weaknesses of your policies and practices?
2. Choose one of the weaknesses that you'd like to address. List several actions that would help you improve your score (hint: you can find suggestions in the pages of the Food Guide!)
3. Rank your potential actions based on five factors— importance, cost, time, commitment, and feasibility using the chart below. Add the points together for each action, and use the total to help you choose a couple of top priority actions to recommend for as-soon-as-possible implementation.
 - Importance – how important is the action to my community?
(3 = high; 2 = moderate; 1 = low)
 - Cost – how expensive would it be to plan and implement the action?
(3 = low cost; 2 = moderate cost; 1 = high cost)
 - Time – how much time and effort would it take to implement the action?
(3 = little time/effort; 2 = moderate time/effort; 1 = high time/effort)
 - Commitment/enthusiasm – how enthusiastic would my community be about implementing the action?
(3 = high; 2 = moderate; 1 = low)
 - Feasibility/Difficulty – how difficult would it be to complete the action?
(3 = easy; 2 = moderately easy; 1 = highly difficult)

<i>Action</i>	<i>Importance</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Commitment</i>	<i>Ease</i>	<i>Total Score</i>	<i>Top Priority?</i> ✓

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What changes are you making at your institution?

We'd love to hear about them and include them in our next edition of the Food Guide!

Send your stories to foodguide@hazon.org.

