

The Founding Document of the California Food Policy Council
December 10th, 2012

Food and agriculture has a profound effect on the health and wellbeing of our communities and our natural environment. The goal of California's food and agriculture system must be to achieve greater health, equity, and prosperity for our diverse communities and natural ecosystems.

Local food policy bodies comprised of diverse food system stakeholders have come together as the California Food Policy Council to develop and promote policies and practices that produce healthy, safe, fair, humane and abundant food in ways that protect our environment and ensure the vitality of our farms and food businesses. We recognize that we have a role and a responsibility in achieving this balance as a means to serve all Californians.

Together we aim to build a food system that grows, processes, distributes, and prepares food in ways that nourish all Californians, ensure the safety of our food supply, upholds the dignity of and fairly compensates producers and workers, celebrates our diverse cultures, and restores and enhances our vital natural resources.

The changes that we call for here have begun but social, economic and ecological conditions require their acceleration through concerted advocacy directed at leaders in business, academia and government. Therefore, the California Food Policy Council will provide broadly supported guidance and assistance to decision makers as they develop new policies, regulations, programs, funding, technical support and research priorities affecting food and agriculture.

Ten principles will guide our efforts and provide a framework as we collectively work with local, state and federal government institutions and private sector entities to enact just, transparent and sustainable food policies that will improve California's food and agriculture system.

A healthy, vibrant, equitable and sustainable food system:

- 1.** Ensures access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food as a basic **human right**. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that contribute to the establishment of food production and distribution systems that ensure easy access to healthy, sustainable, and affordable food and potable water in all communities.
- 2.** Reduces health and income disparities and the concentration of resources, while upholding the dignity, security, and self-determination of all of the communities it serves. The CAFPC supports **equity** enhancing policies and practices that strengthen opportunities and benefits for disadvantaged farmers, workers, businesses and communities that experience disproportionate environmental, economic and health hardships.
- 3.** Makes the healthiest choice the easiest choice. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that promote **health** and result in food environments that provide access to an abundance of affordable, fresh food choices, incentives to consume healthy, humane, local and California grown foods.
- 4.** Protects and restores our **environment** and vital natural resources, such as air, water, soil, biodiversity, climate, and wildlife and eliminates waste wherever possible. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that prevent resource degradation, encourage waste reduction and composting, promote conservation farming and reduce chemical inputs and energy use, while taking into consideration the need to ensure abundant production and economically viable farm and food businesses.

5. Supports a vibrant and diverse food and agriculture **economy** comprised of businesses of multiple scales that sell into local, regional, state, national and international markets, while creating strong linkages and benefits for our local and regional economies. The CAFPC prioritizes policies and practices that strengthen local and regional food and agriculture businesses as an effective way to deliver widespread economic benefits to small and mid-scale producers, while achieving greater equity, health, access, consumer awareness and long term connections between farmers and consumers.

6. **Recognizes that a fair food system requires functional immigration and labor policies that** uphold the dignity, safety, and **quality of life** for all who work to feed us. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that ensure living wages for all food system workers, including opportunities for advancement and ownership and that expand employment in the food sector.

7. Recognizes the vital role of **education** in preparing our youth to become the next generation of informed eaters, producers, food chain workers. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that build school food environments that are based on healthy, sustainably produced, California grown food. We support curriculum that incorporates food literacy and garden-based education, promotes the links between producers and consumers, health, food, and the environment and gives children, families and community leaders the resources they need to learn about food production, nutrition, cooking and food economics.

8. Values our **farmland and fisheries** and the hard work and commitment of our **farmers, fisherfolk, and ranchers**. The CAFPC supports policies and practices that will protect agricultural land, rivers and oceans and provide the necessary incentives, resources, technical support and outreach to help beginning and existing producers to thrive economically while delivering healthy, affordable and sustainably produced food.

9. Operates within a **global food system** that generates economic, political, and market realities that impact the choices of CA producers, food businesses, policymakers and consumers. The CAFPC recognizes the need to reform global policies in order to remove barriers to a healthy, equitable, vibrant and sustainable California Food System.

10. Requires that all food system stakeholders are engaged in the political process and in vigorous dialogue with each other at the local, regional, state and national level. The CAFPC encourages and actively engages in this dialogue with members of government, community organizations, academia, public health organizations, food producers, labor, food industry representatives, business, policy advocates and the public to create meaningful and effective **collaboration**.