

# **Envisioning our Future Together: a Report on the CFSC Membership Meeting**

By Kai Siedenburg

**Kids Eat Better, Learn More**

**Food Deserts Gone - Oases Abound**

**USDA Declares Food Insecurity and Hunger at Zero**

**Farming: the "New" Hot Career Choice**

**Rural Renaissance Revives Cultures and Communities**

**"It's Not Fair CFP Gets All the Farm Bill Money," Said Hy Fructose of the National Corn Growers Association**

**Oprah Says, "I Always Knew Food was the Answer."**

These are just a few of the future magazine headlines created by participants at CFSC's membership meeting in November. Small groups imagined that it was the year 2015 and their positive vision for the food system had been attained, and outlined an issue of Time magazine reflecting this new reality.

This activity was one highlight of the meeting, and gives a flavor of the event: participatory, creative, friendly, and forward-looking. CFSC organized the meeting to engage our membership in visioning and strategizing about the future of the CFS movement, and to get feedback on how CFSC can best serve its members and the movement. CFSC Executive Director Andy Fisher said, "We decided it was time to take a break from the annual conference format to re-energize our membership and to involve them in identifying strategic directions for the movement and the Coalition."

The 75 participants came from all over the country and represented a rich mix of food system change efforts, from local, community-based projects to national and international policy work. The meeting was held November 11-12, 2007, in beautiful Jekyll Island, Georgia.

The first day focused on the broader CFS movement. We shared stories about how positive changes had been created in the food system, reflected on the broader accomplishments of the CFS movement, and identified key challenges and opportunities for the movement. Participants also envisioned the future food system, and strategized about how best to create significant change in key sectors over the next five years.

The second day focused more on CFSC, and included brainstorming about the Coalition's role in the movement and generating recommendations for how CFSC could best support and engage its members. Making CFSC a more inclusive, diverse, and transparent organization emerged as a priority. After lunch, people met in committees and working groups on topics proposed by participants, including economic development, climate change, farm to school, diversity and dismantling racism, urban agriculture, and policy. These groups developed recommendations for CSFC and/or action plans.

The meeting generated valuable and creative ideas about strategic directions for the movement, a wealth of recommendations for ways CFSC can better inform and support its members, and plans and directions for CFSC's member committees. These ideas are being carefully considered by staff and board members and integrated into existing work where possible. They also will provide an important foundation for the Coalition's strategic planning process and future programs, and there will be additional opportunities for members to participate in the strategic planning process over the next year.

The participant evaluations rated the informal networking, committee meetings, and other small group discussions as the most meaningful aspects of the meeting. Their comments emphasized the value of making personal connections, hearing about new ideas and information, learning more about how CFSC works, and feeling connected with a broader movement.

An overall summary of the meeting, notes from committee meetings, photos of the future Time magazine issues, and other information will be posted soon on this page.

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*Kai Siedenburg is Training and Technical Assistance Program Director with CFSC.*