

Growing Food Banks? Securing the Food Insecurity Network

by

Sara Griffen

Department of Food Systems and Society

Marylhurst University

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Food Systems and Society

March 18, 2015

Committee Page

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	i
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
1. Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
2. Chapter 2: Background and Significance	5
2.1 The Concepts of Food Security, Food Insecurity and Food Sovereignty	5
2.2 The Organizations and Programs of Food security	8
2.3 What it would take for 46 Million People to be Food secure	14
3. Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods	17
3.1 Research Approach.....	17
3.2 How I am situated in this work	18
3.3 Research Methods	18
4. Chapter 4: Results, Analysis, and Contribution	20
4.1 Who is Accessing Food Assistance – Increased Demand, Consistent Need.....	20
4.2 The Challenges of meeting the New Normal of Food Insecurity...	26
4.3 Food Bank Farms.....	37
5. Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	49
REFERENCES	52

LIST OF TABLES

1. Annual Household Food Insecurity in the United States.....18

2. Imperial Valley Growth in Demand for Food Assistance.....19

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ii

APR	Agricultural Preservation Restriction
CAFB	California Association of Food Banks
CBPP	Center on Budget and Public Policy
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfer
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FRAC	Food Research and Action Council
IVFB	Imperial Valley Food Bank
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PDP	Perishable Donation Partnership
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TEFAP	The Emergency Food Assistance Program
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture

DEDICATION

iii

For his patience, good cheer, wonderful dinners and encouragement, this thesis is dedicated to the Reverend Dr. Ron Griffen; my husband and best friend.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who contributed information and time to this thesis by allowing me to interview them. Larry Welsh and Bill Shick of the Chester County Food Bank, Andrew Morehouse of Western Massachusetts Food Bank. Also Nicole Sudyman of the Orange County Food Bank, and Blair Wolfer of Clark County Food Bank. Amy Sellers and John May of Maryland Food Bank, Andrew Schiff of the Rhode Island Food Bank and David Goodman of the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

In addition, I was able to interview many people for quotes and general thoughts on Food Banking. Thanks to Bob Aiken, Ellen Teller and Jim Weill. Also to Jim Floros, Chris Carter, Jennifer Seonor, Sue Sigler, Terry Shannon, Eric Cooper, and Mark Lowry.

I would like to express my thanks to my and friends in the first cohort of the Food Systems and Society graduate program for all their instruction and care of not only myself but the greater food system. A special thanks to our professors for their grace under pressure and the will to keep us on track. I am forever grateful.

I am deeply appreciative to the Board of Directors and staff of the Imperial Valley Food Bank. I certainly hope this thesis turns into fish and vegetables for our community.

ABSTRACT

The economic recession of 2008 intensified the effects of poverty for low-income Americans. The subsequent “recovery “has not improved their lives. Many are left with little choice but to rely on the emergency food assistance network as a normal part of their strategy to supplement monthly food shortfalls. Government assistance, which comes primarily in the form of SNAP benefits, are not enough for food insecure people to access food throughout the entire month. The new normal is that food banks fill the gap left, each month, when government benefits run out. Can the food bank network meet this increase in demand and is it secure enough to be the consistent food source for those people that will depend on it for years to come? This thesis reviews the food security network and its ability to secure itself to meet the increased and persistent demand of post-recession food insecurity. It examines who food banks serve, how they have met the challenges of the new normal, and the innovative ways they are trying to produce their own food supply. It will also highlight the benefits of growing their own food.

Keywords: Food security, Food insecurity, Food banks, Food sovereignty, Food bank farms, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Chapter One: Introduction

...because the end game is making sure we are putting meals on tables for folks in the community.

-Terry Shannon, personal communication, 2015
CEO of St. Mary's Food Bank, Phoenix, retired

The economic recession of 2008 intensified the effects of poverty for low-income Americans. In 2013, 45.3 million people lived below the United States poverty line and 49.1 million people lived in food insecure households (Feeding America, 2013). These high rates of food insecurity persisted even though the recession was declared over by economists in 2009 (Tobey, 2013; Sheirholz, 2014). The subsequent recovery, typically evidenced by a recovery in stock and housing markets, has not reached the lives of low-income people. Indeed, the profound and long-lasting impacts of the recession have left low-income people with little choice but to rely on the emergency food assistance network as a “normal part of their strategy to supplement monthly food shortfalls” (Feeding America, 2012).

2

Food insecurity, the uncertainty about where the next meal will come from, or if there will be enough nutritious food at a meal, is a common occurrence for low-income Americans. The increased prevalence of food insecurity mirrors that of poverty and economic struggle; this is evident in the fact that during the economic recession (2007-2009) and prolonged aftermath the number of Americans depending on the national emergency food assistance network grew by staggering proportions (USDA, 2015; Feeding America, 2014). In 2013, 47.6 million people relied on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to purchase food for themselves and their families (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2014). This amounts to 15 percent of the U.S. population or 1 in 7 people. This is a 183 percent increase from 26 million people in 2007, the year before the recession began (USDA, 2015). A similar number published

by Feeding America, the national food bank network, revealed that 46.5 million Americans also received assistance through the emergency food bank system in 2013 (Feeding America, 2014). SNAP is funded and managed by the federal government; food banking is a loose association of nonprofit organizations who provide food to local churches, agencies, shelters and soup kitchens to serve the hungry directly. These two resources that address food insecurity both serve the same number of people, and this is more than coincidence. It is indicative of a relationship between accessing emergency food programs and SNAP, which complement each other in millions of people's lives. This is because the amount of money people receive monthly in SNAP benefits is not sufficient for families to purchase enough nutritious food for the entire month (FRAC, 2012). A USDA report (2013) suggests that 80 percent of SNAP benefits are used up within two weeks of the month. To make up for this shortfall, families turn to charity, agencies, churches, and soup kitchens in their local communities to access enough food for the remainder of the month after SNAP benefits end.

The survival and robust operation of the food bank system is therefore vital to the vulnerable people who rely on it monthly. When a person's monthly benefit runs out, the food bank network steps in to fill the gap. Thus the food bank system must remain intact unless other and better programs for food security can be created, developed and implemented. Until that time, food banks remain the stop-gap for hunger in that in-between time of the month when SNAP benefits have run out and when benefits can be accessed again at the beginning of the next month.

The challenge of providing enough food to address food insecurity through the food bank network may be pushing food banks to their limits and beyond, particularly with the dramatic "post-recession" increase in need that shows little sign of diminishing. As food banks have

grown to meet the increased demand in this situation, they must ask how they can be secure enough to continue to be the vital link for addressing food insecurity in the lives of the millions of people depending on them for food. Through examining who food banks serve, the challenges they have had to overcome to meet the increased demand, and how they are growing, the factors that establish the security of food banks emerge. This thesis investigates food bank programs in order to understand how they work to meet increasing and persistent demands so that they can equip themselves to address the new normal of post-recession food insecurity.

More specifically, this thesis provides both a macro look at the food bank system as a whole and a micro look at the development of food bank farms within the larger food bank system. A food bank farm is defined as a food bank sponsored method of growing or raising food to distribute to hungry people through the traditional food-banking model of distributing to smaller agencies who give food with no payment of money, labor or attention in return. This study does not examine community garden projects. These projects educate and empower individuals to participate in the growing of food to enhance their own food system, but they do not provide large amounts of food for distribution.

In spite of the important work of food banks, they are not without criticism. In particular, Mark Winne, a former food banker is a leading voice against the food bank network focusing his work on food policy creation (Winne, 2008). Janet Poppendieck, who is quoted frequently in this thesis, is also critical of the food bank network. While some may say that food banking allows the government to not take responsibility for the immense problem that is domestic hunger, I say that it is morally inconceivable to allow people to go hungry while the rest of the anti-hunger movement or the United States government decide how it would like to address the problem. Fifty years later, there is still no sign of other work being done or policy being made that will

make any real change in the lives of the food insecure who are accessing food assistance as part of this new normal. In addition, this critique of the food bank network dismisses the ways – such as food bank farms – that food banking is becoming more than a bandage, but can be at the forefront of creating new, more equitable food systems, and establishing food sovereignty, the right of people to define their own food system, at the local level.

Through the lenses of food security and sovereignty, I examine how both the larger food banking movement as well as the smaller innovative food bank farms work to make food banks secure enough to meet the demands of the food insecure. This thesis begins with a background and history of food banking and government assistance programs. The methods used for the thesis are discussed, followed by the examination of who is accessing food from food banks, how food banks are meeting the challenges of the new normal, and how they are beginning to grow their own food. The thesis concludes with an assessment of the security of the food security network and recommendations.

Chapter Two: Background and Significance

When I first came to FRAC (Food Research and Action Center) thirty years ago, food banking was in its infancy. It was a network of food in and food out. What has been amazing to me over the decades is seeing the transformation within food banking to actually running programs and recognizing the complementary role that food banking provides to the federal nutrition assistance programs.

Ellen Teller, 2015, personal communication
Director of Government Affairs, FRAC

Food banks have indeed moved from agencies that simply accept food to agencies that run extensive programs and, as demand for more food by more people has increased, they have had to grow. In order to understand the context of the change in food banking this section will provide introductory information. The following section looks at some key terminology used, a brief history and background of food banking and the federal food assistance programs that form the backbone of the food security network.

2.1 The Concepts of Food Security, Food Insecurity, and Food Sovereignty

There was a time when the terms hunger and malnutrition were used to describe the incidences of people not having access to enough food in the United States. As new government administrations “rediscover” hunger, changes in players or policy often create new ways of dealing with the problem. A recent phenomenon was to change the word hunger to “food insecurity” as if hunger has disappeared from the American landscape (Allen, 2007). While hunger in the United States has more to do with inconsistent access to food or the inability to access healthy food, rather than starvation, we can in no way say that hunger is no longer a problem in this country. Yet the words used have changed. The following are definitions of the new terminology used to describe hunger in the U.S., which will also be used as the framework for how we view the food system in this thesis.

‘Food Security’ was originally defined at the macro level by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) at the World Food Summit in 1996. It is defined as existing when “all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life” (FAO, 2015). This definition was often characterized as the three A’s; availability, access and affordability (Lang and Barling, 2012). There have been many attempts to redefine this initial definition, including Rocha (2008) who removed affordability and in its place added acceptability, adequacy and agency. The last term “agency” was used by Rocha to refer to the need for policy actors to “own” and deliver the term (as cited by Lang and Barling, 2012). The term “food security” (and “food insecurity”) is increasingly used rather than hunger, although there is no consensus on definitions of the concept, which is used at both an individual (micro) and societal (macro) level. Some researchers add criteria to the definition while others take them away causing uncertainty as to its meaning. Currently described as fractured (Maye, 2012) and ruptured (Lang and Barling) the term food security “may not be useful or even viable...nor least since it can mean different things” (Lang and Barling). Yet even the USDA has adopted the term food security and the accompanying term, food insecurity, as the official government terminology for addressing hunger (Allen, 2007).

Moving to its opposite, Jones, Ngunjiri, Pelto and Young (2013) state that food insecurity is the absence of one or more of availability, access, affordability, acceptability, adequacy or agency. Anderson (1990) defined the term as “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways” (p. 1598). Anderson (1990) also included a definition of food security that further specified that food security is not achieved when people acquire food in socially

unacceptable ways such as “resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies” (p. 1598)

In this definition, Anderson groups emergency food assistance with ‘scavenging and stealing’ as socially unacceptable behaviors. However, given that 15 percent of the population of the United States relies on food assistance from a food bank or the emergency food system, on some level we must consider this practice as socially acceptable as it has become normal behavior. As stated earlier, 48 million people accessed food assistance through the food bank network in 2012 (Feeding America, 2012) and more than \$2 billion was donated to anti-hunger work in the United States through the Feeding America Food banks (Feeding America, 2014). A Feeding America (2012) white paper declared:

Emergency food from pantries (the food banking system) is no longer being used to meet temporary acute food needs. A majority of our clients now visit food pantries as a ‘normal’ part of their strategy to supplement monthly shortfalls in food.

If one in six people access the emergency food system and so many Americans (as individuals, corporations, or foundations) contribute donations to support the emergency food system, it has become normalized. While Anderson is calling out that in an equitable society there would not be a need for the emergency food system, calling it socially unacceptable tends to diminish the important role food banks increasingly play in creating food security.

Going beyond food security is the concept of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is the ability to define and create one’s food system. This term is used mainly to describe grassroots movements in impoverished nations where people have lost the ability to own land, raise crops and receive a fair wage for their efforts (Schiavoni, 2014). This term can serve, in the context of this thesis, as a way to frame how food banks as organizations are working to gain control of their food supply by growing it themselves. If in some way, food banks shift from being

dependent on other organizations to growing their own food, this allows them to exercise more control over their own food system and supply.

2.2 The Organizations and Programs of Food Security

The development of food banks is not well documented; therefore much of the history of food banks written in this thesis was informed by interviews and conversations with those engaged in the work. It is helpful to understand the background of why food banks started and the circumstances around their growth to fully appreciate how they have come to work with government while still remaining individual non-profit entities.

The beginnings of food banks were haphazard, arising out of community needs coupled with caring people who were willing to help their neighbors. Food Banks are storehouses for millions of pounds of food and other products that go out to the community. A food pantry functions as the arm that reaches out to the community directly (Food Bank of the Southern Tier, 2015). The terminology of *bank* is important as food banks are industrial warehouses that act as distribution centers getting food to smaller local agencies who do not have the capacity to store food in volume or at a temperatures appropriate for food safety. This is increasingly important as more perishable and frozen foods are moving through the food assistance network. Food banks attract, store and distribute food donations from governments (usually federal and state), large corporate donors, and local communities, and then give that food to smaller, mostly independent soup kitchens, pantries and other congregate feeding sites. Food banks comply with regulations from food safety inspectors, Department of Transportation regulators, the USDA and many other agencies. This compliance allows the smaller direct service provider to be free of these restraints and costs.

Developed in the 1960's, food banks are non-profit 501(c)3s. The first food bank was founded in 1967 in Phoenix, Arizona by John Van Hengel. The food bank he started, St. Mary's Food Bank, began serving the public with a \$3000 investment from John's parish and an empty building ("St. Mary's Food Bank," 2014). By 1980 there were food banks operating in Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta and Chicago. When these early food banks found out about each other, they agreed to meet at the invitation of John Van Hengel (Hensley, 2013). They eventually formed an organization called America's Second Harvest.

This young association of food banks was quickly challenged. In the 1970's, the Reagan Administration enacted systematic cuts to social programs touting an economic theory dubbed "trickle down." Previous programs that protected the hungry, the elderly and the mentally and physically disabled began to disappear. The fraying safety net put an increase in urgency and demand on the fragile network of food banks and their agency partners. Winne described those early years, "The pressure to feed a rising tide of hungry people fell increasingly to local communities and especially non-profit organizations and faith-based institutions" (2008). Poppendieck (1998) described this neoliberal belief as, "the medicine of Reaganomics" which has yet to create the much anticipated "trickle-down". Many are still waiting, and many of them are food insecure.

The history of the relationship between the USDA and food banks began in 1981 when the USDA had accumulated massive quantities of dairy products as well as grain products through agricultural price support programs" (Hensley, 2013). This practice guarantees a minimum price for farm goods and is said to ensure that farmers have motivation and revenue to produce in subsequent years. However, stored for too long, the dairy surplus known now as the infamous USDA "cheese" was about to mold in its government storehouses while thousands of

Americans were feeling the penny pinching of the Reagan Administration (Hensley, 2013; Poppendieck, 1998). A temporary system was begun to distribute the surplus food through the then established food bank network. It was the beginning of a most convenient and direct way for government to meet the needs of the hungry in the country, with food they already had through price supports to farmers, without creation of any new programs or agencies. By this hybrid public-private partnership, government was able to harness the best of non-profits by using their access to the local community. “It was thought that non-profits could be more effective at reaching people at the local level than government could through its efforts” (Libby, 2012). This public-private partnership was used as a vehicle to distribute government commodities to address food security at a local level.

11

Even with the network in place for government food distribution, food security is not necessarily a part of the purview of the federal government of the United States. There are two U.S. cabinet-level agencies that oversee food; the growing of food (USDA) and the safety of food (FDA). Neither is concerned with food security as the term ‘nutrition assistance’ is instead used for the group of programs run by the United States Department of Agriculture that make emergency provisions for emergency food programs and SNAP. The nutrition assistance offered by the USDA seeks to provide financial help, to those who qualify, to purchase additional food for themselves or their families. Food security is a state where all people at all times have access to healthy nutritious foods. The mission of the USDA is to “provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management” (USDA, 2015). Providing leadership on food is much different than providing food security. This hands-off approach of

government programs not to address food security may be why the non-profit food sector has been courted to do the heavy lifting of feeding the hungry directly.

Although the U.S. government does not have an agency dedicated to addressing food security and much less food sovereignty, there are a handful of federal programs that provide food aid. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, aka Food Stamps) is “the nation’s most important anti-hunger program” (Center on Budget and Public Policy, 2014). Begun in 1939 as a paper voucher program, it replaced a previous program that gave out surplus farm crops to local agencies. This first attempt at a food stamp program lasted just four years, as World War II and the economic boom following it decreased the number of Americans living in poverty (snapttohealth.org, 2015). A pilot program was created in 1961 by President John Kennedy in response to a renewed awareness of hunger in the United States. President Lyndon Johnson signed the Food Stamp Act of 1964 into law. The goal of this initiative was to “achieve a more effective use of agricultural overproduction, improve levels of nutrition among individuals with low-incomes and strengthen the agricultural economy” (FNA USDA, 2015). Even at this stage, the program was designed for relief of agricultural overproduction rather than food security. Modern SNAP benefits are transferred to recipients through an Electronic Transfer Benefit (EBT) card replacing the outdated paper voucher system.

SNAP is one of the best run programs of the federal government. Its fraud rate is below 1 percent (Center for Budget and Public Policy, 2014). The average participant stays on the program for 8 to 10 months (snapttohealth.org, 2012). Over 80 percent of recipients are children, senior or the disables. It is not easy to qualify for the SNAP program; it involves lengthy applications and documentation proof to apply. One of its greatest successes is the economic

benefit; SNAP not only allows participants to buy food, but it acts as an economic stimulus by creating \$1.79 of economic activity for every dollar of benefit given (USDA ERS, 2015).

Despite the success of SNAP, the program is lumped in with all social programs under the politically motivated, yet false assumption that people using these services are merely using the system, taking advantage of hard-working tax payers. This false logic makes SNAP a program frequently in line for cuts by congress. Cuts to SNAP were enacted on November 1, 2013 which decreased SNAP benefits by an average of \$9 per month averaged for all households; a change from \$151 to \$142 per month (Center on Budget and Public Policy, 2014). The newly elected congress' agricultural committees have done a thorough investigation into SNAP in the spring of 2015. The food bank network awaits the news of any proposed cuts. As mentioned earlier, the benefits given now do not last past three weeks of the month, any further cuts will further weaken the SNAP program and created a deeper gap for the food bank network to fill.

Another well-established federal program that provides food aid is the Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The USDA regularly distributes emergency food or commodities to low income people through the TEFAP program in a similar fashion to the program, mentioned previously, that predated food stamps, but was not renewed as a viable food aid program until 1981. The TEFAP commodities distributed to low-income people through the food bank network is primarily justified, and as such defended in Congress, as price supports for U.S. farmers (Poppendieck, 1998; Winne, 2008; Feeding America, 2015). Just as clothing that does not sell or get to a retail market and is sent to a factory outlet, so too the food grown in the US that does not get to retail for whatever reason is purchased at pennies on the dollar and given to

the food bank network for distribution. In many ways food banks function as a factory outlet for the U.S. farm industry.

TEFAP commodities are delivered to food banks which then distribute the food to smaller non-profit agencies and food pantries so that people have access to the food in their own neighborhood. This food is purchased through the farm subsidy funding provided in Farm Bill legislation. Although TEFAP accumulates the excess harvest or price-stabilized food to distribute to U.S. food banks, it has always been a government and farmer-serving program. Poppendieck (1998) states, “It is not surprising that government, regardless of party, has consistently taken steps to assist, protect, and preserve the emergency food system” (p. 159). The administrative funds given to food banks to operate the TEFAP program are minimal compared the cost of the purchase of purchasing the farm surplus. As long as there are crops to be subsidized and poor who need more food than they can purchase, this system of moving surplus is convenient for both parties; those who represent farmers and those who represent the poor.

TEFAP does not solve the problem of food security. Ironically, the establishment of the food bank network by caring people trying to do a good thing has actually allowed the government to not take on the issue of hunger in a magnitude consistent with the problem. The non-profit network of food banks is a bargain for the US government. The private-public partnership of food banking benefits the government because they only minimally subsidize the food banks’ administration of the program and prop up farmers through TEFAP purchases. Funding provisions for both TEFAP and SNAP are made in the Farm Bill and levels of funding are set through 2018 when a new Farm Bill will be renegotiated (USDA, 2014).

Thirty plus years later this program is no longer temporary. Although TEFAP started as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program, it became a permanent part of USDA programming in 1990 by simply changing the meaning of the letter “T” in the acronym from “temporary” to “the” (Cabili, Eslami & Briefel, 2013). It could be time to change the “E” in the acronym. At what point is a thirty-year program no longer an emergency?

Feeding America is another organization that ties food banks together around the country and that enhances their security. Originally known as America’s Second Harvest, Feeding America is a non-profit 501(c) 3 as are all the individual food banks that are its members. There are currently 202 full-member food banks and 103 smaller food banks known as Partner Distributing Organizations (PDO’s) that make up the expansive Feeding America network (Hensley, 2013). This network received and distributed over 3.38 billion pounds of food in 2013 and increased that to 4 billion pounds in 2014 (Feeding America, 2015). Feeding America is also active in legislative advocacy for the entire national network of food banks. Because of their proficiency in coordinating emergency food assistance in times of national disasters Feeding America has a seat on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) board. Together these organizations make up the major players in the food security network. The following provides working definitions of the terms associated with food security.

2. 3 What it Would Take for 46 Million People to be Food Secure

Comparing the food banking system to the national SNAP program reveals the important role of providing food through food banks. Essentially the same number of people used SNAP benefits and the food bank system.

- 47.5 million people used SNAP benefits in 2014 (USDA)

- 46.5 million people used the food banking system in 2013 (Feeding America)

The roughly 46.5 million Americans who are poor are also largely the same 47.5 million people using SNAP to purchase food and the 46.5 million people using the food bank system to fill the gap when SNAP benefits run out. SNAP benefits are simply not enough. In part this is allowed to continue because the role of food banks play. Government would rather have food banks fill this gap because it is politically more palatable for food banks to feed the hungry than to increase SNAP benefits. This is important to also take into account that while the demand for emergency food and safety net programs has increased, the benefits to SNAP have not increased, and in fact were cut at the Federal level in 2013 when the temporary increase allocated by the American Recovery Act (2012 and 2013) was allowed to expire (Center on Budget and Public Policy, 2013). For 46.5 million people food pantry visits ‘have become a familiar and vital part of their lives’ (Babic et al., 2014) as visiting food pantries “are now part of household’s long term strategy to supplement monthly shortfalls of food” (Feeding America, 2012). Post-recession hunger has been allowed to become normal as poverty has become normal.

To manage the payments of SNAP benefits to those aforementioned 47.5 million people annually, the USDA allocates \$84 billion of its budget. The TEFAP program, the farm subsidy support given to food banks to give to the food insecure amounts to only a \$258 million outlay from the USDA. If we assume, as many people suggest, that SNAP benefits often last three weeks of every month, then we can extrapolate that the \$258 million for TEFAP begins to fill the gap that the \$84 billion for SNAP does not cover. Food banks are getting food to people who are in need when their SNAP benefits have run out, and they are doing so at a very small fraction of the cost it would take government to do so. In fact, food banking does this at roughly a reduction of 325 times less money than it takes the SNAP program to operate. This can be explained by at

least two reasons: First, federal employees have decent wages and benefits while many food bank workers are volunteers, which keeps food bank overhead low. Second, food banks are the “factory outlet,” that is they distribute food to those in need at no cost to the recipients, while SNAP benefits are used to purchase food at retail prices in grocery stores.

Adding together the \$1.9 billion dollars raised in hunger relief through the Feeding America network of food banks, the funding for TEFAP (\$258 million) and even an additional \$1 billion for hunger relief raised outside the Feeding America network, all that adds up to approximately \$3.5 billion dollars to cover the gap that current SNAP funding leaves. Based on the calculation that it would take at least \$28 billion dollars of additional SNAP funding to fill the existing gap, and that the emergency food system that food banks have created currently fills this gap for \$3.5 billion, it demonstrates that food banking costs \$24.5 billion dollars less than what it would take SNAP to fill the gap it leaves. It would stand to reason that a progressive government would increase the SNAP program by its shortfall adding another \$28 billion to the program for a total expenditure of \$112 billion in SNAP benefits.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Research Approach

This thesis investigates how food banks have positioned themselves to meet the needs of food insecure people in the post-recession era. The design of this thesis follows a pragmatic approach, with the aim of eventually solving a practical problem based on research. Creswell (2014) describes pragmatism as a “worldview [that] arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions.” By talking with those engaged in the work of food banks and food bank farms I gained an understanding of the actions and situations they face. The pragmatic approach also allows for the use of creative methodologies and the use of open ended questions which assisted me in presenting the data in a meaningful and understandable manner.

As a creative person, I identify with Denizen and Lincoln (2008) and their description of the researcher as quilt maker. Using “the aesthetic and material tools of his or her craft, deploying whatever strategies, methods, and empirical materials are at hand”, this thesis utilizes qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, personal experience and literature review to better understand the many approaches to food bank farms and how those approaches affect food security. The ability to be creative using mixed methods of research and all contexts, whether, social, historical or political is a freedom that is employed in this inquiry. Creswell (2014) remarked, “The core assumption of this form of inquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either approach alone” (p. 4).

3.2 How I am Situated in this Work

I am the Executive Director of the Imperial Valley Food Bank (IVFB), a rural food bank in Imperial County, California. My interest in this topic is both conceptual and pragmatic. It is my goal to create a food bank farm to increase lean protein for distribution to my clients. Because of our desert location, solar energy can be harnessed to provide energy for an aquaponic greenhouse facility for the consistent and healthy addition of lean-protein fish, various organic vegetables, and cultural herbs to the diet of the population I serve. I began this thesis work in order to specifically learn more about other food banks involved in growing their own food. While researching what others are doing in this field I was dismayed by the lack of data, published articles, and scholarly work on the expansion of food bank work beyond traditional pre-recession food bank methods. Limitations on the amount of data available and the difficulty I had in interviewing food bankers directly involved in growing projects moved this thesis into a conceptually broader project with more of an emphasis on the hegemonic forces within the food bank network.

3.3 Research methods

In order to examine food banks and their capacity, I sought IRB approval to interview those engaged in food bank work and food bank farm production. This request was granted and allowed the gathering of most of the data for this thesis. To find out who food banks are serving, I conducted interviews with many food bank Executive Directors and also a search of data from literature review, Feeding America and reports and data largely from government and food bank network sources. For the question what are the challenges of meeting needs in the post-recession era, similar methods were used to for the collection and analysis of data. For the third question of

food bank farms and their significance, interviews with food bank farm managers and food bankers of those specific programs were conducted in addition to annual reports of those food banks. Currently over thirty food banks around the country are engaged in some form of large-scale growing, which represents 15 percent of food banks. Eleven of those food bank farms were reached for interviews, six of them in the form of in-depth interview of both Executive Director and food bank farm manager.

More specifically, collecting data for this thesis was facilitated by the modern and efficient communication system that connects the various actors in the food security movement including food bankers and their allies. In this network, newly released research is sent through email reports and recaps to enable actors and stakeholders in the movement to know and use the most current data available. This flow of information within the network was helpful for this thesis because most of the publicly published reports are dated and do not reflect post-recession statistics and analysis. Whenever possible I use the latest reports with the most current data.

In addition, many people engaged in the work of food banks and food security advocacy in general were interviewed for this thesis. The annual anti-hunger conference of the Food Research and Action Council held in Washington DC was held during my work on this thesis. I received a grant through the California Association of Food Banks to attend representing rural food banks. During that time I was able to interview many people involved in food banking and several Executive Directors of food banks with farms who I was not able to interview during the earlier data collection phase of this thesis.

Chapter Four: Results, Analysis, and Contribution

We can see the beginning of the “perfect storm.” Food prices are going up, food manufacturers are facing their own squeeze in the tough economy, and are responding as one would expect in the market, seeking greater efficiencies, which means fewer donations. Charitable contributions are also harder to come by as more Americans feel the economic squeeze. State and local governments are cutting back on social programs.

Feeding America, 2012

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the “perfect storm” that was the immediate aftermath of the great recession has affected food bank programs in order to understand how they work to meet the increasing and persistent demands so that they can equip themselves to address the new normal of post-recession food insecurity. The research is organized around three primary questions: 1) Who are the people food banks are serving?; 2) What are the challenges food banks face in meeting the new normal of food insecurity?; and 3) What is the significance of food bank farms? I address each question in turn; in answering them it becomes clear how role of food banking has adapted to the “new normal.”

4.1 Who is Accessing Food Assistance?—Increased Demand, Consistent Need

As the economy has changed post-recession, a significant number of people are food insecure. SNAP benefits partially address this reality, and the food bank network is relied upon to fill the gap instead of increasing SNAP benefits at a federal level. How have food banks been able to address the increase in demand and its consistent plateau?

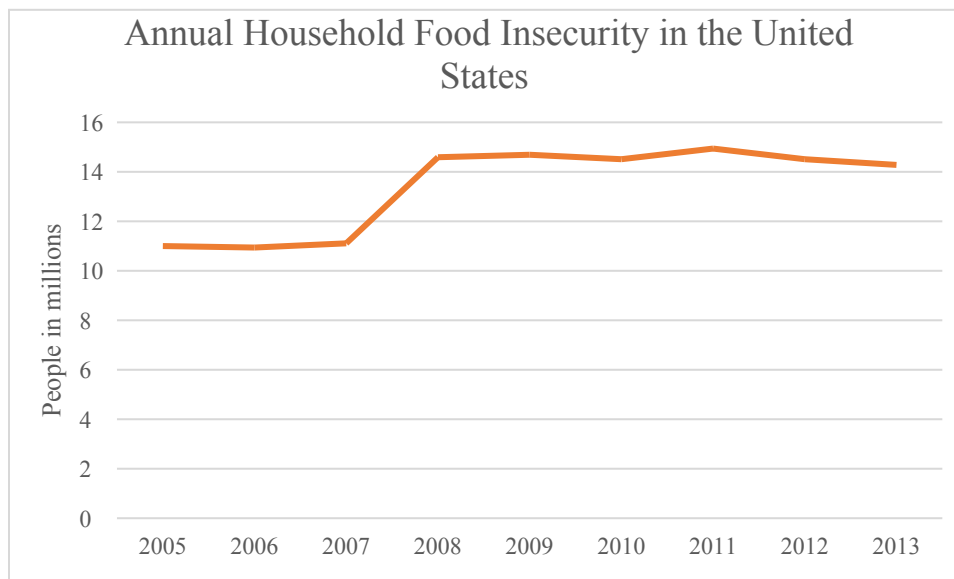
4.1.1 The new normal.

The reality that millions of Americans are unable to afford enough food for themselves and their families on their own incomes or even with some government food assistance programs has been compounded by the economic recession that began in 2008. Many have argued that the

recession is over, but that evidence is only visible on stock market price indexes and corporate earnings sheets far from the daily lives of those with low incomes and little money to invest. The number of people accessing food from the food bank network has leveled off from its high (in 2011) to a consistent level. Figure 1 shows the USDA measure for food insecurity from 2005 until 2013. This is calculated based on information from SNAP recipients.

Table 1

Annual Household Food Insecurity in the United States

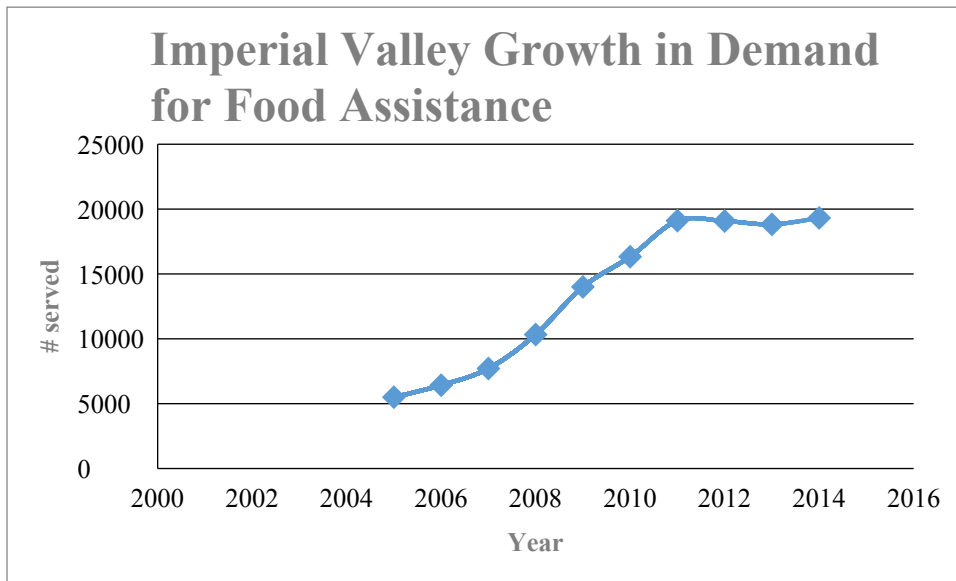


Before the recession 11 percent of households experienced food insecurity; today the food insecurity rate is steady at 14 percent, and rose as high as 15 percent in 2011.

This trend is even more extreme in rural communities such as the one the Imperial Valley Food Bank (IVFB), my food bank, serves. Figure 2 illustrates the people served by the IVFB in Imperial County, California for the years 2005 to 2014. People in need of food assistance rose from 5,500 per month in 2005 to 20,000 in 2011, leveling off to 19,500 in the last three years. This is significantly higher than the rate of food insecurity growth nationally.

Table 2

Imperial Valley Food Bank Growth in Demand for Food Assistance



As evidenced by these figures, both at a national and a more severely in rural areas, such as the one where I live and work, food insecurity has reached an unprecedented rate. Because this high rate has been consistent for four years, it has become the “new normal” of food insecurity in the food bank network. The Imperial Valley Food Bank in the six years between 2005 and 2011 quadrupled the number of people served. Whether the recession has officially ended or not, there are no factors in our local area or on the federal landscape to suggest there will be any great change in the circumstances of lives of the people who use our services for the foreseeable future.

4.1.2 The challenge of normal.

At IVFB, I have observed that the majority of people in line for food assistance in my community are those who will not likely go back to the work force. The predominance of seniors, the handicapped, the homeless and those with mental illness characterize the lines for emergency food in the Imperial Valley. So how many people will actually leave the lines of food

assistance because they have achieved food security? In conversations with food bank executive directors for this research, I asked what percentage of people they would see leaving the lines of food assistance and moving on to food secure lives. The answer to this question is, of course a projection, but one based on the executive directors' knowledge of their clientele.

The executive directors I interviewed project that most of the people standing in line for food assistance will not leave the line in their lifetimes. In fact they felt that 83 percent of their clients would need food assistance long term. The most optimistic estimate, shared by two of the executive directors was that half of their clients in line would move on to food secure lives. However, the majority of executive directors were less optimistic. Seven believed that only 10 percent and one thought only 5 percent would ever leave the food assistance lines. Thus, most executive directors interviewed thought a high percentage of their clients would be permanent users of food-bank services. Food Bankers call this phenomena 'chronic users' of food banking. Since the need for food is no longer temporary and is the new normal, ensuring there is enough emergency food for these clients for a life time changes how food banks must strategically plan for a lifetime worth of food to meet the increased need.

4.1.3 Categories of consistent food-bank clientele.

The reasons that many of the food insecure will not leave the lines are because they are simply not in a position to achieve food security on their own. These groups include children, seniors, and low-wage workers.

Children are not in a position to meet their own food security needs, and hunger affects more than one in five children. Feeding America and the Howard Buffet Foundation launched their *Map the Meal Gap* website and interactive mapping tool (mapthemealgap.org, 2015) that

measures the food insecurity of the overall population and the childhood hunger rate for every county and congressional district in the United States. The current rate of overall hunger is 15.8 percent of people being food insecure but childhood hunger is always higher, this year at 21.4 percent (mapthemealgap.org, 2015 using 2013 numbers) Food banks have developed many programs to address the specialized needs of hungry children because children do not have the ability to achieve food security on their own. Specialized programs include weekend backpacks full of food that children can take home on Friday afternoon. Many of these children depend on school breakfast and lunches for meals, and thus may go without food on weekends. At IVFB, the backpack looks like anyone else's and is not identifiable as food assistance allowing the child not to feel self-conscious or ashamed because they are receiving aid.

One of the fastest growing groups in food bank lines is seniors. They very often have a limited ability to work due to physical issues or perhaps in some cases, age discrimination. These seniors will most likely not be able to achieve food security on their own. Because they generally will not be able to go back to work, this growing group of clients will “continue to face increasing challenges despite the end of the Great Recession” (Ziliak & Gunderen, 2014). In addition, many are raising their grandchildren on their own fixed incomes (Ellis and Simmons, 2014). Nationally, one in 10 children live with a grandparent and 40 percent of those children are being raised by their grandparents (AARP, 2010). Since many seniors spend a large portion of their income on medical issues and expensive medications, it is a challenge to pay for additional food for new family members. Ziliak and Gunderen (2014) bring home the reality of the recession for the senior population, “since the onset of the great depression in 2007 until 2012, the number of seniors experiencing the threat of hunger, the risk of hunger, and hunger has increased by 49%, 63%, and 68%, respectively” (p. 2). The greatest increase in new people

seeking food assistance from food banks are seniors aged 60-69; these are the baby boomers that have recently moved into retirement, but are not necessarily prepared with the financial resources to do so (Ziliak & Gunderen).

The economic recession brought many working families to food bank assistance for the first times in their lives. At IVFB, there was a time when people with a very expensive car came to get emergency food. In conversation with them, staff learned that the father had just been laid off from well-paying profession and had never needed assistance of any kind before. Some of these professions, including agricultural jobs now replaced by technology or the closing of the only slaughterhouse which left 1800 people without work, are no longer options in the Imperial Valley. These workers must transition into new fields or industries where there are jobs available, even if these new jobs do not pay well enough for workers to achieve food security on their own. Thus another consistent group of people the food bank network continues to help are those families whose sources of income are minimum wage, and perhaps part-time jobs. In fact, ‘the U.S. Department of Labor projects that nearly half of the 15 million jobs the U.S. economy will produce between 2012 and 2022 will be in low-wage occupations’ (Babic et al., 2014) indicating that the structure of the national economy will be complicit in the vicious poverty cycle that perpetuates the need for continued food assistance even though new jobs are being created.

Because of the fragile situation of their lives and the economic forces that are beyond any individual control, the majority of food bank clients will be unlikely to achieve food security by increasing their income and, by extension, their ability to purchase more food. Current observations and future projections indicate that food insecurity is not going away, but has instead become the new normal in the United States.

4.2 The Challenges of Meeting the New Normal of Food Insecurity

The challenge is keeping that balance between serving today's need and the future and to create a sustainable model. Where do you invest those monies that come in from the community? Do you buy food for today's need or do you build for the future?

Terry Shannon, 2015, personal communication
CEO St. Mary's Food Bank, retired

The new normal of food banking is complicated, expensive and filled with regulations. And because the regulations keep changing, there is a greater demand on food banks to shift resources from food to infrastructure to be prepared for the continuing demand of clients. This section looks at several of the elements that make up the new normal, including the question of long-term food bank use, infrastructure advances, the culturally appropriateness of food, the nutritional value of food and the increased need for funding.

4.2.1 Building for increased capacity to meet increased demand.

To meet this increased and steady demand of food assistance, food banks had to grow at a time when the economy had contracted. Not only have food banks had to grow in the amount of food they distribute, they also must meet higher standards of responsibility and accountability. For example, as food bank programs expand to serve more people, public health and food safety risks increase. Food banks must be able to track the food they distribute in case there is a food recall (Feeding America, 2014). This requires inventory software to track which agencies received what food on what date; and it requires a skilled workforce to be able to administer the software system as well as organize, sort and pick orders for those agencies. Jim Floros, Executive Director of the San Diego Food Banks spoke on the infrastructure demands:

Transferring to a model where you need to move food quicker obviously as a supply chain organization we have had to become more nimble. We know that when we get fresh produce in we need to turn around and get it out into the community in a shorter

period of time. We've had to expand our refrigeration, expand our freezer space; so it has created a financial burden on the organization.

The quest to maximize efficiency is also a challenge, and best practices and technology are borrowed from the private sector. Large urban food banks that deal in massive amounts of food have the ability and technology to allow agencies to select the kind of food they need by ordering from their website. The order is then picked from the stock by warehouse workers and ready when the agency arrives.

In order to handle bulk food which is stored on wooden pallets, industrial strength equipment is required. Forklifts, pallet jacks, refrigerators and freezers that are large enough to drive forklifts into, and large scale trucks, some of which must have refrigeration are the basic pieces of equipment in any food bank warehouse. As in U.S. warehouses in other industries, Operational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards are enforced. The facilities and equipment are checked for compliance by local fire departments for fire safety, by OSHA for industry-standard warehouse safety, and by USDA for food safety. A new layer of controls through a mandatory third-party food safety audit has been implemented by Feeding America with a compliance date of March 31, 2016 (Feeding America, 2014). This third-party audit is patterned after the American Institute of Baking audit for food safety and is higher in standard than most grocery store food safety standards (Ney, personal communication, June 2013). The USDA also now requires food banks to have a food-defense plan to protect their donated food supply from terrorist activity (USDA, 2014). As the standards of operations have increased, so have the regulations in other areas of the management of food banks, all of them at a higher cost overall for organizations struggling with increased demand and decreased resources.

While food banks still rely heavily on volunteers for manual labor, there is a growing amount of food bank work that must be done by a skilled workforce who are trained in the regulations, software systems, and industrial equipment for example. With this comes the need for more fundraising to cover salaries and the ability to keep employees, which includes pay raises and benefits. From my own experience as a non-profit executive director, it has been difficult to keep staff who are trained and proficient as they leave for the for-profit sector with knowledge and experience to earn higher salaries.

4.2.2 Building for increased regulations.

While food banks have grown to meet increased demand, there has also been an increase in stringent laws and regulations for food and warehouse safety and finances. Because government-issued food is provided to food banks, the highest level and risk audit, the A-133 Circular, must be performed on every food bank serving over \$750,000 worth of USDA TEFAP food (USDA, 2014). These extremely expensive audits are then displayed to the public on websites such as *Charity Navigator* who rate the food bank based on their set criteria for which they award stars. Such criteria are based solely on financial information gathered from IRS 990 filings (Charity Navigator, 2015). Feeding America also audits each food bank annually to be sure they meet their standards and each food bank must then in turn audit each of their agencies/food pantries/congregate feeding sites to be sure they are meeting their obligatory Feeding America and USDA requirements. Requirements of agencies and churches include, for example, food safety standards, non-profit documentation, copies of the agencies financial audits and attendance at volunteer trainings when held by the food bank.

Since food banks are independent 501(c)3s, each must have their own board of directors, fundraising strategies or departments, grant writers, and insurance with a variety of coverages including loss of business, directors liability, general liability and unemployment. Food banks must have all the necessary components of a non-profit organization. In addition, many states have associations of food banks that serve as food solicitors, advocacy organizations require member dues, and Feeding America requires that every associated food banker attend a national conference once every two years and does not offer any assistance with payment. These are just some of the requirements of managing a 21st century charitable food organization and show why there has been a dramatic rise in the cost of running food banks in the last decade.

4.2.3 Increasing costs of running food banks.

The great scope to which the food bank system has grown has meant increased expenses. In the last ten years the cost of operating a food bank has increased by 61 percent (Heath, personal communication, Feeding America data manager, 2015). Many of these costs have been related to increased food distributed, going from 2 billion pounds in 2007 to 4 billion in 2014 (Feeding America, 2007, 2014). The corporate community and foundations provide a great deal of money and donations to food banks, but the majority of food banks' income is from individual giving (Feeding America, 2014). However, it is no surprise that charitable giving in general has declined since the great recession. Today, food banks must constantly seek new sources of food and funding since while charitable giving has declined, expenses have increased. Costello (2014) cautions that it is not likely to be until 2022 before charitable giving will reach 2007 levels. So although donations have decreased nationwide, food banks have had to work harder to operate with larger budgets in order to meet the increase in demand. They are struggling to meet increased need with decreased donations, both of money and of food.

4.2.4 The Challenge of having enough food.

Food banking has already had to adapt and change in its short history because the excess food supplies to which they have access and base their operations on have ebbed and flowed. So even though there has been a great increase in demand for food, the resources of that food are not necessarily stable. In the early years of food banking with the beginning of the national network of food banks (Feeding America, formerly called America's Second Harvest) the combined power of this network was able to attract, in addition to TEFAP commodities, a large amount of donated food from national companies such as Kraft, Beatrice Foods and CPC North America (Hensley, 2013). This changed in the late 1990's, as national food donations began to drop to charitable organizations (Teller, Ash & Sigler, 2012, personal communication). The national corporations that previously donated food to the food bank system began selling that food to secondary retailers. Mark Lowry, Director of the Orange County Food Bank, who has been in his position for 26 years, recalled that:

About fifteen years ago we started to see a steady decline in the availability of canned and dry goods to our food banks and we started hearing the same complaint from colleagues. An explosion of new Dollar Stores and 99 Cent Stores, the grocery outlets... would offer the same product, being sold for pennies on the dollar that we used to see at food banks for decades. We did see a steady decline in availability of that category of food and we attributed it to the growth of the secondary food market. (Mark Lowry, personal communication, 2015)

The secondary food market decreased the product available to be donated to food banks and those food banks were left with the infrastructure and facilities they had worked for years to build that could handle the donated product from these national retailers who now sold these products to grocery outlets. The challenge facing food banks was to figure out where the next source of food would come from to fill those warehouses.

Over the years, food banks have developed four main sources of food supply to fill their warehouses. First is TEFAP through the USDA commodity program, which was discussed previously. Second are national corporate donations of product to Feeding America. Food banks who are members of Feeding America are allotted points to use in a bidding system in which they bid against other Feeding America food banks to receive large quantities of products donated by national corporations. While the products are free to the Feeding America food bank, there are costs involved with transporting these goods to the winning food bank that must be paid for by the food bank.

A third source is food rescue, and is also known as Perishable Donation Partnership (PDP). This type of food bank programming rescues food not retailable for consumption. It is largely grocery stores that participate in this program, often mandated by corporate leadership, allowing food banks to pick up food that would otherwise be thrown away. This may include mislabeled products, discontinued products, food that is about to expire and other food that is edible but not saleable. Food banks in urban areas in particular are able to rescue thousands of pounds of food per week. Volunteers are harnessed to sort through the rescued food and organize it so agencies can place orders to fill their pantry shelves or fill recipes at soup kitchens.

A fourth food supply strategy for food banks is to purchase food. Urban food banks such as Chicago Food Depository and the Los Angeles Food Bank have employees focused on fundraising and can procure large amounts of monetary donations. This money is used to purchase food in bulk at great savings over retail. This strategy of food purchase is more difficult for rural food banks such as the IVFB who lack development officers to fundraise, have poorer communities to fundraise in and must stretch their limited budgets to cover the cost of operations with little remaining for the purchase of food.

Even though these sources of support have become well established over the years, they are still limited in meeting clients' needs and in being stable enough for food banks to confidently rely on them. The fiscal crisis and the government shut downs the country has encountered in recent years have created challenge after challenge for the food bank system. The current emphasis on fresh produce is producing and filling food bank refrigerators, but the reality that the flow of donated food by government is precarious. As the waves of food have come and gone the food banker is left to wonder from where will the next wave come?

4.2.5 The nutrition challenge.

Beyond the challenges to gather enough food, in the last twenty years, but particularly in the last ten, there has been increased national attention paid to the need for healthy and nutritious food (Lo & Jacobson, 2011, Allen 2004). This movement has manifested itself in programs such as farm to fork/table/plate, farm to school, and farmers' markets. The USDA now offers incentives for farmers markets to accept SNAP for produce purchases and other grants for innovative programs to get healthier food to local communities (USDA, 2015). So for food banks, this too is a part of the new normal; the need to be sure the food we distribute is considered healthy.

The HBO documentary, *The Weight of the Nation*, was particularly critical of the type of food that food banks have been giving out in the food security network because they were giving out food that had been donated to them. From personal experience, I can attest that an enormous amount of cookies and crackers used to represent food given out by food banks in the years after sources of good canned goods dried up with the creation of the secondary market (Dollar Stores and the like). Public attention to what food banks distributed, the rise of obesity, especially

among minority populations and the nationwide focus on healthier led to the need for nutritious food for low-income people.

The food bank/food assistance system, long dependent on the “factory outlet” farm commodities and donated products from national manufacturers and local organizations, gave out the food it was given; food in, food out. The quality or healthfulness of the product had not ever been questioned. National media attention focused on how poor the quality of food was in the national food assistance system. Food banks were suddenly, and for the first time, not being applauded for giving food to the hungry. Food banks are now held to accountability for the quality and nutritional value of the food they dispense.

A desire to create standards of what food should be distributed led food banks to emphasize healthy food products and nutrition education rather than empty calories (Handforth, Hennick, & Schwartz, 2013). Some food banks have even developed food policies governing the nutritional quality of the food they distribute. In 2004, the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank developed a nutritional food ranking system called ‘Choosing Healthy Options’ (CHOP). A 3-point scale labels foods as: 1. Choose Frequently, 2. Choose Occasionally, 3. Choose Rarely. This system helps both food bank staff and clients make quick yet informed decisions about what foods to select to enable clients to use the food for healthy meals. The CHOP ranking system has been adopted by more than a dozen food banks across the country. Hank Perret, President and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank of Austin, TX says that adopting the CHOP system has led to improved nutritional quality of the food they distribute.

34

Over the last decade, food banks have also worked to increase the fresh fruits and vegetables they distribute by creating relationships directly with farms and other local

processors. Bob Aiken, CEO of Feeding America emphasized the importance of fresh produce to the national network of food banks. In comments to me he stressed how much product is left in the field and untapped stream of potential produce for the food insecure. He also commented that “providing access to fresh produce and the connections between diet and disease can help people eat and be healthier“(Bob Aiken, personal communication, 2015). Today the food banking industry is attempting to access every grown fruit and vegetable in order that no produce is left unpicked. This is with good reason. The memory of a secondary market arising for donated canned goods, the food bank network is at risk of another business or corporation cornering the market as the secondary buyer for B and C quality produce. At local, state and national levels food banks are discovering many and varied ways to work with existing farmers to harness what they are already growing taking advantage of the product that will not make it to market in hopes that food banks become and corner that secondary market.

35

There are several sources available to food banks to procure fresh produce. A great example is from the California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) Farm to Family program. CAFB is a national leader in the procurement of fresh farm produce, which is made available to food banks at pennies on the dollar by promoting concurrent picking. In concurrent picking, rather than leaving B and C quality produce in the field to be disked under after harvest, workers pick all the harvest and sort it by grade allows the B and C quality produce to be sold to food banks at usually less than \$.10 a pound. This program is truly innovative and sustainable and rescued 140 million pounds of produce in 2013 (CAFB 2013). Yet this addition of fresh produce to food banking is one of the main reasons why so much refrigeration is needed in food bank warehouses today. Fresh produce is delicate and fragile, and it has a very short shelf life. It takes an efficient and organized internal infrastructure of food banks and their inventory systems allow

this produce to be distributed in a manner in which the recipients can get the product while still fresh.

The nationwide emphasis on fresh produce itself presents challenges. Fresh produce is one element of a healthy diet, but it is not the only element. Children and seniors in particular need steady amounts of protein and dairy in their diets. The network has not worked to establish relationships or campaigns in which to harness more of these vital food group foods for their clients.

4.2.6 Other challenges.

There are many more dimensions to what food banks do to stay afloat and stay funded in this post-recession era. These include advocacy at all levels of government, attending conferences at state and national levels, attaining trainings for food safety, financial controls, and maintaining HR legal requirements to name a few. As food banks have struggled to provide adequate food and services to their clients, they have also had to prove their own adequacy to appease leadership and funders. As most funders want proof of how food banks use their resources wisely, food banks have faced the challenge of demonstrating that they make an impact on the real issues of hunger in their communities. Thus some food banks have risen to the challenge in a way that puts them on the cutting edge of programming and takes into account the intersections of poverty, food insecurity, the economy, and the food system itself.

There a delicate balance at play in the relationship between food banks and the federal nutrition assistance programs. A brief talk with Jim Weill, President of Food Research and Action Council since 1998, revealed his concern with the lack of government interest in addressing the larger issues facing the lives of the food insecure:

Nobody knows better than food banks that as important as they are they can't meet the need. We need higher wages and better income and public programs. Better systems, wage and benefits and public supports. (Jim Weill, FRAC, 2015)

The founder of Imperial Valley Food Bank, Richard Ryan, had similar comments about the onus of government to address food security issues and not to rely on non-profit organizations to do the work for them.

Nationally, however, political leaders may misperceive the ability of voluntary organizations ("the thousand points of light") to take up the slack of government program cuts, or policy makers may seek to mask the impact of budget cuts by pointing to the effective work performed by food banks. (Richard Ryan, as interviewed by Poppendieck, 1998)

Should any further erosion or cuts be made to benefits, particularly those of SNAP, the system could be upended quickly as food banks are doing all they can now to meet the needs of the food insecure for the one week or more a month they are called on to fill the gap. The survival of this partnership depends on government continuing to fund food assistance at the current post-recession levels.

Food banks have grown to be able to meet the needs of the food insecure. A perfect storm of increased demand and regulations in the same instance of a vulnerable economy has forced food banks to grow into well managed and well run organizations. Many food banks, including IVFB, claim in their mission statement that they are fighting hunger. Yet truthfully, we are not fighting hunger as much as we are simply managing hunger. We are managing to get food to people so they survive, and yet we are also increasing our scope to try to make that food more abundant and more nutritionally sound so that our capacity grows in ways that allows a transition from managing hunger into proactively fighting hunger.

However, the precariousness of this relationship between the public and private partners currently involved in the food security network has led food bankers to find even more ways to procure food for clients. The innovative strategies food banks have adopted by farming move food banks beyond food security to the edge of food sovereignty as they work to gain control over the amount, type, and nutritious quality of their food supply and all without the cost of transporting it.

4.3 Food Banks Farms

What is the significance of food bank farms? This research has identified over thirty food banks engaged in some sort of growing, which represents 15% of food banks. Similar to how food banks developed on their own in different parts of the United States, food bank farms have emerged without any push, incentive or funding from higher powers in food banking. As food banks developed out of community need, food bank farms have been developed because of the insecurity food bankers feel about the future sources of food for their clients. There is a need to provide food security for the food bank as an institution, as well for the individual lives of the clients served. There is also a need for food banks to be food sovereign; by claiming ownership of the process in order to insure more food, in a fresher state, with higher nutritional quality and with less need to pay for the high cost of transporting food to their particular location. Food banks are increasingly interested in efforts to produce their own food supply.

4.3.1 Motivation.

The primary motivation for growing food at food banks is to increase the amount of fresh produce. Otherwise food banks have difficulty getting enough healthy food to their clientele with traditional methods which are focused on procuring and distributing shelf-stable, processed food

products. Unless a food bank is surrounded by a large agricultural area, most food banks have to purchase fresh produce. Another challenge is that even if fresh produce is available to food banks, not all food banks have the infrastructure (refrigeration, freezers, and refrigerated vehicles), programs developed or money to cover the high cost of transportation of fresh produce. For these reasons procuring fresh produce can be an expensive proposition. In order to have more stable or predictable access to fresh produce, many food banks have turned to their local farmers or the talents of a few farming experts and some vacant land in order to proactively harness the bounty of the earth to increase the healthy food for their clients.

The cultural appropriateness of food is a consideration rarely discussed in the discourse on food banking, but no less relevant to the many minority populations food banks serve. The ability of food banks to grow not only what grows in their climate, but to add fruits, vegetables and herbs contained the cultural dishes of their populations is another step toward food sovereignty that food bank farming allows.

A story of not understanding the significance of culturally appropriate food was told by Bill Shick, farm manager of Chester County Food Bank, in Pennsylvania, explained that the African American community of Coatesville was unimpressed with the hot peppers they had received at distribution; similarly the Mexican community in Kennett Square was unsure of the okra given to them. This may sound stereotypical of these cultures, but cultural appropriateness is important as clients may not have the resources to buy all the ancillary spices and ingredients needed to prepare food that is known to them and much less so for food that is unknown to them.

39

Because food banks that grow have control over what they plant, within the constraints of climate, water, soil and space, these food banks can intentionally grow types of food that are

most appropriate for their communities. Even key herbs needed for cultural dishes can be grown for the specific cultures within a service region.

Young (1990) explains that, 'Dependency in our society thus implies, as it has in all liberal societies, a sufficient warrant to suspend basic rights to privacy, respect, and individual choice' (p. 64) and so it is with those dependent on the emergency food system. Low-income people who rely on the food bank network have little choice in what they are given to eat. Providing choice and culturally appropriate food to ethnic groups will not solve the injustice and stigma that surround food insecurity, nor the multitude of other injustices that maybe a part of their lives, but it does attempt to show dignity and respect to clients by allowing them to put food on the table that is recognizable and culturally meaningful.

Moving food that is donated, unwanted, of lesser quality or about to expire is the usual fare offered to the low income people who participate in the food insecurity programs. But food banks farming turn this approach on its head by growing their own food and working to provide the highest quality, nutritionally dense, and culturally appropriate foods for those who have historically been given limited choice of selection and quality.

Another motivation for growing in the area near to the food bank is that it secures a supply of food that is not as susceptible to being lost or going bad if disasters or weather incidents affect other areas of the country and interfere with transportation of food to a food bank. A large storm in the northeast can keep produce from New Jersey from getting to the Midwest and the fragile state of produce will not allow for a lengthy wait. Knowing that some kind of food is growing in one's proverbial backyard creates security for the food banker.

4.3.2 Resources for food bank farms.

While all food bankers interviewed for this study shared the desire to provide their clients with a relatively steady stream of nutritious food, the means for reaching that goal did not happen without strategic planning and a choice to move into non-traditional food banking arenas. As the basic elements of growing food, land, labor, and capital are fundamental to the creation and maintenance of food bank farms, the following section discusses these elements and the approaches and techniques various food banks have used to start food bank farms. They reveal both weaknesses and future opportunities.

4.3.2.1 Land.

In very creative ways food banks have found access to land in order to farm. Many food banks actually own no land, but run large farm operations through partnerships, leasing, or contracting with farmers to grow on their own for the food bank.

The five year-old Chester County Food Bank developed out of a long-standing gleaning program that served the county through an already established food pantry network. The food bank now harnesses that pantry network and encourages each pantry and many other small-scale sites (churches, schools etc.) to grow fresh produce in garden beds. The produce grown is donated to the food bank and moved to their pantries for distribution to clients. They have also received land from active farms in the county and have a full-time staff people who farms the donated acres for the food bank. They have received many offers of donated land for farming and have had to refuse more land, as they do not have the staff or resources to farm more than they are currently.

A former Cooperative Extension research farm of the University of Washington was abandoned and returned to Clark County in Washington State. The former administrator of the extension, now retired, was retained to maintain it for the county. Eventually a ten acres parcel was lent to the Clark County Food Bank and the retired administrator now farms that land for the food bank. While only ten acres, it has produced a few thousand pounds of food for the food bank and has become a valuable tool for getting local citizens involved with the work of feeding the food insecure in Clark County.

The Western Massachusetts Food Bank has been farming since 1992 and may be the food bank engaged in farming for the longest amount of time. Their 60 acre farm is owned by the food bank through an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) of the State of Massachusetts. The land must be farmed in perpetuity or it can be returned to the state. These programs are available in many states and provide non-development alternatives to farmers by subsidizing the farmer for the difference between the fair market value and the agricultural value of the farmland. (Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs, 2015) Designated solely for agricultural purposes, a local **framers** works all the land and retains 60 percent of the harvest for his own Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. The food bank gets the remaining 40 percent of the harvest. Because of this arrangement, the food bank yields approximately 100,000 pounds of fresh produce a year with no outlay from the food bank, in labor, time, or cost except for a nominal insurance policy on the property. The Food Bank is looking for more farmland to acquire through the APR program to increase their annual supply of locally harvested produce.

42

The Maryland Food Bank does not own any farmland. But the need for nutritious fresh produce for their clients led to a model of contracting farmers throughout the state to grow for them on the farmers own land. The food bank provides the field labor for this arrangement. With

three facilities in the state, the two person-staff have steadily increased the number of farmers in the program contributing substantially more produce each year to the food bank.

Factors that affect the amount of produce that comes from food bank farms are the size of the project, the land, and the relationships. In Clark County, the ten acre plot of land provided 200,000 pounds per year for a food bank that serves 33,000 clients per month. The Maryland Food Bank, which serves the whole state, has contracted local farmers to raise produce for them. In 2014, this program yielded 1.5 million pound of fresh produce. The many variables of the food bank farm, the number of clients they need to serve, the amount of staff and funding available for the project are all factors that affect the size harvest. Food banks have been creative, proactive and strategic in the manner in which they engage farmers and land to grow the needed fresh produce. The various farms described paint a dynamic picture of the community partnerships and possible alliances that can move food banks to growing without large land purchases, equipment purchases, or major investments in staff. Through creative partnerships, many food banks are growing food without owning or touching any land.

4.3.2.2 *Labor.*

43

Labor for food banks farms comes from three sources, staff, volunteers and contracted farmers. Without doubt the majority of labor comes from volunteers. With few resources to hire full time staff devoted to the growing programs, food bank volunteer coordinators are charged with finding large pools of labor for the demanding manual work of farming. School groups, church groups, corporate volunteers, inmates and the recently paroled make up the variety of volunteer (and volunteered) sources of labor for food bank farms. In the northwest weeding is a huge task that requires farm workers every week of the growing season.¹

Food banks interviewed had a staff person who managed the farm program. In some banks it was the produce manager, who also worked on farming contracts, but in most banks it was an employee whose main job was farming or coordinating the volunteers who farmed. As there are just 15 percent of food banks engaged in farming, there is not a lot of training, or resources to share amongst growers, and there is even less funding available to pay for staff salaries. It would be heartening to see more funding opportunities to support food bank farmers.

Most food banks have not tried to recruit volunteers amongst their clients, but Clark County Food Bank is an exception. They ambitiously began such a program to allow self-determination amongst their clients but found very little interest. This makes sense as many food bank clients are elderly; the hard work of weeding and harvesting is not appropriate labor. The working poor who are assisted by food banks are actually working and not free to give the volunteer time needed even if they are able-bodied. So therefore clients are not currently engaged in the labor needed to grow food on food bank farms. Some food banks are able to grow food without ever putting their hands to the soil. By leveraging volunteer labor or building creative partnerships with local farmers, food banks are able to reap the produce without necessarily doing the hard labor themselves.

4.3.2.3 *Capital.*

¹ During his interview with me, Blair Wolfer shared that working the same land for some many years, he had noticed the effects of climate change. The weeding of the farm must be done constantly, unlike many years ago when cooler weather helped keep the weeds to a minimum.

By creatively harnessing land and equipment through partnerships and loans, food bank farms have found ways around the usual high startup costs associated with such large scale programs. Chester County Food Bank began its larger scale farm work through local grant funding. Since they do not farm on their own land, but partner with active farmers, they can use the equipment of the farm and thus bypass the need for an investment in farm equipment. Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, CA fulfills a land maintenance contract on the site of their *Incredible Edible Farm*. The City of Irvine pays them a yearly stipend for this work, and this contract pays for one third of the costs of their farm. Western Massachusetts Food bank is considering a capital campaign to buy another parcel of land under the agricultural land trust program (APR) to increase the size of their possible yield. My conversations with growers did not reveal any substantial grant writing currently being done to fund these farming programs. The biggest financial hurdle for farms is the need for salaries for staff, especially employees with farm expertise, not just interns and farm labor.

45

It does bear mentioning that as relatively new programs on the spectrum of food banking, there may not be specific funding available for food bank farms. Many foundations are long-time supporters of food security organizations and as such provide grants for more traditional food bank programs, e.g., backpacks for kids, SNAP outreach, transportation infrastructure. Grants tailored for existing programs may miss the opportunity of innovations happening in the food bank world. Many funders are looking for innovative and sustainable programs, but few will leave a grant so open ended that food bank farm capacity would fit into an existing grant requirement. The ability of food banks to leverage the resources for farms without major sources to funding is quite remarkable but it could be so much more impressive with foundation support and funding through Feeding America.

4.3.3 Further initiatives in food bank food procurement.

Fresh produce as has been discussed is incredibly healthy, easy to grow and relatively inexpensive to procure for food banks because there is so much excess available. Finding protein for clients is a much larger and more expensive challenge. I identified two programs that are working to make protein available to food banks.

The first has been developed by David Goodman at Redwood Empire Food Bank in Santa Rosa, CA. David has worked with a local rancher and develop a partnership where the rancher raised the cattle expressly for its end use as meat for the food bank. When asked why he had started this program, David responded: The emphasis on fresh produce in the (food bank) network is great but what happens when a better market develops for that produce? (David Goodman, personal communication, 2015) Reflecting on what happened with the rise of the secondary market for canned goods, this is important to consider in thinking strategically about the flow of food in the food bank network. He currently has eight cattle in the program. One cow alone will yield 1800 pounds of meat. While early in its development, David felt this is the “way of the future” in food banking.

46

A second lean protein project is under development at the Second Harvest Food Bank based in New Orleans, LA. The food bank has received a grant to build an aquaponic greenhouse facility to raise both fish and vegetables for their clients for their community kitchen program. Aquaponic growing can be a model of efficiency and versatility when properly managed. The unique closed system allow fish to grow in tanks and fertilize the vegetables which usually grow above the tanks in a shelving system. A greenhouse can be erected on any kind of land, urban landscape or desert floor; not just prime farmland. It is an ideal answer for food banks who do not have the local capacity of farmers already growing with which to partner.

Another novel idea is food hubs. The Wallace Center is the food systems component of Winrock International, a non-profit who specializes working with local communities to “empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity, and sustain natural resources” (Winrock International, 2015). As part of their work on improving local access to healthy food has focused on Regional Food Hubs. A Food Hub is an aggregate distribution center that works to gather locally grown, small farm produce and goods and distribute them up the supply chain to large institutions and retailers. Food “Hubs fill the void in the marketplace that established companies are not serving. The demand for local food substantiates a change toward procurement focused on values that transcend cost alone” (Johnson as quoted by Cantrell and Heuer, 2014). For example, Food Link New York of Rochester, NY has already transformed their food bank into a regional food hub for small farmers in the northern New York area. The food bank food hub is a social enterprise that works alongside the traditional food bank distribution model. At the food bank hub local farmers drop off their produce which is washed and packed. The harvest of multiple growers is combined to have a larger impact. The food bank operates two divisions; the traditional food bank system of distributed donated food and a social enterprise where they act as the distributor for locally grown produce to large institutional buyers and the proceeds of the sales help fund the work of the food bank. It also serves as an economic generator for small farmers who may have had difficulty getting the attention of large distribution centers, but who can now combine their harvest to create economies of scale.

47

The food hub idea is an innovative use of existing warehouse space, staff, inventory systems, refrigeration, trucking and the many modern aspects now required of food banks. The Wallace Center is supporting and encouraging the creation of food hubs in other locations in the U.S. (Cantrell & Heuer, 2014). Time will tell if other food banks move to this unique model of

the combination of a distribution center to both the food insecure and the institutional food buyer.

4.3.4. Growing food banks.

Alternative to the last thirty years of food banking when dependency on government commodities and local canned food drive donations filled their shelves, food banks have become agencies that harness the unique growing situations of their local communities to garner as much healthy fresh produce as they can store and distribute. Food banks are developing increased capacity to either grow more of their own food or access food locally grown by others in their regional farm system.

The data also revealed that when food banks engage in the work of growing, many others are attracted to those efforts. The immense number of volunteers it takes to do weeding and harvesting shows that many have made a commitment to continue this priority work. The farmers who have been asked to provide land continue to do this, indeed there are even more farmers joining the movement at two of the food banks that were interviewed. Of particular interest are the offers of donated land to food banks when landowners see the good work of these food bank farm efforts. Two farm managers told me they had access to more land than they could use.

48

The harvests of these farms vary in degree, but all are contributing to better food for the friends and neighbors served by the food bank. Several food bank farms are limited in plot size, staff and climate or their programs are in their infancy and have not seen large harvest. The farms who have been able to increase in size or scope have seen great leaps in the number of

pounds they have been able to access. The Maryland Food Bank began with 225,000 pounds per year four years ago, it now harvests over 1.5 million annually.

New, innovative food bank programs that move the needle of their programming from addressing food security into establishing food sovereignty allow food banks greater control of food supply. Many food banks are doing this through innovative leveraging of other resources, without having to do the farming themselves. In the unique public-private space food banks inhabit, they have the freedom to create programs that do not necessarily fit traditional roles of programming in order to meet the challenges of the new normal of food insecurity. It is through these efforts that the security of the food insecurity network has been established.

I know that my examination of the food bank network and some of the innovative approaches to food security is only one piece of the larger puzzle of food systems and food insecurity. The intended result of this thesis is to create a pathway for others engaged in food insecurity work to expand beyond traditional food bank methods into more innovative ones that create better food security for clients and food sovereignty for food banks. The data reveals trends and innovations that could be replicable in other environments and therefore could lead to enhancements to food supply across the food bank network. This research will be shared with those who are interested in meeting the needs created by the high level of food insecurity that remain post-recession including food bankers, those interested in food bank growing farms and funders looking to support food banks in this innovative work.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

They showed me the three piles they divided the product into: stuff that the manufacturer required to be returned, stuff that would be sold and stuff that would be donated to food

banks. I asked them ‘How do you distinguish between the products that would be donated or be sold’. They said matter of factly, ‘Well we sell the good stuff’. Which implied they we got the less good stuff donated to food banks.

Mark Lowry, 2015, personal communication
CEO of Orange County Food Bank

Since their creation food banks have been dealing in the world of “the less good stuff”. Collecting unwanted government food, recovering waste from fields and grocery stores, serving the people no one else will assist, dealing with a growing demand while the economy contracted are some of challenges of dealing with “ less good stuff.” Yet food banks have made lemonade of those lemons, refusing to let the inconsistencies of government, food surplus or the economy keep them from their mission to feed the hungry.

50

The goal of this thesis was to examine food bank programs in order to understand how they work to meet increasing and consistent demands so that they can equip themselves to address the new normal of food insecurity. By investigating who food banks serve, their challenges and the innovative work they are doing by growing their own food, a picture of organizations that are secure in their role as a major player in the food insecurity network emerges. However, this assessment comes with two important caveat. First, it is predicated on there being no changes to the levels, programs and promises of the U.S. government when it comes to their share of the nutrition assistance safety net. In fact, this thesis may have a short window of accuracy should congress proceed with cuts and programmatic changes to the SNAP program that are being discussed and debated this very month (March, 2015). Second, that no secondary market emerges to take the lesser quality produce out of the hands of the food bank network.

Food banks are increasingly becoming cutting-edge organizations that are a vital link filling the gap left by insufficient SNAP benefits and by the emergence of food banks growing

their own food to move the movement from just security into sovereignty. These food banks are creating programs that respond to the new normal of food insecurity with a new standard of high quality, nutritious food that affirms the dignity of its clients. Through this programming, many food banks have shown how they enhance security of their organizations to address food insecurity despite multiple challenges in a dynamic environment. The paradox that food banks have been able to become more secure in the face of increased food insecurity demonstrates their need to become normal in order to address the new normal of food insecurity. Poverty is currently normal because the dominant food and economic systems are failing a large number of people in this country. Yet instead of interpreting this as fatalistic, many food banks have created new systems and partnerships, albeit on a small scale, that are an alternative to these dominant food and economic systems that leave many people in situations in which they are chronically food insecure.

The findings about the importance of food banking to ameliorate food insecurity suggest that funding agencies consider innovative projects, such as food bank farming, that may fit outside normal criteria for grant support. As these farms are so new, they may not be in the purview of more established foundations. The work of food bank farms is a positive step in the right direction of food security for people and food sovereignty for food banks. It will need the help of funding sources to support the creation of adequate staffing and other resources for food bank farms.

I would recommend that further research be done in both food banks and food banks farms. There is too little critical analysis of what food banks are doing on an industry-wide perspective. The food bank farms show great promise, but much more work can be done in order to understand best practices, the outcomes of the programs and new innovations emerging front

this work that can be shared with other food bankers and funders interested in supporting these types of projects.

It is not often that one can see how so few people with so few resources are able to create a strong and vibrant service to so many. Yet food bankers are branching beyond traditional food banking methods to try and do more than just manage the hunger problem. The methods of the past provided certain results, so it stands to reason that new methods are needed to move the security of the food banks and their clients into the territory of food sovereignty. To add to Terry Shannon and Mark Lowry, moving from agencies that accept the “less good stuff” to growing the really good stuff gets us closer to the end game – healthy meals on the table.

REFERENCES

AARP (2010). About Grandfacts. Retrieved from <http://aarp.org/relationships/>

Allen, P. (2004). *Together at the table*. Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park, PA

Allen, P. (2007). The disappearance of hunger in america. *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, 7 (2): 19

Anderson, S. (1990). Care indicators of nutritional state for difficult-to-sample populations. *Journal of Nutrition* 120: 1557-1600.

Babic, M., Dys, T., Hake, M., O'Leary, M., Waxman, E., & Yarrow, A. (2014). *From paycheck to pantry; Hunger in working America*. Report from the 2014 hunger study by Oxfam and Feeding America. Retrieved from: <http://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/From-Paycheck-to-Pantry-Oxfam-FeedingAmerica.pdf>

Calibi, C., Eslami, E., & Briefel, R. (2013). Final report TEFAP. Retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/TEFAPwhitepaper.pdf

California Association of Food Banks. (2013). End of year report. Retrieved from <http://cafb.org/>

Cantrell, P. & Heuer, B. (2014 March). Food hubs: Solving local. Wallace Center PDF. Retrieved from: <http://wallacecenter.org/>

Center on Budget and Public Policy. (2014). Who does SNAP reach: whitepaper
Retrieved from: <http://cbpp.org/>

Charity Navigator (2015). How do we rate charities? Retrieved from <http://charitynavigator.org/>

Costello, K. (2014). Food bank funding and donation policies. FactSheet prepared for ChangeLab Solutions. Unpublished document.

Creswell, J. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. London: Sage.

Denizin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2008). *The landscape of qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Ellis, R. & Simmons, T. (2014 October). Co-resident grandparents and their grandchildren: 2012. Report for US census. Retrieved from; <http://us.census.gov>

FAO. Food Security. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en>

Feeding America. (2007). Annual report. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/>

----- (2012). Food assistance becoming the “new normal.” whitepaper
Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america>

----- (2013). Annual report. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/>

----- (2014). Annual report. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/>

----- (2014). Member contract. Internal document

----- (2015). How TEFAP Works. Retrieved from <http://feedingamerica.org/>

Food Bank of Northern Indiana. (2015). Retrieved from <http://feedindiana.org/>

Food Bank of the Southern Tier. (2015). Retrieved from <http://foodbankst.org/>

Hanforth, B., Hennick, M., & Schwartz, M. (2013). A qualitative study of nutrition-based initiatives at selected food banks in the Feeding America Network. *Journal of Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 411-415.

Hensley, S. (2013). *The history of food banking and Feeding America*. Version –March 29, 2013. Unpublished document

Jones, A., Ngure, F., Pelto, G., Young, S. (2013). What are we assessing when we measure food security? A compendium and review of current metrics. *American Society for Nutrition, Adv. Nutr.* 4: 481-505.

- Lang, T. & Barling, D. (2012). Food security and food sustainability: Reformulating the debate. *Geographical Journal*, 178(4), 313-326.
- Libby, P. (2012). *The lobbyist strategy handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lo, J. & Jacobson, A. (2011). Human rights from field to fork: Improving labor conditions for food-sector workers by organizing across boundaries. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, 5, 1
- Map the Meal Gap (2015). Retrieved from: <http://mapthemealgap.org/>
- Massachusetts Energy & Environmental Affairs, (2015). Agricultural preservation restriction program (APR). Retrieved from: <http://mass.gov/eea/>
- Maye, D. & Kirwan, J. (2013). Food security: A fractured consensus. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 29: 1-6
- Poppendieck, J. (1998). *Sweet charity: Emergency food and the end of entitlement*. NYC, NY, Penguin Books
- Rocha, C. (2008). Brazil-Canada partnership: building capacity in food security. Center for Studies in Food Security, Ryerson University, Toronto.
- Shiavoni, C. (2014, January 24). Food sovereignty: A critical dialogue. *International Institute of Social Studies (ISS)*, The Hague, the Netherlands. Conference Paper #90.
- Shierholz, H. (2014, June 9). Six years from its beginning, the great recession's shadow looms over the labor market. Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from <http://epi.org/publications/>
- Snap to Health. (2012). Debunking Myths about Food Stamps. Retrieved from snaptohelath.org

St. Mary's Food Bank. (2014). History. Retrieved from <http://firstfoodbank.org>

Tobey, J. (2013). The great recession is dead. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: <http://forbes.com>

US Census, (2015). Persons in poverty. Retrieved from <http://uscensus.gov/search-results/>

USDA (2013). White paper on the emergency food assistance program (TEFAP) – Summary

----- (2014). <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

----- (2014). TEFAP Program guidelines. Internal Document.

----- (2015). Grant resources for farmers markets. Retrieved from:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/ebt/usda-grant-resources-farmers-markets>

----- (2015). Dietary guidelines. Retrieved from://choosemyplate.gov/

----- (2015). FY2015 Budget summary & annual performance. Retrieved from:
<http://obpa.usda.gov/>

----- (2015). Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <http://ers.usda.gov/>

Winne, M. (2008). *Closing the food gap: resetting the table in the land of plenty*. Beacon Press, Boston.

Winrock International, (2015). Home page history. Retrieved from <http://wallacecenter.org/>

Young, I. (1990). Five faces of oppression. *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*. New York: R, 2000.

Ziliak, J. & Gundersen, C. (2014). The state of senior hunger in America 2012: An annual

Report. Supplement for the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger. Retrieved from <http://nfesh.org/>