



Senator Liz Krueger discussed her 25-year history of working on food policy issues. She is an aggressive supporter of an array of food security issues, and would like to work in partnership with organizations to:

- Develop a wholesale green market for local and organic food in Hunt's Point;
- Change zoning laws to increase the availability of supermarkets in low-income areas; and
- Continue to improve the Food Stamp program and ensure all those who are eligible are receiving benefits, which includes ending interview and fingerprinting requirements.

Senator Krueger also discussed initiatives that will increase Food Stamp monies allotted to people living in public housing.

Pat Purcell of the UFCW Local 1500 explained how the UFCW became involved in the current food crisis. While organizing food and commercial workers, the Union discovered that only 550 out of 11,600 retail food outlets in NYC are traditional grocery stores. Recognizing the link between the supermarket shortage and the obesity and diabetes epidemics that ravage underserved New York City neighborhoods, the Union is working with other stakeholders and developing a set of policy principles in order to develop Good Food, Good Jobs, and Good Health in our communities.

Sean Sweeney, Director, Global Labor Institute discussed the food crisis within a global context.

- One in six people in the world are malnourished
- Forty percent of the world's workers work in the agriculture industry
- Three companies control 80 percent of the world's grain market
- This year, Exxon made record profits for any company ever.
- Speculation in food industry is contributing to food price rise.
- A global movement is developing that connects local and urban challenges with global crisis.
- Local groups can make their presence felt when world leaders attend next year's U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development

Triada Stampas Director of Government Relations & Public Education, Food Bank for New York City, discussed the Food Bank's three-prong approach:

- Serve New Yorkers when they don't have food
- Provide low-income New Yorkers with Food Stamp support
- Offer nutrition education to arm people with the information they need to make good decisions

Stampas also outlined the dire consequences of the current food system:

- More than 19 percent of New Yorkers are living in poverty.
- One in three New Yorkers do not have the money to buy needed food.
- That percentage is up 55 percent from 2003
- 1 in 6 New Yorkers visited a soup kitchen last year, up 20% since 2004

Serita Daftary from East New York Farms! Spoke about her program, which works with 25 teen, paid interns each year and 30 local farmers who all grow for market. Daftary said urban agriculture, which is integral to food justice, should be more widely promoted and supported (monetarily) by the city and state. She said benefits from her program include increased availability of affordable, fresh food; nutrition education; pride; economic development; and recreation space. In cities like Havana, about 40% of food is actually produced in urban areas. New York City is supporting urban agriculture in various ways:

- Vacant lots are being turned into community gardens
- Green Thumb
- In 2003, City settlement: inventory of gardens
- The Department of Agriculture has recently reinstated the community gardens position

While some gardens have been lost to development, working with the Housing Preservation Department can ensure the safety of community gardens. Advocates also should work to:

- Change law that makes beekeeping illegal to help pollination and produce honey



Roger Hayes (Program Director of the Harlem District Public Health Office) discussed the prevalence of obesity and diabetes in neighborhoods with a high percentage of people in poverty. Recent studies indicate that 50% of African American kids have a chance of developing diabetes.

The Health Department is developing:

- Healthy Bodegas
- Healthy Schools
- Healthy Bucks program
- Day Care Nutrition Education
- Calorie labels
- Ban on Trans-fat

Hayes suggested new policies that will address the health crisis:

- All food establishments should offer healthy choices
- Expand Shape Up New York
- Limit advertising of junk food
- Work site wellness programs in offices with >9 workers
- 120 min phys ed in schools should be enforced
- new construction design to promote physical activities

James Subudhi, Sustainability Coordinator at We Act for Environmental Justice, discussed how, besides affecting consumers, rising food costs also affect institutions like schools. Now is an opportune time for revamping the Farm to School Bill in order to bring more healthy foods to children while using schools' purchasing power to promote sustainable, local agriculture.

- New York City provides 800,000 meals/day in schools
- 2% of state's school food budget has been cut
- Parents and educators are usually left out of school food discussion
 - changing food system is about changing power relations

Meanwhile, food issues disproportionately affect black and Hispanic communities

Dan Miner, NYC Sierra Club Chair, discussed food issues as dimensions of a larger, global environmental crisis. Though climate-change issues "do not sell well," sustainability advocates can look to food issues for leverage. Citing the quickening pace of global climate change's affects, Miner suggested that our concern for imported fossil fuel be used to promote local food. Meanwhile, the weakening dollar has increased speculation in agriculture, leading to price increases globally. Miner's "Sustainable Energy Independence for NYC," report is available online at <http://www.beyondoilnyc.org/energyreport.html>