

Global Food Crisis

July Fast Materials

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Food Crisis, Agribusiness Accountability & Pigs

Country Focus: United States



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* Coming to pcusa.org/foodcrisis before the fast – “TWO MODELS of Pig Production: Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) versus Smaller-scale Family Farm Pig Production”

IMPORTANT: Fasting from food should be avoided by those with health-related conditions, such as diabetes, heart problems, and pregnancy. Anyone with questions about their health condition should consult with their doctor before beginning. Those fasting should read the guidelines in "[Fasting 101](#)." 

Fasting options - A fast typically begins after a simple meal Friday evening, no food Saturday, and ends with Communion or a communal meal on Sunday. Other schedules are welcome. Those who are not fasting from food can choose to eat simple meals, skip a meal, or design a fast that fits their circumstances.

Friday evening: preparing & focusing

This month we explore the role of agribusiness in the food system and its relation to the food crisis. Pigs will be the teachers as we reflect on how they are produced. By the end of this mini-curriculum, prayer, and discussion, you should be able to answer questions such as:

- *Does agribusiness (large companies which increasingly control more and more of the industry) produce them sustainably and humanely?*
- *Are there other models of production? And what are the positives and negatives?*
- *How do we engage to make our food system better?*

We Are What We Eat

Excerpts From Report Approved by the 214th General Assembly (2002)
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) www.pcusa.org/smallchurch/pdf/urwhatueat.pdf

The 214th General Assembly (2002) approved this report, "We Are What We Eat," that calls on the whole Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)--rural, suburban, and urban--to participate in the current agricultural revolution that is effecting everyone who produces and consumes food. The interdependence between food producer and consumer is significant, although it is a linkage we don't often acknowledge. Now, we have a unique opportunity to witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ through our daily food production and consumption decisions that will support sustainability, stewardship, compassion and community of all God's creation. ...

... In the United States, the smaller, independently operated family farms and ranches are being forced out of business by the increasing power of agricultural corporations. These changes have created an environment conducive to the manipulation of biotechnology, commodity production and processing, marketing, and retailing. They have resulted in economic trauma for family farmers/ranchers and for rural communities. ...

... How did the General Assembly become involved in this study? Back in 1998, a group of Presbyterian Women from rural communities in South Dakota discussed the effect that the current economic crisis was having in their lives. They envisioned that change could happen if the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) was willing to get involved in the issues that were causing the economic crisis. They took their vision to the Session of Hope Presbyterian Church in Keldron, a small church located in the open ranchland of western South Dakota. From there an overture to the General Assembly began to take shape that was supported by Session of Hope Presbyterian Church, recommended by the Presbytery of South Dakota

and, subsequently, approved by the 211th General Assembly (1999). That General Assembly action led to this study, "We Are What We Eat."

We are indebted to the study group that worked diligently for two years preparing this study:

*Fred Brust, farmer, Union Mills, Indiana
Vernon Carroll, rancher, Cut Bank, Montana
Ward Ernst, farmer, Stanford, Montana
Peter Funch, executive, South Dakota Presbytery
Grace and Jim Hargrave, dairy farmers, Madrid, New York
Carolyn and Jerry Petik, ranchers, Meadow, South Dakota
Richard Poppen, tentmaker pastor and farmer, DeSmet, South Dakota*

Learn More

Agribusiness

From *We Are What We Eat*

The concentration of agricultural corporate power...is one of the significant concerns related to the survival of the family farmer and rancher. ...This study calls attention to the effects of this concentration of power and calls on Presbyterians to live out their faith as shareholders, board members, and food consumers.



This concentration of agricultural corporate power affects all of us—locally and globally—because transnational corporations are controlling food production, processing, and marketing. These corporations, like any other, are driven by the need to produce profits.

Con Agra, Cargill, Archer Daniels Midland, and Tyson/IBP are among the giants in the production, processing, and marketing of food.

Other corporations, such as Monsanto, are active in the field of biotechnology. Genetic engineering and increased use of hormones and other additives in seeds, plants, and livestock result in a higher volume of production. The effect on the physical well-being of people who consume food produced through such controlled, engineered processes is yet unknown.

These corporations make up a global network. Food is produced as cash crops for export in countries where labor is cheap while the purchase of the food product in those same countries is often prohibitive for local consumers and limited to people with financial means. United States' trade agreements with other nations are often influenced by these same corporations. This leaves farmers in developing countries, who traditionally produced their food on their land, with either no control over their own land or diminished ability to produce food for their own table. Now farmland is controlled by transnational corporations and farm products are sent to wealthy nations, resulting in profits for the transnational corporations, leaving local people in economic despair.

Agribusiness Consolidation: Squeezing out Family Farmers and Consumers

Updated from 2006 **Making the Connections: An Interfaith Perspective on U.S. Domestic Agricultural Policy and International Trade, an Adult Study Guide**
<http://www.pcusa.org/trade/downloads/consolidation.pdf>

With over 963 million people on earth experiencing hunger, it is clear that something is wrong with our current global food and agricultural system. Part of the problem is that the current agricultural system is dominated by large corporations, banks, and individuals whose primary motive is profit, not feeding people. As fewer corporations come to control more and more of our agricultural system, we need to ask whether or not this trend is a contributing factor to hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

What is agribusiness consolidation?

Over the past decades, fewer agribusiness firms control more of our food markets. For example, four firms – Tyson, Cargill, Swift & Co., and the National Beef Packing Co. – controlled 83.5% of the beef packing industry in 2005. All four corporations are based in the Global North. Consolidation that happens in this manner is called **horizontal consolidation** and gives agribusiness a tremendous amount of power. Horizontal consolidation allows these giant corporations to influence the prices that they pay agricultural producers and the prices charged to consumers. It also provides them with increased political power used to influence politicians around food and agricultural policy decisions.

As fewer corporations have come to control more of a given market, they also control more parts of the process from “field to table”. This form of consolidation is called **vertical integration**. Companies are increasingly involved in many aspects of the food chain from the genetic information in patented seeds to the item sitting on the supermarket shelf. These firms sell the seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides for given crops, then buy those crops from farmers, process them in their own factories, and sell them to retailers. Vertical integration also gives agribusiness more power to set prices for both farmers and consumers.

CONCENTRATION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETS

April 2007

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CR4, referenced in the charts below, is the concentration ratio (relative to 100%) of the top four firms in a specific food industry.

CR4 Explained: A useful way to identify highly consolidated industries is to examine how much of a given industry is controlled by the top four firms. This measure is called a **concentration ratio** or **CR4**. Although not an exact process, if the top four firms control over **40%** of a given industry, that industry can be seen as highly consolidated and competition may be limited.

PORK PACKERS CR4 = 66% (Estimated)*

	<u>Daily Capacity** (2007)</u>	
1. Smithfield Foods	102,900	(26% of the total market)
2. Triumph Foods	72,800	
3. Seaboard Corporation	46,000	
4. Iowa Select Farms	36,000	

Source: *Smithfield is reported to process 27 million hogs per year and account for 26% of the total market. From this figure, we estimated the CR 4. *New York Times* 1/26/07 ** Daily Capacity from 2007 *Feedstuffs* Reference Issue.

Historical CR4

<u>1987</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>2001**</u>	<u>2005***</u>
37%	34%	40%	59%	64%

** *Feedstuffs Reference Issue* 2001.

*** 2007 *Feedstuffs Reference Issue*

PORK PRODUCTION

	<u>Number of Sows* (10/2006)</u>	<u>Top 4 companies in 2001**</u>
1. Smithfield Foods	1,200,115	(Smithfield 710,000)
2. Triumph Foods	399,800	(PSF 211,100)
3. Seaboard Corporation	213,600	(Seaboard 185,000)
4. Iowa Select Farms	150,000	(Triumph 140,000)

Sources: * *Successful Farming Pork Powerhouses* (October 2006). Notes: Smithfield includes sow numbers from PSF that is pending acquisition. Triumph markets pork through Seaboard.

** *Successful Farming Pork Powerhouses* (October 2001)

Friday evening prayer

Open me, O God, as I begin this time of fasting.
Open me to your Holy Spirit.
Open me to my sisters and brothers.
Open me to your children laboring in the fields to harvest our food.
Open me to your creation.
Open me to myself.
Open me that this might be a time
of drawing closer to you
of reflecting on how I live
of remembering the impact I make on your world
of realizing anew my relations with others
of renewing my efforts to follow Jesus.
Open me, O God.
Amen.

Saturday: fasting / integrating

Saturday Waking Prayer

God of the very breath we breathe

let your peace be known amidst the economic chaos of the day

be with those bound by worry and anxiety
be with those facing loss of food and shelter
be with those who are desperate and panic-filled

be with those who turn away from the stranger
be with those who cling to apathy and comfort
be with those leaning more on self than on You

be with us all as we strive to live lives worthy of Your grace
be with all your children, Lord
be with all your children

And let your peace be known, Lord
let your peace be known.

Amen.

The Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow, Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008)

Breakfast-time prayer:

God, let us never forget that you are with us always.
Help us to remember that you shine through your people,
And that if we need to see your face,
All we must do is look into the eyes of another.

May we see you
In our next-door neighbor
And in the face of a Haitian farmer
In the people squashed against us in the crowded bus
And in the face of those who speed by in their expensive cars
In the weary shoppers elbowing their way towards the counter
And in the face of a child starving
In the doctor who treats people in a local clinic
And in the face of a young girl dying of AIDS
In the playful children kicking dust
And in the faces of their mothers watching.

O God, our Companion,
Let us never forget that you are with us everywhere.

[Jubilee USA Network](#), adapted

Lunch-time prayer:

You asked for my hands
that you might use them for your purposes
I gave them for a moment then withdrew them
for the work was hard.

You asked for my mouth
to speak out against injustice.
I gave you a whisper that I might not be accused.

You asked for my eyes
to see the pain of poverty.
I closed them for I did not want to see.

You asked for my life
that you might work through me .
I gave you a small part that I might not get "too involved."

Lord,
forgive me for calculated efforts to serve you
only when it is convenient for me to do so, and
only in those places where it is safe to do so,
and only with those who make it easy to do so.

Father,
forgive me
renew me
send me out
as a usable instrument,
that I may take seriously
the meaning of your cross.

- From Joe Seramane, South Africa, from Lifelines, Christian Aid, 1987

Supper-time prayer:

God of eternal justice and endless mercy,
we confess our sins of action and complicity,
sins that have oppressed our sisters and brothers,
compromised our witness to the gospel,
and endangered the earth you made.
We have found profit and pleasure in economic injustice.
We are consumed by selfishness and captivated by greed.
We have plundered the resources of nature,

failing to be responsible caretakers for your creation.
We have fractured your church and abandoned your mission.
Forgive us, gracious God.
Restore in us a vision of abundant life for all,
and a longing for the promise of your peaceable realm.
Amen.

David Gambrell, *A Prayer of Confession based on the [Accra Confession](#)* 

Evening prayer time:

We dare to imagine a world where hunger has no chance to show its face.
We dare to dream of a world where war and terror are afraid to leave their mark.
We long to believe in a world of hope unchained and lives unfettered.
We dare to share in the creation of a world where your people break free.
Dare we open our minds to difference?
Dare we open our lives to change?
Your kingdom come, O God.
Your will be done.
Amen.

[Catholic Agency for Overseas Development](#), U.K.

Bible Study: Food Production, Distribution, and Consumption in the Age of Agribusiness

Texts for Reflection: Leviticus 23:22; Mark 6:30-42

In *The Real Dirt on Farmer John*, we stand with young farmer John Peterson as he watches his family farm auctioned off, one tool at a time, in the early 1980s. He is consumed by a deep and devastating depression, tormented by his sense of shame and failure. But he was not alone. Many middle-income farmers lost farms that had been in their families for generations, accruing massive debts and living the reality of agriculture secretary Earl Butz's motto, "Get big or get out."

Indeed, many family farmers *did* get out. Among those who stayed in, many did so by attaching themselves to bigger operations. Over the last five or six decades, we've witnessed sweeping changes in agricultural practices and scale. *Agribusiness* refers to a comprehensive cluster of changes in agriculture broader than human food production, distribution, and consumption. In relation to food, however, we might identify *some* of the characteristics of agribusiness:

- *Export*: shift from growing food for local consumption to growing food for export
- *Specialization*: farms perform one specific function in the food production cycle
- *Efficiency*: shift from small-scale to large-scale operations, from labor to technology

- *Commodification*: emphasis on the profit potential in the production and distribution of food
- *Consolidation*: fewer companies controlling greater percentages of the food supply, and a broader sweep of the food production process

What, then, do Christians have to say about food? We find in the scriptures consistent messages about God's purposes for food and agriculture: it is for the nourishment of people (and all of God's creation), in a sustainable way. We are called to offer our first fruits to the hungry, care gently for the land, and share our food. In the age of agribusiness, all of these admonitions are increasingly difficult to heed.

The Priority of the Hungry

In the brief verse from Leviticus, we read the admonition to farmers to leave some of their crops for the poor and the refugee. Likewise, in 2 Kings, we read about offerings of first fruits to Elisha being repurposed for the feeding of the hungry. So long as we find the hungry among us, they are our priority – not offerings to kings or prophets, not our own profit from our land. The hungry come first.

In the mid-twentieth century, the architects of the “Green Revolution” hoped that responsible use of new technologies would dramatically increase crop yields, insuring an adequate food supply for a growing world population.¹ In recent years, however, hunger has grown in the places in which the most food is produced. This is at least partly due to the “commodification of food,” in which the profit motive means that the best price sometimes conflicts with best use. In the U.S., 11 percent (13 million) of households are food insecure, and rural areas report an even higher rate.² The shift from production of food to the production of feed and fuel also contributes to hunger. In 2000, only about 12% of corn grown in the U.S. was “consumed directly (e.g. corn chips) or indirectly (e.g. high fructose corn syrup).”³ The rest went to feed and ethanol production. Do the hungry come first? To whom do we offer our first fruits?

To Care Gently for the Land

Also in the Leviticus text, we read an injunction against reaping “to the very edges of your field.” In other texts, we find the affirmation of rest, for the land. (Lev. 25:1-7 and Isa. 28:24) We read of the necessity for crop diversity, too. (Isa. 28:25-26) Yet we live in a time of monocropping, CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations), and “fencerow to fencerow” harvesting. For a farmer who depends on cash crops for an already meager income, the financial risk of allowing the land to lie fallow for a year is just too great. Furthermore, our food commodities are produced in fewer locations, and shipped greater distances. All of these practices take a toll on the environment.

“What do you have?” Toward More Just and Generous Practices of Sharing

In the Matthew text, when the disciples express their concerns about feeding the hungry crowd, Jesus responds with a question: “What do you have?” In this simple exchange, we hear a deep challenge: What resources do we have, and how can we share them? The Christian commitment to sharing contrasts with temptations to hoard resources, urging us to trust that there will be more than enough!

¹ Peter Rosset, *Lessons from the Green Revolution* (Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2000, accessed 2009); available from <http://www.foodfirst.org/media/opeds/2000/4-greenrev.html>.

² USDA, Economic Research Service http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/stats_graphs.htm

³ *Major Crops Grown in the United States*, (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2000, accessed 2009); available from <http://www.epa.gov/agriculture/ag101/cropmajor.html>.

In agribusiness consolidation, a very small number of corporations control an increasing share of both the food supply and the food production/distribution process, as well as the profits in our food system. Agribusiness consolidation has an “hourglass” effect on the food system, where thousands of farmers produce food that just a few agribusiness corporations process before distributing it to millions of people.⁴ The implications of agribusiness consolidation are significant both nationally and internationally. Between large-scale distribution and subsidies, food stuffs can now be shipped transnationally and sold for *less* than its costs to produce them – disadvantaging local economies which are not able to subsidize their farmers.

During this time of fasting, let us remember the sources of our food. Let us pray for our food system, and that we might be ever mindful of its reliance on the interdependence of earth, growers, farmers, distributors and consumers. May we imagine ways in which we all may flourish together.

We believe in a God who feeds the hungry
 who creates, sustains, and redeems the land
 who calls us to live in ways that nurture our interdependence
 who is the source of all abundance. Let it be so with us.

Questions for Reflection:

1. One need not demonize agribusiness – after all, some of the technological changes that characterize agribusiness were meant to address world hunger in the midst of population growth. At the same time, how might we address current imbalances in profit and distribution that have arisen in our food system, both nationally and globally?
2. In many places, the most affordable foods are also those that are shipped greater distances and subject to the most processing. In light of this reality, what is our responsibility to the hungry?
3. How might the Body of Christ ask the most powerful stakeholders in our food system, “What do you have?” As Christians who are voters, soup kitchen volunteers, consumers, and shareholders in these corporations (surely many of us are), can we reimagine agriculture as the production of food, rather than commodities? What other means do we have to augment the profit motive with concerns for just distribution and compassion?

About the authors:

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Noah Onguéné François was born in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in Central Africa. He briefly studied psychology at the University of Yaoundé I before joining the Xaverian missionaries in 1999. After three years of philosophy study, François graduated from the major seminary and was sent to the Congo for a year of Novitiate. He has been studying in the United States since 2004, earning the M.Div degree from the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, IL, in 2009. Soon he will complete the M.A. in Social Ethics. François was a student in the McCormick course on Globalization and Food.

⁴*Agribusiness Consolidation: Squeezing out Family Farmers and Consumers*, (Center of Concern and Presbyterian Hunger Program, accessed 2009); available from www.pcusa.org/trade/downloads/consolidation.pdf.

Learn More:

Agribusiness and Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs)

For nine months of fasts we have almost ignored the issue of genetic engineering in agriculture. We can no longer neglect this topic when learning about agribusiness accountability. GMOs have quietly entered our diets in the United States. In fact, the Grocery Manufacturers of America estimate that 75% of all processed foods in the U.S. contain a GM ingredient. Despite their widespread use, many questions about this technology remain unanswered. In Europe, the populace is much more concerned and six nations there have banned GM foods.



Below, the We Are What You Eat report summarizes the controversy and diverse perspectives are provided through video and articles.

From We Are What We Eat. Great controversy surrounds these issues today. On the one hand, industry advocates for genetic modification/engineering on the basis that it will deliver vaccines via food crops while alleviating world hunger. The American Medical Association affirms the safety of such food and states that additional labeling is unnecessary. On the other hand, consumer advocate groups and other organizations are not convinced of these arguments and are concerned about allergens, antibiotic resistance, toxicity, and decreased nutritional value. There are also significant questions about the lack of required rigorous testing of genetically modified food products.

Another concern focuses on the large corporations that hold the patents to genetically modified organisms. As patent holders, these corporations control the availability of food to sectors of the world's population. What responsibility are they exercising to provide healthy and cost-effective products?

Labeling is another issue that remains unresolved. In January 2000 at a global conference sponsored by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, agreements were reached about labeling commodities (corn and soybeans) shipped between countries. However processed foods do not require such labeling. The GMO food destined for store shelves will only mention that the product "may contain" GMOs.

Consumers and several nations throughout the world have raised their voices and refused to purchase/import food products that have been genetically modified. Such actions have resulted in economic pressures causing food growers and food processing companies to revisit their strategies.

Critics believe that the alleviation of world hunger through the production of GMO food products is yet to be proven because issues concerning equitable distribution of food, especially in developing nations, are political rather than a question of supply.

Here again people of faith are called to be informed about the issues through reliable sources of information, to raise questions, and to make responsible choices. Be cautious about media hype or fear campaigns. Rather, choose credible sources of information.

Seeds of Domination

The [Organization for Competitive Markets](#) has posted three videos on YouTube entitled "Seeds of Domination" on Monsanto and anti-competitive behavior. These are the first 3 in a series of 6.

Seeds of Domination - Part 1 (6:16) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTXYcv9RnGU>

Seeds of Domination - Part 2 (5:17) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J0AIRZCrTP8>

Seeds of Domination - Part 3 (5:40) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqLT4L6Aieg>

Monsanto, Inc.

Monsanto rejects many of these claims in Seeds of Domination

Here is their pledge:

Growth for a Better World

We want to make the world a better place for future generations. As an agricultural company, Monsanto can do this best by providing value through the products and systems we offer to farmers. With the growth of modern agricultural practices and crops that generate ever-increasing yields, we are helping farmers around the world to create a better future for human beings, the environment, and local economies. [Read more and their 2007 Pledge Report](#)

Failure to Yield

Studies Disprove Claim of Significantly Increased Yields from GMOs

http://www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture/science_and_impacts/science/failure-to-yield.html

While the biotechnology industry has trumpeted that it will feed the world and deliver higher yields, other researchers dispute the claim. According to *Failure to Yield*, a report by Union of Concerned Scientists expert [Doug Gurian-Sherman](#) released in March 2009, genetic engineering has failed to significantly increase U.S. crop yields despite 20 years of research and 13 years of commercialization.

CDC Confirms Ties to Virus First Discovered in US Pig Factories

May 3, 2009 | By Michael Greger, M.D.

Factory farming and long-distance live animal transport apparently led to the emergence of the ancestors of the current swine flu threat. A preliminary analysis of the H1N1 swine flu virus isolated from human cases in California and Texas reveals that six of the eight viral gene segments arose from North American swine flu strains circulating since 1998, when a new strain was first identified on a factory farm in North Carolina.

This genetic fingerprint, first released by Columbia University's Center for Computation Biology and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton,[1] has now been reportedly confirmed by

researchers at the University of Edinburgh, St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital and virologist Ruben Donis, chief of the molecular virology and vaccines branch at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Dr. Robert Webster, the director of the U.S. Collaborating Center of the World Health Organization, and considered the "godfather of flu research,"[2] is reported as saying "The triple reassortant in pigs [first discovered in the U.S. in 1998] seems to be the precursor."

[Read more...](#)

Video, news and articles on Agribusiness and Livestock. These and more are found in [Factory Farms and the Food Crisis](#) in the Food Crisis Resource Center.

- [VIDEO: Death on a Factory Farm: An HBO Documentary](#)
- [The Pork Industry Responds](#)
- [Environmental and Health Problems in Livestock Production: Pollution in the Food System](#)
- [¿Por qué estas gripes se originan en pollos y cerdos?](#)
- [Economic and Structural Relationships in U.S. Hog Production](#)
- [A U.S. Hog Giant Transforms Eastern Europe](#)

Sunday: breaking the fast / responding

IMPORTANT: *It's important to break a fast carefully. Eating too much too soon will overload your digestive system, causing uncomfortable and disruptive reactions.*

Sunday Waking Prayer:

This is a prayer from an ecumenical conference in Brazil, calling for an end to poverty as the first step on the path to peace through justice.

O Lord, God of life,
who cares for all creation, give us your peace.
May our security not come from arms, but from respect,
May our force not be of violence, but of love.
May our wealth not be in money, but in sharing.
May our path not be of ambition, but of justice.
May our victory not be from vengeance, but in forgiveness.
Open and confident, we want to defend the dignity of all creation,
sharing, today and forever, the bread of solidarity and peace.
In the name of Jesus, your holy son, our brother,
who, as victim of our violence, even from the heights of the cross
gave us all forgiveness.

Amen

- From Joe Seramane, South Africa, from Lifelines, Christian Aid, 1987

Breakfast-time prayer:

This is the day that you have made, gracious God. I rejoice and give you thanks for the miracle of life experienced anew. As Jesus blessed many with the five loaves and the two fishes, may I too, know your blessing as I break my fast. May I experience afresh your peace in my spirit, your love in my heart, and your justice guiding my life that I may work for a world in which your gifts are shared so that everyone has enough and all your children are fed. Grant me the strength and courage to follow Jesus and work for that day.

Break the Fast with Holy Communion

A majority of Presbyterian congregations have communion on the first Sunday of each month, but some do not. If your congregation doesn't celebrate the Eucharist on the first weekend of the month, you could break the fast with a breakfast or a lunch before or after worship. Alternately, another time of the month can be chosen to do the fast.

Worship Materials

Fast and food crisis-related worship materials www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis/fastworship

Bringing it home

The following responses are steps towards solutions. They are ways we can engage in our food system and learn ways of working toward the deeper changes needed. Consider choosing one or two to do during the month as part of your faith practice.

Personal Responses

1. **Eat one less meal with factory-farmed meat each week** for the sake of your health and the environment. High consumption of factory-farmed red and processed meat (anything not labeled organic or grass-finished) increases your risk of colon cancer. Did you know that one cow can pass 75 to 100 pounds of manure and 26 to 54 gallons of methane (a greenhouse gas) a day. Visit www.ibuydifferent.com or download [Food Revolution: how your diet can help save the planet](#) to find out more.



2. **Support local farmers and strengthen the local economy** by purchasing meat and produce through farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and independent grocery stores. Find where to buy it at www.localharvest.org.
3. **Make a donation** to One Great Hour of Sharing pcusa.org/oghs and the Presbyterian Hunger Fund pcusa.org/hunger/give to help fund groups who support farm workers, family farms and small-scale livestock producers, like Missouri Rural Crisis Center, Dakota Rural Action, National Family Farm Coalition, Community Farm Alliance, Rural Advancement Foundation International, Center for Rural Affairs, Dakota Resource Council, Rural and Migrant Ministry, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Interfaith Action of Southwest Florida, and Student Action with Farmworkers to mention a few.

Communal Responses

1. At your next session meeting, **suggest going fair trade** by buying coffee and tea through the Presbyterian Coffee Project (www.pcusa.org/coffee), which has fabulous cocoa and chocolate too! While you are at it, go to www.importpeace.org to order a case of organic, fair trade Palestinian olive oil to sell.
2. **Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: a year of food life*** makes a great summer read and takes you along on their family's wonder-full farming and eating journey. Find out if there are others at church who want to get together and discuss the book. Attract a crowd by making locally-grown fruit salad for the first gathering. Visit the [website](#) for recipes and more.