Uprooting Racism in the Food System

Soul Fire Farm, Grafton, NY

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“A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.”

~Marcus Garvey
Krik? Krak? Thank You Ancestors

Our ancestral mothers hid rice grains and hope in their children’s braids before boarding transatlantic slave ships. Their descendents defeated colonizers and established regenerative agriculture, cooperatives, and survival programs.
Racism and injustice are built into the DNA of the U.S. Food System.
#1. The U.S.A. food system is built on stolen land.

The descendants of European colonizers control almost all of this land today.
The labor that built the U.S.A. food system was stolen from Black-Latinx people. Labor laws continue to permit exploitation of farm and food workers.

While those who run U.S. farms are overwhelmingly white, the roughly 3.5 million people who do the day-to-day work of growing and harvesting food are not.

Excluded from labor protections, about one-third of farmworkers live below the poverty line.

Farmworkers' Total Family Income Levels
National Agricultural Workers Survey 2013-2014

- 33% less than $20K
- 27% less than $30K
- 30% $30K and up

- 30% of families below poverty line

Mean U.S. Household Income: $53,657
#3. We live under a system of food apartheid, where people of color are disproportionately impacted by food scarcity and diet-related illness.
#4. Industrial agriculture is destroying the planet. Black-Indigenous regenerative farming methods are ignored or appropriated.
#5. Our people are often disconnected from land and its wisdom, bearing inherited trauma from land-based oppression.
We are not obligated to complete the task, but neither are we free to desist from it.
Mission

Soul Fire Farm is committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system. We raise life-giving food and act in solidarity with people marginalized by food apartheid. With deep reverence for the land and wisdom of our ancestors, we work to reclaim our collective right to belong to the earth and to have agency in the food system. We bring diverse communities together on this healing land to share skills on sustainable agriculture, natural building, spiritual activism, health and environmental justice. We are training the next generation of activist-farmers and strengthening the movements for food sovereignty and community self-determination.
Ujaama Farm Share
“Netflix for Veggies”

Individuals Fed by the Farm Weekly: 250

Average Food Miles: 20

Bushel boxes of food delivered to the People: 7340
“I have loved the fresh food that I have been blessed to enjoy since joining the CSA. I have seen a complete change in my mood and general outlook. This I believe is tied to relieved stress from not having money for good produce and also the healthier feeling that comes with farm to table food.”

- 2017 Ujaama Farm Share CSA member
Regenerative Ancestral Farming

Fossil Fuel Compared to Industrial Ag: 8.9%
Carbon Sequestered lbs/year: 2400
Increase in Topsoil Depth: 300%
Natural Building

Timber Frame, Straw Bale, Natural Plasters, Passive Solar, Sun Heated Water, Wood Cooking, Clustered Development

Acres in Preservation: 68
Acres Managed: 5
Black-Latinx Farmer Immersion

NextGen Farmer Activist Trainees: 384
Alumni who are leaders in food justice and farming: 87%
"I was depleted and discouraged, not sure if my vision of community farming was sustainable for me and my family. BLFI's embrace not only grounded me, but renewed my dreams and helped inspire our newly designed Ubuntu community farm program!"

- Keisha Cameron
BLFI 2016
High Hog Farms, Ubuntu Training Program
Youth Food Justice Program

Youth Food Justice Empowerment Trainees: 1648
“The youth gained a connection to the land and learned about the importance of story and history, the power of community and the importance of self-determination when it comes to land and food.”

- 2017 Youth Program adult chaperone
Land-Based Healing Justice

“If my resilience were a cup, it would be overflowing.”
Support for Activists

Trained and Supported: 1408

Member of:

USFSA,
Freedom Food Alliance, Via Campesina,
NOFA NY,
National Black Food and Justice Alliance
Sibling Farms in Haiti, P.R.

Trees Planted in Haiti: 2000+
Composting Systems: 75
Farms Irrigated: 20
Organizing for Racial Justice

- Consulting and training organizations
- Contributed to reparations agenda for Vision for Black Lives
- Contributed to policy platforms for BUGS, NBLJA, NOFA
- Public talks and published articles reaching 80,000+
To Free Ourselves We Must Feed Ourselves
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