Ready!
Starting Your Food Sovereignty Assessment Process

Hosted by First Nations Development Institute
Introduction by Tawny Wilson and Marsha Whiting
Presentation by Vicky Karhu
Announcements

• All attendees are on mute
• Questions:
  • Listen: Type in Question box and we will read
  • Q/A also at end of presentation
• Evaluation: survey will pop up when webinar ends and sent in an email. Please complete.
• Recording and attachments can be downloaded from www.firstnations.org/fnk next week.
Upcoming Webinars

• October 18, 2016 @ 1:00 p.m. MDT  
  “Ready! Starting the Community Food Sovereignty Assessment Process”

• November 15, 2016 @ 1:00 p.m. MST  
  "Set! Designing your Community Food Sovereignty Assessment“

• December 5, 2016 @ 12:00 p.m. MDT  
  “Data collection and Presentation for Food Assessments”

• December 13, 2016 @ 1:00 p.m. MST  
  "Go! Conducting Your Community Food Sovereignty Assessment“

• January 17, 2017 @ 1:00 p.m. MST  
  "Moving Forward! Community-Based Policy and Action Plans"
Ready!
Starting Your Food Sovereignty Assessment Process
We’re ready to get started!!!
Now what do we do?

First, let’s consider what “food sovereignty” is and what it means to your community or tribal nation.

Food Sovereignty, simply stated, means that the control of a tribe/community’s food system is in the hands of the people of that tribe/community.

Food Security, simply stated, means that the people of a tribe/community know where their next meal is coming from and that they will have the food that they need.
Food Sovereignty is the right of peoples to define their own policies and strategies for sustainable production, distribution and consumption of food, with respect for their own cultures and their own systems of managing natural resources and rural areas and is considered to be a precondition for food security.


We, the Indigenous Peoples from many parts of North America, convene at the sacred homelands of Taos Pueblo. We wish to recognize our historic agricultural achievements and the important contributions we have made to the United States of America and to the world. We acknowledge the issues and challenges that we face and that the natural and human communities around us face. We affirm our ancient values of food sustainability, traditional seeds, and indigenous systems of trade and commerce with each other. We now find it necessary to exercise our sovereignty and self-determination with regards to the protection of our cultural resources.

Native Food Sovereignty is a means to protect our peoples and communities and to provide a foundation from which to build and/or rebuild.

— From “The Principals of Native Food Sovereignty” statement of an assembled group representing 13 tribal food sovereignty projects in 2008
Before you begin to involve members of your board and tribe/community in your food sovereignty assessment, your staff should understand food sovereignty.

A good place to start is by re-visiting your pre-European contact food sources.
Food Sovereignty is not new!

In the past, and not very long ago relatively speaking, all Native Nations had achieved food sovereignty and were taking care of their own food needs through hunting, fishing, gathering, farming and nurturing important wild food crops.

This knowledge and these food sovereignty skills are still present and can be re-vitalized!
Now, gather together your Food Sovereignty Team made up of people with a direct link to your food system and, most importantly, people with a passion for food sovereignty work in your community/tribe.

Your Team may include:

• Your staff and some Board members
• Diabetes Program staff
• Tribal government leaders
• Farmers/ranchers
• Cultural authorities
• Youth
• Cooks
• Day care/Head Start personnel
• School meals coordinators
• Grocers
• Elders
• And others who are important in your community/tribe

Your Food Sovereignty Team will work together to design and review the assessment tools and questions and to guide the entire process of conducting your food sovereignty assessment. They will each bring their perspective to the work.
Assembling your Food Sovereignty Team

Having trouble identifying who should be a part of your FS Team? Here’s an exercise that your staff can do to help out....

- Have each staff person write the name or position of 5 people who are important to your work and/or the local food system.
- Draw 3 concentric circles on a whiteboard or flip chart.
- In the center, you place the ones who you all agree set the direction and are the most committed to the work.
- The next band is key stakeholders who are affected by the actions of the core group and will help with the work, once the direction is set by the core group.
- The next band is internal people in the tribe/community who are able to influence the work positively or, occasionally, negatively.
- The outer band is for people external to work, but who can provide resources or support.

Invite the Core group to join your FS Team
You may want to form an Advisory Team that could include the non-staff members of the core group and some of the members of the internal support group.
Begin your teamwork by taking a close look at your local/regional food system. This consists of all the people and resources that it takes to get food from the producer to the consumer.

A good exercise to help understand your food system:

• Name a popular food product such as a loaf of bread.
• Talk about all of the steps that it takes to bring that loaf of bread from the farm to your dinner table.
• Name each step of the way and the resources needed.

Example....first you need to grow the raw ingredients so that requires a farmer. The farmer needs land, water, seeds, etc. He/she also needs equipment for planting, harvesting and transporting the product to market.

Next, the raw ingredients need to be stored, transported to the processor and made into the bread dough. This involves trucks (possibly refrigerated), drivers, warehouse space, loading and unloading equipment, etc.

Once you have gone through all the steps and resources needed, think about how much of this is controlled by or takes place in your community/tribe. Which parts were traditionally taken care of by your people? Which parts could you regain?
Get to know your Food System

There are many elements to be considered

Available facilities and equipment, retail outlets, gardens and other sources of food.
A Food Sovereignty Assessment (FSA) provides you and your community/tribal members with basic information about your local food system and the people involved from producer through consumers.

Your Food Sovereignty Team gets to work!

Once you have examined and discussed your food system, you will begin to identify obstacles to food sovereignty. At this point it will be helpful to know more about the food habits, concerns and needs in your tribe/community.

A Food Sovereignty Assessment (FSA) provides you and your community/tribal members with basic information about your local food system and the people involved from producer through consumers.
What is a Food Sovereignty Assessment??

It is a general survey of many aspects of the food system affecting a specific community/tribe, but it goes far beyond a simple survey.

• It’s a conversation starter!
• It’s a “snapshot” of your current food system.
• It’s an examination of the inter-relationships of people and their food system, community and individual health.
• It’s a planning tool for community-based food sovereignty projects.
• It’s documentation of community input into project planning.
• It’s an “awareness raiser” for what assets are available to improve your food system.
• It’s a uniting force for tribal and community programs and services.
• It’s a vehicle for community engagement in your food sovereignty projects.
• It’s honoring the past while planning for the future.
• It’s an inspiration for change!
A good way to get your Food Sovereignty Team excited about the assessment and familiar with the concept of food sovereignty, your food system and their interrelationships is to look at some of the food sovereignty work being done in Native communities across Turtle Island.

Here are a few examples of that work...

Outdoor classroom, “horno” oven, farm fields and high tunnels at White Mountain Apache in Arizona.

Straw bale and adobe construction seed bank at Tesuque Pueblo Farms in New Mexico.
Food Sovereignty Projects

Garden, chicken tractor and bio-fuel production at Bay Mills Community College on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Cannery and retail outlet for cannery products at Oneida Nation, Wisconsin.
Is access to fresh produce a problem in your community? You may need to start growing your own!

Community greenhouse, farmers market and Elder garden in Muscogee (Creek) Nation and Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, projects of the Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative.

Veggie beds at Northwest Indian College, Swinomish, Washington and Youth garden at Chickaloon Village, Alaska
Sustainability in Food Sovereignty Projects

- Solar powered pump for irrigation
  Red Willow Farm, Taos Pueblo

- Hand tools use renewable human energy!

- Solar and gravity feed irrigation
  Native Village of Tyonek, Alaska

- Ancient water-saving techniques at
  Flowering Tree Farm, Santa Clara Pueblo

- Seed bank at Jijak Foundation, Gun Lake Pottawatomi
Defining the community to be assessed

Now that you have a basic understanding of food sovereignty and what it means in your tribe/community, you’re ready to start designing your FSA. First…you need to decide on the parameters of the community that you intend to assess.

• It may be your tribal jurisdictional boundary. If you are “checkerboard” you will need to agree whether or not you want to include non-tribal members.
• It may be a particular town/city/community in your tribal reservation or boundary.
• It may be one town/city/community that will be a pilot project and can be replicated in similar settings.
• It may be a certain age-groups, teenagers, elders, young mothers, etc.
• It may be professionals; health care workers, farmers/ranchers, food program leaders, etc.

No matter what group or geographic definition you use for your assessment area, it is vital to the process that your entire Food Team and advisors agree!!!
Engaging your Tribe/Community in the FSA

Now your Food Team is excited about collecting information to inform future plans to reach food sovereignty goals. How will you share your enthusiasm with your tribe/community and motivate them to participate in your assessment?

One good way is to host a community meal featuring traditional and local foods.

Maybe invite a few Native chefs to help!

- Lead a discussion about “What is food sovereignty?”
- Describe the foods that you are serving and their cultural significance.
- Introduce the idea of conducting a FSA and how it can benefit everyone.
- Explain why your tribe/organization wants food system information and what you plan to do with the results of the information that you collect.
Engaging your Tribe/Community in the FSA

- Get out and talk about local and traditional foods whenever you can.
- Get to know your farmers, ranchers, grocers, cooks, food distribution personnel, etc.
- Talk with health care professionals about the relationships between diet and health.
- Talk to economic development people to learn how much money is being spent on food in your tribe/community and how much that money is circulating within your area as opposed to going far away.
- Pay attention to where your food comes from and share your observations with those around you.
- Host focus groups or talking circles to discuss food sovereignty issues.
- Host a traditional foods class and talk about food sovereignty skills and knowledge.
- Start discussions on social media and post food information on your website.
If you are working toward a food sovereignty policy goal...

Invite your tribal leaders to your community outreach programs and meals. It’s a great place for them to mingle with voters!

Publish a newsletter featuring food issues and information and distribute it to tribal government elected officials.

Encourage food sovereignty issues to be a part of the discussion at election time.

Study tribal and non-tribal food policy issues and formation of food policy councils.

Identify food sovereignty allies within tribal government and ask them for input into your FSA and/or to serve on your Food Team or as an advisor.

Host a tribal leaders’ forum, focus group or working meal to discuss the meaning of food sovereignty within the tribal government context and find out what information would be most helpful to them as policy makers.

Be sure to make the connection between food sovereignty and economic development strategies that would localize control of and revenue from your food system.
Creating a FSA Timeline

Your Food Sovereignty Team should create the timeline as a group through consensus.

It is reasonable to allow a whole year to plan, implement, analyze, summarize and disseminate the results of your FSA. Don’t get in too big a hurry! At least 3 to 4 months should be dedicated to outreach and forming your FS Team and planning. It will take another month or two to design your assessment tools, questions and collection methodology. Conducting the assessment may take one to several months and, finally, compilation of results, summarizing, writing conclusions and disseminating the information will take a month or two initially and will be ongoing.

Draw a simple timeline on the board or flip-chart and divide into months or quarters.

Fill in events that affect your work, FSA tasks and responsible parties as appropriate for your situation.

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<th>Social Events</th>
<th>Spring festival</th>
<th>School year end</th>
<th>Indian Fair</th>
<th>Policy Events</th>
<th>Council Meeting</th>
<th>Council Meeting</th>
<th>Council Meeting</th>
<th>Council Meeting</th>
<th>Elections</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Jun</td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Oct</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSA Tasks</td>
<td>Farm Food Sovereignty Team</td>
<td>Study example FSA's</td>
<td>Community Outreach</td>
<td>Presentation to council</td>
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<td>Exec. Director</td>
<td>FS Team</td>
<td>People for table at festival</td>
<td>FSA Team Leaders</td>
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Note: This sample timeline assumes that you already have funding in place to support your FSA. If not, you will need at least 6 months to secure funding in most cases.
That’s all for today!

- Now you have a Food Sovereignty Team and advisors.
- You have defined the community/tribe that you are going to assess.
- You have an understanding of for sovereignty in the context of your tribe/community and you are initiating conversations about it during your everyday life and work.
- Ideas are taking shape in your heads about what you need to know to further your food sovereignty work.
- You are organized and have a foundational timeline established to begin your Food Sovereignty Assessment.

Helpful Hints until we meet again….

- Read the FNDI Food Sovereignty Tool Book!!
- Bring your FS Team together and establish regular meetings
- Start planning and seeking financial support for your FSA now
- Talk to others who have conducted FSA’s
- Think about your food system.
Thank You!

Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have as you continue your work.

Vicky Karhu
vkarhu@gmail.com
575.495.3957
Or
Tawny Wilson
twilson@firstnations.org
303.774.7836
Questions?
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Thank you joining our webinar today!

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Any questions, please feel free to contact Marsha Whiting at (303)774-7836 or via email: mwhiting@firstnations.org