

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO



**FARM** FORWARD

# COMMUNITY PARTNER BRIEF

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR 2021 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

USING INFORMATION COLLECTED FROM OUR 2021 CHANGEMAKER CHALLENGE COMMUNITY PARTNERS WE HAVE COMPILED FINDINGS ABOUT EACH PARTNER'S MISSION, VISION, PURPOSE, HISTORY, PROGRAMS, CHALLENGES, ASPIRATIONS AND TESTIMONIALS FOR USE IN YOUR CLASSROOM.

# FRAMING THE ISSUE OF FOOD JUSTICE

The Changemaker Challenge topic of *food justice* is especially relevant and timely for our USD community and the San Diego community more broadly. *Food justice* highlights the importance of creating and maintaining a food system where everyone has access to healthy and fresh foods, while also acknowledging the impact our food choices have on those around us. Food is central to our daily lives - it helps to define our cultures, our families, and our communities. Because of this, it is critical that we think about the structure of our food system and its consequences for our individual health and the quality of life in our communities. While it is more common today for us to consider where our food comes from and how it affects our own health, *food justice* intersects with many of today's most urgent challenges, such as structural racism, climate change, and economic inequality.



# FRAMING THE ISSUE OF FOOD JUSTICE

*Food justice* highlights many of the issues that the environmental justice movement and the anti-Black racism movement have been addressing for decades. For example, many factory farms and meatpacking plants pollute the water and air of the communities in which they are located - which are most often communities of color and low-income communities ([Food is Power](#)). In the United States, people of color are also more likely to suffer from hunger, food insecurity, and diet-related illnesses. It is clear that a more detailed focus on the food system requires that we consider issues of the living conditions and wages of those who are employed in the system as well as the ways in which communities can control the food system itself. This year's Changemaker Challenge invites the USD campus community to think about ways to address and change the inequities that exist in our current food system - both on and off campus.





# FARM FORWARD

**The following sections were taken with permission from the Farm Forward website. For more information, please visit <https://www.farmforward.com/>**

## OVERVIEW

Farm Forward is a team of strategists, campaigners, and thought leaders helping guide the movement to change the way our world eats and farms. Our vision sets us apart from other animal welfare groups: we look beyond incremental suffering reduction on factory farms toward the institutional and cultural changes that will *end* factory farming. We push the ceiling of animal welfare by advocating for the highest welfare alternatives to factory-farmed meat, such as plant-based foods as well as heritage poultry, which requires genetically healthy animals raised entirely outside of the industrial system.



## MISSION

Farm Forward was founded in 2007 as the nation's first nonprofit devoted exclusively to end factory farming, and our work improves the lives of 400,000,000 farmed animals annually.

## HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Farm Forward was created to turn the vision of the groundbreaking book *Eating Animals* into real-world action to end factory farming. For the last five years, we've helped bring that vision to a new audience through the medium of film, by supporting the creation of the documentary *Eating Animals*, now released to widespread acclaim. Now we're looking for new stories that will change the narrative of food and farming.

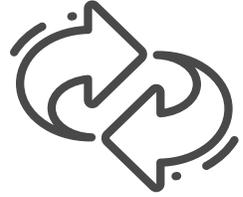
## PROGRAMS & SERVICES OFFERED

### LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

An institutional purchasing program that leverages the buying power of businesses, universities, and civic and religious institutions to change the way animals are raised for food. The Leadership Circle supports institutions that adopt a "less meat, better meat" approach. "Less meat" means incorporating more plant-based products, to lower costs and improve public health, the environment, and animal welfare. "Better meat" means sourcing *higher welfare* meat, poultry, and eggs. The Leadership Circle helps institutions align their supply chains with their institutional values by providing a comprehensive set of tools and technical assistance, free of charge. Our Leadership Circle benefits an estimated 3.2 million animals per year by assisting institutional food providers such as universities, corporations, and nonprofits in sourcing higher welfare meat, poultry, and eggs while incorporating more plant-based products into the meals they serve!

**DEFAULTVEG**

Making plant-based food the default, allowing diners to opt in for meals with animal products, helps reshape what we think of as a “normal” meal. How food is presented in a dining hall or at an event plays a big role in what we choose to eat. DefaultVeg relies on behavioral nudges to motivate delicious food choices that are better for us and the planet.



Institutions defaulting to a plant-rich menu is one of the most substantive and inclusive solutions to address climate change, public health, and animal welfare.

**FAITH IN FOOD INITIATIVE**

We’ve cultivated ongoing conversations about the plight of farmed animals with leading Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Daoist spiritual leaders through annual participation in multiple national conferences and live presentations at dozens of seminaries, departments of theology, and departments of religious studies.

Our Jewish Initiative for Animals (JIFA) plays an integral part in our plan to stimulate religious institutions to take community-specific approaches to the problem of factory farming and to develop ethical food policies that reflect their own values. JIFA has already collaborated with nearly 65 national and local Jewish organizations—camps, synagogues, youth groups, community centers, schools, college programs, and more—to produce educational resources that will spark inquiry into how Jewish values should interact with how we treat animals.

### WHAT ARE THE QUESTIONS USD STUDENTS CAN HELP EXPLORE SOLUTIONS FOR?

In the next section, we provide background and information on why these “how might we” questions matter to Farm Forward.

- **Option A: How might we** help university students understand the impact of factory-farmed animal products on marginalized communities, climate change, animal welfare, and public health in a way that leads to personal change?
- **Option B: How might we** create a culture where plant-based food choices are the default option in university settings?



In an interview with the Changemaker Hub, Farm Forward's Outreach Director, Ilana Braverman, provided information about the challenges Farm Forward currently faces. In the sections below, we provide direct quotes from this interview.

### **How might we help university students understand the impact of factory-farmed animal products on marginalized communities, climate change, and public health in a way that leads to personal change?**

We often don't look past our plates to understand where our food is coming from and who it impacts. Incorporating food systems education in our classrooms to help students understand what's happening is crucial, as it's hidden from public display. For example, factory farm and slaughterhouse workers have some of the most dangerous jobs on the planet, with the least protection. A vast majority of the soy and corn we grow in monocultures goes toward feeding animals who live intolerable, short lives on factory farms until they're slaughtered. The impact of slaughtering more than nine billion animals in the U.S. every year on humans, animals and our planet is devastating.

Personal change is necessary to drive larger structural change. One person can play a crucial role in motivating and helping their institution or organization to make key transitions. And if we align our food choices with our inherent values for protecting our planet and the lives of others, it makes it easier to advocate for change at a higher level.

*To learn more about the impacts of factory farming on marginalized communities, public health and the environment, please see the 'Resources' section at the bottom of page 6.*

### **How might we create a culture where plant-based food choices are the default option in university settings?**

Farm Forward uses nudge theory to help communities move towards sustainable plant-forward diets with limited higher welfare animal products while maintaining diner satisfaction. Universities are an optimal place to start realizing this shift, as places where students are forming new habits and world views, and as environments where reaching the tipping point is attainable.

One of our primary programs is DefaultVeg, which makes plant-based products the default while giving everyone the choice to opt in to animal products. DefaultVeg helps universities meet their greenhouse gas reduction targets by decreasing Scope 3 emissions from food, and it also makes food environments more inclusive by default by meeting the needs of those with dietary restrictions, while allowing everyone the freedom to choose the meals they want. Launched in early 2020, this program initially focused on working with conferences and campus events, before COVID-19 upended everything. Now, as society returns to a new normal and people resume communal eating, we have the perfect opportunity to engage around a new sustainable and inclusive default.

## WHY IS THIS PROBLEM IMPORTANT TO YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Fixing our food system is inextricably connected to many other critically important injustices. Different types of activists—environmentalists, animal advocates, feminists, racial justice activists, etc.—are mostly siloed into their respective issue areas, but we would be much more powerful if everyone worked together to recognize how these issues intersect and how we can stand up for all of them together.

Aph Ko's book *Racism as Zoological Witchcraft: A Guide to Getting Out* delves into the concept of interrelated oppressions. This work isn't just about animals and the environment—it's about racial and economic justice as well. And we can stand up against all of these injustices together by transforming the food system. For instance, who is working in slaughterhouses? Mostly people of color and people in poverty. The same applies to people living in communities where factory farms are built, devaluing properties and trapping people who end up suffering from significant health issues due to factory farms' air pollution and water contamination. We do this work because we believe all of these issues are connected. We understand that the people who will suffer the most from our climate crisis, which is significantly due to the way we're eating, are people of color and people with lower incomes. Exploring this topic can help us look at these issues through a different lens and give us the opportunity to discover how we can each play a role in changing our food system.

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM?

Many organizations are asking institutions to offer at least one plant-based option on their menu. This is a move in the right direction, but our work needs to be bigger if we want to make plant-based eating not the alternative but the norm. That's why we focus on making plant-based meals the default. Another strategy groups have tried is taking meat completely off the menu, which often results in backlash because people don't like having options taken away from them or being told what to do. Sometimes universities revoke such initiatives and avoid the issue altogether because they're afraid of upsetting people. That's why DefaultVeg maintains freedom of choice, allowing everyone to opt into the food they choose while establishing plant-based food as the norm.

Here are a few other organizations doing exceptional work in the food justice & farm animal advocacy space:

- *Factory Farming Awareness Coalition*
- *Food Empowerment Project*
- *CreatureKind*
- *Shamayim*

## WHAT CAMPUSES HAVE YOU WORKED WITH THAT HAVE HAD REAL SUCCESS?



### *Harvard University*

- Policy: Harvard's Office of Sustainability implemented DefaultVeg, meaning that once we go back to serving meals in person, every event they host will be plant-based by default!

### *University of California, Los Angeles*

- Substitutions: UCLA recently switched out the butter in their hamburger buns for a plant-based butter and they are going to serve fully plant-based cookies and brownies in their dining hall next semester as well, substituting plant-based alternatives for milks, butters, and eggs in those products.
- Research: A team of UCLA students and faculty are working on a variety of research projects with us over the next school year. For our first study, we are asking universities all over the country to conduct a plant-based default experiment with fall events to study how we can increase the amount of plant-based meals served at events, just by changing the default option during registration. If you know of an event that might be interested in participating, please email [ilana@farmforward.com](mailto:ilana@farmforward.com).



### *The University of Victoria*

- Climate Action: The University of Victoria also created a DefaultVeg website specifically for their university and are working on getting plant-based defaults implemented in the new dining hall coming to campus next year. They recently submitted a DefaultVeg proposal to their Climate Solutions Challenge and came in second place!



Many other colleges and universities across the U.S., Canada and Europe have adopted DefaultVeg within academic departments and at conferences and events as well.

### **Resources:**

- Annual Reports: 2020, & 2017, 2018, 2019
- Plant-based Foods and Inclusivity
- Eating Animals, Jonathan Safran Foer <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2180351/>
- Eating Animals documentary film
- Peer reviewed study on defaulting to vegetarian meals at a conference.
- Articles
  - farmworkers.
  - slaughterhouse workers.
  - people living near factory farms