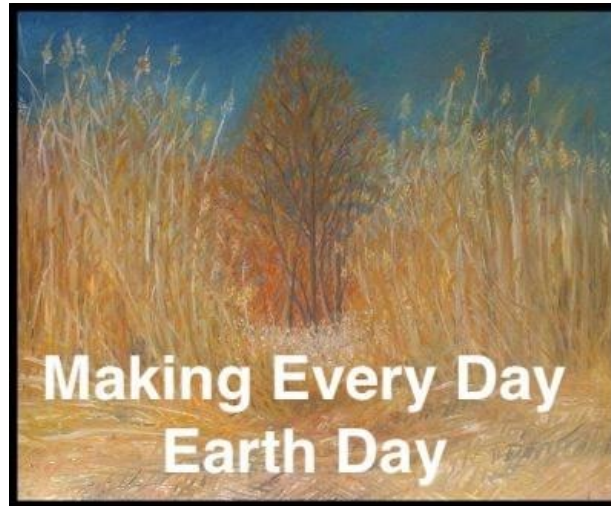




September 15, 2020



Food and Climate Change:

Farmers and Eaters

In the previous issue ([view archive](#)), we covered several connections between climate change, our food systems and health. Here we take a closer look at certain farmers and organizations in the United States (US) addressing some of these concerns.

"The food system was built on the stolen land and stolen labor of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian and people of color."

— [Soul Fire Farm](#)

Marginalized poor Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) are on the front lines of climate change and food farming. Those who own land struggle to cope with climate change impacts, such as extreme weather events. Many of them have lost their land and/or their ability to maintain farm-based livelihoods.

The majority of the food we consume in the US is produced by large corporations who employ poor people in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as migrant farm workers from those countries in the US. Global warming poses health risks to these farm workers, who often endure extreme heat while performing strenuous manual labor.

There are various US-based organizations teaching farming practices, and helping people of color obtain resources to pursue food justice and reverse climate change simultaneously. Among them are [Black farmers](#) reclaiming space after generations of being forced off the land.

Video: ["Soul Fire Farm: Feeding the Soul, Growing Community"](#)

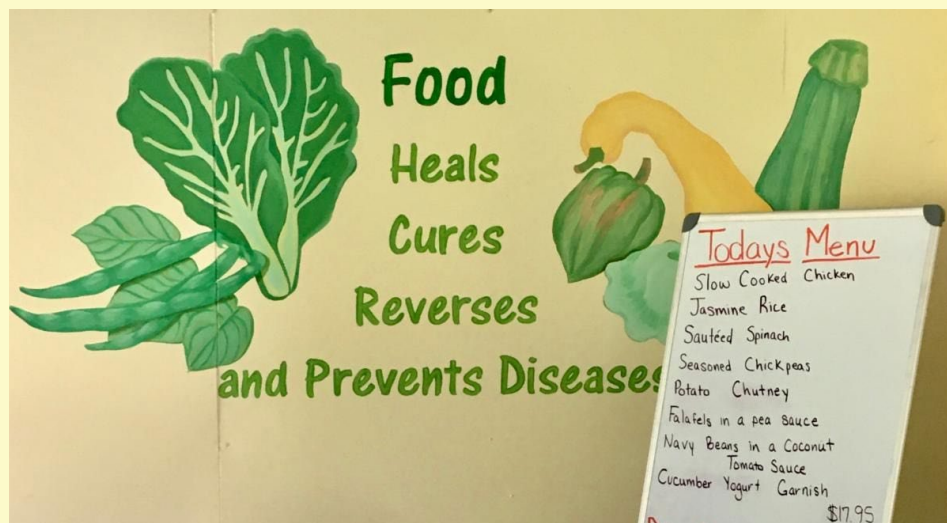
[The Laura Flanders Show](#)



Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) helps get locally grown nutritious food to local people. CSA members subscribe to purchase seasonal fresh produce boxes, which often combine produce from various local small-scale farms. Another benefit of consuming local produce through the CSA model is supporting sustainable, low greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting food production and transportation.

As we discussed in our last issue, reducing meat consumption is an important climate change mitigation strategy that has substantial health co-benefits. However, transitioning to diets with increased intake of nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables can be difficult for a number of reasons, including cost and access. Without sufficient knowledge about the nutritional value of fresh foods, consumers cannot make effective cost-benefit analyses.

LT Organic Farm CSA, Restaurant & Preventative Medicine



Originally from Guyana, Lalbhowandat Tiwari (LT) and Ahilia Bhramdatt were working as nurses in Illinois when they decided to start a health-focused CSA in Iowa. With assistance

from the US Department of Agriculture, they were able to purchase the land in Waukee, where they have been living and farming since the late 1990s. Their business opened in 2000.



They converted the corn crib, used by the previous farm owners, into a restaurant and education center. They grow most of the food they serve at the restaurant, which specializes in Indian, Caribbean and Mediterranean cuisine.



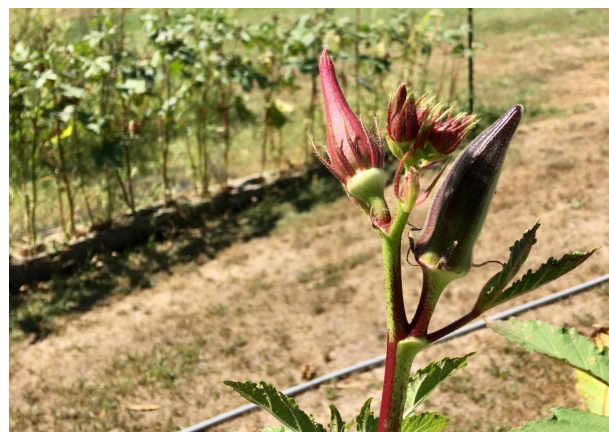
From early spring to late fall, CSA members get a share of fresh produce every week, which they can harvest from the farm themselves, or simply pick up. CSA subscriptions include

education about the fresh produce, as well as nutrition and cooking classes. Members also learn how to preserve food for winter.

The Bhramdats emphasize the health benefits of organic produce that ripens on the plant, which optimizes the nutrient content of food. Most plant-based produce is harvested prematurely in order to endure lengthy travel and storage before being purchased by the people who will eat it.



Every year has presented challenges for cultivating plant-based food on the farm. The Bhramdats regularly plant a rich variety of crops, some of which do better than others, depending on the weather. However, the derecho wind storm this year was especially problematic, as it blew so many blooms off their food plants. The drought this year has posed further challenges. For example, their red okra (pictured below) did not grow as large as they normally do.



Despite the challenges, the Bhramdat family continues to successfully run their business. They believe that more people are becoming interested in their way of life. LT and Ahilia have become CSA advocates, and help families in other cities set up their own CSAs.

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