Healthy Food Declaration Unveiled at Slow Food
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Roots of Change, an organizing force behind the statewide food system transformation in California, announced the release of a national Declaration for Healthy Food and Agriculture, which will provide the good food movement a clear and commonly held framework for future action to educate citizens and policy makers. The final draft Declaration was unveiled in a public reading and briefing on Thursday, Aug. 28 at 5:00 p.m., the eve of the debut four-day event Slow Food Nation 2008 in San Francisco.

The Declaration provides a clear statement of current policy needs and is endorsed by a broad base of organizations and individuals with a long-established commitment to improving food and agriculture. It is an invitation to all Americans to join in the reform effort by taking action in their own communities, and to call on policy makers nationwide to support comprehensive change.

The Declaration will be posted on www.fooddeclaration.org for 90 days of public comment and/or endorsement. Following the 90-day period, Roots of Change and other collaborating organizations will launch a nationwide campaign to collect hundreds of thousands of endorsements of the Declaration, and subsequently, convene a working group of policy experts to develop a specific policy platform. In late-fall 2009, the Declaration and the platform will be delivered to policy makers in Washington, D.C., at an event which will be the official launch of the next effort to improve federal food and agriculture policy.

Working with Slow Food Nation to provide policy content for their Labor Day weekend events, Roots of Change and the authors of the Declaration identified foundational principles that will ensure the health and wealth of our nation and the world. A healthy food and agriculture policy:

• Provides access to affordable, nutritious food for everyone
• Informs the customer on how food is produced, where it comes from and what it contains
• Prevents the exploitation and upholds the quality of life for all farmers and food workers
• Ensures future prosperity through youth education, protection of finite resources and a transition to renewable resources and energy, and
• Creates a more secure, prosperous and healthy society

“This Declaration is a call to action by and for all Americans,” said Michael R. Dimock, Roots of
Change president. “The movement to create better food and agriculture in the U.S. has been slowly and steadily gaining ground for well over a decade. The purpose of U.S. food and agriculture must change, and it can no longer focus on the production of cheap calories. Conditions demand a more holistic approach to human and community health that begins on our farms and ranches.”

Roots of Change convened a core “drafting team” with Washington, D.C.-based Food & Water Watch farm policy advocate Patty Lovera; Midwestern publisher of *Edible Iowa River Valley*, Wendy Wasserman; and Dan Imhoff, the founder of the Wild Farm Alliance and Watershed Media, and the author of several books, including *Food Fight: The Citizen’s Guide to a Food and Farm Bill*.

Alice Waters, author and founder of Chez Panisse Restaurant, said, “This Declaration unites us all in pursuit of a food system that makes stewardship and nourishment a national priority.”

The drafting team enlisted a group of esteemed “original framers,” including Keith Bolin, president of the American Corn Growers Association (ACGA); Jim Braun, Slow Food USA and Illinois Local Food & Farm Coalition; Randall Gray, former national conservation biologist, USDA; Fred Kirschenmann, Leopold Center and Stone Barns Center for Urban Agriculture; Maricela Morales, Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy; Michael Pollan, journalist and author; Richard Rominger, former deputy secretary, USDA; August Schumacher, Jr., former undersecretary, USDA; Larry Yee, Association of Family Farms; Alice Waters; and Mark Winne, Community Food Security Coalition and the author of *Closing the Food Gap*. In addition to the framers, other original endorsers in support of the final draft include rock musician Jack Johnson; Kim Johnson, executive director of the Kokua Hawai‘i Foundation; environmental author Bill McKibben; nutrition scholar Marion Nestle; ranching leader Becky Weed; Niman pork producer Paul Willis; policy advocate Aimee Wittman of the Sustainable Agriculture Coalition; and representatives from 22 states. During the course of the writing, significant written comments were submitted by Judith Bell and Sarah Truehaft, Policy Link; Stephen Gliessman, UC Santa Cruz; Vance Russell, Audubon California; Wendell Berry, poet and author; and Winona LaDuke, Native American leader.

“This Declaration, which is being crafted by a broad coalition, is the preamble for the next generation of farm policy, and we hope it will stimulate the discussion to help get us there,” said Richard Rominger, farmer, former deputy secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and former secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture.