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PRESS CONTACT

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Food & Society Policy Fellowship Announces 2009 Class

The Food & Society Policy Fellows program named nine new Fellows with backgrounds in farming, public health, filmmaking and policy research to promote strategies for achieving a more sustainable, healthy and equitable food system.

The Food & Society Policy Fellows program was jointly launched in 2001 by the Jefferson Institute and the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), with support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Classes have ranged in size from 8 to 12 Fellows, with a total of 63 selected Fellows over the last seven years. The Fellowship buys a portion of the Fellows' time for two years, allowing them to focus on media outreach and participate in policy and communications trainings.

"This new class has some of the nation's top and emerging leaders on food, agriculture, public health and social justice," said Mark Muller, director of the Fellows program. "The way food is grown, processed and distributed has a tremendous influence on health, the economy and our culture. The Fellows are building on the momentum for a fresher, healthier, more sustainable and more equitable food system."

The program is designed to facilitate the Fellows' use of mass media channels to inform and shape the public agenda for food. Together, they will work to affect local, regional and national policy through strategic communication efforts.

The 2009-2010 Food & Society Fellows are:

Fred Bahnson, Director of Anathoth Community Garden in Cedar Grove, North Carolina, will work to expand the involvement of faith-based communities in food and agriculture.

Nicole Betancourt, a New York-based, Emmy-award winning filmmaker, will mobilize urban parents to create a sustainable food system through childhood nutrition and education.

Alethia Carr, Director of the Michigan Department of Community Health's Bureau of Family and Maternal Child Health, will address "food deserts" (access to healthy food) in cities like Detroit.

Debra Eschmeyer, a fifth generation farmer from Knoxville, Ohio, will continue work through the National Farm-to-School Network to increase access to healthy food for diverse populations.

Andy Fisher, the Oregon-based director of the Community Food Security Coalition, will focus on bridging food security with federal programs.

Shalini Kantayya, a Brooklyn-based film director, will look at water access, nutrition and agricultural issues affecting present and future generations.

Erin MacDougall, of Washington's King County Public Health Department, will publicize the impact of food policy on children's health.

Sean Sellers, a founding member of the Alliance for Fair Food in Texas, will raise awareness on farmworkers' rights and promote socially responsible purchasing by food corporations.

Elizabeth Ü, Manager for Strategic Development at RSF Social Finance, will promote investment opportunities in healthy food systems.

IATP works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems.