

INSIGHT 05

ADDRESS THE NEED TO PAY FARMERS FAIRLY AND DESIRE TO SEE FOOD AS A RIGHT.

Capitalism as part of the food system was a major concern. There was **tension** between the desire for fair compensation and support for those in the food industry and the belief that food is a human right. For the sake of this report, we define capitalism in the food system as the private ownership of food and its production.

One participant mentioned the desire for “more work that does things that scare people.” Another mentioned the **fear** of naming policies and strategies as socialist. The ways in which state and federal dollars are spent to support minority and small farmers was also discussed. Specifically, we heard that state and federal programs provided less support and funding to small and minority farmers.

Participants from the youth group aligned most with rejecting capitalist ideals. Their **excitement** and **energy** to innovate the current system requires a shift away from seeing food as a commodity. On the other side, participants from the rural group explicitly stated the need for farmers to be paid fairly for the products and to be financially supported because it is the right thing to do. This leading insight relates closely to the next insight—understanding charity vs. justice in relation to food systems change.

“I still struggle with the dichotomy of wanting to create a vibrant agricultural economy (attractive to younger farmers, making small farming viable) vs. having to put a value on food (we want to think of food as more of a right).”

- RURAL

“Empowering...finding federal dollars to empower minority farmers, small farmers, not in a microloan format....finding more equitable ways to approach support for small farmers. Removing capitalism out of agriculture.”

- YOUTH/ELDER



Calls to Action:

- We need to shift towards work that is bold, regardless of whether it elicits **fear** and apprehension.
- The food system is ready to move away from short-term innovations. We need to move towards long-term changes in the system that pay farmers for their production and make food accessible to consumers.
- Rather than using temporary solutions such as micro loans, there is a desire to use equitable strategies to fund communities.