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**New Orleans "Worst food desert in U.S." and "Best City in America for Foodies"
The Recirculating Farms Coalition
Statement of Executive Director, Marianne Cufone**

For Immediate Release

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New Orleans, LA – [A new study by News One](#) ranked New Orleans, Louisiana as the worst food desert in the United States. Just a few weeks prior, [Travel and Leisure Magazine](#) dubbed New Orleans “America’s Best City for Foodies”. This dichotomy highlights two vastly different food experiences in New Orleans. How does this happen? Like in many places around the United States and beyond, while restaurants serve a wide array of exciting, enticing dishes, much of the local community struggles to find affordable, healthy food. The people of New Orleans recognize this problem and are collectively taking steps to make changes.

Although the number of grocery stores decreased post-Katrina, the city hosts a rapidly growing local fresh food movement, with neighborhood gardens, community farms and people growing food creatively in unexpected spaces. A wonderful example of the increased awareness about the need for accessible, healthy food is that many schools here, urged by children, are building their own gardens to add more fresh vegetables into cafeteria meals.

The Recirculating Farms Coalition chose New Orleans as home to support the local push for affordable, healthy food. Recirculating farms use clean recycled water and no soil, to grow fruit, vegetables, herbs plus a wide assortment of finfish and shellfish. They employ innovative ways to be space, energy, and water efficient. Well-designed farms re-use up to 99% of their water, and recycle waste. They can run without antibiotics, or other drugs and chemicals, and use renewable energy. Recirculating farms are an eco-friendly, affordable way to build a local food system that can serve the entire community - restaurants, markets and a diverse population.

We are calling for a meaningful infusion of support and funding to build a model recirculating farm in New Orleans, and to expand development of these farms all around the country. Community-based recirculating farms can help close the gap between “foodie” and “food desert” New Orleans to create a healthy, food secure future.

The Recirculating Farms Coalition supports building eco-friendly farms that use clean recycled water to grow local, accessible, fresh food and create stable green jobs. For more information, please see: <http://www.recirculatingfarms.org>

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