



Food and Job Crises Spawn New Nationwide Farming Coalition

The Recirculating Farms Coalition Launches U.S. Campaign for Local, Fresh Food and Green Jobs

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New Orleans, LA — Today, a new organization, the Recirculating Farms Coalition, is officially launching a national campaign to promote growing local, fresh food and create green jobs. Its focus is on eco-friendly farms that use clean, recycled water in place of soil to grow plants (hydroponics), fish (aquaculture), or a combination of both plants and fish (aquaponics). The new collaborative brings together educators, farmers, chefs, non-profit organizations and many others who are working to create an accessible, sustainable and healthy food system in the United States.

Marianne Cufone, Executive Director of the Recirculating Farms Coalition, said, “The current U.S. unemployment rate is 9.1 percent, and about one in six people are struggling to buy food. Building recirculating farms in diverse communities nationwide can provide fresh, local food and create stable jobs in a sustainable business, two things the U.S. very much needs right now.”

Recirculating farms use innovative ways to be space, energy, and water efficient. They can be as small as a desktop for personal use, or large enough for commercial operation. 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 can grow fish, vegetables, flowers, fruits, herbs and more.

“I have been developing and using water reuse, recirculating systems for almost 15 years to produce food responsibly in urban settings.” said Dr. Martin Schreiber, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Biology at CUNY's Brooklyn College and the founder and Director Emeritus of their Aquatic Research and Environmental Assessment Center. “People are just recognizing the many incredible advantages of these systems as a novel method of farming. Now, we are joining together with others - farmers, chefs, fishermen and a new wave of aware students - in this coalition to highlight the benefits of using clean recycled water, without soil, to grow food locally, virtually anywhere, year-round. This is very significant.”

The Recirculating Farms Coalition was created to be a hub for farmers, policy and law makers and consumers; a way to make connections, learn and join together in supporting recirculating farms. The organization also plans to provide training for farmers, build a model farm for teaching and demonstration and actively engage the public on recirculating farming issues.

Cufone explained, “The United States is in one of its worst economic situations ever. We need change, now. Building recirculating farms will help address the food and job crises by empowering communities to create new jobs growing their own food, in a way that is healthy for both us and our planet.”

The Recirculating Farms Coalition is a collaborative group of farmers, educators, non-profit organizations and many others committed to building local sources of healthy, accessible food. Through research, education and advocacy, we work together to support the development of energy efficient farms that use clean recycled water to grow food. We believe that these recirculating farms can create stable green jobs and supply sustainably-grown plants, fruits, vegetables, and humanely-raised seafood in diverse communities nationwide, and someday, worldwide. See: <http://www.recirculatingfarms.org> The Recirculating Farms Coalition is headquartered in New Orleans, Louisiana.