**Values and Food Choices**

**Class activity for Chapter 4**

***Food, Farms and Community***

**Material Requirements: None**

**Time Requirement: 20-30 minutes**

We value particular foods and food combinations for a variety of reasons. Our food preferences are a result of a range of values we hold, some of which we might be consciously aware of while others we might not be. This exercise will offer students an opportunity to explore some of the values that underlie their food preferences.

Break students into small groups of two or three and have each student articulate the top five values that they believe underlie their food preferences. These values might include things like nutritional value, taste, texture, the fact their grandmother prepared the food for them when they were very young, or because it was something they turned to for comfort when times were hard. Regardless of what the values are, have each student compose a list.

Once each student’s list is complete, have students consider foods they commonly eat that do not mesh well with any of the values they list. Most students, upon reflection, will be able to name several such foods. Now invite students to consider why they eat these foods, when they don’t seem to jibe well with the values they originally articulated. This second round of brainstorming will likely make it clear that students initial stab at their values was, at best, incomplete. Ask them to come up with a new version of their top five food values, and discuss in small groups what the differences were between their first list and their second.

Once students finish their second list and have a few minutes to talk about it in small groups, bring the class together to further the discussion. A few useful questions to ask include: How many iterations of this exercise do you think you’d need to arrive at a top five list that stops changing? Is it surprising how your listed top five values changed between your first and second attempt? How do you think your *preferred* (the ones you want your friends to associate with you) top five food values relate to your *actual* top five? How do you think your food values are shaped by media and advertising? How much of today’s diet-related health issues are tied to food values influenced by media?