**Barriers to Food Access**

**Class activity for Chapter 9**

***Food, Farms and Community***

**Material Requirements: None**

**Time Requirement: 20-30 minutes**

Chapter 9 in *Food, Farms, and Community* discusses at length several factors that can contribute to lack of access to food, or to food insecurity, to use a broader term. Invite students to break into small groups and make a list of factors that can contribute to food insecurity, including both those mentioned in the book and those that were not.

While it is an invasion of students’ privacy to ask them to talk about their own situations where they may have lacked access to food while growing up, you may invite students to discuss, without naming names, how food insecurity may have been evident in the cities, towns or neighborhoods they grew up in. What factors specific to their localities contributed to hunger and food insecurity? What factors would need to change in order to alleviate these symptoms of food insecurity?

Once students have time to brainstorm in small groups, invite the class back together to discuss students’ brainstorm session. Compile a list of factors that contribute to food insecurity on the board, or elsewhere where all students can see and reflect on them. This is an excellent opportunity to talk about solutions to some of these factors, and to note how many problems that surface within the system may require solutions that are far broader or more expansive than just the food system itself. For instance, how closely are factors contributing to food security tied to income inequality in the United States? How closely are they tied to lack of economic opportunities in particular localities, factors such as transportation infrastructure, or lack of access to quality education and all of the opportunities it provides? Does the free market system appear to aggravate or mitigate the problem of food insecurity? This may also be an opportunity to discuss issues of race- and class-privilege, which can be challenging but ultimately valuable discussions if facilitated well.