

Fleet Farming

Stampar, Nicholas; United Nations Director, IDEAS for Us, United States,
nick.stampar@ideasforus.org

Fleet Farming is an urban farming program that converts lawns into organic farms and uses bicycles to distribute fresh produce to local venues. This grassroots, self-sustaining solution was created and sponsored by IDEAS For Us, and targets activating communities to diversify local food production, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions associated with the production and distribution of our food. In order to achieve these ends, Fleet Farming empowers, educates, and engages community members in the sustainable reallocation of their property for food growth. Specifically, community members partner with Fleet Farming and donate front, side, or back lawns on their property to be devoted to an urban farm. Subsequently, the food grown through this small-plot sustainable agricultural initiative is shared with the homeowner and sold throughout the community in local restaurants and farmers' markets -- effectively creating a community-driven and locally sourced sustainable food system. Additionally, in the interest of minimizing carbon output from our production and transportation, Fleet Farming is bike-powered - transporting workers, input resources, and final products to and from farms and market exclusively by bicycle.

Most directly, Fleet Farming targets Conference Sub-Theme Number Four: Education and Training. Central to Fleet Farming's mission and activities is the involvement and education of community members whose knowledge and dedication fuel the project and productivity itself. In the interest of fueling this educational component, Fleet Farming provides a series of educational programs to engage the community audience in the urban farming movement and teach functional knowledge and skills to help advance their capacity and involvement. These initiatives include an hour-long Fleet Farming presentation and discussion with Fleet employees, available for purchase by any individual or group, hands-on seed planting workshops, team building work-days where groups can learn to construct a small-plot "Farmlette", and Swarm Rides where interested individuals can ride along with Fleet employees, learn how to farm, and help in the transportation of goods to market as well. Through these initiatives, Fleet Farming is capable of not only effectively impacting local food systems, but also educating and proliferating sustainable practices through the community.

Subsequently, while Fleet Farming does involve socially inclusive economic growth by making sustainable economic production available and effective on small and affordable scales, this food solution is directly relevant to Conference Topic Number Three: Agriculture, Food Security, and Nutrition. At the most basic level, Fleet Farming is a community driven and easily replicable solution to an array of agricultural issues, not only involving issues of food security and nutrition, but also in the social and environmental sustainability of food systems themselves. Where centralized food systems create large scale GHG emissions issues, generate socially stratified food insecurity, and risk sufficient nutrient consumption, Fleet Farming provides a system for

communities to personally and sustainably face these issues and effectively assuage these concerns.

To date, Fleet Farming maintains a network of 11 Farmlettes in the Orlando area, with roughly 6000 total square feet dedicated to small-plot sustainable agriculture, actively grows over 40 crop varieties, and sells products to several local partnered restaurants. Additionally, a Fleet Farming location in Oakland, California is currently in the process of establishing its initial partners and property donors for production. Ultimately, with roughly one third of global GHG emissions sourced in food systems, Fleet Farming represents not only an active recognition of this fact, but a functional and growing attempt to mitigate this trend through the kind of grassroots activism that remains the centerpiece of all of our work at IDEAS For Us.