In June 2010, the American Dietetic Association, American Nurses Association, American Planning Association, and American Public Health Association initiated a collaborative process to develop a set of shared food system principles. The following principles are a result of this process and have been collectively endorsed by these organizations.

PRINCIPLES OF A HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

We support socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable food systems that promote health – the current and future health of individuals, communities, and the natural environment.

A healthy, sustainable food system is:

HEALTH-PROMOTING
• Supports the physical and mental health of all farmers, workers and eaters
• Accounts for the public health impacts across the entire lifecycle of how food is produced, processed, packaged, labeled, distributed, marketed, consumed and disposed

SUSTAINABLE
• Conserves, protects, and regenerates natural resources, landscapes and biodiversity
• Meets our current food and nutrition needs without compromising the ability of the system to meet the needs of future generations

RESILIENT
• Thrives in the face of challenges, such as unpredictable climate, increased pest resistance, and declining, increasingly expensive water and energy supplies

DIVERSE IN
• Size and scale—includes a diverse range of food production, transformation, distribution, marketing, consumption, and disposal practices, occurring at diverse scales, from local and regional, to national and global
• Geography—considers geographic differences in natural resources, climate, customs, and heritage
• Culture—appreciates and supports a diversity of cultures, socio-demographics, and lifestyles
• Choice—provides a variety of health-promoting food choices for all

FAIR
• Supports fair and just communities and conditions for all farmers, workers and eaters
• Provides equitable physical access to affordable food that is health promoting and culturally appropriate

ECONOMICALLY BALANCED
• Provides economic opportunities that are balanced across geographic regions of the country and at different scales of activity, from local to global, for a diverse range of food system stakeholders
• Affords farmers and workers in all sectors of the system a living wage

TRANSPARENT
• Provides opportunities for farmers, workers and eaters to gain the knowledge necessary to understand how food is produced, transformed, distributed, marketed, consumed and disposed
• Empowers farmers, workers and eaters to actively participate in decision-making in all sectors of the system

A healthy, sustainable food system emphasizes, strengthens, and makes visible the interdependent and inseparable relationships between individual sectors (from production to waste disposal) and characteristics (health-promoting, sustainable, resilient, diverse, fair, economically balanced, and transparent) of the system.

These principles should not be construed as endorsement by any organization of any specific policy or policies.
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