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Rose Tardiff

Upstate Medical University, Syracuse, NY

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Towards an Expansion of the Salt City Harvest Farm

Exploring a Community Farm's Impact, Challenges,
and the Agricultural Ways and Aspirations
of its New American Farmers

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at
Syracuse University

Rose Tardiff
Candidate for a Bachelor of Arts Degree
and Renée Crown University Honors
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Honors Capstone Project in Geography

Capstone Project Advisor: _____
Thomas A. Perreault, Professor of Geography

Capstone Project Reader: _____
Jonnell A. Robinson, Assistant Professor of
Geography

Honors Director: _____
Stephen Kuusisto, Director

Date: April 22, 2015

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Abstract

The Salt City Harvest Farm (SCHF) is a community farm located in Kirkville, NY cultivated by and for New Americans living in Syracuse who wish to expand gardening beyond their backyards and community gardens. While the farm has been operational for two growing seasons, it is an all-volunteer project with limited capacity, and concerns about long-term sustainability. This research was designed to be pragmatic; it seeks to inform the future structure and programming of the SCHF by identifying its project-specific challenges, drawing on the agricultural aspirations of its New American participants, and investigating how other refugee farming projects in the United States function. To this end, primary qualitative data was collected (primary research methods included an oral survey and focus group with the farm's New American participants, semi-structured interviews with the farm's owners and facilitators, and participant observations of the previous growing season), and relevant background research conducted.

As an urban-fringe agricultural site providing access to greenspace, supplemental produce, and the opportunity to socialize, the SCHF hosts a wide range of benefits for its New American participants. While the majority of refugee farming projects in the United States are farmer-training, or incubator, programs, the SCHF stands apart in its unique emphasis on communal cultivation and cross-cultural exchange. Results reveal that the Salt City Harvest farmers have rich agricultural backgrounds and extensive botanical knowledge. The farm would best suit their interests by continuing to be a place to grow their own food (rather than transitioning into an incubator model), incorporating identified culturally significant crops, and perhaps connecting them with resources for identifying more wild edible plants, especially those with medicinal properties. Some organizational recommendations for best practices include clearly defining roles, integrating New Americans into the farm's decision-making processes, investing in interpreting services, forging mutually beneficial partnerships, and considering alternative forms of fundraising.

Executive Summary

About ten miles outside of the City of Syracuse, in the town of Kirkville, is a 32-acre privately owned piece of land. Roughly four acres of that land is under the cultivation of the Salt City Harvest Farm, a project spearheaded by the farm property's owners, local teachers and educators, social service providers, and other community members. The Salt City Harvest Farm (SCHF) is a space for New Americans (another term for refugees who, being forced from their home countries *and* places of refuge, have permanently resettled in the United States) to communally plant, cultivate, and harvest food for their own personal consumption. Syracuse is home to a growing network of community gardens (a form of urban agriculture in which a group of people garden together in a central location). Members of the refugee population cultivate several of these community gardens. Having observed this interest in the refugee community to grow their own food, the Salt City Harvest Farm seeks to provide a space for interested New Americans to scale-up their gardening activities.

I became involved with the Salt City Harvest Farm in the summer of 2014, working part-time as the farm's coordinator. This summer experience piqued my interest in the New American participants' wealth of agricultural knowledge, their foraging practices, and the ways they prepare and use vegetables. I also quickly became aware of the farm's limited capacity, in terms of maintaining the farm property, effectively communicating, generating volunteer interest, and securing funding that could relieve some of the demands of the all-volunteer project. I realized that I could carry out relevant research to address some of these concerns for the sake of the SCHF's viability in the long-term, while also exploring an incredibly interesting and under-studied subject: the

agricultural backgrounds of refugees, and how their traditions carry over, or are limited by, their cultivation experiences here in Syracuse.

This research draws upon relevant background research and primary qualitative data collection, in the form of an oral survey and focus group conducted with the farm's New American participants, semi-structured interviews conducted with the farm's owners and facilitators, and participant observations during the 2014 growing season to address the following questions: What role does the Salt City Harvest Farm play in the lives of the resettled refugees who make use of it? What are the agricultural backgrounds and aspirations of these New Americans, and does the farm align with their expressed interests and needs? How does this community farm fit into the larger mosaic of emerging refugee farming projects in the United States?

The research process has revealed that the Salt City Harvest Farm is quite unique in its mission and structure. While the majority of refugee farming projects in the United States are non-profit, farmer-training programs (also called incubator farms), the SCHF stands apart in its emphasis on communal cultivation and cross-cultural exchange surrounding agricultural knowledge. In alignment with this finding, primary research indicates that the farm's participants would like to see it continue to be a place to grow their own food, rather than serve as a platform for learning how to start-up and operate their own farm business. As an urban-fringe agricultural site providing access to greenspace, supplemental produce, and the opportunity to socialize, the SCHF hosts a wide range of benefits for its New American participants. In turn, New American participants bring extensive agricultural knowledge to the farm. While some cultivars and growing practices translate to the climate found in Syracuse, other aspects of their

botanical knowledge is of no use here, suggesting the potential merit of connecting them with resources for identifying more wild edible plants, especially those with medicinal properties.

This project is significant for the information it can provide the SCHF about its farmers, their agricultural backgrounds, and hopes for the future. This information can help guide the short-term planning of the farm in terms of planting culturally significant crops, and incorporating other methods of growing, as well as lending insight into larger questions surrounding the farm's vision and future programming. It may also serve as a baseline of research to draw upon in grant applications. In addition, the challenges (both self-identified and observed) that the SCHF experiences are addressed with detailed recommendations and suggestions for best practices. In this way, the project contributes to the long-term sustainability of an important social agricultural enterprise, while also gathering preliminary data on the growing and foraging practices, botanical knowledge, and food ways of several refugee groups living in Syracuse.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Executive Summary.....	iv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Research Design.....	2
Chapter 2: The Role of Refugees in Urban Agriculture & the Emergence of Refugee Farming Projects.....	6
Refugees in Syracuse.....	6
Refugee Community Gardening in Syracuse.....	9
Refugee Farming Projects in the United States.....	12
Salt City Harvest Farm.....	19
Chapter 3: Primary Research Results.....	25
Semi-Structured Interviews & Participatory Observation.....	25
Survey.....	52
Focus Group.....	63
Farm Maps.....	68
Chapter 4: Discussion of Results.....	76
Significance of the Salt City Harvest Farm.....	76
Vision.....	78
Capacity.....	81
Visibility.....	85
Organizational Structure & Internal Management.....	86
Considerations.....	91
Chapter 5: Conclusion.....	93
References.....	95
Appendices.....	99

List of Figures & Tables

Figure 1. Locator Map of the Salt City Harvest Farm	20
Figure 2. The SCHF’s Land Use and Crop Layout in 2014	28
Figure 3. 2014 SCHF Participants’ Countries of Origin.....	31
Figure 4. Sorting the Harvest	32
Figure 5. Distributing the Harvest	33
Figure 6. Foraged and Harvested “Betu” (Lamb’s Quarters).	39
Figure 7. Foraged and Harvested “Sisnu” (Stinging Nettle).....	39
Figure 8. “Jaringo” Plants (Pokeweed).....	40
Figure 9. Black Nightshade.....	41
Figure 10. Animals Raised by Participants in their Home Countries	55
Figure 11. Number of Animals Raised by Survey Participants	56
Figure 12. Salt City Harvest Farm’s Outward Impact	57
Figure 13. Salt City Harvest Farm’s Impact on Food Security.....	58
Figure 14. Reasons for Going to the SCHF (Survey Responses)	59
Figure 15. Map of the SCHF’s Soils and their Classification.....	70
Figure 16. Map of the SCHF's Soil Suitability for Cultivation	71
Figure 17. Proposed Future Farm Use & Crop Map.....	73
Table 1. Legal Structure Options for the SCHF	89

Chapter 1

Introduction

In response to the burgeoning population of refugees resettled across the U.S., refugee farming projects have emerged to meet these New Americans' desire to cultivate land, interact within a familiar environment, and in some cases, become farmers. Many studies have examined the resettlement experience and acculturation of refugees. Despite the growing number of refugee farming projects, few studies in the literature specifically explore these projects' organizational structures and programming, the role they play in the lives of their refugee participants, or the extent to which their mission and activities are informed by their farmers' input.

The Salt City Harvest Farm (SCHF) is a community farm located in Kirkville, NY intended to be cultivated by and for New Americans living in Syracuse who wish to expand gardening beyond their backyards and community gardens. This research will systematically draw upon relevant background research and primary qualitative data collection, in the form of an oral survey and focus groups conducted with the farm's New American participants, semi-structured interviews conducted with the farm's owners and facilitators, and participant observation of the 2014 growing season, to address the following questions: What role does the Salt City Harvest Farm play in the lives of the resettled refugees who make use of it? What are the agricultural backgrounds and aspirations of these New Americans, and does the farm align with their expressed interests and needs? How does this community farm fit into the larger mosaic of emerging refugee farming projects in the United States?

This study was designed to be pragmatic; ideally, it will help to develop the future programming of the farm to best suit the expressed needs and interests of its farmers in addition to serving as a baseline of research for the farm to draw upon. More broadly, it will explore the role refugee farming projects may play in the resettlement experience of refugees, and the unique agricultural knowledge of specific refugee groups living in the City of Syracuse.

Research Design

General. Niewolny and Lillard (2010) urge researchers to “Explore the social and cultural impacts and implications of beginning farmer programs through ethnographic and critical analysis of on-the-ground, everyday practice and curriculum materials” (p. 76). I strove to take this approach with this research (though the Salt City Harvest Farm is not a beginning farmer program per se, it bears many similarities to, and aspires to be, one). As an involved member of the Salt City Harvest Farm project, I am not a detached researcher. I designed this research in a way that could both distance me from the Salt City Harvest Farm to lend some objectivity, as well as pull me in close to understand the very place- and person-specific challenges of the project. To this end, I investigated the origins of beginning farmer programs and other contemporary refugee farming programs in the U.S., in addition to conducting primary research (interviews, survey, focus group, and the creation of original maps). Necessary permissions were obtained from Syracuse University’s Institutional Review Board for carrying out primary research methods. More specific details regarding these methods follow.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four of the core members of the farm: farm owner Theresa Letcher, former farm manager Jennifer

(Jenny) Stratton, ESL teacher Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson, ESF professor Matthew (Matt) Potteiger, and Saro Kumar, an individual who has worked closely with New Americans as a member of the organization Women Transcending Boundaries and the Isabella Street Tapestry Community Garden. Interviews were intended to cull their motivations for being involved, their hopes for the farm in the long-term, the purpose(s) they perceive the farm to serve, and the biggest challenges that present themselves in the current functioning of the farm, as well as the biggest challenges in achieving their goals for the farm. To fulfill dual purposes, these interviews were conducted in conjunction with interns of the Syracuse Community Geography Program who were also collecting information on refugee gardening and farming in Syracuse for their own Community Geography project. In general, all core members of the farm were asked similar things; some questions were geared towards each individual's specific role at the farm, and thus specific set of knowledge. Appendix 1 provides a sample interview guide. Interviewees allowed for the use of their real names throughout this research.

Survey. A survey was designed for New Americans who had previously been to the Salt City Harvest Farm. It was intended to capture baseline information directly from those that the farm serves. Its objectives were three-fold: 1) to discover the extent of participants' agricultural experiences prior to resettlement; 2) to understand the role and impact of the Salt City Harvest Farm in their lives; and 3) to find out which vegetables, herbs, and flowers specific to their home countries—other than those already grown at the farm—they are most interested in cultivating in future growing seasons.

Survey participants were recruited during two visits to Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson's ESL class at the Refugee Assistance Center. Rozlynn is heavily involved with the Salt

City Harvest Farm, acting as the farm's sole connection to the New American community. As such, many of her students were, or have become, involved with the farm.

The survey was conducted in English in a group format, the thought being that many of the New Americans would feel most comfortable if they were amongst familiar faces. Most of the New Americans involved with the farm in the summer of 2014 were Bhutanese, so one of the benefits of conducting the survey in a group was that the Bhutanese with stronger English skills could help to translate for those experiencing a greater language barrier. To make the survey sensitive to participants' potential (and likely) English literacy limitations, questions were simple and posed in plain English, and responses were recorded by simply checking boxes on an answer sheet, or using stickers placed next to images.

Focus group. A group discussion with involved New Americans was planned to capture, in greater detail, their farming and foraging practices in their home countries, how they prepare vegetables and plants, the kinds of dishes they make, and their future interests in farming (in relation to the Salt City Harvest Farm). The focus group was co-conducted with Matthew Potteiger, who was primarily interested in learning more about farm participants' foraging. Nepali-speaking and Burmese-speaking translators, of Empire Interpreting Services, were present to convey the nuances of the conversation. Appendix 9 provides the questions used to guide the focus group.

Maps. I created several original maps in order to: 1) contextualize the farm in terms of its location and the origins of its New American farmers (see Figures 1 & 3), 2) to visualize the soil attributes (see Figure 15) of the farm property to evaluate its

suitability for cultivation, 3) to reveal the way the farm property is currently being used, and if that plan makes the best use of the farm's physical properties (see Figure 16), and 4) to propose a potential new farm plan informed by these results (see Figure 17).

Positionality. I drew on my own experiences and observations at the SCHF, embracing DeLind's (2011) suggestion to "speak from our own felt experiences as well as to admit multiple forms of expression into our narratives of the local food system" to counter the transformation of "the objects of our concern into abstractions" that accompanies the separation of researcher from subject (p. 380).

My position as the farm coordinator in the summer of 2014, places me in a position of power relative to the farm's participants, which in all likelihood influenced the feedback I received from them. At the same time, my personal relationship to them is precisely what enabled me to ask them questions about their foods, home countries, and how they experience the farm. It was this position working alongside people of diverse cultures and languages that piqued my interest in their former agricultural experiences, essentially shaping my research questions. As a newcomer to the project with some non-profit and farming experience, I held both a critical and empathetic eye to the program. This unique vantage point enabled me to see the utility of a project that could gather information from participants while simultaneously carrying out research to propose recommendations for addressing identified challenges.

Chapter 2

The Role of Refugees in Urban Agriculture & the Emergence of Refugee Farming Projects

I will begin by contextualizing this research's subjects. First, I will define who refugees are, explain why they have ended up in Syracuse, and touch on their resettlement experience. Next, I will discuss the creation of community gardens in Syracuse to meet the interests of these New Americans. Lastly, I will discuss the emergence of beginner farmer programs and illustrate some of the contemporary forms they take. I will focus particularly on the significance of urban agriculture and refugee farming projects in relation to their impact on the places in which they are situated and the people they seek to serve.

Refugees in Syracuse

A refugee, as defined by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, is someone who, “owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR]). The 1951 Convention also resulted in the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the entity that designates refugee status and directs refugee resettlement (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). The important distinction between refugees and migrants is that “refugees have to move if they are to save their

lives or preserve their freedom,” whereas migrants “choose to move to improve their future prospects” (“Refugees,” UNHCR).

In instances where refugees cannot, or are unwilling, to return to their home country, and/or they find themselves in dangerous or inadequate situations in the country where they have sought refuge, refugees will be resettled in a third country (“Resettlement,” UNHCR). Permanent resettlement in a third country only happens for one percent of some 10.5 million refugees worldwide (“Resettlement,” UNHCR). Based on the most recent statistical report of global resettlement, the main beneficiaries of UNHCR-facilitated resettlement in 2013 were refugees from Burma (Myanmar), Iraq, Bhutan, and Somalia (UNHCR, 2013).

There are approximately 263,700 refugees currently residing in the United States, making the U.S. the 10th largest hosting country to refugees (those that plan to return to their home countries), but the world’s leading resettlement country (UNHCR, 2014). As of 2013, roughly 12,000 of these refugees were resettled, or living (by way of secondary migration) in Syracuse (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). The first refugees to resettle in Syracuse, beginning in 1979, were Vietnamese. Since that time, refugees from nearly 40 countries have arrived in Syracuse from their home countries, or places of relocation (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). In recent years, Syracuse has seen the largest cohort of refugees arrive from Burma (Myanmar) and Bhutan, respectively (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). Refugees in Syracuse tend to be concentrated on Syracuse’s Northside, a historically immigrant neighborhood. It continues to be a prime location for resettlement given its affordable real estate coupled with landlords who have good rapport with local resettlement agencies (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012).

The surge in refugee arrivals to Syracuse—the average number of refugees arriving annually has more than doubled in recent years—has made the Northside a cultural hotspot, bringing new foods, languages, and small businesses (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). But the refugees residing on the Northside also represent a population that still has unmet needs, and struggles to find long-term employment, despite access to resources provided by resettlement services and community-based organizations. “Refugees arriving in the past decade are increasingly more diverse, have a wide range of formal schooling and professional experience, and the Department of State has recognized that this has made resettlement more challenging” (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012).

During her interview, Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson spoke to the experience of Bhutanese refugees before arriving in the United States:

The Bhutanese have been in refugee camps since 1991 and some become pretty established, which is a very different experience from the Congo or Burundi, where people were forced out by the government and have had to move around, which is more of an insecure experience. Despite the relative stability of the camps, there were still food shortages, cholera outbreaks, and fires (personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Despite the relief of leaving the kind of place described above behind, New Americans tend to face many challenges in the resettlement process as they work to create new lives for themselves in an entirely foreign place. Resettlement challenges include navigating resettlement assistance options, language barriers, job placement (either because of low literacy skills or no formal education experience), transportation constraints, and cultural assimilation, to name only a few (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). These can present other challenges, like accessing everything from health care services to law enforcement. Ultimately, these obstacles all work in tandem to hinder some refugees’ ability to achieve

economic independence. The already difficult resettlement process can be compounded by mental health problems like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012).

Syracuse, a deindustrialized city characterized by declining density, outdated transportation and infrastructure, high crime rates, and poverty (one-third of residents live below the poverty level), presents even more place-specific challenges (United States Census Bureau). While, “the agricultural sector in central New York regularly hires refugees,” work locations outside of the public transportation network makes traveling to these jobs difficult (Onondaga Citizens League, 2012). One Bhutanese woman described to me, while dividing up the morning’s harvest at the Salt City Harvest, how hard it is to find a job here. She has family in a different state, where all that’s needed to find work is a refugee card, making acquiring a job much easier. Her comment highlights a resettlement challenge specific to Syracuse, and more largely, New York State.

Throughout this paper, the term ‘refugee’ will be used interchangeably with ‘New American.’ New American has been popularized as an alternative descriptor because it discards any connotation of vulnerability and labeling, instead emphasizing the integration of refugees into their places of resettlement.

Refugee Community Gardening in Syracuse

Community gardens¹ have a long history in the United States, often “emerging as a response to specific social crises.” The contemporary emergence of community

¹ “A community garden is any garden cultivated by a group of people” (Weissman & Robinson, forthcoming).

gardens, on the other hand, tends to be associated with public interest in finding alternatives to conventionally produced food. Unlike their historic counterparts, today's community gardens are typically initiated by the people interested in using them, and organized by and for their members (Weissman & Robinson, forthcoming).

Today, Syracuse is home to more than twenty community gardens—several of which are gardened exclusively by members of the refugee community—and a non-profit organization, Syracuse Grows, that works to leverage resources and advocate on their behalf. Syracuse Grows was founded in 2008, on the heels of the Syracuse Hunger Project, a collaborative study to address local food insecurity. At the time of the study, there were no community gardens in Syracuse, nor any organization to facilitate and promote their existence, despite insufficient geographic and monetary access to fresh food experienced by many City residents. Syracuse Grows' founders asserted that community gardening could foster food security, neighborhood revitalization, and community building.

The Isabella Street Tapestry Garden was the first refugee community garden to be established in Syracuse. Refugee women participating in “sewing circles” facilitated by Women Transcending Boundaries² expressed an interest in gardening and growing the foods they missed from their home countries (S. Kumar, personal communication, December 2, 2014). Women Transcending Boundaries worked with Syracuse Grows, and several other partners, to plan, design, and build 15 raised beds for the Tapestry garden. Neighborhood residents from Bhutan, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Burma participate in the garden. Many of the Isabella Street Tapestry gardeners are also participants of the SCHF.

² Women Transcending Boundaries is a community organization working to bring women of diverse cultures and backgrounds together to share their beliefs and stories.

A year later, in 2010, two new community gardens were established with refugee groups on the Northside and Southside of Syracuse (Syracuse Grows, 2010). The Congolese refugee community, in collaboration with City partners and funders, established the Karibu Community Garden, and the Somali Bantu community developed the Filtrexx Garden Soxx Community Garden, which utilized garden ‘socks’ instead of raised beds (Syracuse Grows, 2010). While the Filtrexx Community Garden ultimately went defunct, interest in participating in the Karibu Community Garden exceeded its physical capacity (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November, 1, 2014). In 2013, gardeners successfully applied for a grant to fund the building of a new garden on a vacant lot just across the street from Karibu. Though the garden was considered an expansion of Karibu, it is often called the New Roots Community Garden.

The significance of community gardens. Community gardens provide a number of benefits for both the gardeners that use them and the immediate neighborhoods in which they are located. They produce supplemental food for gardeners, tend to have positive social and psychological effects, revitalize neighborhoods, and bring community members together (Weissman & Robinson, forthcoming). Interestingly,

To date the most pervasive economic benefits of urban agriculture in the United States come not from urban farming, but from community gardening, which is the dominant form of urban agriculture in almost all cities, involving far more people and growing more food...Community and backyard gardens contribute significantly to some households food budgets, and gardeners sustain active networks of distribution to neighbors and strangers as a deliberate form of food relief (Vitiello & Wolf-Powers, 2014, p. 10).

Refugee Farming Projects in the United States

Emergence. It is perhaps not surprising that New Americans are interested in farming. “American agriculture has historically been forged by newcomers, like the Scandinavians who helped settle the Great Plains; today’s growers are more likely to be rural subsistence farmers from Africa and Asia, resettled in and around cities...” (Brown, 2011, p. 1). A multitude of programs, initiatives, and projects, especially those taking the form of farm incubator programs, have emerged within the last decade to support beginning farmers, including refugee and/or immigrant farmers. A farm incubator program can be defined as, “a land-based multi-grower project that provides training and technical assistance to aspiring and beginning farmers” (Overton, 2013). While there are projects like the SCHF that support refugee community farming (or gardening) without an emphasis on farmer training or job creation, here I will focus specifically on the emergence of incubator farm programs in the United States. For one, they are the predominant form of refugee farming projects lending agricultural support and resources to resettled refugees. They are also of importance to the core members of the Salt City Harvest Farm, who have expressed interest in eventually transitioning the SCHF into an incubator program to create agricultural jobs.

Incubator farms, and other beginning farmer programs, are geared towards assisting refugees in the process of starting their own farm businesses to grow autonomously. Starting a farm is both resource- and capital-intensive. In general, beginning farmers tend to experience the similar challenges, including prohibitively high start-up costs and finding farmland (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010). They also have the added challenge of seeking out the “institutional and local support to exchange

knowledge and build capacity for gaining access to suitable markets, capital, land tenure, hands-on training, and education that are necessary to develop and sustain food and farming activities” (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010, p. 70). When beginning farmers are also refugees (or immigrants), limited-resource, or socially disadvantaged, their barriers to successfully creating and operating a farm start-up multiply.

In 1998, the Office of Refugee Resettlement in Washington formed a sustainable farming program and funded 14 refugee farms and gardens (Brown, 2011). In 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded \$19 million to grantees through their Beginner Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP), a competitive grant funding programs supportive of new farmers (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010). This USDA program was a result of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, but wasn't implemented until the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, which mandated funding for beginning farmer provisions (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010). Although the emergence of beginning farmer education programming is not new (the land grant university and Cooperative Extension system began in 1862), the creation of the BFRDP is a significant milestone in the resurging movement to meet beginning farmers' needs (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010).

Educational opportunities for beginning farmers, which traditionally existed in colleges and universities, Extension offices, and agricultural workplaces, are increasingly available in different formats, including workshops, internships, apprenticeships, networking, and online resources (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010). Furthermore, access to these opportunities varies across the demographic spectrum of beginning farmers, spanning: “immigrants and refugees, urban and suburban agriculturists, organic growers,

transitional farmers, young farmers, mid-career changes, and new conventional commodity operators” (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010, p. 67).

Niewolny and Lillard (2010) attribute this response of meeting the specific and specialized needs of beginning farmers seen over the last few decades, to the concern over the rising age of U.S. farmers and decline in people entering farming, coupled with an increase in the number of existing farmers. Policies emerging from the 1990 farm bill created collaborative efforts between schools, extension services, government agencies, and community-based organizations, which produced a new platform for the dissemination of agricultural knowledge (Niewolny & Lillard, 2010). Niewolny & Lillard (2010) argue that this shift in pedagogy is owed in large part to the broader social movement surrounding sustainable agriculture, which has produced new opportunities for the exchange of farming knowledge via its alternative networks.

Community farms for refugee agriculture are “an entrepreneurial movement spreading across the country” (Brown, 2011). As of 2013, there were 111 farm incubator projects (this includes operational as well as potential incubators), 54 percent of which served the needs of refugees and/or immigrants (Overton, 2013). These projects are diverse in their organizational structures. The majority (68 percent) of projects are non-profits, 12 percent are some combination of nonprofit, academic institution, government agency, cooperative, trust, or organization, 8 percent are part of an academic institution, 8 percent are part of a government agency, and only 4 percent are sole proprietorships (Overton, 2013).

Pertinent examples of current refugee farming projects. Maine’s largest land-based farmer training program, Cultivating Community (formerly the New American

Sustainable Agriculture Project), is an example of a very successful single organization refugee incubator farm program. Cultivating Community provides significant market opportunities for its New American farmers, in addition to technical assistance and educational support to help establish independent farm businesses. Through this diversified non-profit organization (they also do garden-based education for youth and work to establish urban garden sites), New American participants gain access to a plot of land and the opportunity to sell their produce as a part of the program's collective 'Fresh Start Farms' ("Fresh Start Farms CSA," 2015). Fresh Start Farms offers a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program, farm stands, and space at farmers markets, in addition to wholesale distribution ("Buy Our Produce," 2015). Excluding the small fees beginning farmers must pay to the program for land access, equipment, the use of shared washing and packaging facilities, and marketing services, they keep their own revenues ("Fresh Start Farms CSA," 2015).

Aggregating the vegetables produced by several New American farmers increases this program's options for market sales, and removes the risk of their farmers competing for customers, giving the program more flexibility and its farmers greater security. Cultivating Community reveals the power and possibilities of a cooperative program working equitably on behalf of its members. What's more, in supporting and training producers to access customers while simultaneously working to meet market demands, Cultivating Community acts as a food hub,³ which is considered a significant feature of regional food environments.

³ Food hubs are defined by the USDA as, "a business or organization that actively manages the aggregation, distribution, and marketing of source-identified food products primarily from local and regional producers to strengthen their ability to satisfy wholesale, retail, and institutional demand" (Barham, 2013).

While beginning farmer programs can be single-organization projects, they are increasingly collaborative partnerships (Niewolny and Lillard, 2010, p. 75). This makes sense considering the diversity of support available when tapping into a network of diverse entities. The country's pioneering refugee farm incubator program, New Entry Sustainable Farming Project (New Entry) of Lowell, Massachusetts is an excellent example of a collaborative project. It was founded in 1998 by Tufts University's Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and developed as a broad partnership that also included Boston and Community Teamwork, Inc. of Lowell. Though New Entry was originally conceived to embed recent immigrants and refugees with farming backgrounds in regional agriculture, the program has expanded to target beginning farmers of *all* backgrounds, and draws on relationships with farm organizations and food businesses, social service agencies, community groups, state and federal farm service agencies, other incubator farm projects, experienced farmers, and academic institutions (New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, 2015). Outside of their on-the-ground work, New Entry has developed a multitude of online resources, a farmland matching service, a National Incubator Farm Training Initiative, and an active referral network to serve beginning farmers and incubator programs across the country (New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, 2015). Like Cultivating Community, New Entry has also created their own food hub that includes a CSA program, wholesale distribution, and initiatives to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Growing Home in Chicago is "a farm-based training program for people with employment barriers." Growing Home provides 25 hours per week of paid work to participants who work as production assistants on their organic urban farm sites to "train

them in job skills, give them real work experience, and support them while they begin their careers by helping with job placement and life-planning” (Growing Home, 2015). The produce harvested by program participants is subsequently sold to neighbors at reduced prices, to improve the surrounding neighborhoods’ healthy food options. Given that earnings from farm work are typically low, perhaps a job-training program like Growing Home, in which graduates tend to find jobs in landscaping and food service, could be successful for the Salt City Harvest Farm, if it also emphasized English language learning.

The significance of refugee farming projects. Urban (and in some cases rural) agriculture projects are unique in that they’re often social enterprises, meaning that their missions are of higher priority than profit generation (Vitiello and Wolf-Powers, 2014, p. 7). Agricultural social enterprises, therefore, play an important social justice role in the inclusion of resource-poor and socially disadvantaged communities into their activities and objectives. Agricultural social enterprises almost always produce food for people, and in some cases they create supplemental income as well, which “may be vital to household food and economic security (Vitiello and Wolf-Powers, 2014, p. 7). While some farming programs may create non-profits jobs, others offer workforce development opportunities for refugees, former convicts, and youth. Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014) see urban agriculture as an especially effective form of workforce development because farming- and gardening-specific skills are highly transferrable ones. Furthermore, agricultural social enterprises build supportive social networks (Vitiello and Wolf-Powers, 2014). Such networks are particularly significant for people like refugees, who may not otherwise be exposed to beneficial relationships outside of their immediate

community. Vitiello and Wolf-Powers (2014) argue that the “foremost contribution of urban agriculture to economic development lie in developing the human and social capital to effectuate ‘inside-out’ community revitalization” (p. 2).

As the mechanism that provides fresh produce to underserved populations and teaches food production skills, many agricultural social enterprises also support civic agriculture, which refers to the “embedding of local agricultural and food production in the community” (Lyson, 2005, p. 92). If these agricultural programs are civic in nature, they then facilitate collective decision-making and shared responsibility, more largely contributing to the building of healthy communities and sustainable agricultural systems (Lyson, 2005).

In addition to helping integrate New Americans into their places of resettlement, research indicates that greenspaces⁴ may also serve as an important link to their former lives. Rishbeth and Finney (2006) explored how refugees perceive and experience new environments of resettlement, specifically within formal gardens, plant collections, parks, woodlands, and an urban farm, through participatory photo journaling. They found that greenspaces played a significant role in triggering complex feelings of nostalgia for study participants: “Landscapes and plants became the starting point for stories, small vignettes about home life, family outings, relaxation or leisure activities” (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006, p. 287). Participants identified greenspaces as “places of freedom and escape from worries” (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006, p. 290). For some, the familiarity of these landscapes provided an important “conceptual link” from their pasts in their home countries to their

⁴ Greenspaces are public, open spaces that are green and represent nature in an urban setting (Rishbeth & Finney, 2005).

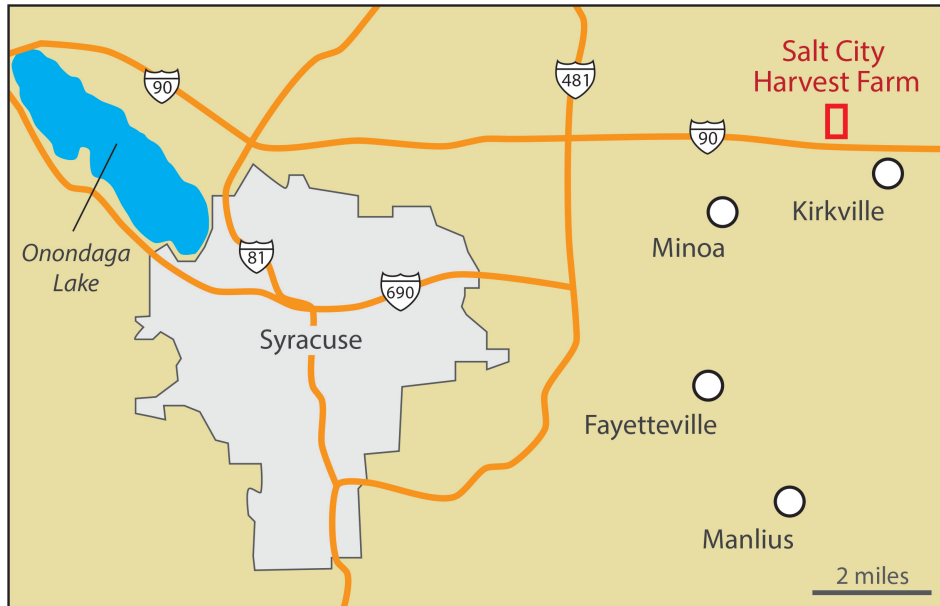
new lives in the UK (Rishbeth & Finney, 2006, p. 294), presenting a strong case for greenspaces as a positive tool for resettled refugees in connecting to memories of home.

Now that I've discussed some of the various forms that refugee farming projects take, I will detail how the Salt City Harvest Farm came to be, and the objectives it strives to accomplish.

Salt City Harvest Farm

The Salt City Harvest Farm of Kirkville, NY is a community farm cultivated by and for refugees resettled in Syracuse (see Figure 3). Eighty years ago apples were grown on the same piece of land, followed by the joint raising of cattle (in the front portion of the property closest to Fyler Road), and growing of corn (in the back). The land had not been cultivated for decades afterwards until several years ago, when its current owners, the Letcher family, began farming it once again (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Figure 1. Locator Map of the Salt City Harvest Farm



The red box delineates the farm property, which is the area of the maps illustrated in Figures 2, 15, 16, & 17.

Cultivation began in 2012 as teenager Dylan Letcher’s endeavor to give back to his community by growing vegetables to donate to local food pantries. When the vegetable garden grew into an acre-and-a-half operation with tomatoes, pumpkins, corn, and squash, his mother, Theresa, began to help cultivate and distribute harvests on the weekend (Zych 2012). Neighboring farmers, supportive of the Letchers’ efforts, offered up crops of their own for donation, as well (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). The Letcher family hoped that in the following year, people who use the food pantries would be interested in having a plot on the land and learning to grow their own food, creating a “community-oriented program” (Zych 2012).

In February of 2013, a meeting was held between the Letcher family, Assumption Church, several Advisory Board members of Syracuse Grows, and other invested community members, to discuss how the farm could function as a community-oriented

program (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Wide-ranging ideas were discussed—everything from bringing out upwards of one hundred volunteers to involving refugees in some capacity. Syracuse Grows board member Matthew Potteiger was one of the individuals on this committee. As a Landscape Architecture professor at State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry (SUNY-ESF), he involved his students in the farm planning to develop designs for using the extensive property, based on how it would function (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

As the growing season approached, the Letcher family made plans to incorporate crops into the farm that could be grown, and eventually sold, to generate income to pay for farm equipment, resources, and water expenses. Theresa Letcher secured a donation of fruit trees (peach, plum, pear, apple, cherry), grapes at a discounted price from Waffler's Nursery, and connected with local orchardists to learn how to grow these crops (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). The family also liaised with community organizations and companies to access other essential farm resources. Seeds and seedlings were donated by local nurseries, farmers, and Tops Friendly Markets, compost was supplied by the Onondaga County Resource Recovery Agency (OCRRA), and tools were given to the farm by the Onondaga County Department of Health (Stratton, 2013). The farm's fields were tilled under based on the designs of Potteiger's Landscape Architecture students. They used potential labor input as a framework for scaling their design. So field sizes were calculated based on the approximate number of people who could get to the farm in any given week, and the amount of work that could be accomplished in just a few hours, knowing that the farm would be cultivated by large

unskilled groups of people for short amounts of time. The design was modular so fields could be added, as needed, to easily expand the farm. They also designed the layout of the farm's gravel roads and orchard (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Appendix 2 are samples of the farm's original designs.

By Spring 2013, the farm's infrastructure was in place and plants were in the ground and ready to be tended. Come June, however, no one was showing up to work the land communally (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Gaining the interest of individuals and families using the food pantries, and securing volunteer commitment, proved difficult (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). As it became clear that the donation garden model would not be a viable community-oriented program, Theresa Letcher and Matthew Potteiger started discussing how the farm could be repurposed (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Because of Potteiger's extensive involvement in community gardens throughout the city, many of which have are cultivated by refugees interested in gardening, he suggested that the farm serve this growing population of people so invested in growing their own food. Based on interviews he helped to conduct with gardeners from the Isabella Street Tapestry Community Garden, Potteiger was aware of the importance of refugee community gardens as social spaces, as well as the desire of many gardeners to scale-up their gardening activities (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Potteiger reached out to fellow Syracuse Grows board member Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson, an ESL teacher at the Refugee Assistance Center, more commonly referred to as "The Bob School" after its longtime director Bob Huss, enlisting her help in advertising the farm and recruiting interested New Americans. Rozlynn acted as the farm's sole

connection to the refugee community, telling her students at the Bob School, as well as community gardeners at the New Roots, Karibu, and Isabella Tapestry Street Community Gardens, about the opportunity to grow and harvest food on a big farm.

When Jennifer Stratton, another Syracuse Grows board member, came on as the farm manager in the end of June, there were four New Americans coming out to the farm. However, by the summer's end, as many as thirty New Americans were making trips to the farm from week to week (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). To accommodate the transportation constraints of New Americans imposed by the farm's location twelve miles outside of the city, Theresa Letcher secured a bus and driver from New York Bus, LLC, who donated their time transporting New Americans to and from the farm once a week (Stratton, 2013). With prior organic farming and teaching experience, the role of Jenny as farm manager was essential for addressing technical needs on the farm, overseeing and assisting the New Americans in accessing tools and water, coordinating volunteer visits, directing volunteer activities on the farm, and establishing and maintaining a website and blog for the farm.

A core group of people continues to meet to discuss and evaluate the farm, and make plans for its future. This group consists of aforementioned Theresa Letcher, Matthew Potteiger, Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson, and Jennifer Stratton, as well as another Syracuse Grows member, someone associated with the Onondaga County Health Department, and an employee of Interfaith Works' Center for New Americans. (Throughout this paper, this group of people may be referred to the "board," despite their informality, or as the "core members" of the Salt City Harvest Farm.) They have yet to organize formally as an organization and advisory board, but they typically meet once a

month and have developed a mission statement for the Salt City Harvest Farm: “Creating food independence, strengthening relationships, and improving the quality of life of the New American community through the cross cultural exchange of ideas, food, and life skills in a collaborative farming effort” (Salt City Harvest Farm, 2015).

Chapter 3

Primary Research Results

In this chapter, I will focus on relaying the results of the three methods of qualitative data collection utilized in this study. First, I will share the content of the semi-structured interviews, as it relates to the Salt City Harvest Farm's history, the observed agricultural and botanical knowledge of its participants, its impact, and self-identified challenges. This section will be infused with reflections based on my personal observations at the farm. After, I will discuss the results and limitations of the survey I conducted with over twenty of the farm's New American participants. Then, I will go in to detail regarding the more in-depth discussion coordinated between a handful of Bhutanese and Burmese farm participants. Lastly, I will explain the original maps created of the farm, and how they can be used in planning for future growing seasons.

Semi-Structured Interviews & Participatory Observation

The farm's first year. In the farm's first growing season, the summer of 2014, as the Salt City Harvest Farm, primarily Somali and Sudanese men, as well as some Bhutanese, Burmese, Cuban and Ethiopian New Americans made trips out to the farm. An incredibly rainy season created a major setback. After fields were essentially washed out and plants drowned, everything had to be replanted. It was at this point that the Letcher family put in underground drainage to help alleviate the issue (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Broccoli, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, radishes, lettuce, zucchini, yellow squash, corn, and herbs were planted and cultivated by New Americans (Stratton, 2013). They also began foraging for edible plant varieties similar to those found in their home countries, in overgrown patches around the farm's periphery (see "Foraging Practices").

Youth groups from the Southwest Community Farm's Urban Delights crew, Youth Ministries of Assumption Church, Christian Brothers Academy, and the Immaculate Conception Church, volunteered regularly. In total, "Fifty-four community members volunteered their time during the 2013 growing season, collectively working over 211 hours and harvesting 1,900 pounds of sweet corn and 20 pounds of yellow squash. The farm also distributed excess produce grown and donated by neighboring farms" (Stratton, 2013). Other than this excess corn and squash harvested at the very end of the season, not much produce from the farm went to the food pantry (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). By and large, all produce went home with refugee individuals and families.

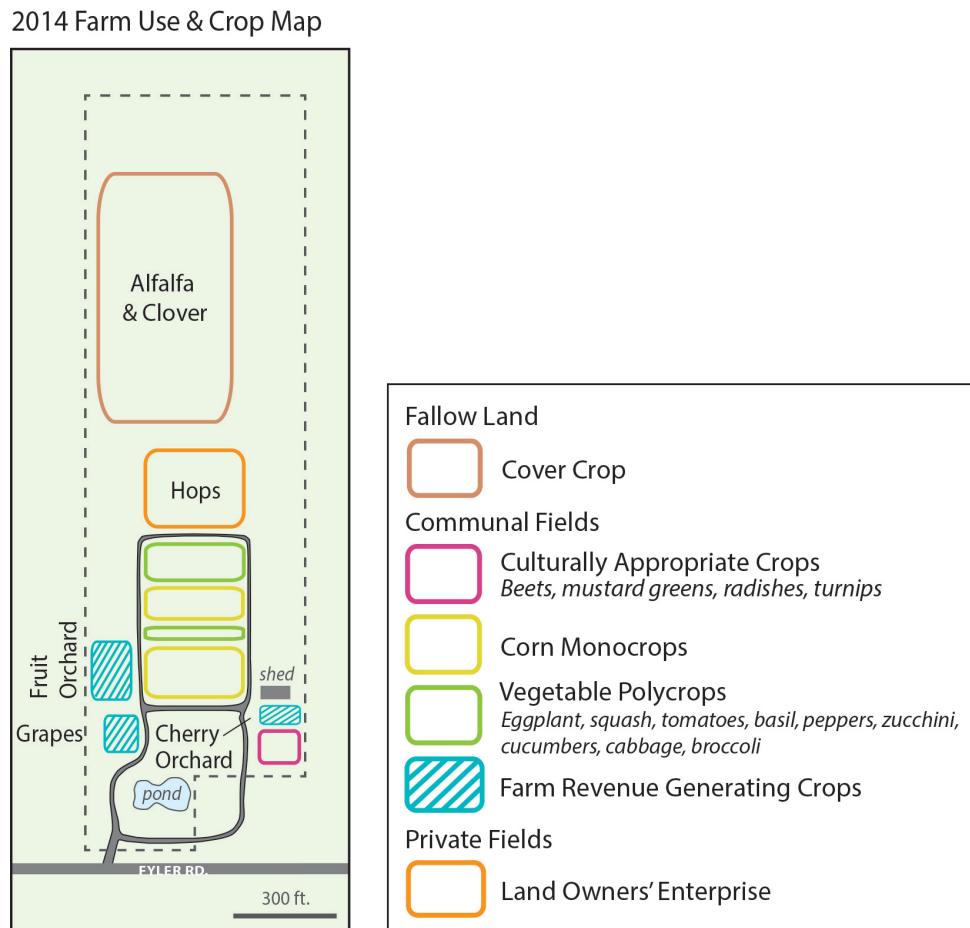
On ten acres of land in the back of the farm property, the Letcher family put down clover and alfalfa as cover crops to improve the soil (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). They also did all the maintenance on the 500 young apple, peach, plum, pear, and cherry trees, and set up a trellising system for 120 donated grape vines. In addition to adding drainage to the farm property, they installed an irrigation system and built a storage shed. The Letcher family also tended to their hops project: an area of the farm on which they erected field poles to trellis 21 different varieties of hops. According to Theresa, it is her sons' endeavor, which began three years

ago when a nursery reintroduced hops to New York State (personal communication, December 4, 2014).

The farm's second year. My involvement with the Salt City Harvest Farm began in the summer of 2014. I had heard about the farming project based on my involvement with Syracuse Grows, and inquired about getting involved as a means of working outside when I wasn't in the office where I was interning at the time. I inquired about volunteering, but based on my prior season of farm experience and their need for a farm coordinator, Jenny asked if I would take on the position, instead. They had some funding that could pay me for 10-15 hours a week of work. I began working at the farm in July, continued into August, and after my funding ran out, continued to volunteer weekly until the end of the season in late September.

When I came on, most of the planting on the farm had already been done. This included, tomatoes, several varieties of chile peppers (habanero, sweet banana, jalapeno, poblano, and cayenne), cucumbers, potatoes, eggplant, basil, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, swiss chard, radishes, turnips and corn (both cow's corn and sweet corn). We transplanted some remaining zucchini and summer squash seedlings, hot pepper plants, and would later seed carrots and beets (though it was fairly late in the season to be planting them). See Figure 2 for a map of the farm's crops and layout during the summer of 2014.

Figure 2. The SCHF’s Land Use and Crop Layout in 2014



To create this map, I referred to older schematics of the farm (see Appendix 2), provided by an ESF Landscape Architecture professor involved with its initial groundbreaking. These were not very detailed, nor did they indicate the types of crops that would be grown in each field, but they at least provided a general sense of the size and shape of each field since the groundbreaking⁵ of some of the farm’s fields were based on these original drawings. This map also incorporates my first-hand knowledge of the farm, including the places and types of crops grown on the farm, farm features like the

⁵ Groundbreaking refers to the tilling under of soil to create fields for growing crops.

gravel road and shed, and the nature of the community farm being privately owned which plays out in the micro-geographies of shared versus privately designated areas. The legend of this map reveals the latter.

Before the start of the second growing season, Rozlynn went through images of vegetables with the New Americans involved in the first season so they could select what they wanted to grow. Matt made an effort to find some of the culturally significant vegetables the Bhutanese had indicated interest in, like bitter melon and snake cucumber, but finding sources proved challenging and ultimately the seeds arrived too late in the season for sowing. However, there was continued success with foraging. The Letcher family intentionally left some pockets of land around the periphery of the farm uncut after the first season to provide more land to be foraged on (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

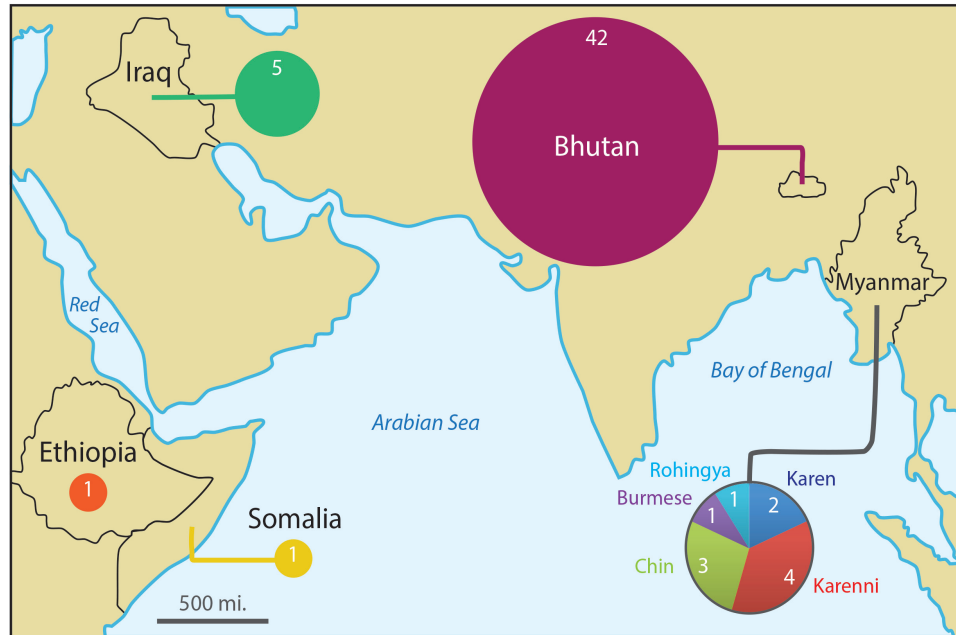
Fewer tomato plants were planted in the second season because so many were lost in the first year (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). In general, however, the farm's community-cultivated areas were scaled up relative to the first season. Theresa estimates that there were two acres of corn, two acres of vegetables in the large field, and 0.5 acres worth of vegetables planted in the 'sand lot,' referring to the field in front of the storage shed that has primarily sandy soil (relative to the larger fields where the vegetable polycrops and corn were grown) (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Most New Americans who come out to the farm heard about it from Rozlynn, who teaches at the Refugee Assistance Center. As students, they are in school four days a week (Monday through Thursday) during the summer, so trips to the farm were

scheduled on Friday mornings, and in September, on Saturday mornings. In the summer of 2014, the Letcher family actually purchased a retrofitted 14-passenger bus to help resolve the transportation constraints of the first season (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Many of the New Americans would love to come out to the farm more than once a week. Unfortunately, the Letcher family doesn't have the time to transport people to and from the farm more often (they are the only ones insured to drive the bus at this time), nor does the project have the capacity to fund someone to be at the farm to supervise full-time.

New Americans who came out to the farm in the summer of 2014 were primarily Bhutanese women, though there were also couples and younger kids who made trips (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). This may have something to do with the fact that in Nepal and Bhutan, both men and women farm (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Sixty different New Americans made trips to the Salt City Harvest Farm over the course of the summer. Figure 3 reveals these farm participants by their countries of origin. I would say that there were between six and ten individuals that came out to the farm consistently (i.e. every Friday) throughout the growing season.

Figure 3. 2014 SCHF Participants' Countries of Origin



The graduated circle for Myanmar (Burma) is further broken down into ethnic groups.

Matt noted that the “cultural groups changed radically from one year to the next,” which “has to do with who’s coming here [to the United States]” (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). During the farm’s first year, men from Darfur and Sudan were involved, none of who came out the following season (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). According to Matt, this turnover has to do with the fluidity of resettled refugees’ job situations. In other words, the ability of the African men from the first year to travel out to the farm on a weekday changed when they got jobs. As such, the majority of the refugees involved during the second season did not have jobs (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Rozlynn corroborates this, saying that many of her students participate in Jobs Plus, a workforce-training program (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). She estimates they spend about 20 hours a week between their time at Jobs Plus and school at

the Refugee Assistance Center (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014).

Typically we spent about an hour weeding on Fridays, and used the rest of the morning to harvest anything that was ready. Produce was collected in harvest baskets. The board was particularly interested in keeping good track of what and how much was harvested throughout the season, so a good chunk of time was spent sorting, weighing, and recording any harvested produce (see Figure 4). Usually one or two New Americans would assist me in this process while people continued to harvest.

Figure 4. Sorting the Harvest



*Photograph take on August 15, 2014.
A Bhutanese woman sorting the morning's harvest.*

The New Americans were insistent on dividing everything equally amongst the people at the farm that day. So after weighing, a pile for each individual was made on the ground, and vegetables were distributed evenly to each pile (see Figure 5). Some people who helped even insisted on finding some kind of container to make sure everyone

received an equal amount of tomatoes, for instance. Towards the end of weighing, people would begin to wander off to forage for 10 to 15 minutes. Divided produce was gathered in plastic bags and then loaded onto the bus. Later in the season, large mesh corn bags were used to accommodate the much larger amount of vegetables being harvested and transported back to Syracuse.

Figure 5. Distributing the Harvest



*Photo Credit: Matthew Potteiger
Distributing the morning's harvest into equal quantities for each New American to take home.*

At some point over the summer, Matt forged a connection with My Lucky Tummy, a local business run by Adam Sudmann that hires New American chefs to prepare dishes for pop-up food courts and catering events. Matt felt that this could

potentially be a direct market opportunity, and that it might create greater visibility within the Syracuse community for the farm. “My Lucky Tummy is the connection that can bring the vision of the farm really full circle, because it creates an environment [in the form of its ‘pop-up food courts’] for broader cultural exchange around food” (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). In forming this relationship, Matt offered to use the farm as a means of producing some of the vegetables Adam and his chefs could use in their multicultural meals. As a result, we seeded beets, carrots, mustard greens, and additional radishes and turnips for My Lucky Tummy. It was quite late in the season to do so, so the carrots and beets weren’t ready in time for any summer events, but the mustard greens, radishes and turnips did quite well. Plus, there were plenty left over after harvesting for My Lucky Tummy, so Salt City Harvest farmers harvested the remaining plants for the rest of the season. These were all very popular vegetables amongst participants.

Agricultural and botanical knowledge of farm participants. Generally, board members’ observations at the farm affirm their belief that New Americans involved have prior experience gardening or farming in their home countries. All interviewees referenced New Americans’ aptitude for learning how to do things on the farm, for instance, the practice of basket weaving to lift tomato vines off of the ground using stakes and twine. “They pick these things up quickly because they are drawing on a knowledge base they already have” (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Matt also noted, “there seems to be a knowledge with what to do with seeds, plants, how to care for plants...we don’t have to explain too much what to do” (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Theresa underscored

this, “They don’t need much direction at the farm. They know what they want, and what they don’t want” (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

While New Americans seem to have an intuitive idea of what to do with plants on the farm, Jenny Stratton, the farm manager during the Salt City Harvest Farm’s first season, observed that many New Americans who came out to the farm were not accustomed to planting seedlings (they would ask, “Why are we planting plants?”) and were unfamiliar with the practice of securing soil around seedlings (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). They also seemed unfamiliar with transplanting, and the use of black plastic to suppress weeds. Stratton’s comments highlight stark differences in agricultural techniques fairly common in the Northeast, to those of the New American farmers. Jenny also noticed variations among New Americans in direct seeding techniques: some seeded heavily while others would seed farther apart (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). In a recent meeting of board members to which several New Americans came, Bhutanese individuals confirmed that they saved seeds to replant in their home countries (referring to okra and chile peppers).

Matt told me of an experience with Rozlynn’s students, primarily Congolese New Americans involved with the Karibu Community Garden, which serves as a testament to the same kind of in-depth understanding of plants. During interviews with these New Americans, he learned about “langa-langa,” what we might refer to as amaranth, or pigweed. “It was interesting because our Northeast variation is slightly different—it has shorter leaves—but it’s the same plant [that they were able to recognize]” (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Matt feels that this degree of specificity

with which they can identify a variety of plant they once grew, points to their wealth of botanical knowledge. He also learned that these gardeners saved the seeds of amaranth to replant in the following season (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

An Ethiopian New American has been recognized for his specific agricultural skills. According to Rozlynn, he worked for an NGO in Kenya distributing tree seeds, in addition to having farmed prior to coming to the U.S. (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Based on my own interactions with him, he had a very clear sense of the specific needs of the farm from week to week. When potato beetles were discovered on the leaves of potato plants mid-summer of 2014, he suggested the plants should be sprayed, pointing to prior experience, or at least knowledge of, handling insecticides.

Farmers' cuisine. Through our interactions and observations of the New Americans at the SCHF, the board has gathered some information regarding the kinds of dishes they prepare, especially those using vegetables harvested at the farm. It's become clear that refugees eat more parts of vegetables than are typically consumed in the United States. Stratton observed one man picking brussels sprout leaves. She wondered if they were reminiscent of a native vegetable, like Ethiopian kale (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Other New Americans picked the leaves of broccoli plants, in addition to broccoli heads. According to Rozlynn, in the Karibu Community Garden, Congolese and Burundians pick zucchini and summer squash leaves, as well as the leaves of bean plants (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton,

personal communication, November 1, 2014). Theresa noticed that farmers tended to prefer cow's corn to sweet corn (personal communication, December 4, 2014).

With the exception of tomatoes, which were always picked when they were fairly ripe, I noticed that farmers tended to harvest certain things, like eggplant, radishes and turnips, earlier than when I would consider picking them. Perhaps they preferred these items smaller, or were more interested in going home with them that day than waiting a few more weeks for a larger vegetable. A Bhutanese woman told me that she pickles radishes and turnips, and dries their leaves. Theresa recalls a Bhutanese woman explaining that she made tea using oregano leaves (T. Letcher personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Some New Americans seem generally uninterested in certain vegetables at the farm, like squash, for instance. I noticed basil wasn't very popular either; it went virtually untouched for the entire season, with the exception of one Burmese man who harvested a Thai variety. Theresa has the feeling that participants would love to know how to prepare these things, that their disinterest stems from simply not knowing what to do with vegetables they've never encountered before (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Staples of Nepali cuisine are dhal (lentil stew), and injera (flatbread) topped with beets (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). The Bhutanese use hot peppers in a lot of their cooking, so they have a sensitive palette for them (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). They were interested in growing multiple varieties of peppers at the farm. Saro Kumar spoke to the hybrid nature of Bhutanese cuisine during her interview:

Bhutan is in the foothills in the Himalayas, near Tibet and Nepal. Some refugees had pear and citrus trees. Cuisine is a fusion of Burmese, Chinese, and Hindu (Indian) cooking. For instance, the food is less spicy and milder than Indian cooking, they eat noodles, as well as flat bread and rice (S. Kumar, personal communication, December 2, 2014).

Foraging practices. During the Salt City Harvest Farm's first season, core members noticed that New Americans would forage for wild edible plants on the farm's periphery. To ensure the space for this to continue, areas near the farm's property line were intentionally left uncut in the second season, and sometimes entire fields would be left to grow wild after a tilling. As farm coordinator during the second season, I was charged with recording the amount of produce harvested by weighing everything. I attempted to include the weights of plants that were foraged for, as well, but the harvest log often underestimates these values, since foraged plants were not communally shared (see Appendix 3, the summer 2014 harvest log); people tended to wander off to forage towards the end of a farm trip, if they wanted to. Matt Potteiger spent time informally gathering information about the plants New Americans foraged for, and was able to identify their North American names. What the Bhutanese and Nepali refer to as "betu," is lamb's quarters (see Figure 6), "sisnu," or "shisnu," is stinging nettle (see Figure 7), and "jaringo" is pokeweed.

A Bhutanese woman once described to me how she prepared "betu," likening it to sautéing spinach. With "jaringo," or pokeweed, farmers seemed more interested in gathering the tender leaves of younger plants, rather than the berries of mature plants, though someone did explain that the berries can also be eaten after cooking, and contain medicinal qualities (see Figure 8). "Miranta" is another term used to name a foraged

plant, but because I was not diligent about documenting it and not everyone seems to know what it is, it's unclear what edible this word refers to.

Figure 6. Foraged and Harvested “Betu” (Lamb’s Quarters).



Photograph taken on July 9, 2014.

Figure 7. Foraged and Harvested “Sisnu” (Stinging Nettle).



Photograph taken on July 9, 2014.

Figure 8. “Jaringo” Plants (Pokeweed).

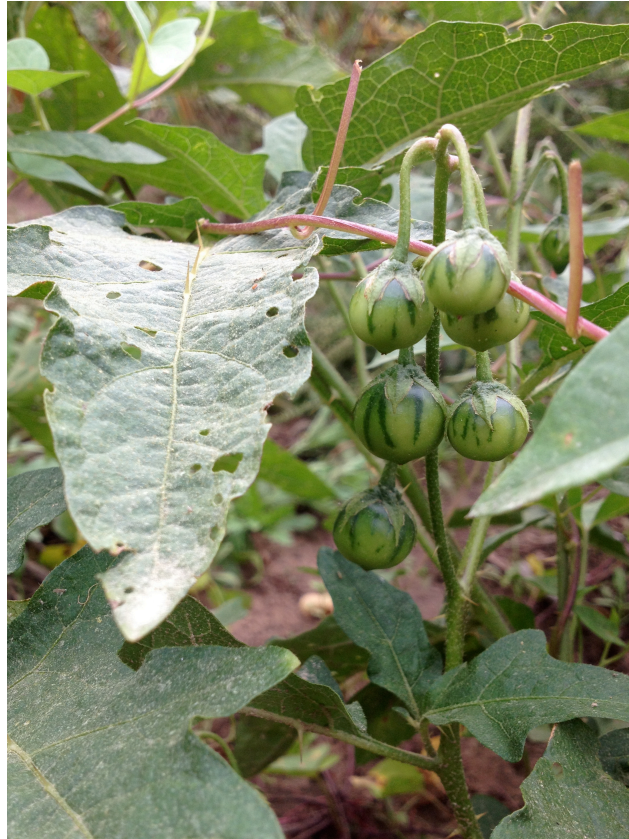


A mature pokeweed plant (left), and a young one (right).

Rozlynn Jakes-Johnson noted, “Their cultural knowledge and understanding of plants is something to figure out,” referring to an instance during the summer of 2014 when a participant harvested something while foraging that we (core members) suspected to be poisonous (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). After some research, Matt confirmed that it wasn’t the deadly nightshade, but what he believes to be a variety of black nightshade, which has varied reports of being poisonous, but can apparently be made edible with proper preparation (See Figure 9). This may point to New Americans’ very in-depth knowledge of foraging for, and cooking, edible plants. How well this knowledge of edible varieties carries over from Bhutan to North America, on the other hand, is unknown, and for this reason, of concern, especially since it’s the unripe berries of black nightshade that contain toxins, and it was

unripe berries that were harvested by this individual. Interestingly, varieties of black nightshade are eaten all around the world. According to one source, “In the region of India the plant has many names and is firmly in the human food chain and very popular” (Deane, n.d.).

Figure 9. Black Nightshade.



*Photograph taken on September 6, 2014.
Black nightshade growing wild near the farm. It was identified and its berries picked by a Bhutanese New American.*

The farm's impact on food security. There are different perceptions among board members of the impact of the farm on participants' food security. Both Jenny and Rozlynn imagine the produce from the farm would supplement their groceries (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Rozlynn maintains that many New Americans go to the Central New York Regional Market throughout the year. Based on her closer relationship to participants as their teacher, she knows they do a lot of cooking, sometimes several times a day, so they tend to go through vegetables very quickly (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Matt, on the other hand, estimates that the Salt City Harvest Farm makes a great contribution to participants' food security (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Over the course of the 16 trips made to the farm while I was coordinating farm activities in the summer of 2014, approximately 2,735 pounds of produce were harvested (see Appendix 3, the 2014 harvest log for records and notes on recordkeeping). The biggest producers (in terms of weight) in the summer of 2014 were corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, cabbage, radishes and turnips (weighed together), and peppers. To give a sense of what 2,735 pounds might mean over the course of one growing season, I've divided the total harvest amount by the average number of people going to the farm each week (14) to arrive at approximately 195 pounds of produce per person over the course of the entire season. Further dividing this figure by the number of trips made to the farm arrives at the approximation that each participant took 12 pounds of vegetables home from the farm each week, on average. Purchasing 12 pounds of vegetables at a local grocery store would leave one person with a large amount of fresh produce, if you

consider that many items (a cucumber, a small eggplant, a bunch of tomatoes, for instance) weigh not even one pound, each. That being said, these calculations should be more of a visualizing tool than anything else, given the fact that the number of people coming to farm varied from week to week, and that some participants made very infrequent trips, while others came out regularly. Additionally, the quantity and weight of produce varies significantly depending on when in the growing season.

It is unlikely that all the produce that went home with one individual or one family remained there. Theresa noted the “ripple effect” that came with dropping off New Americans on the Northside of Syracuse after a morning at the farm. She recalls one phone call that drew out twenty people, despite the rain (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). She observed many interactions like this, of New Americans sharing the harvest with family members, friends, and neighbors.

The farm’s primary function. Interviewees were asked to reflect on what they felt the farm’s foremost role, or function, is in the lives of its participants. Responses varied. Rozlynn and Jenny are both in agreement that the farm’s primary role is one of socialization (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). “They’re also engaging in an activity they’re expert in, which is significant in the resettlement process, where information and knowledge is generally thrown at them” (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Theresa would agree that it’s a social experience, from the communal harvesting to splitting up large corn bags of produce on the bus (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Plus, “It’s an opportunity for them to be around, and to practice, English, and they’re out of the realm of the Northside” (T. Letcher, personal communication,

December 4, 2014). On the other hand, Matt Potteiger feels uncomfortable speculating based on mere observations, and feels that interviews are really needed to truly know the primary role the farm plays in the lives of its New American participants (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

In Matt's conversations with farm participants about plants they've foraged for, they've said they're used medicinally, that in their camps there were no doctors, so they used plants. "The farm provides access to these plants, not just access to food, but to medicine and a part of their histories" (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). In this way, "Plants provide continuity from their home village landscape, to the camps, to the farm here" (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Though Matt was reluctant to point to the central function of the farm for its participants, he nonetheless points to the significant role the farm plays in the resettlement process for New Americans.

Self-identified challenges. Conversations with the (informal) board of the Salt City Harvest Farm revealed several important self-identified barriers to the farm's current functioning and long-term sustainability. Many issues seem to stem from the fact that the project is a grassroots, all-volunteer effort with next to no funding. Theresa Letcher worries about the future of the farm. For over two full seasons she and her son, with help from other family members, have spent countless hours maintaining and cultivating the land. "We are by no means farmers," she said, recalling an entire weekend her family spent trying to lay plastic using a tractor implement (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). She's experiencing the significant learning curve that comes with never having farmed before. While Theresa recognizes that they've done well despite

these challenges and the huge amount of upkeep, her family's hands-on involvement in the future is limited. Theresa's son Dylan, who does the bulk of grounds maintenance (mowing and tilling) and tree and grape maintenance (pruning and tying), will need to focus on his studies while Theresa feels like she needs to relinquish responsibilities in order to devote more time to the family construction company. "The structure is in place, when the fruit comes in there will be a good harvest, but I don't know where it will go" (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Other board members agree that some kind of seed funding for capacity building is essential for moving forward. At the very least, they all hope to find and fund, an experienced person to coordinate the farm's activities and act as full-time farm manager during the growing season.

A shoestring budget also constrains the board's ability to carry out its mission. While members would like the SCHF to serve as a significant source of culturally appropriate crops (crops which are familiar to, and popular among, New American participants), seed and seedling donations primarily dictate what is planted on the farm (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). New Americans are encouraged to bring any seeds they have to the farm, however most have not traveled to the U.S. with seeds from their home countries, and finding varieties they like locally has proved difficult. The farm does have the ability to start seeds early via Theresa's professional connection to a nearby nursery. The only caveat is that this greenhouse needs ample time to find seeds, especially if they are unconventional varieties. The board has yet to make full use of this valuable resource. While Matt Potteiger sought out and ordered some specialty seeds during the summer of 2014, they arrived too late in the season for planting.

All core members recognize that their project's greatest weakness is the lack of New American presence on the board, and thus involvement in the decision making process. Outside of informally being asked what they would like to grow, and how they like the format of the farm, New Americans have little direct input. That being said, given the close relationship of Rozlynn to many of her students, her role as a liaison and champion on their behalf, cannot be understated. Still, all core members would like to see several New Americans join their board and act as representatives of the farm's participants, relaying their feedback, hopes, and needs. Language differences will likely present the biggest barrier to effectively incorporating New Americans on the board.

While Rozlynn has been instrumental in serving as the farm's connection to interested participants, Theresa would like to see other forms of outreach happening through various community organizations (personal communication, December 4, 2014). Diversifying community connections to New American populations would not only introduce new people to the farm, it would serve as a safety net should Rozlynn ever work somewhere other than the Refugee Assistance Center, or stop being involved with the SCHF altogether. In a similar vein, Theresa would like to see larger volunteer groups that could come out to the farm more often. She feels they are also "a key to the farm's success" (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Both kinds of outreach and community networking could be responsibilities of a full-time farm manager.

Unrelated to resource challenges, Potteiger touched upon communication issues amongst board members during his interview. For instance, the culturally appropriate crops that were planted at the start of summer 2014 were plowed under (M. Potteiger,

personal communication, November 6, 2014). Rozlynn has had a similar experience in which a board member undertook another project on the farm that would be time- and labor-intensive, and require everyone's help, but without consulting anyone first. My own experience liaising with the core members of the farm during the summer of 2014 raised similar concerns. I believe that some of these issues stem from the uneven power dynamics of the board. In other words, because the Letcher family are the farm owners, they make on-farm unilateral decisions. This is a good thing in terms of accomplishing work on the farm, but it proves challenging to negotiate for other board members who perhaps have ideas of how to do things differently, but are too grateful for the family's generosity to risk their ideas coming off as criticism, or a lack of appreciation for what they do. The presence of the farm owners on the board plus their de facto role as primary farm managers, presents a potential conflict of interest, which is problematic. It ultimately means that not all of the farm's stakeholders have an equal say, making the decision-making process an undemocratic one.

As a result of the organizational structure and capacity constraints of the project, a unique kind of model has emerged, one that is "an interesting mix of machines and hand labor" (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). More specifically, the Letcher family has had to learn to do large-scale farming for efficiency and time sake, while the New Americans and volunteers do all things on the farm by hand. Matt thinks that it's probably time to review the current system (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Theresa has also mentioned going entirely organic, which she feels would require a much smaller area of cultivation (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). This may work well for the summer of 2015 since

there are plans to downsize. It's unclear what inputs and practices make the current operation of the farm non-organic, since application of pesticides and insecticides have never been observed. While there has been mention of the use of fertilizers when the farm was first prepared for cultivation in 2012, it's unknown if these were organic fertilizers or not (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Some of the self-identified challenges articulated above were affirmed by an outside review of the SCHF provided by the USDA. Though Matt's grant application to the USDA Beginner Farm and Rancher Program was rejected, it did result in critical feedback in the form of a proposal review. The application reviewers took issue with the fact that the community impacted by the farm is not utilized in design of the program, expressed concern about the SCHF's lack of sustainability past the lifecycle of the grant (were it awarded), felt that the project's farmer training objectives (as stated in the application) were overly ambitious considering that the project is "starting mostly from scratch," plus highlighted the lack of feedback and evaluation input from farm participants (C. Ellis, personal communication, October 3, 2014).

Hopes for the farm's future. *Incubator farm.* All of the core members seem to understand what is possible for refugee farming projects, and as such, have ambitious visions for the farm's future. Former farm manager Jenny would like to see funds materialize to pay a year-round, full-time farm manager, that could apply for grants and do other forms of fundraising during the off-seasons (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). There have been discussions among board members about the potential for transitioning into more of an incubator farm model. This translates into an opportunity for involved New Americans to rent a piece of land to farm

on their own, a few years down the line (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). Jenny sees the program framed as a series of workshops aimed at assisting people interested in farming for a living in everything from developing business plans to learning cultivating techniques and pest management. “These workshops could perhaps tap into existing Cornell Cooperative Extension workshops” (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). In this way, the programming could be open to the wider public in addition to participants in the incubator program, which might have some kind of an income threshold for eligibility (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014). They’ve looked at Groundswell, a farm in Ithaca, as a potential model of incubator program to base the SCHF on. Jenny feels that the SCHF has real potential, citing the fact that Groundswell’s program currently only has three farmers. Though the SCHF may lack funding and programming, it definitely has access to interested participants (R. Jakes-Johnson & J. Stratton, personal communication, November 1, 2014).

Business planning and market opportunities. Theresa believes “There is an opportunity [for New Americans] to get farming experience and jobs out of this,” for instance, “they can learn how to grow and harvest hops” (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). She’s not necessarily interested in co-mingling her family’s personal hops enterprise with the community farm work, but she does see it as a potential learning opportunity for New Americans to acquire more technical and transferrable farm skills (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Theresa also hopes New Americans can learn how to use some of the equipment on the

farm in the future, especially now that the farm is insured (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Like Jenny, she loves the idea of programming and workshops being built into the farm, but knows “so many threads need to come together to make it work” (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

If the New Americans were to start doing work on the farm other than weeding and harvesting the communal plots, Theresa feels they should receive some kind of a salary, but she’s not entirely sure how this would work in terms of the awareness that if they go over a certain level of income, they’re no longer qualified for refugee entitlement services (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Matt is particularly interested in other models of refugee farming projects, like growing for market and/or an incubator farm, because he has concerns about the sustainability of their current community, volunteer-run farm charity model (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). During the process of writing the proposal for the USDA Beginner Farm and Rancher Program grant, Matt connected with potential community partners—the Central New York Regional Market Authority and various ethnic markets on the Northside—so he knows that there are opportunities for direct market sale (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). Matt would like to secure local funding to scope out some kind of a business plan for the farm, “some kind of framework for moving forward” (personal communication, November 6, 2014). At the time of this research, he was exploring it as a possibility.

Theresa feels that as soon as the coming growing season, the SCHF could begin selling decorative pumpkins, gourds and cornstalks to generate some farm revenue, in addition to fruit, since the trees are expected to begin producing come summer 2015 (T.

Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). This money could in turn go into paying for the seeds for the types of vegetables they wish to grow (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Anecdotally, Theresa is aware of at least two individuals who informally sold produce they harvested at the farm (personal communication, December 4, 2014). According to Rozlynn, one of these individuals harvested a bunch of “betu” (lamb’s quarter) and sold it at a Nepali market on the Northside (personal communication, November 1, 2014). Apparently, even though this man is not Nepali, he knew it would sell.

By far the most achievable and agreed upon goal for the farm, at this point in time, is to have several New Americans become a part of the informal advisory board. All current core members agree this is important for understanding the interest and needs of the farm’s users. As of March 2015 this process was already underway. Matt would also like to have a local farmer join the board. Not only would this be a helpful source of technical farming and business guidance, it would also serve to satisfy the part of the farm’s mission to maintain and support urban-edge farming in the area (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Farm infrastructure. In terms of physical infrastructure on the farm, Theresa would like some kind of a toilet or bathroom to be installed or built on the property (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Theresa would also really like to eventually have a barn built, which she envisions to serve multiple purposes as a drying and storage place for hops, a space for washing and storing harvested produce, and a kitchen for cooking (T. Letcher, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Seed library. Matt is interested in establishing a seed library on, or associated with, the farm (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). He would like it to serve as a physical repository for storing and cataloging culturally significant seeds, that could also incorporate stories of where they come from and how they are grown and used by different ethnic groups (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). The seed library would also be a means of saving seeds, a practice Jenny would like to implement at the farm, beginning in the upcoming growing season (summer of 2015) (J. Stratton, personal communication, February 27, 2015).

In the hope of documenting refugee food stories and their botanical knowledge, Matt would like to better structure how he gets and records information about plants from New Americans (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014). As of now, it's done on an informal basis where he writes down the phonetic names of plants in their language, takes photos of the plants they forage, and ask how they cook it in English—a process he feels is “very imprecise” (M. Potteiger, personal communication, November 6, 2014).

Survey

This study's survey gathered much-needed information directly from the farm's New American participants. It was conducted in order to complement, and in some instances, qualify personal observations and interviews. In this section, I will turn to the survey's outcomes, but first I will further describe how the survey was conducted, since it was administered in a rather unconventional way.

Methods. Every survey participant was given an answer sheet, a pen, and a set of stickers (with distinct numbers used to code answers) at the start of the survey. Each

survey question was displayed as its own PowerPoint slide on an overhead projector, and spoken aloud in English. Questions 1-10 (see Appendix 4 for a list of all survey questions) asked about each participant and their agricultural experiences prior to resettlement. Participants were instructed to use their answer sheets to record their answers.

With the exception of Questions 1-3, the answer sheets consisted of a series of boxes with “yes” or “no” written in each, so they only had to check an appropriate box to record their answer (see Appendix 5 for a sample answer sheet). Questions 11-15 pertained to participants’ experiences at the Salt City Harvest Farm. These questions were also posed verbally and displayed overhead, but participants were asked to record their answers by placing a sticker next to each image that applied to them. For instance, Question 11 asked about the kinds of animals participants raised in their home countries, so its poster had an image of a cow, a sheep, chickens, pigs, so on and so forth, depicted (see Appendix 6 for images of the posters). Questions 16 and 18 were follow-up questions that asked participants if they had answers not captured by the image options. For participants who wished to answer and gave their consent, I digitally recorded their spoken answers. Question 17 asked about participants’ interest in growing certain plants. Each table of people was given a binder containing 51 images of vegetables, flowers, and herbs and asked to indicate what they would like to grow by placing a sticker next to each plant they chose. What’s already grown at the farm was intentionally excluded, as we have a sense of what’s popular and what’s not.

The selection of 51 plants was derived from a variety of sources, including a publication on the “Non-Wood Forest Products of Bhutan” (Tshering, 1996), a wholesale

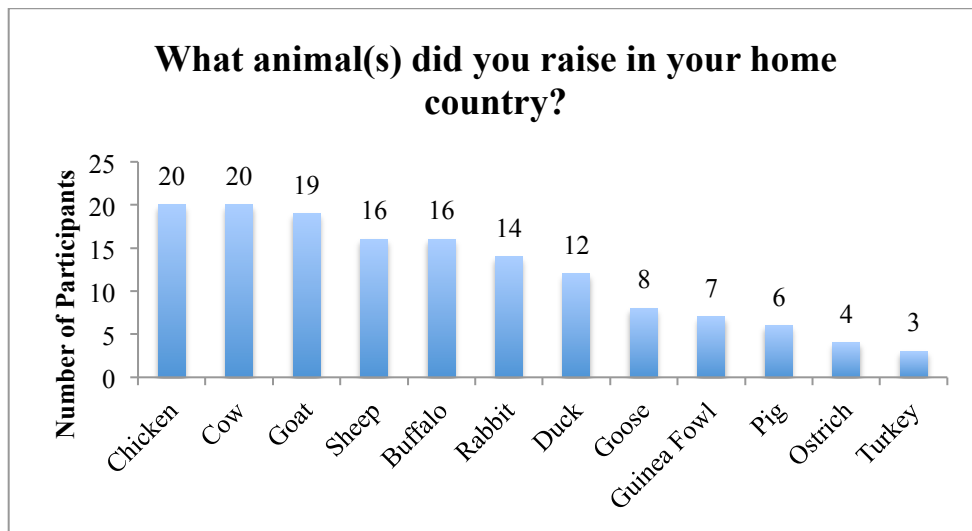
and retail price listing of vegetables from Nepal's Ministry of Agricultural Development ("Daily Price Information," 2015), a blog on the flavors and cuisine of Nepal (Pathak, 2012), and my understanding the cultivars of interest to participants on prior conversations. Appendix 7 provides the complete list of the 51 vegetables, flowers and herbs participants could choose from.

Results. Twenty-four New Americans participated in the survey. Of those people, twenty-two have been to the Salt City Harvest Farm before. The survey was intended for those who have experienced the farm first-hand, but because these two participants had relatives who have been directly involved with the farm, their answers are included. Among the other participants, nine were involved with the farm since its first growing season (summer 2013 and summer 2014), while thirteen became involved in the farm's second year (only summer 2014).

Survey participants self-identified as being from Bhutan (18), Burma (4), Ethiopia (1), and Nepal (1). Ten participants were between the ages of 41 and 50, five were between the ages of 20 and 30, and four each were between the ages of 31 and 40, and 51 and 60. All participants grew their own food in their home countries and 79 percent of them sold some of the food they grew at market. All participants (with the exception of one, whose answer has been omitted for its selection of both "yes" and "no" in response to the question) also indicated that they had worked on a farm prior to the Salt City Harvest Farm. Whether selling at market served as their main form of income, or a way to supplement their income, is unknown. Everyone, save one person who didn't indicate an answer, said that they like farming, and twenty-two said they want a farming job.

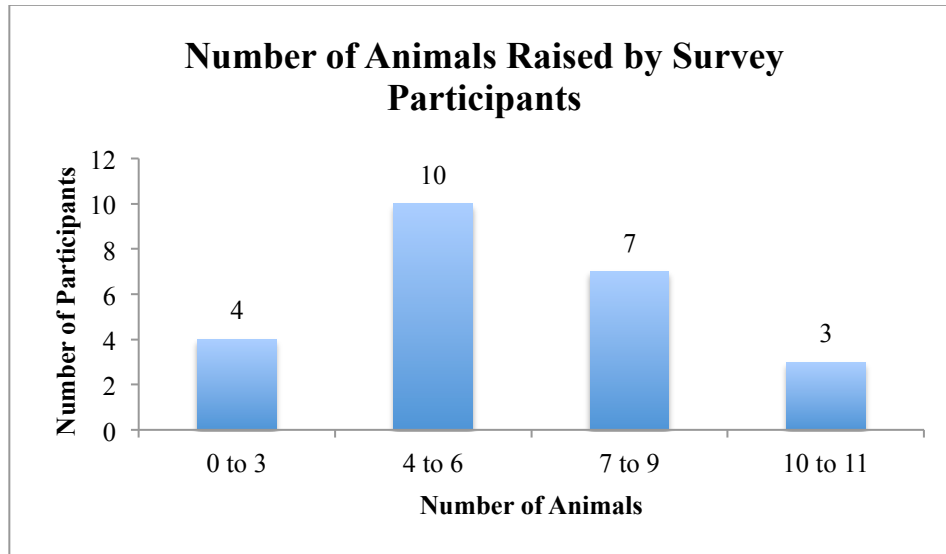
The vast majority of participants raised animals in their home countries, and 75 percent sold animals at market. Participants were lively when examining the 18” x 24” poster with twelve images of different kinds of animals. Many chatted amongst themselves in groups, as people at the various tables took turns coming up to the front of the room. They pointed at the different images, some said the English names of the animals out-loud, and others showed me all the animals they used to have. Chicken, goat, cow, sheep, and buffalo were the most popular choices amongst participants. On average, participants raised six—and as many as eleven—animals in their respective home countries. See Figures 10 and 11 for a more detailed account of survey participants’ animals rearing.

Figure 10. Animals Raised by Participants in their Home Countries



This graph visualizes the distribution of survey participants’ responses.

Figure 11. Number of Animals Raised by Survey Participants



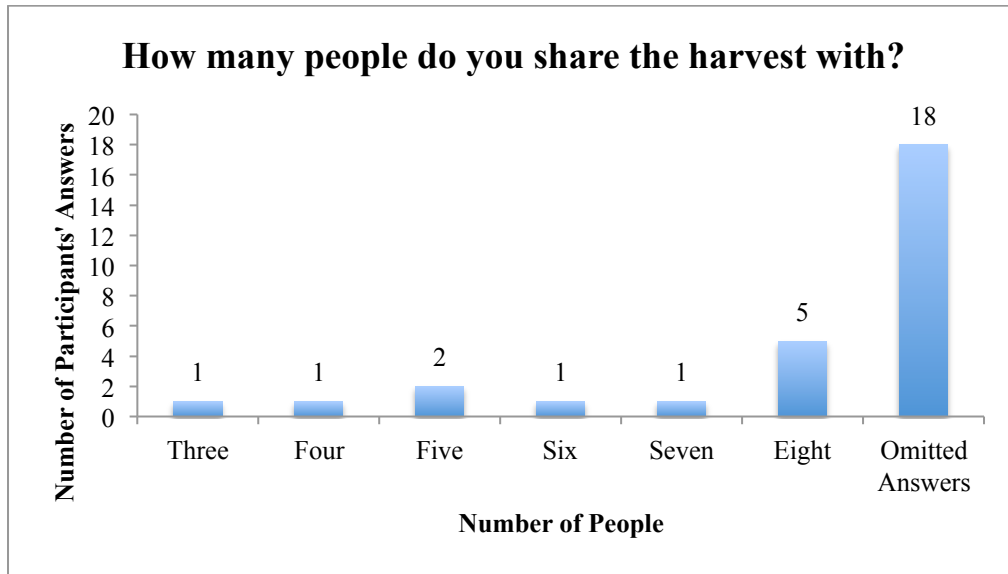
This graph visualizes the distribution of survey participants' responses.

To evaluate participants' experiences at the Salt City Harvest Farm, they were asked to place a sticker next to the illustrated face that best represented their rating. Twenty participants chose "Great" (the face with the biggest smile), and two indicated "Good" (the face with a big smile). This question was followed by two that sought to evaluate the impact of the Salt City Harvest Farm on participant's food security by asking, "How many people do you share the harvest with?" and, "How many meals do you make each week from one harvest?" Results for these questions are captured by Figures 12 and 13.

Both of these questions proved to be somewhat problematic. For one, participants did not understand the specific words 'harvest' and 'meal.' It didn't help that the images used for 'meals' weren't very elucidating (see Appendix 6). I tried my best to paraphrase and clarify these questions, but their questions (was I asking how many people were in their family? could people include friends and neighbors?) and responses still reflected misunderstanding. I intended for participants to choose only one image of all of the

options on the posters, but many people responded with multiple numbers of meals and/or of people. Responses were omitted when more than one image was selected (see Limitations section).

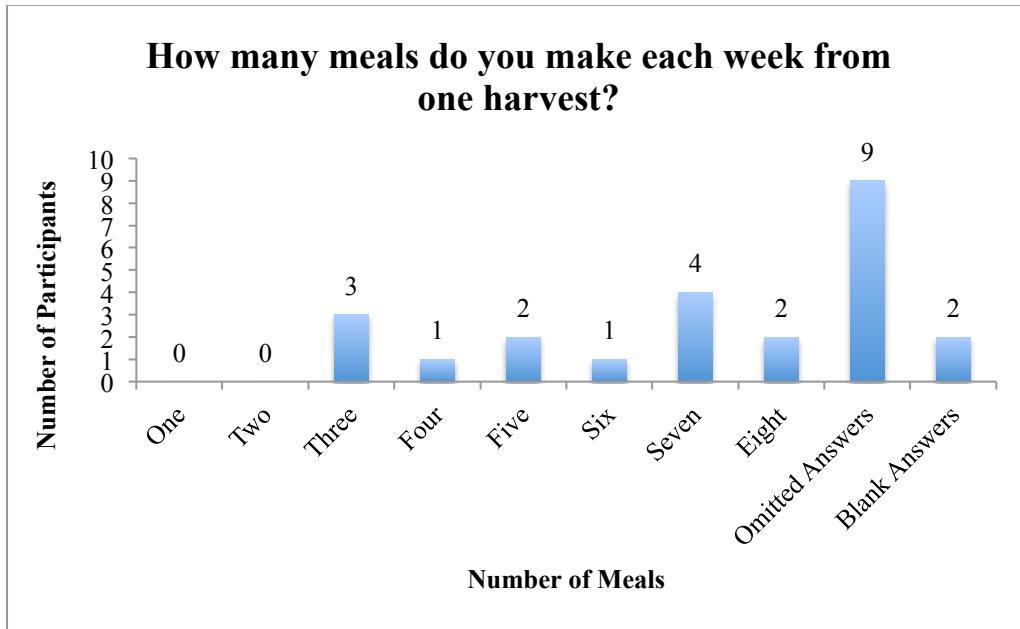
Figure 12. Salt City Harvest Farm’s Outward Impact



This graph visualizes the distribution of survey participants’ responses.

Based on the fact that nobody (of whose answers are being considered) selected fewer than three people with whom they share vegetables harvested at the Salt City Harvest Farm, it would seem that the farm has a rippling effect. The magnitude of this rippling effect would depend on the New American farmer you asked, but cumulatively these effects are considerable.

Figure 13. Salt City Harvest Farm’s Impact on Food Security



This graph visualizes the distribution of survey participants’ responses.

The most popular reason among survey participants for going to the farm is because they enjoy farming (see Figure 14). Seventeen people indicated because “It’s social and fun,” sixteen selected, “For the fresh food,” and “It reminds me of home,” while fourteen chose the image indicating, “To be outside in the country,” and only three noted, “It’s something to do.” On average, participants selected over three responses to this question, suggesting that the farm has several functions, that it serves its New American farmers in multiple ways.

Figure 14. Reasons for Going to the SCHF (Survey Responses)



Photograph of the poster (post-survey) used to illustrate the responses to the question, “Why do you go to the Salt City Harvest Farm?”

Participants were asked to tell me in their own words, if they had any other reasons for going to the Salt City Harvest Farm. Several women cited the opportunity to have fun with friends, how much they like farming, planting different vegetables and bringing them home, and how healthy it is. One woman even noted the fact that no chemicals are used at the farm, and specifically mentioned picking “betu” and “jaringo,” two of the plants the New Americans forage for on the farm’s periphery (lamb’s quarter and stinging nettle, respectively). Though it was challenging to understand her, one participant included her children in her response. Another said, “Because I like vegetable (.) fresh (.) and vegetable gives vitamin (.) and getting our bodies active (.)...everything’s good.” Most responses used plural pronouns when describing what they get out of going to the Salt City Harvest Farm. Speaking from the perspective of being a part of a larger group, rather than as an individual, reflects the communal nature of the farming activities,

highlighting that these benefits are experienced collectively. This particular participant's response nicely captures many of the reasons people gave for their participation in the Salt City Harvest Farm:

I like to go to the farm because when I do work outside home (.) our body become healthy and do exercise (.) and also in the farm we have to get fresh vegetables and we have to get chance to get together our friends and get happiness (.) one of the reasons is also doing good things in the farm and to know how to farm the new things (.) to cultivate or to plant the vegetables.

In contrast to the responses described above, one man's reasons for going to the farm were in direct response to the demands of the land; "[I go to the farm] sometimes for (.) the climate if good for planting (.) seeds ready for harvest times (.) for going to harvest (.) only no harvest times for going [now], for planting vegetables." His response reveals a deep understanding of the growing cycle of crops at the farm, as well as a sense of responsibility he feels towards the farmland.

To inform the cultivar selections in the future growing seasons at the farm, and to help the farm better align with its mission to be a source of culturally significant crops for its farmers, participants were asked what they would like to grow at the farm. They were given fifty-one options of root vegetables, beans, herbs, gourds, leafy greens, flowers, grains, and perennials to choose from (see Appendix 7 for an exhaustive list). Plants with over fifteen 'votes,' so to speak, included ginger, coriander (cilantro), potato, shallot, hyacinth bean, okra, strawberry, carrot, field pea, yardlong bean, winter melon, Ethiopian kale, and asparagus. Appendix 8 illustrates the plant selections of participants, grouped by plant type. Significantly, participants indicated a desire to grow more than twenty-six plants, on average. These results reveal the New Americans' great interest in growing

things outside of what is currently grown at the Salt City Harvest Farm, giving the farm a wealth of information to guide future plans.

When asked what they would like to grow, excluding the images they could choose from, one man said “collard,” as well as some vegetables already grown at the farm: tomatoes, eggplant, broccoli, cabbage, chile peppers, cucumbers and yellow squash. Another participant said they wanted to grow “mustard greens, red and white beans, and white pumpkin.”

Limitations. This survey has several limitations, most of which stem from the fact that it was conducted in English. Uncertainties surrounding the extent to which every question, and the options for answering them, were understood, directly affect the quality of the data. Of the 24 total survey participants, four were Burmese, whose comprehension of what was being asked, without the use of images (Questions 3-10) is limited. There were at least two other participants in addition to the Burmese, whose English literacy may have prohibited them from fully understanding the first set of questions (3-10). I repeated, and often tried to act out the wording of certain questions when participants seemed confused or explicitly had inquiries. Of course, attempting to translate some questions raises other issues. It would have been best to maintain the integrity of the questions by not deviating from their original wording, but in most cases clarification seemed absolutely necessary, and proved helpful. For the questions whose meaning was still not understood after clarification, participants were encouraged to leave answers blank, and move on. Imparting this, however, did not always work since by and large, there were very few skipped questions.

Some participants wrote the questions displayed on the projector down on their answer sheet, to correspond to their answers. This begs the question of whether or not the format of the survey was confusing. Perhaps it was unclear that the numbers on the answer sheet corresponded to the numbers of the questions displayed and read aloud. It may have been beneficial to include the written English questions on participants' handouts. Several questions arose when participants were reviewing the images of plants to choose from. For some plants, I included a picture of what they look like harvested, as well as what they look like while still in the ground. Even though a box bounded every photo pertaining to the same plant, the use of multiple representations may have been misleading.

Answers were omitted when misunderstanding of a question was captured in the response to that question, itself. For instance, an answer sheet that indicated both "yes" *and* "no" to a question that sought only one of those options was taken as evidence of misunderstanding.

In retrospect, I would have done a trial run survey with just a few participants to work out the kinks of its format and delivery. The way the survey was conducted is itself a major limitation. In addition to comprehension concerns, the more vocal/fluent respondents spoke for the less fluent respondents. It seems obvious now that (provided the time and money) having the survey translated, in addition to having translators present for participants not literate in their native language, would have eliminated most of my uncertainties concerning comprehension of the questions, and in turn, the validity of answers. Though the vast majority of participants were Bhutanese with strong English

skills, rendering most results sound and interpretable, many of the survey limitations would have been resolved by having several translators present.

Focus Group

Just as the information gleaned from the survey helped to clarify information about the farm's New American participants, which was gleaned from observations and interactions, the focus group was intended to further clarify, and lend greater detail to, the results of the survey. See Appendix 9 for a list of the focus group's guiding questions. In general, the focus group began with questions related to how participants cultivated food in their home countries, shifted into how much foraging they did and the kinds of things they foraged for, inquired about their use of plants for reasons other than eating, and concluded by asking them about future seasons at the SCHF.

Focus group participants included eight Bhutanese farmers (five women and three men), and three Burmese women. At least one focus group participant had never been to the Salt City Harvest Farm before, but he was well aware of its existence and eager to get involved. Since there were two groups speaking different languages, I worked with the Bhutanese participants and the Nepali interpreter, while Matt Potteiger worked with the Burmese participants and the Burmese interpreter. I will discuss the results of the conversation carried out with the Bhutanese and Burmese participants, by theme, and end this section with potential limitations of this focus group.

Cultivation practices. When asked to describe how they grew their own food, Bhutanese participants replied that they would prepare the soil, apply manure (cow dung), then either plant seeds (direct sow), or transplant seedlings. They would also use compost from food waste as a soil amendment. Vegetables were planted in rows, and

undesirable plants were weeded out. Fencing was often used around the areas where food was grown. No one used fertilizers (they explained that the vast majority of people in Bhutan grow organically), and pesticides were used very sparingly, typically to kill insects on fruits trees (they would never be used on vegetables). People who lived in a hilly area would build terraces to farm on. One woman described a system that sounded as if there was a large piece of property shared between 3-4 houses to compensate for the very small plots found at their individual houses. They grew tomatoes, potatoes, lentils, chiles, beets, pumpkin, different kinds of gourds, mustard greens, okra, cucumber, and beans. Participants said they would only sell at market if they had excess, so they would often grow more of the items considered “cash crops” (vegetables that sell for more at market), which included potato, ginger, onion, lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower, and eggplant. They also grew fruit of various kinds, including orange, tangerine, pomegranate, jackfruit (in high altitudes), berries, peach, pear, betel nut, coconut, lychee, lemon, and banana.

Burmese participants, on the other hand, would only sell homegrown produce at market when the money was needed. For Burmese participants, it would take 15-20 minutes to walk to the edge of their farm area—they considered the land on which they grew food to be farms, not gardens. Unlike the Bhutanese, they did not plant in rows. While manure was used, the soil in Burma was very fertile, plus they rotated crops, so other kinds of fertilizers and inputs were not needed. Seeds were planted in the ground right before the wet season; “rain came, plants grow by themselves.” Participants described a hot season, which was followed by a rainy season, then the cold season. These Burmese recounted growing many fruits, including pineapple, banana, lemon,

mango, and malaca. Crops consisted of potato (“aloo”), tomato, cucumber, rice, sugar cane, corn, peanut, long bean, watermelon, gourds, and eggplant. Many different types of eggplant, of various colors, were described, which they would eat, and also use as medicine (one variety of eggplant was used to treat malaria, for instance). They raised chickens, ducks, pigs, and bees.

Foraging practices. Bhutanese participants foraged for ferns, bamboo shoots, and mushrooms in the forest. Compared to the amount of time spent growing foods, however, they did not forage very often, and they were more likely to go into the forest to collect fruits like guava and peaches, than plants. Apparently, “sisnu” (stinging nettle) and “betu” (lamb’s quarters) grow rampant in the jungles of Bhutan, which explains how they easily identified it in Syracuse and at the SCHF. In their home country, the Bhutanese also foraged for plants for medicinal purposes. Though these plants couldn’t be translated, they described how “titepati” was used on cuts to stop bleeding, “mani” was used for bruises, and a variety of red mushroom treated ear infections. They noted that they haven’t tried using plants as medicine here because they haven’t seen any of the plants they’re familiar with.

It seems that the Burmese women participating in the focus group foraged much more extensively in their home country than the Bhutanese, recounting that they ate “everything” in the jungle. In Syracuse, they forage far less, but have managed to find some plants they recognize: one with a white flower (“hegalachi”) on the way to West Onondaga Street, small onions around Onondaga Creek (they prepare these with oil, salt, and “yellow powder”), and fiddlehead ferns, or “kikudo” in wet areas.

Meals. The Bhutanese do a lot of pickling, everything from radishes and cucumbers to coriander, chiles and ginger. Sometimes they will pickle a mixture of vegetables, other times they do a certain vegetable alone. Their pickling mixture includes cumin seeds and oil. Curry is another common meal. It is made with lots of spices, which they would typically purchase in Bhutan. Sometimes (depending on the weather) they tried to make their own spices, like funugreek and coriander, in a home garden. The potato is a major staple of many of their meals.

The Burmese eat two meals a day, one at 10am and one at 5pm. The morning meal consists of rice, fish paste, chile, vegetables and soup, while the evening meal (“monyay”) consists of rice, meat (beef, pork, or chicken), and vegetables. In Syracuse, there are three Asian markets on the Northside (on Lodi, North Townsend, and Butternut Streets), which they identified as important sources of cultural foods.

Future at the SCHF. The group of Bhutanese in the focus group were not interested in growing produce at the SCHF to sell at market; they would rather grow food for themselves. Though, they would consider selling excess (just as they did in their home countries). They said that they would prefer their own plots, as opposed to the current layout of communal fields (assumedly). This would allow them to give more attention to the work. However, when I asked them to clarify, they changed their response, saying that they agree to one plot, they want to carry on farming together. In response to the kinds of things they’d be interested in learning at the farm (techniques, pest management, how to use farm equipment, etc.), the interpreter relayed, “they’ll go for this group farming and see what’s beneficial; first they’ll see about sustaining the

farm because they haven't done this kind of farming before, so they can't say at this point if learning new things would produce more for their families."

The Burmese women were not interested in selling for the market. They expressed that they would like to learn more English before they learn more about farming. They'd like to learn the whole process of farming, beginning with planting, because it is very different here than in Burma, in terms of climate and soil fertility. Both groups' responses refine the blanket response of "yes" to the survey question, "do you want a farming job?" revealing a truer sense of their interest in the Salt City Harvest Farm. They are primary interest at the SCHF is cultivating crops, and to a lesser extent foraging, for their own personal consumption.

Limitations. While the presence of translators was essential in gathering more detailed information and input from some of the farm's participants, it came with its own set of constraints. The Bhutanese interpreter couldn't translate certain things. For the Burmese, two women spoke Chin, so the third participant (not the interpreter) helped to translate on their behalf. The Bhutanese interpreter was forced to generalize quite a bit because he was interpreting a lot of input from eight people, all from different parts of Bhutan. As a result, there's lack of great specificity. With some responses, both interpreters seemed to draw on their own experiences to relay answers. There's a great possibility that their own biases and subjectivities infused the conversation. Hopefully this didn't severely distort any of the actual responses of focus group participants.

With the Bhutanese in the focus group, it's unclear whether they would prefer individual plots or shared land at the SCHF. They may have been confused by what I was referring to (the SCHF, not another garden), or perhaps they don't want to disagree or

seem unappreciative of what “teacher” (Rozlynn) and the other people involved, like about the SCHF.

There may have also been some misunderstanding regarding the purpose of the focus group, for one Bhutanese man in particular who was under the impression that it was his chance to express his interest in going to the farm (he’s wanted to go for several years in a row). For research purposes, it highlights the importance of having a translator present for recruitment. For the SCHF, it may also point to the need to have a translator present whenever asking New American farmers to take part in farm-related meetings.

Farm Maps

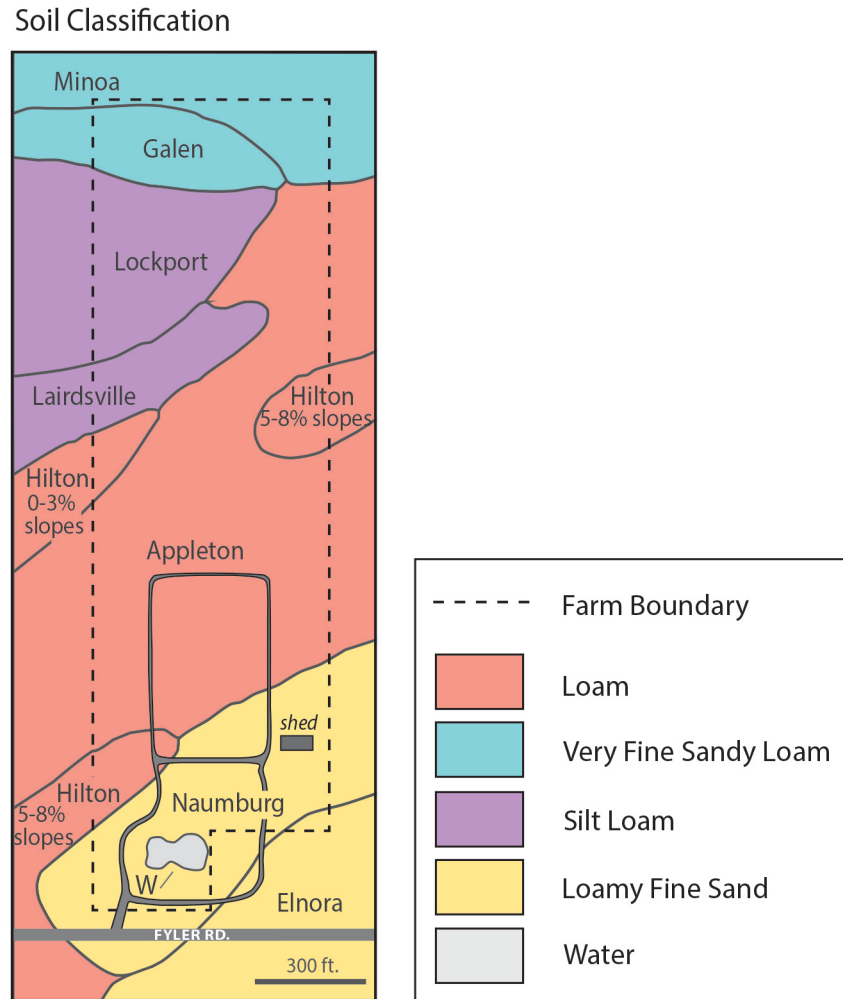
Data sources. All maps were created in Adobe Illustrator to integrate information from various data sources, including my own first-hand knowledge of the farm property. An ESRI “Imagery” (15m TerraColor imagery) basemap in ArcGIS was used to determine the farm’s property boundary and other physical features. Soil data (both soil classification information and soil ratings based on organic matter content) were derived from the Web Soil Survey, an online soil database produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey (operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service). The Web Soil Survey had current soil data for Madison County (where the farm is located). Defining the area of extent I was interested in looking at on their interactive page produced a map of the farm’s soil seams, at an extent of 1:15,800. To ensure that the classification produced by this tool wasn’t totally inaccurate—the tool warns that viewing a map beyond the scale at which it was mapped “can cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping and accuracy of soil line placement” (Natural Resources Conservation Service Web Soil Survey)—I cross-referenced this map with the

USGS Soil Survey of Madison County conducted from 1965 to 1973, and found the soil lines to be precisely the same. Still, I did not conduct on-farm soil tests that could corroborate these soil data sources' accuracy, or reflect more recent changes to soil quality due to farming, local land transformations, etc.

Farm use. A series of maps related to the Salt City Harvest Farm's physical (soil type, organic matter content, soil hazards) and qualitative attributes (types of crops grown, layout of fields, distinction between private and shared parts of the property) were created to illustrate recommendations for addressing its current cultivation challenges, and for taking steps in the directions of its long-term goals.

The Soil Classification map (Figure 15) reveals the soil seams of the land where the farm is located. The names of these soil seams are labeled on the map while their general classification (soil type) is indicated by their color. The areas of the farm currently cultivated are loamy soil (equal parts sand, silt, and clay) and loamy fine sand (soil that mostly sand). In general, all of the soil types found on the farm are classified by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) as either "prime farmland," or farmland of "statewide importance" (Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farmland Classification). That being said, the portions of the farm cultivated in the Appleton loam soil seam proved to have extremely poor drainage, and flooding of the crops was an issue in both growing seasons.

Figure 15. Map of the SCHF's Soils and their Classification

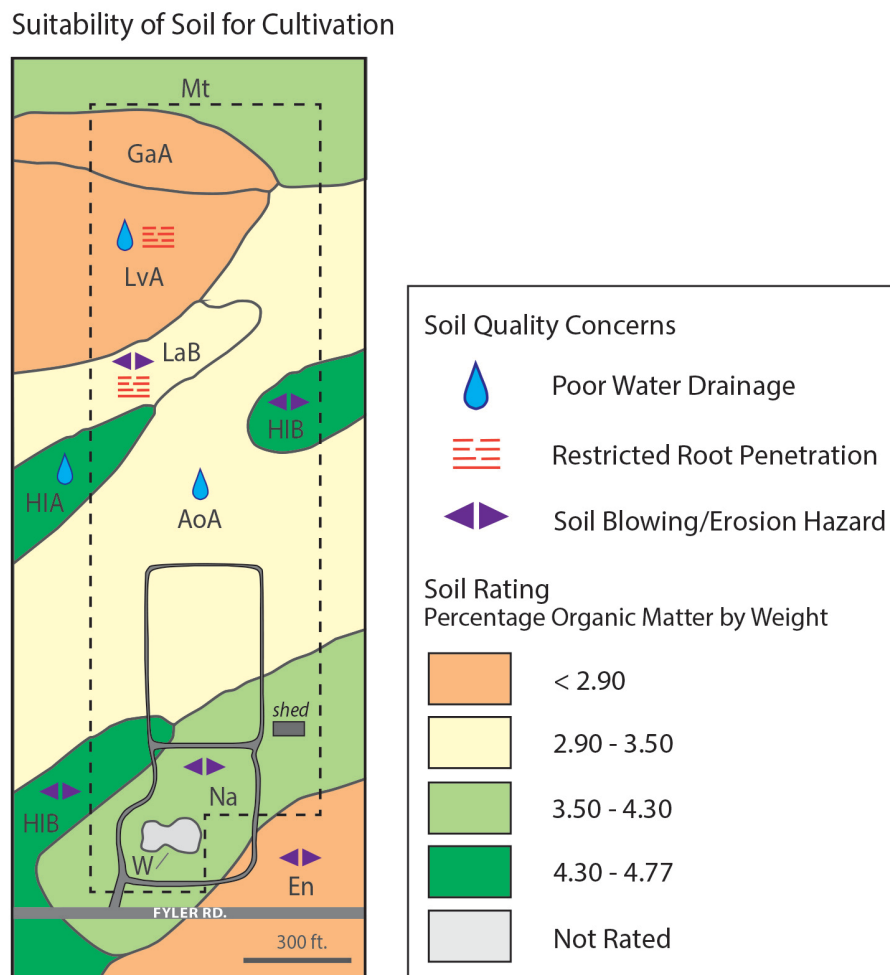


Map of the SCHF's soil seams and their classifications.

The soil seam name e.g. Appleton, referring to Appleton loam, lends a greater degree of specificity to that particular soil's qualities. The U.S. Geological Survey's soil survey for Madison County (Soil Survey of Madison County, New York) revealed the nuances of these seams, which qualify their general classifications (i.e. loam, very fine sandy loam, silt loam, etc.). To visualize the specific qualities of each soil seam in relation to cultivation, I developed an original coding system to represent their particular limitations and hazards (see Figure 16). I combined this qualitative data (derived from

descriptions of these soil seams) with the quantitative basemap of Organic Matter (derived from the Web Soil Survey), which classifies organic matter into four cohorts of soil ratings, to produce the Suitability of Soil for Cultivation map (see Figure 16). I used an intuitive color scheme for the organic matter data, so that the closer to green a soil is, the greater soil rating it has (greater amount of organic matter it contains).

Figure 16. Map of the SCHF's Soil Suitability for Cultivation

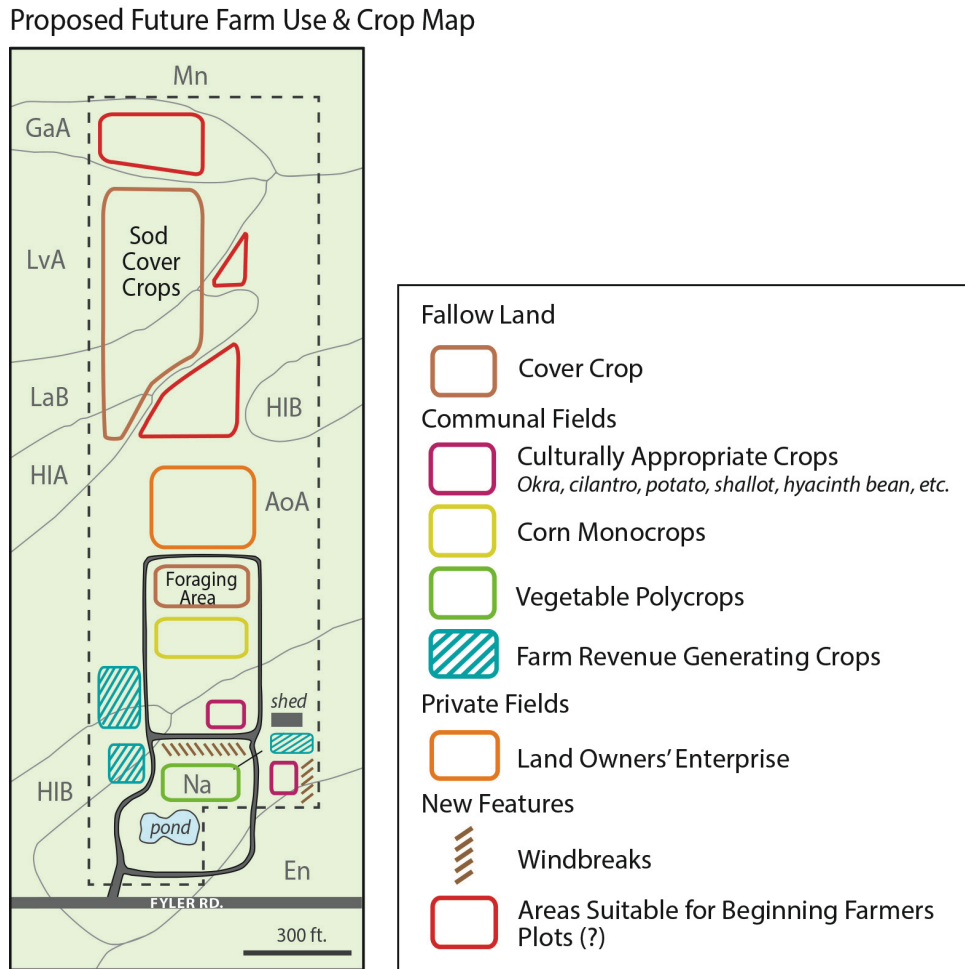


Overlaying both kinds of soil qualities provides a much more nuanced picture of suitability. For instance, a soil—let's take Hilton loam (HIB)—that has soil blowing concerns associated with it, is typically not a good thing for plants trying to stay rooted in

the soil. However, since this soil also has a lot of organic matter (falls within the highest cohort for soil rating), there may be hope. The integration of these two data types indicates the kind of management practices needed to make that soil suitable for farming. In this example, planting fruit trees or berry bushes to serve as windbreaks around a plot of vegetables may minimize the amount of wind that contributes to soil blowing and erosion, and prove to work well to combat the soil's hazards for cultivation. Tilling as minimally as possible will also benefit this particular soil type.

These maps (Figure 15 & 16) also reveal ways to change the farm plan to better suit crops grown. The majority of crops in the summer of 2014 were planted in poorly drained, loamy soil (Appleton loam [AoA]). Because these large fields were unmanageable and often saturated due to the predominance of clay in the soil, there are plans to change the farm's layout for the summer of 2015. As suggested by these maps, it would be beneficial to move the majority of growing areas to the 'sandy lot,' and other parts of the Naumburg loamy fine sand (Na) area, to make use of this much more ideal soil type.

Figure 17. Proposed Future Farm Use & Crop Map



A map to help guide future SCHF plans.

This final map, the Proposed Future Farm Use & Crop Map (Figure 17), is an altered version of the 2014 Current Farm Use & Crop Map (see Figure 2). This map makes adjustments to field sizes and land use designations to account for the soil considerations relayed by the Suitability of Soil for Cultivation Map (Figure 16), my first-hand knowledge of the farm, and potential future plans.

Recommendations to changes based on soil quality include the introduction of windbreaks (like trees or shrubs) along the Naumburg loamy fine sand soil line, which is great for cultivation but prone to wind blowing. The use of sod cover crops in place of

another kind of cover crop would serve to promote root tenacity for the Lockport and Lairdsville silt loam soils (LvA and LaB), which suffer from poor drainage, erosion, and restricted root penetration. I moved the primary vegetable polycrop area out of the Appleton loam (AoA) soil seam, a primarily clay soil that is easily saturated and has drainage issues. The former vegetable polycrop area in Appleton soil also had dips in otherwise flat terrain, which exacerbated soil drainage issues. Its proposed new location in the Naumburg (Na) soil seam has fewer drainage issues, a better soil rating for organic matter, and did well for the culturally appropriate crops cultivated there in summer 2014. Suggested changes are also made based on the hope that the farm will reflect the character of its farmers better. For instance, New Americans forage for edible weeds on the farm's periphery, many of which are counterparts of their once native plants. To provide a larger area for the foraging of these culturally significant plants, I designated a field to grow wild (see the "Foraging Area" field on the map). I also expanded the area dedicated to growing culturally appropriate crops. Based on the results of the survey (see Appendix 8), this field could potentially include Ethiopian kale, potatoes, bitter melon, and long beans.

Lack of labor capacity, over planting, and the farm being expanded in summer 2015, are some of the reasons why this future farm map downsizes fields a bit to make them more manageable. Lastly, areas for new fields are delineated in the case that the farm and its participants choose to transition into an incubator farm program, whereby plots of land could be 'rented' (this would likely be a nominal fee) and farmed autonomously. These areas could be used in alternative ways, depending on the direction the farm takes.

Map limitations. The Proposed Future Farm Use & Crop Map is based on research and my opinions formed by experiences on the land. That being said, it is in no way the only means to make good use of the land. It should be seen as a potentially useful tool in the discussion of how and where to grow things for next season, as well as a roadmap for growing seasons beyond that, based on what makes the most sense for the stakeholders of the farm.

Chapter 4

Discussion of Results

Significance of the Salt City Harvest Farm

The Salt City Harvest Farm is certainly an agricultural social enterprise, though it escapes easy classification. It bears closer resemblance to community gardens in form and function than it does a farm incubator program, with an organizational structure and mission entirely its own. This unique program presents its own set of individualized challenges (to be discussed later), but also specific strengths and outcomes not necessarily shared by other projects.

For instance, the Salt City Harvest Farm offers all the benefits of community gardening and other forms of urban agriculture without the space, zoning, and environmental constraints of an urban context. The SCHF doesn't have contamination concerns, or the same issues surrounding theft and vandalism, that urban gardens tend to deal with. Free of scale limitations, participants take home greater amounts of food than could be produced in several raised beds of a community garden, making a greater dent in their food budgets. What's more, the SCHF fosters a direct form of fresh food distribution among social networks within the refugee community in Syracuse. Like other agricultural social enterprises, the Salt City Harvest Farm generates human and social capital for its participants and supports civic agriculture. It also offers all of the psychological and physical benefits of accessing greenspace and gardening communally, in addition to serving as an important connection to participants' agricultural past. In addition, the USDA Proposal Review highlights that the cross-cultural exchange and

“community aspect of this project is original, and if successful, spinning off commercially viable farmers or skilled farm laborers from community garden efforts could become highly replicable” (C. Ellis, personal communication, October 3, 2014).

Perhaps most importantly, the Salt City Harvest Farm positively impacts the lives of its New Americans participants. The daughter of a Bhutanese woman who makes trips out to the farm regularly, shared with me the following sentiment:

It’s so wonderful what the farm and the people involved have done for my community. Being at the farm reminds my people of being back home. So many of them are depressed, they have nothing to do and sit around the house all day except for the English classes. My mother is so happy now.

Recognizing these strengths, and all of the potential for this to be a self-sustaining, successful project, I will outline challenges I’ve observed and identified as well as present suggestions for moving forward based on the results of the interviews, survey, and focus group conducted, other refugee farming projects, and in some instances, my personal, informed, opinions. It should be noted that the SCHF has already begun to implement new practices in preparation for the upcoming 2015 growing season: the Letcher family plans to prepare an area of the property better suited to vegetable production for cultivation (the Naumburg loamy fine sand seam, as suggested by the Proposed Future Farm Use & Crop Map in Figure 17); Rozlynn created forms for participants, to fill out to track demographic data and formalize commitment; Jenny and Theresa have ordered seed varieties based on the popular vegetables indicated by this study’s survey results; there has been New American presence at one board meeting, so far, and the New Americans will design the crop layout during planting in early May.

Vision

Challenges. While board members have agreed upon a mission statement, and have expressed similar visions for the future of the SCHF during interviews, the specifics of these long-term goals and ideas for beginning to work towards them leave much to be desired. For instance, Theresa said she would like to see the fruit from the orchard sold at market, and that money can go “back into the farm,” but how that revenue will be used and whether it will be for the farm or as supplemental income for the New Americans who in theory would be selling it, remains unclear. The feedback given on the USDA grant expressed similar confusion over this detail.

What’s more, all board members have identified the importance of having direct farmer input to guide the direction of the farm, but have done little to create a process for accessing their input. In a similar vein, the “cross-cultural exchange of knowledge” aspect of the SCHF mission is not fully realized because New American participants’ significant language barriers are not addressed (Salt City Harvest Farm, 2015).

Recommendations. First, time and energy should be devoted to further determining the specific long-term hopes of current SCHF farmers. The results of the focus group suggest that, unlike the assumption of many board members (myself included), some farm participants are entirely uninterested in learning about farming here in order to sell produce for profit (i.e. become a farmer in a farmer training program). Of course, these were the views of a fraction of all of the New Americans involved in the farm. Further conversations need to take place to determine the needs and desires of participants.

I would highly recommend that the farm use translators in this process. I know that Rozlynn opts not to use translators in some situations, because she feels that she can effectively communicate with the New Americans. During my experience conducting the survey, I didn't feel comfortable with their level of comprehension, knowing some things escaped them. Even with the use of interpreters during the focus group, I was still concerned that I wasn't hearing participants' true voices. Navigating language barriers is complicated and difficult, even more so, in light of the power dynamics often embedded in these interactions. Both Rozlynn, in her position as teacher, and myself, in the position of farm coordinator, are very aware of farm participants' inclination to want to please "teacher." Perhaps the use of a neutral, bilingual intermediary (someone mindful of important cultural differences in communication) who could facilitate farm-related discussions would alleviate some of these concerns. The informal presence of such an interpreter during trips to the farm during the growing season would be an efficient way to gather such information, without overburdening participants.

To relieve Rozlynn of all of the responsibility of contacting and communicating with the New Americans, I urge other board members to further develop their personal relationships with farm participants. Doing so will be beneficial for the board—they will have a diversified means of contacting participants—and may also be socially important for the farmers. In their research of immigrant farming programs, Hightower, Niewolny, and Brennan (2013) found that, "Social outcomes were positively associated with trust and reciprocity between the participants and other individuals in the program...when participants had access to information from a broad range of individuals in the program,

there tended to be more social outcomes⁶” (p. 594). In the future and given the capacity, the board may also want to consider diversifying the networks through which they acquire farm participants.

To structure the ways in which the farm gathers feedback from participants, it may also be helpful to create evaluation metrics for the program. For instance, administering an annual end-of-the-season oral survey for participants in their native languages. And during the off-season, I would suggest the use of an interpreter in the process of recruiting participants for farm-related meetings. This will ensure that everyone who shows up is genuinely interested in participating.

Next, board members must decide how to integrate those voices with the financial realities of the project and their own ideas for the farm’s future. This will inform the discussion about whether to continue the communally-shared fields format for personal consumption, begin to incorporate elements to transition into an incubator farm model (individual plots, development of curriculum, etc.), connect farmers to market opportunities, or venture into some other direction. It might be useful to have a discussion internally about the most important impact of the farm—is it food security, job creation, community building, or something else? Establishing short and long-term goals for the farm can help to prioritize tasks for board members and work in a more intentional, productive way.

If it turns out that the majority of farm participants are not interested in farm training (an incubator program), I would recommend keeping the format of the farm as it

⁶ The “social outcomes” of this study refers to results that may improve the health of participants, especially due to interacting with more people, and feeling better integrated in their communities (Hightower et. al, 2013).

is now, seeking out market opportunities for them to sell their excess produce (to generate some supplemental income), and creating educational programming opportunities that align well with their interests. For instance, perhaps a workshop, or series of workshops, related to foraging in the Northeast, especially for plants that have medicinal properties, could be implemented (of course, it would have to be adapted to accommodate the different languages of participants).

Capacity

Challenges. Lack of substantial funding is a huge hindrance to the SCHF's ability to expand its capacity or diversify programming. Farming is a full-time job, requiring more than 10-15 hours a week of paid labor, plus a few hours of weekly volunteer help. If the farm wants to incorporate educational workshops, farmer training, or any other kind programming, substantial funding will be required for a part- or full- time paid position to seek out, or develop and implement these programs. Even without special programming, having the ability to consistently fund a farm manager is essential for providing more frequent trips to the farm (alleviating transportation constraints of farm participants), maintaining the farm's crops, creating opportunities for specific skill building and cross-cultural exchange of agricultural knowledge, and potentially tackling fundraising efforts. Funding is also required for interpreting services, which should be utilized in these early stages of organizational development.

The farm's capacity is also tied to the capacity of its all-volunteer board. All board members have jobs and in almost all cases, are involved in other community organizations; four out of seven are also board members of Syracuse Grows, for instance.

This in it of itself is not an issue, many organizations are all volunteer run. However it appears that the Letcher family is feeling burned out, and the inefficiencies attributed to an overcommitted board, are issues worthy of recognizing.

Recommendations. Fundraising efforts are something that the SCHF should prioritize. It's important to remember that the agricultural sector, in general, is heavily subsidized, and even Chicago's Growing Power urban farms, which produce \$500,000 worth of produce and fish in a year, rely heavily on "philanthropy and public support" to make revenue generation possible (Lepeska, 2013, p. 2). Syracuse has several local foundations that would be worth building relationships with, to find out if the SCHF is a project they would be keen to fund. At the very least, this effort would put the SCHF on their radar. In most cases, small grants will not fund salaries or capacity building, but they may fund things like farm resources (tools, seeds, seedlings, water, etc.), materials to create a seed library, interpreting services, and a much-needed, on-farm bathroom.

Of course, applying for grant money is not the only way to raise funds for the farm. And given today's neoliberal climate of limited funding and competitive grant pools, it would be wise to think creatively about other means of fundraising. Not to mention, many funders, including the USDA Beginner Farm & Rancher Program, like to see evidence of some kind of financial sustainability in a project's budget. An alternative means of fundraising is crowd sourcing, or 'crowdfunding' on platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo. This could be a very lucrative option if a compelling written narrative or video were developed, and board members worked hard to share and promote it, far and wide.

Putting a “Donate Now” button linked to a PayPal account on the farm’s website (given that Blogger supports this kind of function), would be an easy way to fundraise since the website gets a surprising amount of traffic. The process of formally organizing, as will be discussed in “Organizational Structure and Management” section, may also help to elucidate the most appropriate avenues for fundraising, as well as determine who will spearhead fundraising efforts.

There may be creative ways to make the farm more self-sustaining altogether, i.e. not rely, or rely less on external funding. Many urban farms generate higher profit margins by growing specialty crops for high-end restaurant accounts. I don’t know that this could be a viable enterprise for the SCHF, but it may be worth investigating further. While there aren’t a plethora of high-end dining options in Syracuse, towns like Fayetteville, Cazenovia or Chittenango, may be untapped markets. Forging more unique partnerships like those with My Lucky Tummy could be particularly beneficial if the farm began charging for the services it provides.

In a similar vein, I see potential revenue-generation in promoting the farm as a venue for weddings, farm-to-table dinners, and other special events. The Letcher family was kind enough to let Syracuse Grows use the farm property gratis as the site of their Farm-to-Table Benefit Dinner. The event drew over one hundred people, and I think the high turn out of people, especially those who had never heard of Syracuse Grows before, has a lot to do with the popularization of, and narratives surrounding, concepts like ‘farm-to-table,’ ‘localism,’ and ‘going organic.’ I think the idea of charging competitive prices for the use of the farm as an event space is a promising one, especially since some people in the City now associate the farm site with the experience of a wonderful autumnal

event. What's more, the SCHF will be set apart from other venues because it is not a profit-generating company; the funds will go back into the farm and be used for an important cause, something future customers can feel philanthropic about.

An idea proposed by other members of Syracuse Grows could accomplish capacity building both in terms of fundraising and program development. If the SCHF were to rent a portion of the extensive property to an experienced farmer seeking land, it may be possible to negotiate a discounted price in exchange for their cooperation with and participation in the SCHF. Given that a potential candidate will most likely be a working farmer with their own business to run, it may be too much to ask that they also serve as farm manager and coordinator of the SCHF farm, but they may be willing to offer their agricultural expertise, run any potential educational workshops, and agree to do some property maintenance like mowing and tilling. Plus, the rent they pay could go back into the farm, used for the farm's seasonal resource needs, paying for translation services, hiring a farm manager, etc.

Board capacity may be improved by recruiting more people to join the board, especially people with valuable skill sets like grant writing, farming, legal or bookkeeping expertise, or former non-profit experience. Connecting to local universities to advertise volunteer opportunities, or even unpaid internship opportunities, would be a great way to recruit unpaid student help, whether for on-farm activities, administrative or fundraising needs. Professionally, one board member has access to undergraduate and graduate students, one to high school students, and a third to diverse audiences through Extension programming. Tapping into these other, highly accessible networks is probably

the easiest way to advance the farm's agenda, while simultaneously increasing the farm's visibility *and* creating skill-building opportunities for young people.

Visibility

Challenges. While the Salt City Harvest Farm has managed to do a lot in two short seasons, it has failed to really create a presence within the larger Syracuse community. It struggles to find the volunteer commitment to accomplish the demands of the farm, lacking a strong network of supporters.

Recommendations. The farm could include more descriptive narratives, discuss its history, list its accomplishments, and update its plans on the website. It would also be smart to integrate a widget so people can sign up for email announcements. Developing a listserv would be a great way to inform people interested in the farm, and recruit volunteers. If someone were willing to maintain it, a Facebook page is a more interactive option that could publicize the farm's activities, as well as connect to supporters and other community organizations. It also provides another means for people to communicate with, and about, the farm. In general, the more information about the farm and how to get involved that's online, the less board members will have to do in terms of active outreach. The SCHF could begin to issue press releases to local media outlets, whether announcing the start of the growing season, end of the season summaries, fundraising campaigns, or calls for volunteers. Continuing to forge collaborative partnerships, like Matt did with My Lucky Tummy, will result in beneficial cross-promotion.

Organizational Structure & Internal Management

Challenges. I feel that the way in which the board operates is problematic. Roles are not clearly or formally defined, there is little accountability for follow-through on agenda items from meeting to meeting, and meetings days and times are not consistent. Because of this, their efforts tend to be piecemeal and short-term; some items that are discussed are not followed through on, and from meeting to meeting there is little continuity. I think many of these issues stem from the board's lack of formal organization. Communication in between meetings is challenging, and the capabilities of the farm's database (Google Drive) for sharing documents and records is underutilized.

Recommendations. It will greatly benefit the SCHF to establish better management practices. Deciding on a legal structure for the farm will ultimately shape the protocols to be followed. In the meantime, it's essential for members involved to be assigned specific roles, and more largely for the people committed to being involved to determine and put down in writing how they will work together. This can help to ensure that all things are followed up on and all essential functions of the farm are performed. As of now, I would break down the SCHF's existing (and needed) roles into the following categories:

- Legal and bookkeeping assistance
- Communicating with New American farmers; ensuring that they are being heard; working in their best interest
- Preseason planning; writing growing season schedules; farm record keeping; other administrative tasks
- Researching potential funding sources; fundraising; grant writing

- Outreach, marketing, web maintenance, including networking to build presence and strategic relationships in the larger community
- Repairs, maintenance and upkeep of farm infrastructure and equipment

Gilbert (n.d.) outlines the following important considerations for managing major functions:

- “Will you have managers, officers, point people?”
- “How are these roles filled? Compensated?”
- “What is the term, scope, and duties of those positions?”
- “How often will the managers meet? What’s the process for meeting?” (p.23)

Addressing some of these questions and appointing people to work within these specific categories may provide continuity from meeting to meeting, and reduce the amount of planning and management that is currently being performed on an ad hoc basis.

As Gilbert (n.d.) rightly comments,

While holding meetings might sound like a minor detail, good meeting process is critical to functioning as a group. Especially during formation, meetings can quickly become burdensome if they aren’t well organized or the participants aren’t able to stay to task. Setting up and sticking to good practices in meetings can greatly increase efficiency and morale (p. 32).

To this end, the guidebook suggests having agendas and facilitators, keeping meeting notes, and reserving time at the end for review of what decisions were made, which were not, and next steps agreed upon (Gilbert, n.d., p. 32). It might also be useful to have committees or task forces created for items of interest so that there is discussion and research amongst a few individuals in the interim, and then major decision can be made or feedback given during whole-group meetings. When there happen to be developments

in between meetings, there needs to be email communication *and* response from all members so that things can move forward.

It would be best practice to begin financial book keeping, especially with regards to how donated monies are used. As the SCHF looks into perhaps organizing as an autonomous legal entity (to be discussed below), it might also be useful to have the Letcher family be transparent in terms of how their personal funds have been, and continue to be, used on the farm property for upkeep, purchasing equipment, paying the water bill, etc. This will also give the board a sense of the kinds of annual budget the SCHF will require, when it's no longer being bankrolled.

Legal Structure. Though thus far, the SCHF has operated without any legal structure, establishing the organization within legal parameters may resolve several challenges. In the long run, becoming a legal entity will define the SCHF for tax and legal purposes and establish a formal structure and specific procedures. Not only will this prompt the board to adhere to the recommendations outlined above, it will also help distribute decision-making power equally amongst all board members.

The Salt City Harvest Farm has several options for defining itself as a legal entity. Drawing upon the Gilbert (n.d.) guidebook, "Cooperative Farming," I've outlined several legal entities, their definitions, benefits, and considerations:

Table 1. Legal Structure Options for the SCHF

Legal Entity	What It Means	Benefits	Considerations
Sole Proprietorship	A business owned by one person	<p>Simple paperwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No registration required, besides filing a business name • Income reported on the owner’s personal income tax return 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Create[s] no distinctions between the actions of the business and the owner” (p. 25) • Does not offer liability protection
Limited Liability Company (LLC)	Combines the taxation of members in a partnership with the limited liability of a corporation (whereby members can’t be held liable for the company’s debts or liabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners (members) determine how decisions are made, how profits and losses are allocated • “Due to its flexibility, simplicity, and limited liability, an LLC is a good option for many collaborative farm businesses” (p. 26) • Formation process is relatively easy, and can be done without outside help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically taxed as partnerships, in which profits are taxed on the members’ individual tax returns, though members can elect to be taxed as an S, C, or cooperative corporation • Must be dissolved upon the death or bankruptcy of a member
Cooperative Corporation	Member-owned, member-controlled, and generates member benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owned by the people who use the business; governed by majority vote • Can be organized as LLCs, but taxed as cooperatives if they use one-member-one vote and distribute profits back to members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members assemble regularly to vote on major decisions and elect a board of directors to oversee daily activities • Must provide a particular benefit to those who participate in the business • Each member receives their share of the profits in proportion to how much they’ve used the cooperative’s services • Required management practices • Required minimum number of members

Legal Entity	What It Means	Benefits	Considerations
501(c)(3) Non-Profit	A business formed for charitable purposes; owned by no one and does not distribute income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can apply for, and receive, grant funding • Can accept tax-exempt donations • Does not pay taxes on income generated from mission-related activities • Local foundations in Syracuse are more keen to fund non-profit organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IRS filing process is complex and may require outside assistance • Will have difficulty generating enough revenue if it only relies on outside funds • Must elect a board of directors to manage the organization and officers to oversee daily activity; must hold regular meetings and keep meeting minutes, keep careful financial records, and file tax returns • To form must create articles of incorporation, bylaws, and file for tax-exempt status with both the state and federal government
Fiscal Sponsorship	Non-profits lend their tax-exempt status to groups with similar missions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative to forming a new organization • “The sponsoring organization may also provide services like bookkeeping, payroll, preparing tax forms, or organizational support” (p. 28) • Fiscal sponsorship allows a start-up to focus on building its organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically the sponsee group signs an agreement (Memorandum of Understanding) and pays a fee to the sponsor

Although there is no specific law statute for it, another option is forming a Community Land Trust, a non-profit dedicated to affordable housing and/or farming that owns land and leases it to individuals (Gilbert, n.d., p. 48). A trust might make sense if the SCHF were to form a non-profit and adopt an incubator farm model in which they

were leasing plots to New Americans. The trust would require the Letcher family to legally relinquish a portion of what is currently their privately owned land. This may be a good option if the farm were to adopt the use of individual plots, at the request of its farmers (provided the Letcher family's consent), because as stakeholders ("members") in the cooperative, the New Americans would have a great deal of agency.

Of all of these options, two really stand out to me as viable possibilities for the SCHF. The Letcher family's for-profit business (the hops enterprise) could lease access to their land (the communally shared fields) to the SCHF if it formed as a non-profit organization. Alternatively, if the SCHF could identify an existing non-profit with the capacity to act as a fiscal sponsor, it would be an ideal option, because the farm could, in essence, receive all the benefits of being a non-profit, without as much of the paperwork. This arrangement would be especially beneficial if the non-profit had programming that could be used on the farm in some way.

Considerations

My biggest suggestion for the Salt City Harvest Farm would be to take things slowly. While the Letcher family is eager to hand off the project to an entity that can manage it, and while Matt and Jessi have jumped into applying for a national USDA grant twice, it's important to evaluate the program as it is now, and above all, to let the voices of its participants guide how its programming and future unfolds. It's essential to put in the time and legwork upfront to develop a solid foundation. This includes gathering more information from participants, including them in decision-making processes, and establishing some of the good management practices discussed earlier. While it may be appealing to adopt an existing farm program's structure, curriculum and

practices, I think the most successful projects I've encountered are those that are place-specific, informed by the populations they seek to serve, and very cognizant of their capacities and limitations, each step of the way.

I hope that the examples I've discussed and observations I've outlined will provide a useful starting point for the farm to further develop. This research has revealed a multitude of web-based handbooks, guides, and other resources on topics ranging from farmer-training curriculum development, to potential funding sources, to program evaluation metrics (see Appendix 10 for a list of resources I've compiled). While I've initiated this participatory research process and gathered some important information from New American participants, it's all fairly preliminary. Each process of information gathering from New American participants in this project, beginning with my own observations, and ending with the focus group, provided increasingly refined insight. The SCHF should carry on this process, continuing to glean participants' interests and needs, and documenting their agricultural practices through observation, interactions, and conversations.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

There is profound security in the foods we know. Saro shared a story she heard of a Bhutanese woman who in her travels to the United States from her home country, brought corn seeds with her stashed away in her bra (S. Kumar, personal communication, December 2, 2014). Saro noted the seeds' importance to this woman's emotional survival (S. Kumar, personal communication, December 2, 2014). Her point suggests the significance of food beyond mere sustenance, highlighting the ways it can provide tangible connections to place, people, and a certain way of life.

As a piece of land steeped in an agricultural past that provides the means of linking people who have been dislocated from what they know, to the means of growing food again, especially those that they know and love, the Salt City Harvest Farm is undoubtedly significant. The communal nature of the farm allows individuals and families to work and learn together. "At the Salt City Harvest Farm everybody is a teacher, and everybody is a student; social hierarchies fade when there is work to be done" (Salt City Harvest Farm, 2015). While its current form is somewhat inadvertent—a mix of hand and machine labor, the volunteer work of inner-city youth, dedicated individuals, and New Americans—it strives to allow New Americans participants to maintain their agricultural traditions.

The Salt City Harvest Farm is just one of hundreds of others projects sharing similar intentions, but taking various forms. The cumulative impact of these projects is largely unknown. While this project has been highly focused and specific to one farm, the process has certainly revealed several avenues for future research. It's raises questions

like, where are these programs located and what are their spatial patterns? How can the qualitative outcomes of these projects be measured? How many full-time farmers do they produce? What kinds of resources do these projects provide? What challenges do these projects share and what are their implications for long-term viability? How are (or can) their obstacles, successes, and distinctions being documented so that new projects are not starting from scratch? If New Americans are indeed the new generation of farmers in this country, what forms of support, beyond these transitional projects, will they need? What are these farming projects' implications for economic and community development? How are New Americans' agricultural traditions preserved, or are they largely being discarded for the adoption of an American farm business model? What agricultural, botanical, and culinary knowledge can be learned from New Americans, and how can these dialogues be fostered?

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Sample Semi-Structured Interview Guide

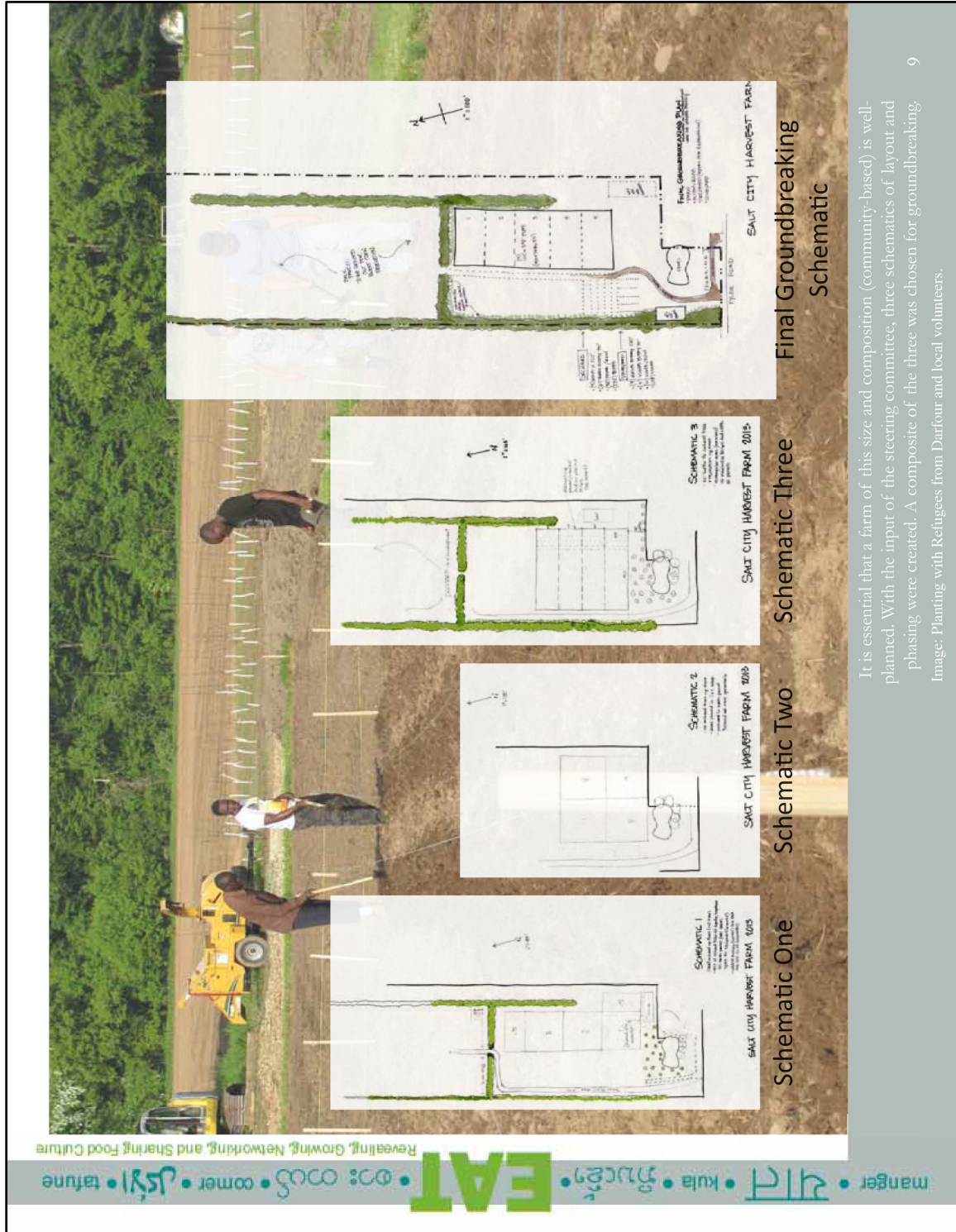
1. Please describe how the Salt City Harvest Farm came into being.
 - a. What was your initial vision for the farm? How did it change in the process of starting the farm?
 - b. Who else was involved in the beginning stages?
 - c. What has your involvement been?
2. What role do you think the farm plays in the experience of the New Americans?
 - a. How would you like to see its current role expand, or change?
3. About how much land do just the refugees farm (in acres?)
 - a. How does this compare to land devoted to crops that will be grown for-profit (e.g. apples, grapes, hops)?
4. What were some of the biggest challenges in the first year of the farm? Were they overcome?
5. Can you talk about the role of supporting and neighboring farmers in the functioning of the farm? How essential have these ties been to the success/operation of the farm?
 - a. How do you envision these relationships changing or growing?
6. What do you know about the SCH Farmers' histories?
 - a. Do you know specifically about any of their agricultural backgrounds?
 - b. Do you know anything about the refugees' foraging practices?
 - c. Do you know much about how they prepare the foods they grow or find?
7. Where do the farm's resources come from?
8. Please describe the current functioning and role of the SCHF Advisory Board.
 - a. What purpose do you think it should serve?
 - b. Who else would you like to see involved in the Advisory Board?
9. What are some of the biggest challenges in the current functioning of the farm?
10. Can you describe the form you'd like to see the SCHF take in the future?
 - a. What essential steps and resources are needed to achieve these goals?
 - b. What are the biggest barriers to achieving these goals?
 - c. Would you like to see a change in the extent of the involvement and role of the New Americans in the future?

11. What kind of programming would you like to see incorporated into the farm in the future?
12. Are there things you'd like to speak about/add that haven't been addressed over the course of the interview?

Appendix 2. Salt City Harvest Farm Original Designs

These designs were created by SUNY-ESF Landscape Architecture students and shared by Matt Potteiger.

Farm Groundbreaking Schematic



It is essential that a farm of this size and composition (community-based) is well-planned. With the input of the steering committee, three schematics of layout and phasing were created. A composite of the three was chosen for groundbreaking.

Image: Planting with Refugees from Darfour and local volunteers.

Updated Farm Schematic (2014)



Appendix 3. Salt City Harvest Farm Summer 2014 Harvest in Weight (lbs.) by Date

	6/18	6/25	7/9	7/11	7/25	7/30	8/1	8/8	8/15	8/22	8/29	9/6	9/13	9/16	9/20	9/21	TOTAL
Basil								3			0.5						3.5
Beet														4			4
Betu (lamb's quarters)		3	1				5.5	4	1.25						3	3	20.75
Broccoli	7	14							4.5								25.5
Brussels sprout					20												20
Cabbage								32.5	44.5	50	56						183
Carrot														17.5			17.5
Chiles																1	1
Corn											184.5				352	528	1064.5
Cucumber					11	63.5	18.5	42	73	34.5	24.5	7.5					274.5
Eggplant						4	2	1.5	7.5	5	9						29
Green pumpkin									8								8
Jarango							2.25	3.5	1.75		2						9.5
Miranta			3				0.5										3.5
Mustard green									12						22.5	9	43.5
Pepper			2	1	8	4.5	2.5	3	9	13.5	18	34.5					96
Potato											0.5						0.5
Purslane										2							2
Radish								22.5	14.5	33	26.2			1.5			97.7
Radish & turnip															49.5	182.5	232
Sisnu (stinging nettle)			2	0.5			1		5							2	10.5
Summer squash						0.75	2	10.5	19.5								32.75
Tomato			8	3	15	44.5	27	106	80.5	91.5	114.2	66.5					556.2
TOTAL																	2735.4

Notes:

- Green field indicates estimated weight based on volume
- Corn weight typically estimated by multiplying the number of corn bags by the average weight of one bag (~22 pounds)
- 7 bags of summer squash and 14 of corn were donated by a neighboring farmer on 8/22 and not factored into the harvest weight
- 18 bags of corn were harvested on a neighboring farmer's property (on 8/29) and not factored in to the harvest weight

Appendix 4. Survey Prompts

Personal Questions

Answers to Questions 1-10 were recorded on answer sheets (see Appendix 5):

1. What is your home country?
2. How old are you?
3. Tell me the summer(s) you went to the farm.

Questions Related to Participants' Home Countries

4. Did you grow your own food in your home country?
5. In your home country, did you or your family ever sell produce at market?
6. Did you or your family raise animals in your home country?
7. In your home country, did you ever sell animals at market?
8. Have you ever worked on a farm before?
9. Do you like farming?
10. Do you want a farming job?

Answers to Questions 11-16 were recorded using stickers, which were placed next to images on posters (see Appendix 6):

11. If you said “yes,” I raised animals in my home country, what kind(s) of animal(s) did you raise.

Questions Related to the Salt City Harvest Farm

12. How would you rate your experiences at the farm?
13. How many people do you share the harvest with?
14. How many meals do you make each week from one harvest?
15. Why do you go to the farm?

Answers to Question 16 were spoken, and tape-recorded for participants who chose to answer:

16. Are there any other reasons you go to the farm?

Answers to Question 17 were recorded using stickers, which were placed next to images of plants in a binder (see Appendix 7 for a list of the plants whose images were used):

17. What would you like to plant at the farm?

Answers to Question 18 were spoken, and digitally recorded for participants who chose to answer:



18. Are there things you'd like to grow that weren't shown?

Appendix 5. Sample Survey Answer Sheet


1. Bhutan Burundi
 Burma Congo
 Iraq Cuba
 Somalia Thailand
 Ethiopia Other _____

2. _____ years old


3. Summer 2013
 Summer 2014

4.  

5.  

6.  

7.  

8.  

9.  

10.  

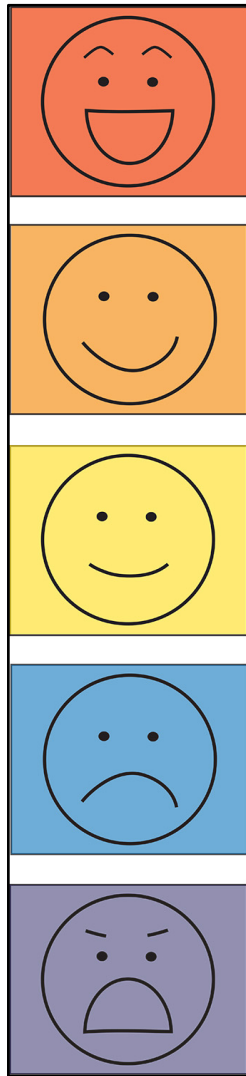
Appendix 6. Survey Posters

Participants were asked to place stickers next to the images that represented their answers for survey questions 11-15. Note that these are reproductions of the original posters; original poster sizes were 18" x 24."



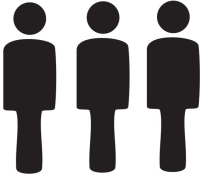

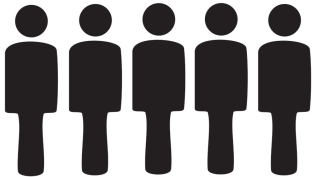




Question 11. If you said "yes," I raised animals in my home country, what kinds of animals did you raise?





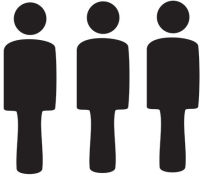






Question 12. How would you rate your experiences at the farm?



Question 13: How many people do you share the harvest with?

 1	 2	 3
 4	 5	 6
 7	 8	 More than 8

Question 14: How many meals do you make each week from one harvest?

 1	 2	 3
 4	 5	 6
 7	 8	 More than 8

Question 15: Why do you go to the farm?



For the fresh food



Because I like to farm



To be outside in the country



It's social and fun



It reminds me of home



It's something to do

Appendix 7. List of Vegetables, Flowers, and Herbs Used in the Survey

Participants selected images of any of these options in response to the Question 17, "What would you like to plant at the farm?"

Root Vegetables

1. Potato
2. Ginger
3. Beets
4. Shallot
5. Onion
6. Sweet potato
7. Carrot

Beans/Peas

8. Field peas
9. Garden peas
10. Chickpeas (green)
11. Green bean
12. Soybean
13. Yardlong bean
14. Hyacinth bean
15. Alfalfa

Herbs

16. Garden cress
17. Coriander (cilantro)
18. Chinese leek
19. Mint
20. Fenugreek
21. Dill
22. Fennel
23. Lemongrass

Gourds

24. Luffa gourd
25. Ridged gourd
26. Bitter gourd

27. Pointed gourd
28. Round gourd
29. Pumpkin
30. Winter melon

Greens & Other Green Vegetables

31. Kohlrabi
32. Snake cucumber
33. Indian Spinach
34. Kale (Ethiopian)
35. Okra
36. Lettuce
37. Celery

Flowers

38. Blue poppy
39. Primrose
40. Gentian
41. Geranium
42. Lily
43. Sunflowers
44. Sea buckthorn
45. Pitcher plant

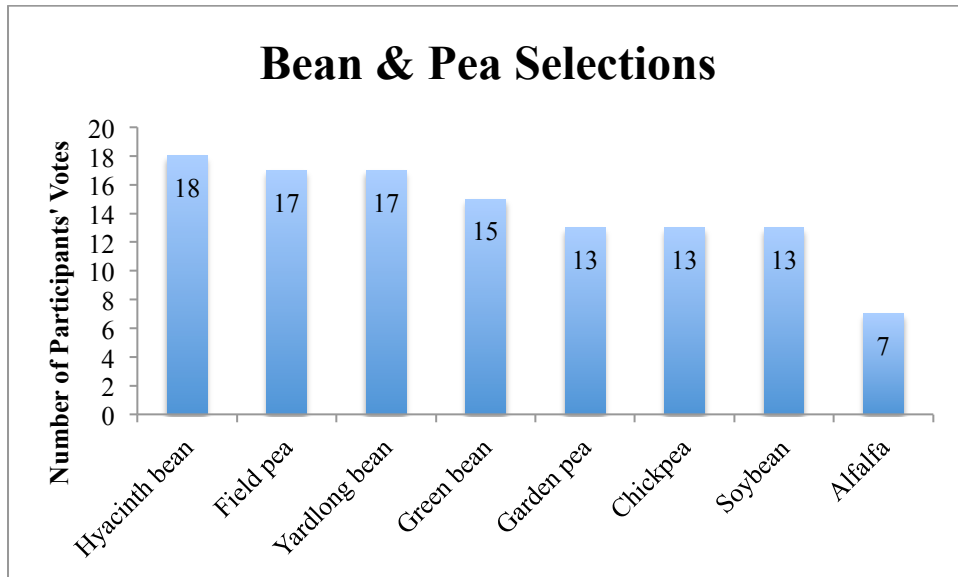
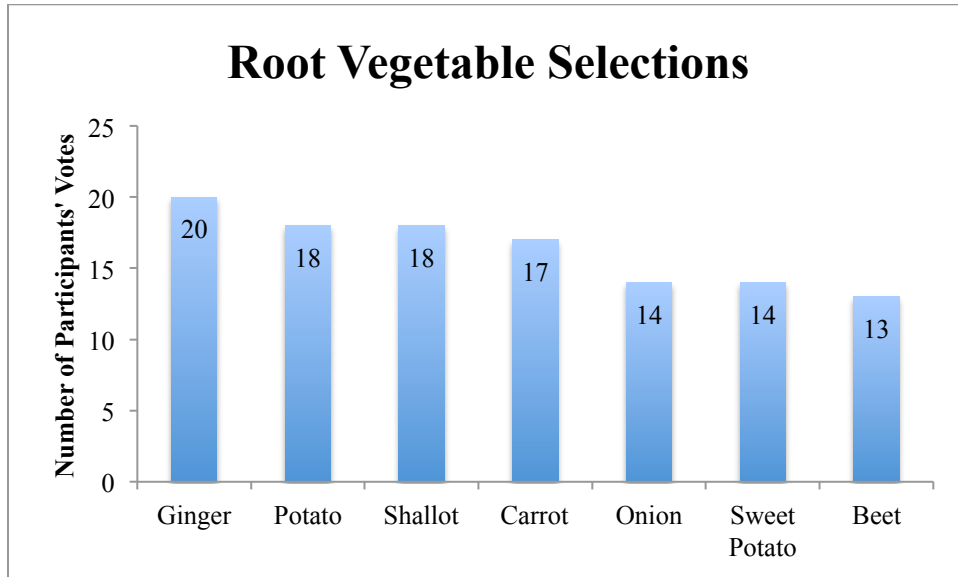
Grains

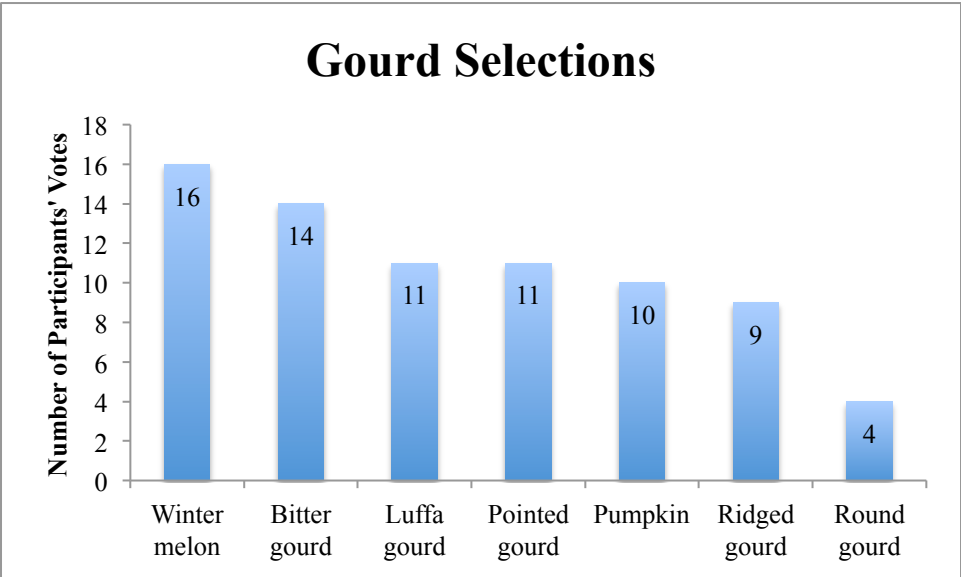
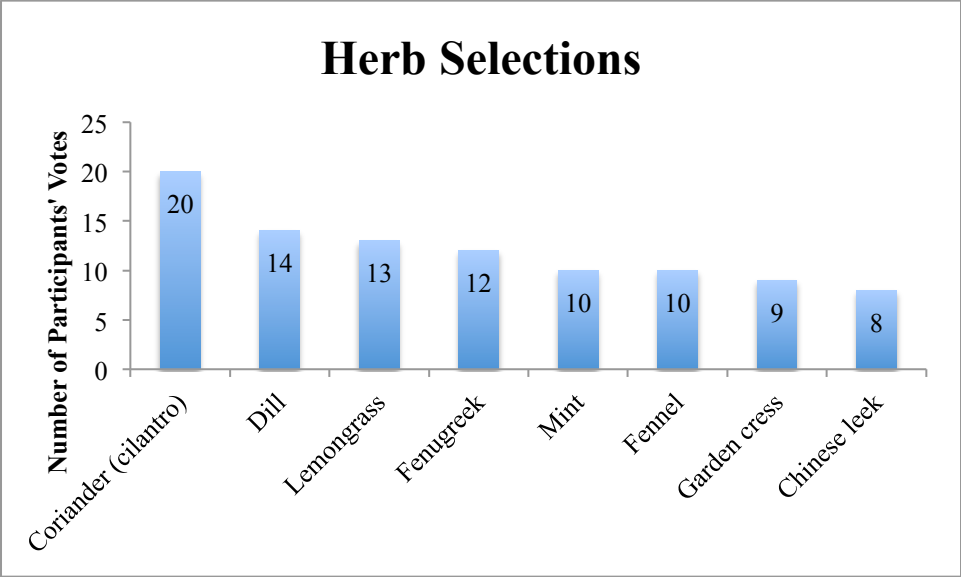
46. Barley
47. Millet

Perennials

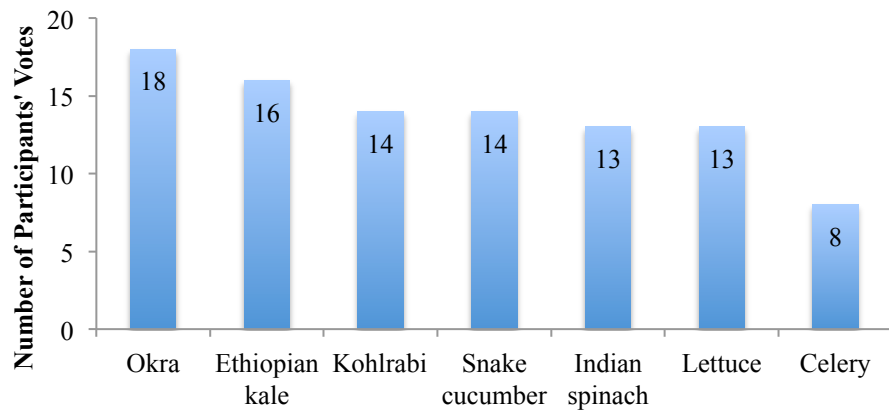
48. Ginseng
49. Asparagus
50. Fiddlehead fern
51. Strawberry

Appendix 8. Survey Responses Indicating What Participants Would Like to Plant at the Salt City Harvest Farm

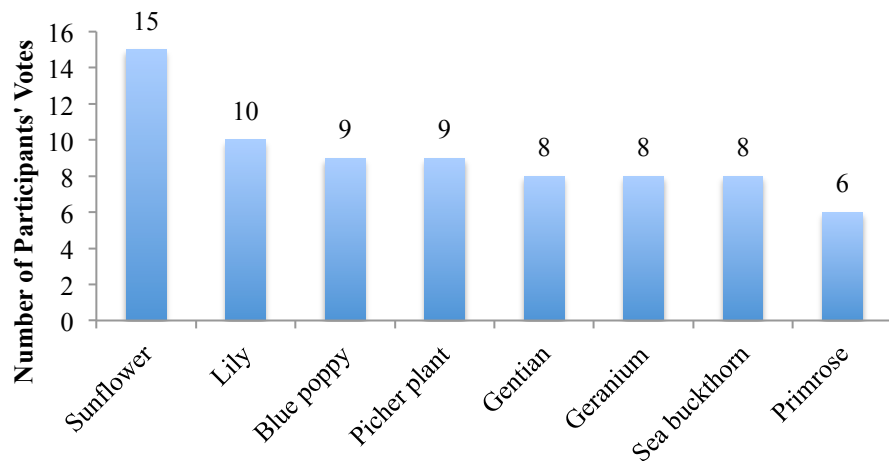


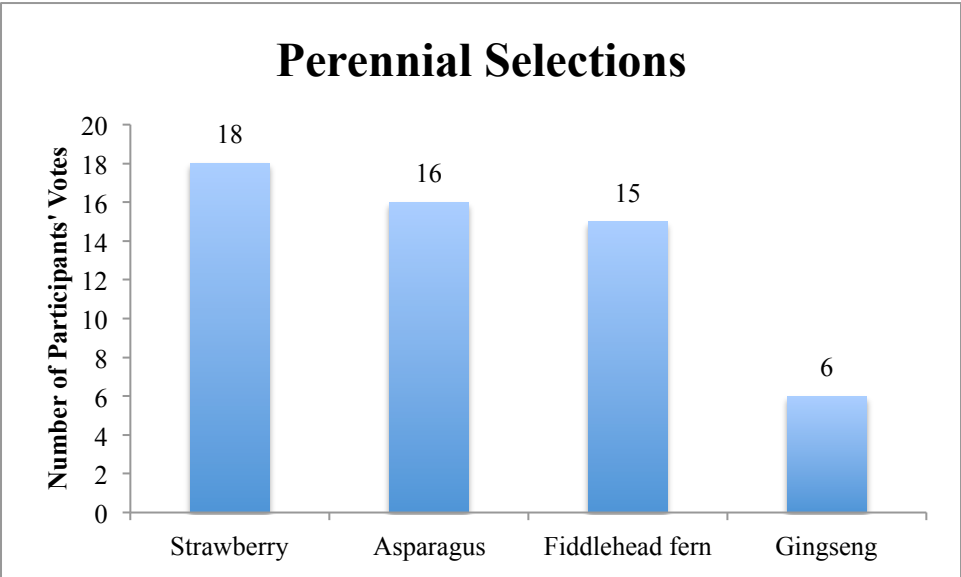
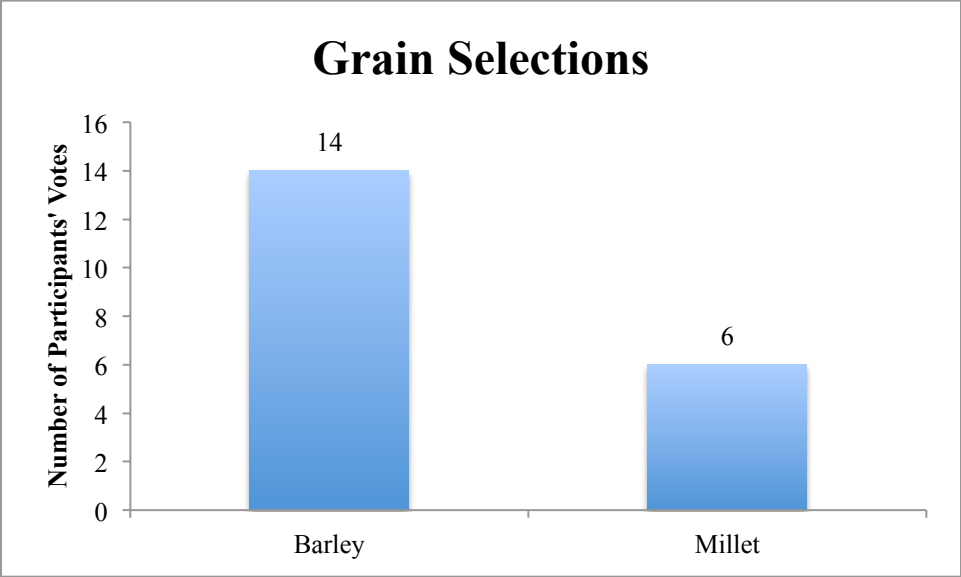


Leafy Greens & Other Green Vegetable Selections

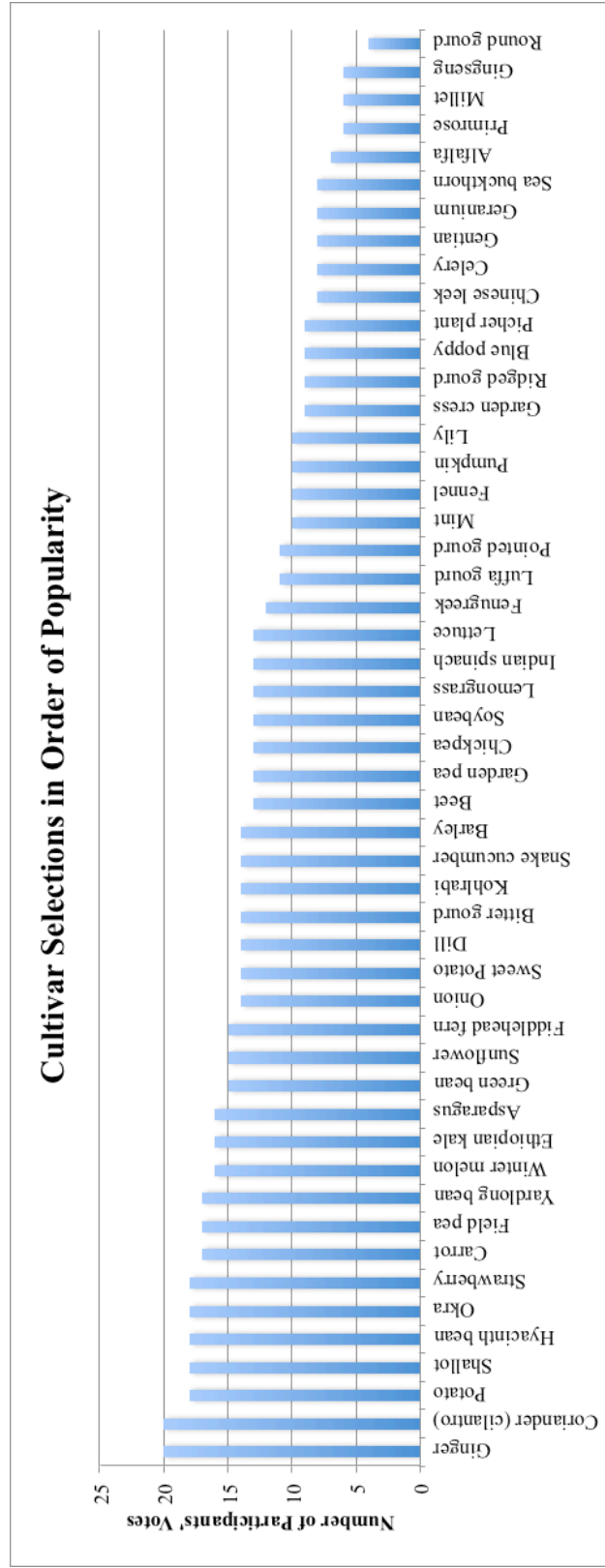


Flower Selections





Cultivar Selections in Order of Popularity



Appendix 9. Focus Group Guiding Questions

1. Describe how you grew your own food in your home country.
 - a. On how much, and what kind, of land did you grow food?
 - b. Were plants grown densely, or spread out?
 - c. In rows or groupings (clusters)?
 - d. Were certain vegetables grown with others?
 - e. Did you use mulch or compost?
 - f. Did you use fertilizer?
 - g. Did you use pesticides?
2. Did you mostly grow your own food, or forage for food?
 - a. Did farming and/or foraging account for all of your food needs?
3. What would you forage for in your home country?
 - a. How would you prepare the wild plants?
 - b. What meals would you typically prepare at home?
4. Were any of the vegetable you grew or plants you foraged that were used for purposes other than eating? How else were they used and prepared?
5. What do you want to do in the future with farming? (Continue gardening with others? Become a farmer? Sell produce at market?)
 - a. If interested in becoming a farmer:
 - i. Are you interested in learning more about that process, or being connected to resources that could help you do that?
6. At the SCHF, how do you know which wild plants to pick?
 - a. Where and how did you first encounter them?
7. Would you like to farm full-time at the SCHF, if you could?
 - a. If yes:
 - i. Would you like to sell what you grow at market?
 - ii. Do you want your own land to farm autonomously?
8. If the Salt City Harvest Farm were to offer programs where you could learn things related to farming, what kinds of things would you be interested in learning?
 - a. The kinds of crops that grow well in the region
 - b. Farming techniques, how to use farm equipment
 - c. Resources for starting your own farm (developing a business plan, being connected to land you could lease to farm on)
 - d. Being connected to farms where you could work
 - e. How to better communicate in English

Appendix 10. List of Online Resources for the Salt City Harvest Farm

Programming

- Growing New Farmers Project & Growing New Farmers Consortium
 - A consortium of 200 beginning farmer entities, that includes comprehensive programs, research projects, professional development services, and policy advocacy to assist farmers with the difficulties of establishing new farm operations in the Northeast.
- Rhodes, M., & Hugh, J. (2004). Immigrant farming programs and resources: a guide to projects, people, places, publications, and other information on immigrant farming activities across the United States. *Tufts University*.
 - Information on organizations that work with immigrant farmers, agricultural resources, seed sources for ethnic crops, plus detailed information on various immigrant farming programs.
- Ostrom, M., Cha, B., & Flores, M. (2010) Creating access to land grant resources for multicultural and disadvantaged farmers. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development (1)*1: 89-105
 - Outlines the challenges of developing and implementing farmer training curriculum for New American audiences, and presents strategies for addressing some of them. Their program represents a model for best practices in terms of catering to their target audience.

Potential Funding Sources

- Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Programs
 - <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>
- Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Programs
 - <http://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/community-food-projects-competitive-grants-program-cfpcgp>
- CNY Community Foundation
 - <https://www.cnycf.org/>
 - Local community foundation
- The Gifford Foundation
 - <http://www.giffordfoundation.org/>
 - Local community foundation
- The Pollination Project
 - <https://thepollinationproject.org/>
 - \$1,000 seed grant for social change

Resources of Beginning Farmers

- USDA National Agricultural Library
 - <http://afsic.nal.usda.gov/farms-and-community/beginningnew-farmers>
- Northeast Beginning Farmers Project (Cornell University)
 - <http://nebeginningfarmers.org/>
 - Self-help resources for beginning farmers in the form of online publications, videos, tutorials, and courses.

Structure & Management

- Gilbert, Faith “Cooperative farming: frameworks for farming together” *A Greenhorns Guidebook*. Retrieved from http://www.thegreenhorns.net/wp-content/files_mf/1393438767FINAL_greenhorns_guidebook_PK2.pdf
- National Incubator Farm Training Initiative
 - <http://nesfp.org/food-systems/national-incubator-farm-training-initiative>
 - Provides comprehensive one-on-one consulting, educational, and organizational resources for incubator farm programs or potential incubator programs.