

OCTOBER 2013

# WORLD FOOD DAY DINNER DISCUSSION GUIDE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS TO GUIDE  
YOUR CONVERSATIONS



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America

Right the Wrong

This World Food Day, Oxfam America not only invites you to host a dinner conversation about food, farms, and fairness—we're also inviting you and your guests to use your power as consumers to change the way some of the world's biggest food companies do business. You'll find more information about how you can help in this guide; after your dinner, invite guests to make their voices heard using the action tips on page 3.

## SCRIPT FOR THE DINNER HOST TO OPEN YOUR EVENT

Welcome. Many of us are here today not only because we love a good meal, but because we care about what we eat. We want to make food choices that are healthy, smart, and sustainable, both for our families and for the planet.

You may already be buying local produce or finding other ways to support farmers close to home. But you can also connect your efforts in your own community to fighting hunger worldwide. Today, we'll talk about some of the ways we can help hardworking farmers around the globe

access the resources they and their families need to thrive. For example, we can speak up to end land grabs in developing countries, which can push small-scale farmers off their land and into poverty and hunger.

Because it's not just about local farmers here in the US; local is relative. It's about robust local agriculture here and all over the world. Supporting small-scale farmers helps to ensure that all of us have healthy food in abundance. Because we all rely on the land—our common ground—and farms to put food on the table.

## TOPICS TO GUIDE YOUR DISCUSSION

### 1. FARMERS, FOOD, AND FAIRNESS

#### Questions to start the conversation:

When you picture a farmer, who do you see? ▪ What challenges might face small-scale family farmers, who grow food on less than five acres? ▪ Even though they grow much of the world's food, many farmers in poor countries are going hungry—why do you think that is? ▪ What role do farmers from around the globe play in ending hunger? ▪ How can your family support small-scale farmers when you shop and eat?

#### Facts to share:

- About one in three workers worldwide rely on agriculture to earn a living. More than half of them are women, who are often overrepresented in the lowest-paid jobs. Many live in poverty, earning less than \$2 a day.

- For both women and men, working on or owning a farm is no guarantee of a decent income: ironically, up to 80 percent of the world's chronically hungry people are farmers.
- You might think hunger is about too many people and too little food, but this isn't the case. Hunger is about power. Its roots lie in inequalities in access to resources, like fertile land and water.
- The power to control these resources sits neither with the billion-plus farmers who produce food, nor with the billions of consumers who eat it. Instead, companies and governments control the global food system—and they often determine who eats and who doesn't.

## 2. THE LAND: OUR COMMON GROUND

### Questions to start the conversation:

Where have you seen farmland disappearing in your town or state? ▪ What is the land being used for instead of growing food? ▪ What kinds of challenges do farmers face finding or holding on to good farmland in the US? ▪ How might those challenges be different for farmers around the world? ▪ Do you own land and do you use it to grow food? ▪ What if you were told you had to leave your land? What would you do? What would you take with you? What legal options might you have?

### Facts to share:

- Here in the US, we have been losing more than an acre of farmland every minute.
- In developing countries, the rush for land is even more intense. In the past decade, nearly 800 large-scale land deals have been recorded, covering more than 81 million acres.
- Some of these deals are what's known as "land grabs": land deals that happen without the free, prior, and informed consent of communities and often result in farmers being forced from their homes and families left hungry.
- While these large-scale land deals are supposedly being struck to grow food, the crops grown on the land rarely feed local people. Instead, the land is used to grow profitable crops—like sugarcane—often for export.
- More than 60 percent of crops grown on land bought by foreign investors in developing countries are intended for export. This fact is especially problematic because two-thirds of agricultural land deals by foreign investors are in countries with serious hunger problems.

## 3. THE WORLD'S SUGAR RUSH

### Questions to start the conversation:

How many foods and drinks in your cabinet or fridge right now contain sugar? ▪ Why do you think sugar might be especially in demand around the world? ▪ Do you know where the sugar in the products you buy comes from? ▪ Do companies have a responsibility to share this information with consumers? ▪ When shopping at the grocery store, are there certain food brands that you feel good about buying, or that you avoid buying? Why?

### Facts to share:

- The three products that pose the greatest risk of being linked to land grabs are sugar, soy, and palm oil. Of the three, sugar uses the most land. It is grown on 31 million hectares of land globally—an area the size of Italy.
- Sugar is a key ingredient for the food industry: 51 percent of sugar produced is used in processed foods such as soft drinks, candy, baked goods, and ice cream.
- Worldwide demand for sugar is set to rise by 25 percent by 2020. This growing demand for sugar will propel even greater competition for land.
- Three companies in particular—Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Associated British Foods (ABF)—buy and produce huge amounts of sugar around the world and hold significant influence over the industry. Right now, though, they are not doing enough to ensure that their suppliers and operations respect land rights.
- In Brazil and Cambodia, Oxfam has found that companies that supply sugar to Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and other food and beverage giants have violated farmers' rights and kicked them off their land. ABF—the biggest sugar producer in Africa—is reported as linked to a range of other unresolved land disputes. Whole communities have lost their main source of food and income.

For more background on this issue, see page 4.

### THE COMPANIES BEHIND THE BRANDS

Can you identify which company—Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, or ABF—owns which everyday food and beverage brands?

1. Odwalla
2. Twinings
3. Quaker Oats
4. Stacy's
5. Vitaminwater
6. Ovaltine

Answers: 1. Coca-Cola, 2. ABF, 3. PepsiCo, 4. PepsiCo, 5. Coca-Cola, 6. ABF

# TAKE ACTION: HELP CHANGE THE WAY FOOD COMPANIES DO BUSINESS.

You don't need to stop buying your favorite products to make a difference. Instead, make your voice heard. Get the facts. Then use your power as a consumer to tell companies exactly what needs to change.

Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and Associated British Foods (ABF) can help fight land grabs, but their policies are so slack that they don't seem to know if the sugar they use is grown on grabbed land. They don't have sufficient policies to ensure that their own operations and the middlemen they buy from respect land rights.

But you can change this. Even the biggest food companies care what you think—because you buy what they sell. And when you speak, they listen.

## TELL COCA-COLA, PEPSICO, AND ABF TO MAKE SURE THEIR SUGAR DOESN'T LEAD TO LAND GRABS. HERE'S HOW:

**1** ADD YOUR NAME TO OUR ONLINE PETITION AT [BEHINDTHEBRANDS.ORG](http://BEHINDTHEBRANDS.ORG).

**2** SEND A MESSAGE TO COMPANIES ON YOUR SOCIAL NETWORKS.

- › Print out the sign on the last page of this guide (or get creative and make your own).
- › Grab your camera or smartphone, flash a smile, and take a picture with your sign.
- › Post the picture to Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. In the caption, make sure to include #BehindTheBrands. Tweet at the companies, post to their Facebook pages, and tag them on Instagram to make sure they hear you loud and clear. Here are a couple of sample posts to get you started:

**On Twitter:** *Tell @CocaColaCo and @PepsiCo to take action against land grabs! Sign the petition at [behindthebrands.org](http://behindthebrands.org) #BehindTheBrands*

**On Facebook:** *Stop land grabs! Tell Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and ABF—some of the biggest buyers of sugar in the world—to make sure their sugar doesn't lead to land grabs that force poor farmers and their families off their land. #BehindTheBrands*

# FOR IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS: MORE BACKGROUND ON FOOD COMPANIES AND THE WORLD'S SUGAR RUSH

The truth about sugar is anything but sweet. As global demand for sugar increases, so does the rush for land to grow it.

Oxfam has found that, in countries like Brazil and Cambodia, companies that supply sugar to Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and other food and beverage giants are kicking poor farmers off their land and violating their rights. Elsewhere, ABF—the biggest sugar producer in Africa—is reported to be linked to a range of other unresolved land disputes.

Whole communities are losing their main source of food and income—but global brands like Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, and ABF are doing very little to ensure that the land rights of communities where their sugar is grown are respected.

Coca-Cola is the world's biggest buyer of sugar and sells a quarter of the world's fizzy drinks. PepsiCo is right up there too, selling 18 percent of all soft drinks worldwide. And ABF is the largest sugar producer in Africa—where there is a growing rush for land. If they changed how they do business, it could help shift the industry.

Right now, communities in Brazil, Cambodia, and other countries where these companies work are standing up for their rights, protesting against land grabs. And you can stand alongside them.

The global food companies care what you think—because you buy what they sell. So you have the power to push them to help end land grabs for good.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

The companies don't disclose where or from whom they get their sugar. They don't have sufficient policies ensuring that their own operations and the middlemen they buy from respect land rights.

## WHAT YOU CAN MAKE HAPPEN

Right now, communities in these countries are standing up for their rights by protesting against land grabs. And you can stand alongside them.

Companies like PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and ABF care what you think, because you buy what they sell. So push them to make sure their sugar doesn't lead to land grabs. Ask them to respect farmers' rights. Ask them to identify their suppliers. Ask them to ensure respect for the land rights of farmers and communities where their sugar is grown. And ask them to push governments to take action to stop land grabs, too.

Sound like a lot to ask? Then you're underestimating the power in your hands.

It's time to put a stop to land grabs.

TO SEND A MESSAGE TO FOOD COMPANIES, AND LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW THEY MEASURE UP, GO TO [BEHINDTHEBRANDS.ORG](http://BEHINDTHEBRANDS.ORG).

## MORE WAYS TO HELP: TRY THE GROW METHOD

When it comes to fighting global hunger, the choices we make every day—in the grocery store and in the kitchen—are more powerful than we might think. You can also help by trying Oxfam's GROW Method: five simple steps, from cooking smarter to wasting less, that can help to ensure that everyone has enough to eat, everywhere.

Find ideas, recipes, and more at [oxfamamerica.org/growmethod](http://oxfamamerica.org/growmethod).

**STOP LAND  
GRABS**

**#behindthebrands**