Men and women across the world depend on rural areas for their income: from tomato pickers in Florida to mushroom harvesters in South Africa to rice growers in Thailand. Women are particularly reliant on agriculture for their livelihoods. Forty-three percent of people who work in agriculture are women.¹ In poverty-stricken areas, agriculture provides food security and jobs that aren’t available elsewhere.

Yet the sources of our food have been neglected. Ownership of land is more concentrated. Unpredictable rainfall as a result of climate change forces farmers to lose crops. Unfair trade rules have left small producers and waged agricultural workers in a dangerous state. Our national policies in response to migrants who have been forced to move for survival are tearing families apart and do not address the unjust economic policies that leave people with no options.

The field explores food systems, energy use, livelihoods, land use, violence against women, migration, criminalization, greed, radical hospitality and abundance.

We understand that God has created abundance and that we can organize in a new way to ensure that all are fed in ways that are just and life-giving.

The Social Principles state that “a prerequisite for meeting the nutritional needs of the world’s population is an agricultural system that uses sustainable methods, respects ecosystems and promotes a livelihood for people that work the land.”² Learn ways to make it happen in your own community.


²Social Principles, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, ¶162Q, “Sustainable Agriculture.”