



## U.S. Celebrates Terra Madre Day

**Communities hold events for Terra Madre Day to promote local food.**

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Photo courtesy Slow Food/ Alberto Peroli

Slow Food founder Carlo Petrini speaks at Terra Madre 2008 in Torino, Italy. The international conference will reconvene in 2010 for its third meeting. The desire to buy local food is taking root. In November, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that 16 organizations would receive funding to provide access to healthy, local food. And this month, on a more grassroots level, people around the world will celebrate Terra Madre Day.

Terra Madre is a large conference that has been held biannually in Torino, Italy, since 2006 with farmers, producers and other interested groups from around the world discussing how to improve food systems.

This year, the focus turns local. On December 10, 2009, communities across the world will hold events to focus on providing good, clean and fair food to their community members. This is the philosophy perpetuated by Slow Food, the organization driving the day's celebration.

In the U.S., from coast to coast, an array of events, from film screenings to food tastings to people dressing up in bee costumes, will take place to provide a platform of discussion on the tenets of Terra Madre and the importance of local food.

### The 7 Pillars

In San Francisco, the Slow Food movement has already gained a strong following of 1,000 members. In observance of Terra Madre Day, the chapter's holiday-themed cookbook and recipe exchange will bridge the conversation about one of Terra Madre's seven pillars: language, culture and traditional knowledge.

"In San Francisco, everyone is very virtual, and creating community around food is a good place to start creating great conversation and change," says chapter president Dava Guthmiller, referring to changes in the food system and awareness of small farms.

The seven pillars of Terra Madre Day take the idea of "eating locally" to a level of action. The pillars are: access to good, clean and fair food; agricultural and food biodiversity; small-scale food production; food sovereignty; language, culture and traditional knowledge; environmentally responsible food production; and fair and sustainable trade.

Slow Food in Asheville, N.C., will focus on the pillars of small-scale food production and environmentally responsible food production with its "There's No Place Like Hive" event.

"We will have a woman dressed up in a bee costume who will speak about colony collapse disorder and the need for more research to find causes and solutions," said Cathy Cleary, the president of the local Slow Food chapter. In addition, they will provide a sampling of local honey products.

### Emphasizing "Local"

For a fishing and farming community in Bellingham, Wash., the idea of eating locally is nothing new, but this year they will be celebrating Terra Madre Day with a tuna canning party.

"We've been doing the albacore canning for upwards of eight years," says Jeremy Brown, who will host the event. "It began in our kitchen. A few friends joined in. More asked if they could, and before long, my wife had kicked us out and told me we needed a better space."

The canning became an annual event in the community, and then officially became a Slow Food event when a chapter started in their area.

"Our focus has been to encourage people to get their hands into food preparation and preservation," Brown says, noting the local focus requires people to participate in the food process and develop their own standards.



The showing of the film “Fresh” in Rockford, Ill., will raise awareness of people (like the group in Washington) who are reinventing food systems, says organizer Constance McCarthy. Because there is no Slow Food chapter in her area, she works with the Local Foods Working Group to distribute local food directories and hold other related events.

“Our aim is not to force a viewpoint on people, but to educate them about the questions they can ask to be sure the food they are buying is in line with the values and principles that are important to them.”

A Slow Food chapter in Cincinnati, Ohio, however, is taking a more policy-oriented approach. At the Symposium on Smart Growth, they will discuss regional developments in food sustainability and formation of a Food Policy Development group, says event coordinator Katie Draznik.

“Local food is important because it ties us to our community and the soil we live on. It gives us connection to our land and keeps us ‘rooted’ in our community, literally,” Draznik says. “Local, responsibly produced food allows for biodiversity, which is nutritive to our soils and our bodies.”

Visit the [Terra Madre Day](#) website for information about events in your area.