**Farm to School Systems Analysis**

**Class activity for Chapter 10**

***Food, Farms and Community***

**Material Requirements: None**

**Time Requirement: 30-45 minutes**

Throughout the book *Food, Farms, and Community* references are made to the complexity of various issues and the importance of systems thinking. In the state of Vermont, the Farm to School Network, a network of professionals and advocates working to link local food production and the state’s K-12 schools, has taken both the complexity of the system and the value of systems thinking to heart by carrying out a systems analysis of the Network itself. The goal of this project was to illustrate key leverage points that farm to school professionals might use to further their goals. The process and results of their work are featured on the [Vermont Farm to School Network](http://strategy.vermontfarmtoschool.org/index)’s website.

For this activity, have students read through the Vermont Farm to School Network’s website before class and come ready to discuss the process used, the systems map generated by the process and the leverage points identified. In class, break students into small groups of three to five and invite them to critique the leverage points the project identified. In students’ judgment, did the systems analysis identify all high value leverage points? Are there some that were left out? Do students question the importance of some of the noted leverage points?

After giving students around 20 minutes to discuss the leverage points, bring the class back together to share their thoughts on the leverage points. Also invite reactions to the length of time required for the systems analysis and the number of stakeholders that were engaged. Does this very practical application of systems analysis seem accessible to a broad array of organizations, or does the time and resource requirement put it out of reach for many?