

Remembering John Kinsman, President of Family Farm Defenders

Mark Kastel, Cornucopia Institute

January 24th, 2014



Organic dairy farmer and lifelong social-justice activist John Kinsman passed away January 20 on his family farm near Lime Ridge, Wisconsin. He was 87. A founder and the longtime president of Family Farm Defenders, John touched the lives of thousands of people, worldwide, for decades as a grassroots proponent of organic sustainable agriculture and a globetrotting advocate of food sovereignty.

An organic farmer and forester, John helped found Family Farm Defenders (FFD) in 1994 to promote sustainable agriculture, fair trade, workers rights, animal welfare, consumer safety, environmental stewardship and, above all, food sovereignty. Through FFD, John worked to relocalize food/farm economies and forge new economic relationships between consumers and farmers.

He was also the secretary of the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC) and served on the Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Alliance board of directors. John was also one of the leading voices in the U.S. challenging GMOs and an outspoken critic of corporate globalization. As one of the farmer leaders involved in Via Campesina, the largest umbrella organization for farmers, fishers, foresters, hunters, gatherers, and indigenous peoples in the world, John traveled extensively around the world to share the message of food sovereignty.

John Glenn Kinsman is survived by his wife of 64 years, Jean, their 10 children, and 38 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren. Details about the January 24 wake and January 25 funeral can be found at www.hooffuneralhome.com or by calling 608-524-2337.

Family Farm Defenders will share some of John's legacy at the 3rd Annual John Kinsman Beginning Farmer Food Sovereignty Prize Award Dinner to be held March 15 at University of Wisconsin, Baraboo, with Raj Patel as the keynote speaker. Watch www.familyfarmdefenders.org for details.

"John was a good friend and trusted advisor and will be dearly missed," said Cornucopia's Mark Kastel. For those who wish to learn more about the inspirational life of John Kinsman, below are some links to recent profiles and interviews:

2012 Interview with John Kinsman conducted by Daniel Tucker at the Jane Addams Hull House Museum in Chicago: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_0vviyVlPo

2012 Profile of John Kinsman by Marc Eisen for Progressive Magazine:
http://www.progressive.org/family_farm_defender.html

2012 Booklet titled "John Kinsman: Activist Farmer" compiled by Daniel Tucker:
<https://danieltucker.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/kinsman-booklet-final-singlepage-web.pdf>

2102 Interview with John Kinsman by In Motion Magazine:
http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/ra11/j_kinsman_int11.html

2011 Interview with John Kinsman conducted by Bekah Wilce of PR Watch
: <http://www.prwatch.org/news/2011/10/11044/food-rights-network-interviews-food-farm-hero-john-kinsman>

Another 2011 Interview conducted by Daniel Tucker with John Kinsman at his farm near Lime Ridge, WI: <http://www.foodfirst.org/en/Family+Farm+Defenders>

<http://www.cornucopia.org/2014/01/remembering-john-kinsman-president-family-farm-defenders/>



John and Jeotak of South Korea