

The US Food Sovereignty Alliance (USFSA) (on behalf of the USFSA Coordination Team) Pays Tribute to the late John Kinsman: agro-ecological dairy farmer and forester, veteran agricultural activist, host and speaker of many a rural justice tour, ambassador for food sovereignty, peacemaker, friend and mentor!

Early this week we were stunned and saddened by the news of the passing of John Kinsman. (I can still barely come to grips with our loss.) To many of us he was a friend with whom we have shared many meaningful, hilarious, soulful and challenging times together, across the U.S. and in various gatherings of Via Campesina in Latin America, Africa, Europe or Asia. For some of us he was the elderly but strangely spry, young-in-spirit dairy farmer who regaled the circle of members of the USFSA around the fire at our 2nd Assembly in Tampa, Florida last March, recounting stories of running from riot police with the French farmer-celebrity-anti GMO icon José Bove during the Battle of Seattle, and other memorable tales. For some he was the lone man holding a picket denouncing rBGH growth hormone at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, many years before people knew about the threat of GMOs. For some he was the founder and head of the dynamic organization, the Family Farm Defenders, who in addition to a history of education, advocacy and action, provided replacement tractors for farmers struck by hurricane Katrina, or truck loads of hay to farmers in drought-stricken areas during 2011 to stave off the loss of their cattle. To the Korean Women farmers who won the Food Sovereignty Prize of 2012, he was a virtual celebrity and symbol of all that is hopeful in the United States. How happy they were to realize they would visit the laughing man himself on his farm! He had a BIG HEART, a warm smile and a contagious laugh! The Haitian winners of the 2013 Food Sovereignty Prize stopped in this past November and visited John and his Amish neighbors and the Cedar Grove organic cheese factory John's cows helped supply. Despite his ailing body, John went around with us on that tour as well, falling down once on a sloping Amish pasture, mobilizing his bones literally until his 87-year old body couldn't anymore...

He will always be our Food Sovereignty Champion!



John Kinsman at far left, listening to Ben Yahola, in a sharing of movement stories...