

L'Association  
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sur l'alimentation



Canadian  
Association for  
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photo: David Szantó  
(see page 9)

## Hello CAFS members!

Well, we have made it through what has been, for many, one of the most unusual and difficult academic years in recent memory. Despite the many challenges, the CAFS board has made progress on a number of fronts. In partnership with *Canadian Food Studies*, we recently launched [a call for proposals for a themed issue](#) entitled “Confronting Anti-Black, Anti-Indigenous, and Anti-Asian Racisms in Food Systems in Canada,” to be co-edited by Leticia Ama Deawuo and Tabitha Robin. We also published [an open access resource list](#) at the intersection of food systems, racialized violence, and oppression in food systems in the territory known as Canada (thank you to Michael Classens for bottom-lining this initiative). You can find more information on both of these on the new and greatly improved [CAFS website](#) (thank you to David Szanto for his amazing work). In addition to overseeing the re-design of the CAFS website, the Communications

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### MESSAGE DE LA PRÉSIDENTE

in programs such as Environmental Studies, Geography, Labour Studies, Ecology, and Anthropology (to name a few) will no doubt have an impact on food scholarship in Northern Ontario and beyond. As one of the few bilingual and tri-cultural post-secondary institutions, the restructuring of Laurentian should give us all pause.

On a more positive note, [this year's joint food studies conference](#) is shaping up to be an incredibly interesting and dynamic six days! With over 600 presentations to choose from, there should be something for everyone. A huge thank you to this year's CAFS conference coordinators Rachel Portinga and Rosie Kerr for all their work in making this happen. The conference will also include the CAFS Annual General Meeting (June 11 at 1:00 PM ET), where we will present the recipients of this year's CAFS Awards along with the incoming Board members. Unfortunately, as it will again be virtual this year, you will have to bring your own lunch!

It's been a pleasure serving as this year's president, alongside a great team of fellow board members. I look forward to seeing what CAFS has in store for the future!

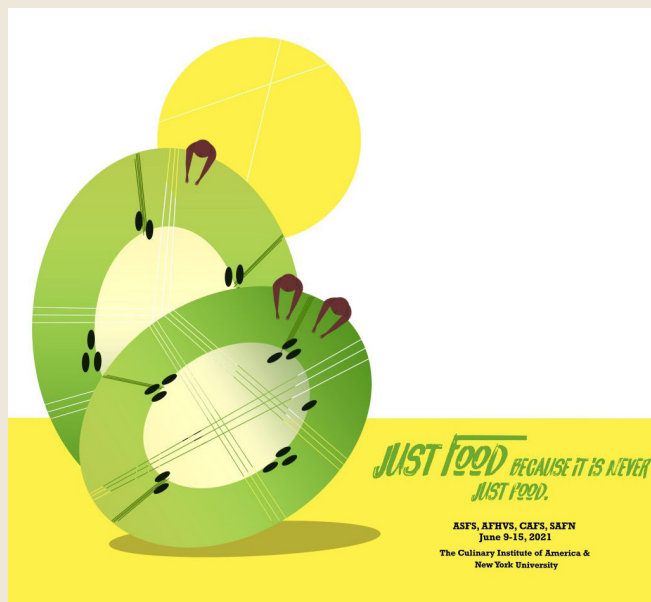
—Amanda

Committee has continued to organize the [CAFS Webinar series](#), highlighting a diversity of issues and conversations.

While not directly tied to food studies, the upheaval at [Laurentian University](#) and its devastating impact on students, staff and faculty



Amanda Wilson, CAFS Board President



## NEWS / NOUVELLES

### The Many Truths of Food and Nutrition

As Oscar Wilde wrote, “the truth is rarely pure and never simple.” On April 29, 2021, critical nutrition scholars [Alissa Overend](#) (MacEwan University) and [Jennifer Brady](#) (Mount Saint Vincent University) took a deep dive into nutrition, health and wellness, and commercial messaging during CAFS’ third webinar in this ongoing series. They discussed Alissa’s powerful new book, [Shifting Food Facts: Dietary Discourse in a Post-Truth Culture](#) and spilled the T on “Truths that make us mad!” (including Canada’s Food Guide, food labeling and advertising, and ‘singular food truths’). A video recording of the webinar is now available on the [CAFS YouTube channel](#).

For upcoming webinars, see the CAFS website or follow our updates on the CAFS [Eventbrite page](#).



**CAFS** WEBINAR

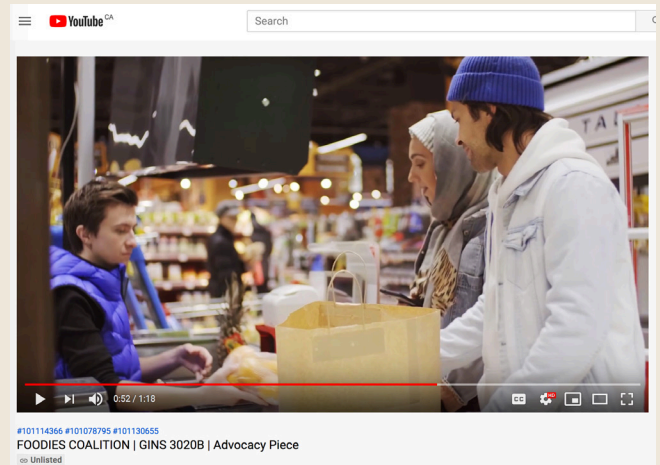
A lively, fast-paced webinar with critical nutrition scholars Alissa Overend and Jennifer Brady, unpacking the complex and contextual nature of “truth” when it comes to food.

Canadian Association for Food Studies

April 29 @ 2pm AT  
[foodstudies.eventbrite.ca](http://foodstudies.eventbrite.ca)

### Ottawa’s Food Deserts and the Foodies Coalition

Students in Global and International Studies at Carleton University care deeply about food and equitable local food systems. In Marylynn Steckley’s third-year course, “Places, Boundaries, Movements and Environmental Change,” students were asked to create a one-minute piece (video, audio, poem) to amplify advocacy for more just food systems in Ottawa.



One group of students made a video about [Ottawa’s Food Deserts](#), a testament to the creativity and advocacy that students can produce.

*video by Caroline Leal-Purchase, Sarah Doherty Hillman, Holly Laroche, Shanon McNulty & Julianne Payne*

### Feeding the City: Pandemic & Beyond

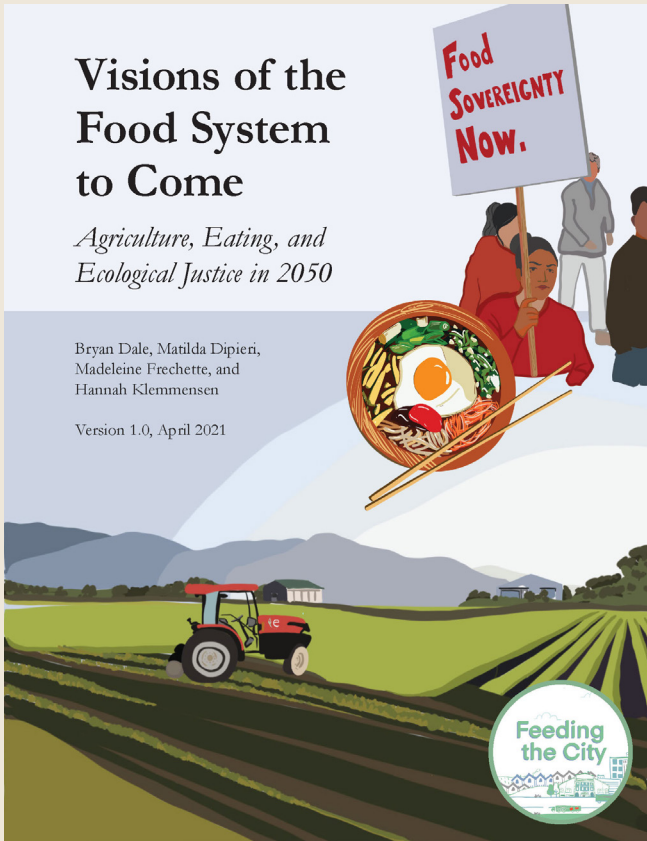
In April 2021, members of the Feeding the City team launched [Visions of the Food System to Come: Agriculture, Eating, and Ecological Justice in 2050](#). In this

# Visions of the Food System to Come

*Agriculture, Eating, and Ecological Justice in 2050*

Bryan Dale, Matilda Dipieri, Madeleine Frechette, and Hannah Klemmensen

Version 1.0, April 2021



report, project manager Dr. Bryan Dale and undergraduate researchers Matilda Dipieri, Madeleine Frechette, and Hannah Klemmensen envision a resilient future food system in Canada and beyond. Each chapter of this solutions-oriented report sets forth a fictional portrayal of the food system in the year 2050, demonstrating the interconnectedness of individual and collective struggles for food sovereignty and socio-economic and environmental justice.

The feasibility of the future food system we present is supported by extensive academic research, through which readers can consult the resources used to prepare the report. *Visions of the Food System to Come* is a contribution to ongoing discussions about the

longstanding vulnerabilities within the Canadian food system, and the viability of alternative approaches.

Importantly, we recognize that creating an agro-ecological, socio-ecologically just food system is a process rather than an outcome. We therefore invite the CAFS/ACÉA community to [provide feedback on the first version of this report](#) (you can also email us directly at [feedcity2020@gmail.com](mailto:feedcity2020@gmail.com)). Our plan is to incorporate feedback into future iterations of the report. To download the document, go to [Resources > Reports](#) on the Feeding the City website.

## RESEARCH / RECHERCHES

### Lake Superior Living Labs Network Sustainability Stories Video Series

Throughout 2020, members of the Thunder Bay hub of the Lake Superior Living Labs Network co-created the [Sustainability Stories Video Series](#). The goal of this project was to use digital storytelling to highlight efforts, share learnings, and synthesize a place-responsive understanding of what sustainability means in the community of Thunder Bay and across the watershed. The videos weave together some of the key themes of the LSLLN: relationships, collaboration, diversity, place, and just sustainabilities. Their purpose is not only to tell a story, but also to prompt reflection and invite community participation.



## Diverse Ways of Knowing Nature

[This video showcase was a collaborative effort](#) supported by the Milton Public Library, the Wilfrid Laurier University Office of Strategic Initiatives, and the Laurier Center for Sustainable Food Systems. The approach to this presentation was inspired by work being done



**Diverse Ways of Knowing Nature:  
Speak for the Bees Wrap-up**

“This video showcase will explore how artists use different mediums to express their personal relationships with nature.”

— Project Facilitator Jennifer Marshman

Milton Public Library  
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

in the Decolonization and Indigenization community of practice at Wilfrid Laurier University. Beyond formal presentations, lectures, peer-reviewed journal articles, and popular media, there are diverse ways to engage with the natural world. Every day we hear more about the many ecological crises on the planet from degraded food and water systems to mass species extinctions. Most recently we have seen how human activity is diminishing the health of ecosystems and wildlife populations which helps to create the conditions for the emergence of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. The video showcases how six unique artists use different mediums to express their personal relationships with nature. These diverse approaches can help us understand that we all have unique and meaningful ways of connecting and engaging with nature. In doing so, we can enhance a reparative, reciprocal, and interconnected relationship with the rest of the natural world.

About the artists:

[Alanah Jewell](#), Indigenous artist and organizer  
[Andrea Elena](#), watercolour artist  
[Ann Sanderson](#), science illustration  
[Jennette Reid](#), metalsmith  
[Gaia's Gardens](#), landscape artists

## Towards a Gender-Inclusive Food Sovereignty Assessment of Health

[Jennifer Vansteenkiste](#), [Joshua Steckley](#), and [Marylynn Steckley](#) have been exploring the challenge of Haiti's food insecurity for over a decade. Haiti has one of the highest levels of food insecurity in the world, and the island nation is particularly infamous for its acute rural food insecurity, food import dependence, and malnutrition. The three have joined forces and have received a Canadian Institute for Health Research Project Grant for their project, “Towards a Gender-Inclusive Food Sovereignty Assessment of Health.” Marylynn Steckley is the principle investigator on this bi-national multidisciplinary project that builds on Vansteenkiste's community partnerships in Haiti's North, and brings together a team of eight Haitian and Canadian researchers: Weldenson Dorvil, Magalie Civil, [Myriam Fillion](#), [Walner Osna](#), and [Steve Sider](#).



The team has identified that while Rapid Food Security Assessments reveal population-level rises in rates of obesity, heart disease, and hunger in Haiti, there is a gendered picture that is missed. In rural Haiti, marital/relationship status, place, and gendered divisions of labour bear women's access to income, status, and food. This community-grounded project is motivated by needs for an integrative Gender-Inclusive Food Sovereignty and Health Assessment tool that considers social and environmental determinants of health in addition to nutrition.



## PUBLICATIONS

### 'Bee Cities'

One million species are threatened with extinction globally, including more than half of the native bee species in North America. In Canada, a growing number of municipalities have signed a resolution to commit to the standards of the Bee City Canada program, which includes

celebrating and educating about pollinators, along with creating and enhancing pollinator habitat. Our central argument is that the commodification of pollination has detrimental effects on people, pollinators, and ecosystems, and that a diverse economies framework is one conceptual model that can help shift our perspective. Within the 'save the bees' narrative, a capitalocentric, unidimensional image of pollination persists, driven by particular forms of market power and domination. Good intentions may be constrained by industry-dominated messaging that limits understanding of appropriate interventions. Meanwhile, Bee City Canada offers municipalities the opportunity to engage in conservation efforts by starting where they are and building on a network of Bee Cities across the country. This collective case study, using thematic interpretive analysis of interviews with members of Ontario Bee Cities, shows how a diverse economies framework can help us to understand the value and contributions of this initiative in previously undervalued and under-recognized ways, and how they help to advance a whole-of-community approach. It is only through decentering the hegemonic market-based view of pollination that true conservation of bee diversity, and associated pollination services, can be prioritized. Our findings show that Bee Cities can animate a vibrant political ecology through a collective municipal identity, by centering bees (and other pollinators by proxy).

Marshman J. & Knezevic I., (2021) "What's in a name? Challenging the commodification of pollination through the diverse economies of 'Bee Cities'", *Journal of Political Ecology* 28(1). p.124-145.



## Moving beyond direct marketing with new mediated models

For some time we have seen a shift away from direct marketing, a core feature and dominant exchange form in the alternative food world, towards a greater role for intermediation. Yet we still need to better understand to what extent and in what ways new mediated Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) represent an evolution of or departure from core tenets of alternative food systems. This paper focuses on AFNs with new intermediaries that connect small-scale producers with urban end-consumers. Based on original research in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Calgary, we analyze three different types of mediated AFNs: one driven by consumers, one by an external intermediary, and one by producers. Our cases include non-capitalist, capitalist, and alternative capitalist economic practices as identified by Gibson-Graham. Conceptually, we base our analysis on the three-pillar-model of alternative agri-food systems, which we further refine. Besides comparing our cases with each other, for heuristic purposes we also compare them with an ideal-type model that adheres to core tenets of alterity in all three pillars. Our empirical analysis shows that intermediary organizations can bring important benefits and that mediated AFNs are in principle able to hold true to the core tenets of alternative agri-food systems.

Rosol, Marit & Barbosa Jr, Ricardo (2021). "Moving beyond direct marketing with new mediated models: Evolution of or departure from alternative food networks?" *Agriculture and Human Values*.

[Read the article.](#)



### A community farm maps back!

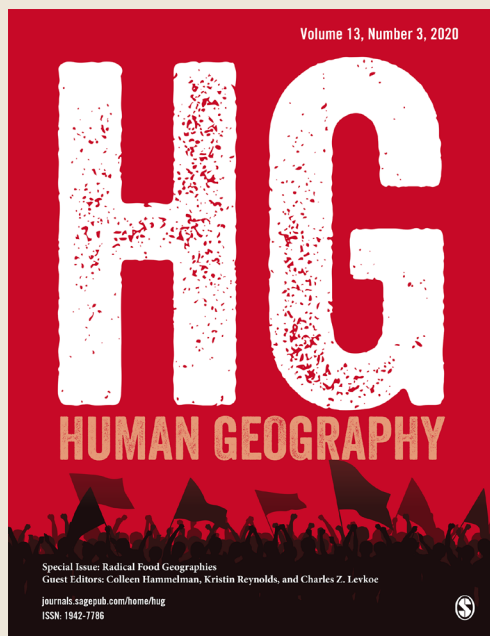
Geographers, cartographers, and related social scientists are increasingly locating the (geo)politics of the vernacular within volunteered geographic information, the geoweb, and other digital technologies that enable the production of new maps. We instead focus our attention on 'old' cartographic practices. We contend that map-based community activism and geopolitics continue to occur in ways that much research has left behind in its shifted attention toward digital geographies. We conceptualize vernacular counter-mapping, as practiced by Grow Calgary, a community urban farm located on public land, by focusing on vernacular cartographic method and mode. We argue first that the vernacular exists not just in the production of new maps but also in the practice of altering and re-narrating existing maps, and, second, that the vernacular exists not just in the new modes of VGI and distributed/crowdsourced data production, but in the mode of leveraging official, static state maps to make legible situated knowledges.

Barbosa Jr, Ricardo & Burns, Ryan (2021). "A community farm maps back! Disputes over public urban farmland in Calgary, Alberta," *Journal of Maps*, 17:1, 46-54.

## Radical Food Geographies

guest editors: Colleen Hammelman, Kristin Reynolds, and Charles Z. Levkoe

In [this special issue of Human Geography](#), we present diverse engagements with radical food geography praxis. This praxis sits at intersections between food systems scholarship and radical geographies and makes theoretical and action-oriented contributions to resisting oppressive food systems and building viable and equitable food futures. These approaches are grounded in a critical analysis of power, oppression, and capitalist exploitation across time and space. But they go beyond those theorizations to use such knowledge for creating change in food systems through scholarship, activism, or both. Importantly, such praxis is rooted in heterogeneous understandings of the systems of history, culture, and philosophy that have an impact on how change is pursued and by whom.



### The future of agroecology in Canada

Agroecology and food sovereignty have gained a significant foothold in the Global South. In the Global North, however, there are significant challenges hindering the adoption of these concepts. Drawing on participants' insights following an Agroecology Field School and Research Summit held in Ottawa in 2018, this paper presents the context for agroecology's potential expansion in this country. We argue that three key dimensions must be addressed in order for the concept to be advanced: (1) engagement in food system governance; (2) building networks of solidarity between academics, activists, and food producers/harvesters; and (3) realization of Indigenous food sovereignty.

Laforge, J., Dale, B., Levkoe, C.Z., and Ahmed, F. (2021). "The future of agroecology in Canada: Embracing the politics of food sovereignty." *Journal of Rural Studies* 81, 194-202.





## On the Cover

The sovereign nation of [Timor-Leste](#) is a country rich in food and agriculture, characterized by exceptional species biodiversity. It is also a place that has experienced centuries of colonial oppression and exploitation. Today, numerous food-based initiatives are helping to address economic and cultural challenges, as well as the complexities of under- and malnutrition.

During a visit there in 2018 for a research project on food heritage, 'recombinant' culinary innovation, and empowerment through storytelling, I participated in an event celebrating local plant species and traditional foods.

These photos are from an interactive display about Timorese candlenuts, organized by [Agora Food Studio](#) in partnership with Oxfam.

Visitors were invited to crack one open (using the surprisingly effective tool shown in the bottom-right) and learn more about their multiple uses. With their high fat content, candlenuts can be pounded into a paste and mixed with cotton batting, which is then wrapped around a skewer to form a long-burning, mini torch.

Candlenut meat and oil are also both delicious and nutritious, but it's best not to eat them raw, unless you want an unpleasant 12 hours of digestive distress!



— David Szanto

## Parallel Precarity

As national borders tighten against undocumented migrants, agricultural employers throughout North America have pushed governments for easier access to a legalized temporary farm workforce. Some U.S. farmers and policymakers are seeking to expand the country's temporary agricultural guest worker program (H-2A visa). Canada's longstanding Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program has been proposed on an international scale as an example of best practices because it fulfills employer demands for a stable workforce, enables state control over migration flows and, at least on paper, safeguards workers' rights. However, researchers have documented systemic violations of workers' rights in both countries. How do outcomes for legalized temporary migrant farmworkers in Canada compare to those in the United States? This paper addresses an empirical gap in the literature by rigorously comparing agricultural guest worker programs in Canada and the United States. Ultimately, we argue that programs in both countries function by creating an unfree workforce. Despite differences in the policy environment and program structures, they present similar outcomes of systemic precarity for participating workers.

Weiler, A. M., Sexsmith, K., & Minkoff-Zern, L. A. (2021). "Parallel Precarity: A Comparison of US and Canadian Agricultural Guestworker Programs." *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food*, 26(2).

## "Informalization" of food vending in China

The central government of China required local governments to allow street food vending on May 27, 2020, which is essentially a policy of "informalization" in urban food governance. Before this, some local gov-

ernments such as Nanjing Municipal Government had already relaxed the implementation of regulations for street food vending. The original purpose of allowing street food vending was to help ensure food security. Currently, it is used for increasing informal employment as a response to unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The temporary informalization is important for mitigating food insecurity, which demonstrates China's adaptability in contexts of crisis.

Zhong, T., & Scott, S. (2020). "'Informalization' of food vending in China: From a tool for food security to employment promotion." *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. Advance online publication.

## What makes a CSA a CSA?

In different parts of the world, community supported agriculture (CSA) has taken a variety of organizational forms, drawn on different ideologies, used a variety of land tenure arrangements, and taken on varied types of market relations in terms of how they arrange sales and memberships. Despite this, comparative studies of CSAs are sparse. Based on interviews and survey results, this paper develops a framework to compare CSAs in Canada—where this system has evolved for the last 30 years as an alternative to industrialized agriculture—with those in China, where CSAs have emerged since the late 2000s, mainly in response to food safety and health concerns. The comparison is based on their initiators' motivations, economic characteristics, ecological practices, shareholder relations, and community building. We find that in both Canada and China CSAs are struggling to maintain the movement's original values and be economically viable. They are moving away from the traditional

'risk sharing' approach underpinning the model and adopting more flexible payment mechanisms. However, other original tenets of the CSA model, such as member engagement, are strengthening. This poses a definitional challenge—what makes a CSA a CSA? We conclude that CSAs mix capitalist and other-than-capitalist economic logic, blend traditional, organic, and productivist ecological relations, and demonstrate both individualist and civic collectivist politics simultaneously. These characterizations are what make a CSA a CSA in contemporary Canada and China.

Si, Z., Schumilas, T., Chen, W., Fuller, T., & Scott, S. (2020). "What Makes a CSA a CSA? A Framework for Comparing Community Supported Agriculture with Cases of Canada and China." *Canadian Food Studies / La Revue Canadienne Des études Sur l'alimentation*, 7(1), 64–87.

## Employing an Agroecological Approach to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals

In this chapter, using a case study approach, we examine the potential benefits of employing agroecology to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a response to food safety and environmental concerns, diverse agroecological practices have been proliferating in China in the past decade. These cases demonstrate agroecology's interdisciplinary nature in that they embody not only ecological farming cases but also social innovations (e.g., ecological farmers' cooperatives and community organizations) for ecological and healthy food provisioning. The development of agroecology in China shows how it facilitates most of the SDGs in various ways. Yet the further development of agroecology also faces multiple challenges. This chapter reviews the contributions of agroecology to the SDGs and the barriers hindering

its wider adoption. It offers lessons for other countries in terms of policy supports to enhance the capacity of producers, reduce the cost of production and facilitate market access.

Si Z., Scott S. (2020) Employing an Agroecological Approach to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals: A Case Study from China. In: Caldwell C., Wang S. (eds) *Introduction to Agroecology*. Springer, Singapore.



## DE L'ÉQUIPE DE L'INFOLETTRE FROM THE NEWSLETTER TEAM

Merci à toutes celles et ceux qui ont contribué à ce numéro de l'infolettre. Bonne continuation de vos recherches !

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Keep up your good work!

—David Szanto

