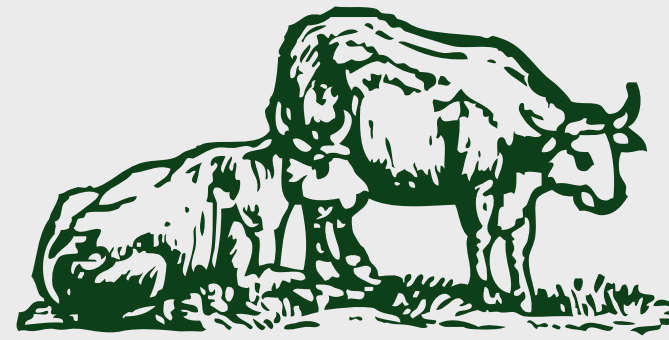




TACKLING FOOD INSECURITY

THROUGH LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

PRESENTATION BY ANDREA KOBETIC



This module is intended to give you a broad understanding of how Canadian industry and politics deals with the issue of food insecurity.

If any of the topics discussed pique your interest and you would like to explore them more thoroughly, you can refer to the number in the top right-hand corner that corresponds with a journal article cited in the final 'References' slide. There is a lot of interesting and useful information in these articles that is not presented here for the sake of concision.

Happy learning!

According to Khoury et al. (2014), “As a global trend, national per capita food supplies from both plant and animal sources consistently increased over the past 50 years for all variables, with animal foods becoming increasingly important in contribution to protein and oil crops dominating fat food supplies.”

So if the resource (food) itself has increased, the inequality that drives food insecurity seems to be a question of systemic failure of distribution/access.



A notable global food trend is the homogenization of food.


Not only has food become more calorically (energy) dense, but 'global foods' have become dependent on the success of 'global crops'.

This is a highly political phenomenon since it refers to a strong link between the countries of the world that exists on multiple planes (e.g., health, economy, culture, etc.).

Further, this dependence on global crops also describes the importance of Canada maintaining strong international ties with countries who produce these crops (political dependence).




The health effects of 'global foods' are truly concerning: their correlation with non-communicable diseases is well-established.



Apart from the general human preference for these calorically dense, nutritionally deficient foods which is associated with diseases such as diabetes, food-insecure groups often depend on these unhealthy foods.

Equal access to nutritional foods is a well-known issue, but its urgency is not always emphasized adequately.

It is not only that nutritional foods must be made more accessible to a greater percentage of the population, but also a question of increasing the diversity of 'global crops'.






For Khoury et al. (2014), “From a genetic diversity perspective, increasing homogeneity in global food supplies highlights the importance of the breeding and cultivation of varieties of these crops with diverse genetic backgrounds”

As such, it is not only diversification of global crops that is necessary to sustain production or to achieve food insecurity objectives, but also genetic diversity within the current global crops.

This becomes especially concerning in light of evidence that the homogenization of global food supplies does not seem to be decreasing.



The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is an important resource on global food insecurity.



PAUSE



Click on the icon above and to the right or copy-paste the URL below, and take a few minutes to explore the FAO Food Insecurity page on your own.

<https://www.fao.org/hunger/en>

A solution to food insecurity that is often proposed is greater dependence on (accompanied by greater investment in) local food systems.





However, according to Martin & Andrée (2012),

“a key obstacle to the buy local challenge [is] the transnational corporations who are contracted by many public institutions in North America to provide foodservices. The institutional food sector is dominated by three large transnational foodservice corporations: Compass Group, ARAMARK, and Sodexo. It is their centralized supply chains and management structures, along with a dependence on prepared and “ready to eat” food, that are barriers to local food procurement.”

The researchers' description seems to reflect the particular dynamics of the Western world, and they employ examples taken from the Canadian context (e.g., the University of Toronto's participation in the Stop Killer Coke campaign).

Further, they describe the multiplanar effort toward allocating government resources toward the development of local food systems that is underway in academic, social movement, and food labour circles.

The execution of this effort on multiple levels (planes) increases its possibility of reaching policymakers and changing discourse around local food systems such that policy change may occur.




There is a strong correlation between the food service industry and public policy objectives which, at times, support one another and push them further together than just coexistence in the same space.

An important example of the policy-food industry nexus is the correlation of increasingly Western diets among the world with globalization and trade liberalization.

For this phenomenon to have been able to occur, public infrastructure (e.g., transport systems) had to have been sufficiently developed.

As such, investment in the food industry was often regarded as an investment in national development.



Speaking again to the issue of crop diversity, while from a consumer perspective there may be greater diversity of products available locally, the global trend reflects a decrease in 'global crop' diversity.

It is important to remember that global trends and changes are not necessarily experienced in our day to day lives.

For instance, in the case of climate change, although the Earth has warmed at a faster rate since the Industrial Revolution this has not been experienced equally across the globe.





Another important contributing factor to food insecurity is food waste.

Food waste occurs in four levels of the food supply chain: production, manufacturing/processing, retail, and household.

It is especially difficult to collect accurate data regarding food waste at the household level.

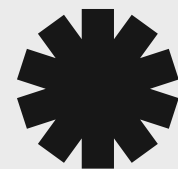
Take a moment to reflect on your own.



**HOW MIGHT FOOD WASTE BE
MINIMISED AT THE PRODUCTION
LEVEL?**

**WHAT KIND OF POLICY
(INCENTIVISED, REGULATORY)
DO YOU THINK WOULD BE MOST
EFFECTIVE AT THIS LEVEL?**

PAUSE



Shifting to the consumer level, most consumers are completely unaware of the three aforementioned leading transnational food enterprises (Compass Group, ARAMARK, Sodexo).

While consumer-oriented movements such as the sustainable 'Buy Local' movement intend to effect change by building collective consumer awareness, these companies' marketing strategies greatly complicate this matter.

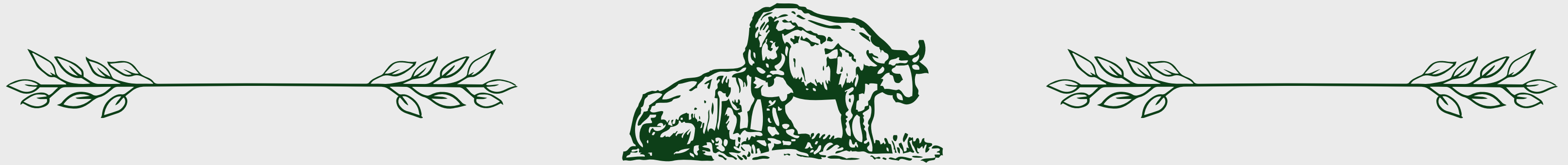


As such, it is difficult to determine which level would be most effective in initiating sustainability and food insecurity efforts.

Certainly, the formal acknowledgement and resources that are associated with the governmental level would make policy a powerful tool for these movements.

However, this involves a long fight that may not amount to anything (given the system's resistance toward policy change).

In the meantime, by focusing on building up local food systems and guiding food insecurity rhetoric, producers can effect both an immediate and longterm impact.



You've reached the end of Module 5!

We will continue with our discussion by turning our attention to Indigenous agriculture in Module 6.

Please make sure to complete the Module 5 Quiz before moving forward in your learning.

Thank you!



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