FOOD SECURE CANADA
SÉCURITÉ ALIMENTAIRE CANADA

Where agriculture, environment, health, food and justice intersect
Le pont entre l'agriculture, l'environnement, la santé, les aliments et la justice

DISCUSSION PAPER 10

Food Democracy and Governance

Food Secure Canada is a national membership-based organization committed to fighting against hunger and to building a healthy, fair, and ecological food system. Our vision is encapsulated in *Resetting the Table: A People's Food Policy for Canada.*

FOOD SECURE CANADA DISCUSSION PAPERS

The People's Food Policy is based on ten detailed discussion papers. These discussion papers were generated through 350 Kitchen Table Talks, hundreds of policy submissions, dozens of tele-conferences, online discussions, and three national conferences. Over 3500 people participated in their development. These papers cover a breadth of issues and include detailed policy recommendations for rebuilding Canada's broken food system. Unlike *Resetting the Table,* they are not consensus documents and not every member of Food Secure Canada has signed on to every recommendation in them. Rather, they are living documents, intended to inform debate, stimulate discussion and build greater understanding of our food system and how it should be—and must be—fixed.

1) Indigenous Food Sovereignty
2) Food Sovereignty in Rural and Remote Communities
3) Access to Food in Urban Communities
4) Agriculture, Infrastructure and Livelihoods
5) Sustainable Fisheries and Livelihoods for Fishers
6) Environment and Agriculture
7) Science and Technology for Food and Agriculture
8) International Food Policy
9) Healthy and Safe Food for All
10) Food Democracy and Governance

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Food Democracy and Governance

Towards a People's Food Policy Process

Policy without a strategy is a wish list without a plan.
Roberts 2010: 196

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discussion paper is focused on the need for *democratic food governance*. Our everyday lives are intertwined with the food system. An inclusive and enabling policy environment requires institutions and organizing structures that facilitate public participation in shaping policies, norms, values, and rules. Moreover, a democratic society must be able to guarantee the meaningful and active involvement of all individuals, groups, and institutions in decision-making processes. In other words, people must have a say in how their food is produced and where it comes from, and they must have an active role in realizing the principles of food sovereignty.

This final discussion paper presents a framework and a set of strategies for establishing open, democratic, and transparent governance processes that lay the foundation for the policies outlined in the previous discussion papers with the overall goal of building a sustainable, healthy and just food system. These strategies include:

- Establishing councils/roundtables to work with governments at all levels (municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal) on food policies to achieve social justice, ecological resilience, and sustainable livelihoods in Canada's food system. They must include representation from all food-related sectors, including health promotion, education, housing, environment, community governed food programs, farmers, and retailers, and must ensure full participation of dispossessed and marginalized people. Each council must be able to organize itself

autonomously and establish its own working structures in line with the values and principles of accessibility, transparency, inclusivity, and equality.

- All food policy needs to be grounded in an integrated analysis of the entire food system. This is to ensure that solutions address root causes and avoid creating further challenges due to silo-based thinking.

- Initiatives contributing to a diverse economy must be recognized and supported, including new economic approaches that value ethics of interdependence, sustainability, health, and justice over those of profit and individualism.

- Knowledge based on community experience as well as scientific knowledge must be included in public education, training, and capacity building efforts. The policy environment and broader public knowledge base can only be strengthened and improved by taking into account the contributions of urban and rural farmers, fisher folk, hunters and gatherers, gardeners, and Indigenous peoples.

INTRODUCTION

This final discussion paper presents a framework and a set of strategies for establishing open, democratic, and transparent governance processes that lay the foundation for the policies outlined in the previous discussion papers with the overall goal of building a sustainable, healthy and just food system.

It takes the policy recommendations identified in the earlier discussion papers and considers how these can be put into action. It summarises the vision for a *People's Food Policy Process,* considers what is needed to move toward this vision, and presents current examples of how existing initiatives across Canada are already moving in this direction. In other words, it helps to move us from the People's Food Policy Project to a *People's Food Policy Process*.

Before moving forward, we clarify a few key terms used in this paper: government, governance, framework, and strategy.

Government can be broadly defined as the agencies involved in the act and process of controlling and administering public policy. Governments are organs of the state, the broader institution that seeks legitimate authority and power in society.

Governance, according to the UNDP (1997), "comprises the mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, meet their obligations, and mediate their differences." Governance also "implies

more indirect, softer forms of direction from the state than command and control, and reflects collaborative outcomes, involving a wide range of actors often from the private sector, as well as from government bureaucracy, as much as deliberate interventions by the state" (Lang et. al. 2009: 75). Food governance involves the regulatory mechanisms relating broadly to agriculture, food, ecosystems, and health that are politically organized and sanctioned within society and which produce policies regulations and norms at the municipal, provincial, national and international level with important local implications. Thus, for our purposes, governance can be understood as the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences, and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions, and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations, and firms.

A **framework** is a set of principles and a long-term vision that give direction to the planning and development of a process. Our framework is grounded in a vision for a sustainable, healthy, and just food system that provides adequate, healthy, acceptable, and safe food for all: a food system that respects ecosystems as well as the people, animals, and organisms that depend on them. The framework is the big picture: it is the way that we envision what we are working towards.

A **strategy** is a long-term action plan to achieve our vision (as outlined in our framework). It is the scope and the direction that the *People's Food Policy Process* will take. In this case, the goal is not only to (re)imagine but also to (re)build institutional structures in a democratic and inclusive way so that the policies outlined in the previous discussion papers can be implemented. Therefore, the strategies are the actions, the ways of organizing, and the steps we can take towards the realisation of these policies.

This paper is focused on the need for *democratic food governance*. Our everyday lives are intertwined with the food system. An inclusive and enabling policy environment requires institutions and organizing structures that facilitate public participation in shaping policies, norms, values, and rules. Moreover, a democratic society must be able to guarantee the meaningful and active involvement of all individuals, groups, and institutions in decision-making processes. In other words, people must have a say in how their food is produced and where it comes from, and they must have an active role in realizing the principles of food sovereignty.

In pursuit of the vision of a sustainable, healthy, and just food system, we must:

- **Acknowledge current inequalities and barriers to participation** as well as the potential mechanisms already in place to overcome these barriers. This requires the creation of decision-making structures at all levels and across all sectors, regions, cultures, and ages. This will enable meaningful involvement in negotiating and defining more appropriate food systems.

- **Understand the current decision-making patterns and processes** in Canada that affect food and agriculture. This means understanding that decision-making is mediated by municipal, regional, provincial, federal, international, and private incentive structures, regulations as well as public action and pressure. It also necessitates awareness of the "silos," or divisions of food issues, within governmental ministries, departments, and authorities as well as within social movements.

- **Realize that food-democracy cannot be achieved without the democratization of all institutions.** This means recognizing that the food system as a whole is related to other social, economic, and political structures and institutions in any society; changes in the food system alone cannot be achieved without changes in other institutions and structures. Food democracy cannot be possible without democratization in all sectors, institutions, and structures of the society, such as health, education, housing, finance, transportation, social services, etc.

- Be aware of the **role of international and global decision-making structures** and their impact on our food systems (for example, the World Trade Organization, Codex Alimentarius).

- **Recognise the interdependence of relationships that make up our food system**. A food system is an interactive, interdependent web of relationships – systems within systems. The food web metaphor is useful for understanding this complexity: when one strand of the web is weakened or neglected the entire web is in turn weakened, but when all parts of the web work together the strength of the web increases. Similarly, within food systems, all aspects of the system are interconnected and interrelated to each other. For example, when soil nutrients are depleted, plants suffer. When indigenous plants are cleared from an area, the wildlife tends to leave as well, changing the ecological balance and affecting foods that communities may consume. The tension of the food web is maintained through various social norms, ecological realities, and institutionalised relations of ruling (laws, regulations, policies). It is through these tensions that food becomes politicized: the organization of food systems impacts who eats and who does not, as well as what we eat and do not eat (Duncan and Medina 2010: 12-13). In our framework and strategy, a sustainable and resilient web involves strengthening the web as well as weaving new strands. These strands will connect production to consumption to waste management to ecosystems to local communities to global communities to virtual communities and to rural and urban environments.

To be clear, this does not mean that every individual or organization must take on each of these things in order to move forward. Instead, this list highlights the need for strong

knowledge, experience, and communication networks wherein individuals or groups of people undertake this work and analysis and share it with others in an accessible and meaningful way.

Summary

In order to move a *People's Food Policy Process* forward, we must:

➢ Acknowledge the barriers to participation and the mechanisms to overcome them;
➢ Understand municipal, provincial, and federal decision-making processes;
➢ Realize that food democracy cannot be achieved without the democratization of all institutions;
➢ Be aware of international and global decision-making processes and their impacts;
➢ Recognize the food system as an interactive, interdependent web of relationships.

THE BIG PICTURE: A FRAMEWORK FOR A PEOPLE'S FOOD POLICY PROCESS

Through country-wide kitchen-table talks, policy meetings, animated sessions, conferences, online discussions, and working groups, the People's Food Policy Project has come up with a vision, articulated through policy recommendations, for a food system that respects all people, animals, and organisms on land and in water. This vision is more than a shift in the existing system. It is a (re)imagining and (re)construction of our food system from the ground up. To call this a (re)imagination is to recognize these ideas are not completely new but rooted in experience-based knowledge, formal scientific expertise, creativity and the initiative of people willing to experiment with new approaches.

What were once referred to as "alternative food initiatives" are no longer operating only on the margins of a monolithic industrial or corporate food system. Many of these initiatives have been successful at creating new linkages within the food system as well as broader communities. They are located at both a grassroots level and with/in governments, businesses, and academic institutions. These initiatives occupy a muddy and contested terrain – an inside/outside game – addressing policy change from below and from within (Wekerle 2004; Koc et. al. 2008). This strategic and patient work has moved food system change beyond a polarized "mainstream-alternative" framing.

Moving forward, the framework for a *People's Food Policy Process* must be understood as long-term and evolving. Our approach to food governance goes far beyond simply a shopping list of possibilities; it is instead an interactive, interconnected, and participatory process that models the kind of food system we are attempting to build. Drawing on the words of Paulo Freire, this process reminds us that "we make the road by walking."

Our framework demands a different kind of dialogue: one that is multi-jurisdictional and multi-sectoral, that crosses geographies, and is grounded in local places. Equitable and just policies must begin from a systems perspective, which reflects on and garners strength and structure from interconnections across the food system. It follows then that our strategies must engage Canada's broad geographic and cultural differences, build alliances and allegiances, and develop inclusive, transparent, and participatory spaces that can empower communities, facilitate discussion, negotiation, and collective decision-making.

In reconstructing a sustainable, healthy, and just food system, we must embed food systems thinking into our governance structures and way of communication as well as into every aspect of human and ecological life. This means using food system initiatives as a way to support Canada's ongoing efforts to improve the lives of all of its residents.

Central to our framework is the idea of "multi-functionality." This is described in the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD*)* report which recognizes agriculture as "a multi-output activity producing not only commodities (food, feed, fibres, agro-fuels, medicinal products, and ornamentals), but also non-commodity outputs such as environmental services, landscape amenities and cultural heritages" (McIntyre et. al. 2009: 4). This approach recognizes the multiple roles that food and agriculture can play in improving the human condition, such as "reducing hunger and poverty, strengthening rural communities, improving human health, and contributing to equitable and sustainable social, environmental, and economic development. It provides a solid foundation for an integrated policy framework that links economic viability and health along the food chain (Baker et. al. 2010: 14).

Our framework includes trust, respect, and the recognition of fundamental and internationally recognized rights including those laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Declaration the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women. But more than simply a right, our framework understands food as a public good – as contributing to social solidarity, common identity, and a responsibility to care for others.

Land and ecological systems are not only economic assets but are deeply connected to culture, identity, tradition, and history. Therefore, there is a need to address them in an

integrated way based on the specific geographical context through negotiation, dialogue, and participatory approaches. This means we must incorporate inclusive, transparent, and democratic mechanisms to protect the commons – non-commodified basic life-goods that populations share in common, such as seeds, agricultural lands, oceans and water, air, urban green spaces – as well as the individuals and communities who take responsibility for and depend on them for their health and livelihood.

Summary

Central to a Framework for a *People's Food Policy Process* are principles that:

➤ Integrate systems thinking;
➤ Engage a broad spectrum of geographic, cultural, and sectoral perspectives and differences;
➤ Recognize the multifunctionality of food and agriculture for rebuilding infrastructure and for improving the human condition and ecological systems;
➤ Establish governance structures that are inclusive, accessible, participatory, and transparent;
➤ Recognize the important roles that food and agriculture play in identity, culture, tradition, and history;
➤ Recognize fundamental rights and responsibilities.

STRATEGIES FOR A NEW CANADIAN FOOD SYSTEM: HOW DO WE GET THERE?

Given the diversity of needs, wants, and objectives put forward in the previous discussion papers and the constantly changing nature of society and the food system, this discussion paper does not aim to propose a concrete strategy for policy implementation. Instead, in this section, we present some key examples of approaches that have the potential to move us towards more democratic organizational and governance systems. These approaches correspond with our framework and are each supported by examples of existing initiatives rooted in place and functioning in various ways. The aim of presenting a strategy for the *People's Food Policy Process* in this format is to provide realistic and achievable short-term opportunities to move our framework forward towards our long-term vision.

Developing a strategy involves large-scale popular events as well as incremental changes that take us in the right direction. We must build new forms of social empowerment in the niches and margins of society - often where they do not seem to pose any immediate threat

to dominant systems. Such strategies are deeply embedded in civil society and often fall below the radar of radical critiques. Through making these kinds of on-the-ground changes that develop and grow organically, we can also begin to see the kinds of further changes that need to take place.

Referring to initiatives that embody such strategies, Erik Olin Wright (2009) explains, "what they have in common is the idea of building alternative institutions and deliberately fostering new forms of social relations that embody emancipatory ideals and that are created primarily through direct action of one sort or another rather than through the state" (230). In this respect, food can be an important starting point – but it is just a starting point. We must avoid "food determinism" where food becomes an end in and of itself. Transforming the food system demands addressing broader social, political, and economic systems that all contribute to the current moment.

Such initiatives already exist and are changing the way people grow, raise, catch, harvest, process, package, access, eat, and understand food. These approaches are actions that advance the vision outlined in our framework. Here we introduce a set of practical and overlapping approaches that will allow our (re)imagined food system to take shape. Each of these approaches, in part, represents the strategy for democratic food governance as a process towards a sustainable, healthy, and just food system.

➢ Embed Systems Thinking into All Aspects of Individual and Community Life

Description:
Food and agriculture policies are fragmented and "siloed" among government jurisdictions and social sectors in ways that often work in opposition to systems-based approaches. Consequently, many solutions to food system problems neglect or ignore the root causes as well as further negative outcomes that may be incurred. A way to overcome these challenges, without detracting from the current experience and the important focus on specific areas, is to embed food systems thinking in all decision making.

Example: Waterloo's Healthy Community Food System
An example of food systems analysis can be found in the cross-fertilizing approach of the Region of Waterloo's Healthy Community Food System. This has included linking local farmers to local consumers, cultivating partnerships to ensure access to healthy food, the creation of a food systems network, and "A Healthy Community Food System Plan." Outcomes include provisions to protect agricultural lands to ensure farm viability and encourage neighbourhood markets and community gardens in urban areas. The Region also works in schools, in workplaces, and with a myriad of community partners to ensure access to healthy food. *For more information see:* www.wrfoodsystem.ca

➢ **Increase Collaboration across Government Jurisdictions, Social Sectors and Geographies**

Description:
In order to ensure that the diversity of opinions, approaches, cultures, and even tastes are informing the organization of our food system, we need collaboration. This collaboration will take time and must be preceded by or developed with the building of strong networks based on respect and trust. The benefits of collaboration are well known and need not be repeated here, but it is useful to reiterate that collaboration leads to the sharing of ideas and resources, the advancement of discussions, time saving by not having to "reinvent the wheel," and the sharing of instructive practices.

Example: Food Policy Councils
According to Wayne Roberts, food policy councils serve two central functions: "councils can break free from narrow specialties to champion and embrace cross-disciplinary and cross-departmental collaboration; and, they can engage people as citizens from diverse backgrounds, rather than as representatives of varying special interest groups, and thereby uphold the goal of serving the public interest. Without such institutions mandated to engage governments in multi-departmental collaboration and engage citizens in deliberative democracy, sustainability efforts won't get out of the starting gate" (Roberts 2010: 174). Roberts also writes that food policy councils empower people and "help them work with new problem-solving skills, and thereby transform the everyday functioning of governments – all to the benefit of sustainability in the food system" (173). *For more information see: The Toronto Food Policy Council (www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm); and the Vancouver Food Policy Council (www.vancouverfoodpolicycouncil.ca)*

➢ **Develop and Implement Multi-Level Organisational Structures**

Description:
Central to our framework is fostering a dialogue that is multi-jurisdictional, multi-sectoral, crosses geographies, and is grounded in local places. This type of dialogue conforms to what is known as "deliberative democracy," which calls for policy networks to be extended to include all those governed. A deliberative democracy demands that all those affected by a decision should have the opportunity to participate in its development. It further necessitates that all those involved are open and willing to change their mind, otherwise the process risks being overwhelmed with interest group politics instead of honest participatory deliberation. Given that there are often barriers to participation and that a diversity of perspectives must be included in such dialogues, it is important to develop organizational mechanisms that ensure democratic and meaningful involvement. Building on the above approach, it is vital to focus on methods and processes to increase collaboration across government jurisdictions, social sectors, and geographies. This

strategy is also fundamental for linking local collaboration efforts to ensure groups do not work in isolation from one another but rather as strong, coordinated networks.

Example: Civil Society Mechanism for the Committee on World Food Security
The Committee for World Food Security (CFS) is the United Nations' forum for reviewing and following up on policies concerning world food security. Recently, the reform process of the CFS gave civil society organizations, NGOs, and their networks the possibility of autonomously developing a mechanism to coordinate their participation in the Committee. The challenge was to develop an organizational structure that could allow for engagement of all the civil society and NGO interests around the globe while remaining sensitive to local and sectoral issues and giving priority to those most affected by food insecurity. The resulting Civil Society Mechanism establishes sub-regions and constituencies with elected focal points that act as communicators between the sub-regions and constituencies and a coordinating committee. Each sub-region and each constituency has the right to organise in the manner of their choosing, respecting the wide diversity of perspectives and approaches.
For more information see: Proposal for an International Food Security and Nutrition civil society mechanism for relations with CFS www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/019/k9215e.pdf and CSO4CFS on the Civil Society Mechanism http://cso4cfs.org/who-we-are/civil-society-mechanism

➢ **Recognize and Support Initiatives Contributing to a Diverse Economy**

Description:
Moving beyond a binary "alternative-mainstream" framework that subsumes all forms of social interaction within a "business as usual" economic approach, a diverse economy refers to a way of representing the different economic relations that make up our world. In other words, as Sally Miller (2008) says, "food is good to think (about economics) with" (47). Developed originally through the work of JK Gibson Graham, we can draw on this diversity of relations to think creatively about the way that new economies are being built that value ethics of interdependence, sustainability, health, and justice over those of profit and individualism. With respect to food, we can look to initiatives that draw on different forms of labour (paid and unpaid) and different types of transactions (market and non-market) and in doing so "contribute to ethical economies in which interdependencies between people and the environment are centre stage" (Cameron and Gordeon 2010, see also Blay-Palmer 2006; Miller 2008).

Example: Food Cooperatives
Beyond creating better markets for producers and providing higher quality food for retailers, the cooperative model fundamentally changes the governance structures for all those involved. There are now more than 200 co-operatives across Canada involved in the production, marketing, retail, processing, and distribution of local food. One example is the

Elmira Produce Auction Cooperative, owned and operated by members of the Mennonite farming community. As Canada's first wholesale produce auction, the initiative supports local growers by creating a new and different market for regional produce. The goal is to increase family farm revenue by encouraging local farms to diversify into crops such as seasonal fruit and produce. The auctions take place multiple times per week and preference is given to produce grown within a 75km radius; however, if there is space the management will give the approval for producers that have travelled greater distances. The co-operative has experienced a 600 percent increase in sales since it began in 2004.
For more information see: www.coopscanada.coop/en/orphan/Local-food-Co-ops

➢ Include Scientific and Experience-Based Knowledge in Public Education, Training and Capacity Building

Description:
In recent years, changes in funding structures have directed universities towards research partnerships with the private sector, yet there are also examples of effective community-academic partnerships where societal good remains a central priority. An environment that fosters a sustainable, healthy, and just food system requires the active involvement of universities, colleges, school boards, as well as the experience and knowledge of food producers – all contributing to public education, training, and capacity building. The policy environment and knowledge base can only be strengthened and improved by taking into account the contributions of urban and rural farmers, fisher folk, hunters and gatherers, gardeners, and Indigenous Peoples. Their experience and knowledge are critical to understanding how agricultural practices and ecological sustainability can be mutually reinforcing. Moreover, academics can provide in-depth analysis and research in specific areas and should be encouraged, through the university and funding systems, to engage in community research collaborations and projects.

Example: Activating Change Together (ACT) for Community Food Security
Many long-standing and well-respected community, university, and government partnerships have been working together for many years to understand and address the root causes of food insecurity in Nova Scotia. A new project, begun in February 2010, builds on this collaborative work. Activating Change Together (ACT) for Community Food Security is a 5-year participatory action research project that aims to enhance Community Food Security for all Nova Scotians. Rooted in lived experiences, real community needs and innovative solutions, it amplifies and broadens conversation, research, and action to strengthen capacity for policy change. This Community University Research Alliance (CURA) project aims to help further understand the components, determinants, and promising practices of Community Food Security and strengthen capacity for policy change to achieve it.
For more information see: www.foodsecurityresearchcentre.ca/cura

➢ **Work to shift Incentive Structures**

Description:
For over two generations Canada's high-input and energy intensive farming systems, along with the mass production of food available at low prices, have contributed to problems of "negative externalities." These negative externalities include an unhealthy, or "obesogenic," food environment, and high levels of pollution and emissions contributing to climate change and global warming. Current incentive structures encourage these negative externalities through subsidizing large-scale, industrial farming systems as well as the overproduction of calorie-dense, nutrient-poor products. Changing incentive structures to support "positive externalities," or consequences that benefit both human society and natural ecosystems, are an important part of changing the way the food system is organized in order to take advantage of the already existing interconnections between human and natural systems that make up the food system.

Example: Alternative Land Use Services
Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) is an initiative that provides incentives to farmers and ranchers to manage their land sustainably. Respecting the ecological services farmers provide, ALUS recognizes the value of conserving and restoring ecosystems while respecting and rewarding the important role that farmers play in ecological management. By paying farmers a fair price for the environmental benefits produced on farms through conservation and restoration of ecosystems, farmers are given incentives to act as stewards of the land. According to the Norfolk ALUS initiative, the concept is a "fee for service" proposal that rewards farmers and ranchers for the role they play in creating healthy, sustainable landscapes vital to healthy human populations. ALUS sees the production of agricultural crops and livestock as compatible with the production of environmental benefits and empowers farmers and ranchers to utilize land management practices that create productive agricultural systems and sustainable landscapes. Projects that produce environmental benefits on farms include the planting of native vegetative cover, the creation and enhancement of wetlands, establishment of native pollinating plants to increase habitat for pollinator species, creation of riparian buffers and vegetative zones, reforestation, and the establishment of nesting structures for waterfowl.
For more information see: Norfolk ALUS www.norfolkalus.com; and PEI ALUS
www.gov.pe.ca/growingforward/index.php3?number=1024407&lang=E

➢ **Foster Multi-Scale Communities of Food Practice**

Description:
Communities of food practice are made up of networks of individuals, organizations, and institutions that share knowledge and experiences related to the food system. These networks exist at all levels, from the municipality to the province to transnational alliances. By interacting with government bodies and organizations from multiple sectors,

communities of food practice offer a unique opportunity to draw on and develop strategic resources, as well as "to experiment and learn from others' experiments, to the diverse individuals who move through them, usually leaving behind new projects and ideas" (Freidmann 2007: 395).

Example: The Development of Local Food Plus (LFP)
LFP is a national non-profit organization that acts as a third-party certification body to verify products from farmers, processors, and distributors. It promotes certified products and ensures their availability to consumers and commercial buyers. Certification criteria include source (food grown or produced within the province) as well as environmental and social sustainability criteria that attempt to balance social justice, ecological sustainability, and community health. LFP was developed in 2004 from within Toronto's community of food practice. A government research grant at the University of Toronto involved a senior seminar class at the university, the university's food services contractors, non-profit and municipal organizations, as well as a number of individuals active from multiple sectors.
For more information see: www.localfoodplus.ca

Summary

Strategies to forward the *People's Food Policy Process* include

➢ Embed systems thinking into all aspects of individual and community life;
➢ Increase collaboration across government jurisdictions, social sectors, and geographies;
➢ Develop and implement multi-level organizational structures;
➢ Recognize and support initiatives contributing to a diverse economy;
➢ Include experience-based and scientific knowledge in public education, training, and capacity building;
➢ Work to shift incentive structures;
➢ Foster multi-scale communities of food practice.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

To implement the strategies discussed in this paper, we conclude by putting forward the following priority recommendations:

1. Establish councils/roundtables to work with governments at all levels (municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal) on food policies to achieve social justice, ecological resilience, and sustainable livelihoods in Canada's food system. They must include representation from all food-related sectors, including health

promotion, education, housing, environment, community-governed food programs, farmers, and retailers, and must ensure full participation of dispossessed and marginalized people. Each council must be able to organize itself autonomously and establish its own working structures in line with the values and principles of accessibility, transparency, inclusivity, and equality. The Committee on World Food Security of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization offers a clear model for inclusiveness. The Committee ensures participation of the full range of people concerned about and affected by hunger and food insecurity, while also balancing gender, regions, constituencies, and sectors.

2. All food policy needs to be grounded in an integrated analysis of the entire food system. This is to ensure that solutions address root causes and avoid creating further challenges due to silo-based thinking.

3. Initiatives contributing to a diverse economy must be recognized and supported, including new economic approaches that value ethics of interdependence, sustainability, health, and justice over those of profit and individualism.

4. Knowledge based on community experience as well as scientific knowledge must be included in public education, training, and capacity building efforts. The policy environment and broader public knowledge base can only be strengthened and improved by taking into account the contributions of urban and rural farmers, fisher folk, hunters and gatherers, gardeners, and Indigenous peoples.

Policy requires both a strong vision and a strategy. In this paper, we have outlined our vision through a framework and provided a set of strategies and recommendations that will lay the foundation for the implementation of policies presented in the previous discussion papers.

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Food Secure Canada is based on three interlocking commitments:

Zero Hunger: All people at all times must be able to acquire, in a dignified manner, adequate quantity, and quality of culturally and personally acceptable food. This is essential to the health of our population, and requires cooperation among many different sectors, including housing, social policy, transportation, agriculture, education, and community, cultural, voluntary and charitable groups, and businesses.

A Sustainable Food System: Food in Canada must be produced, harvested (including fishing and other wild food harvest), processed, distributed and consumed in a manner which maintains and enhances the quality of land, air and water for future generations, and in which people are able to earn a living wage in a safe and healthy working environment by harvesting, growing, producing, processing, handling, retailing and serving food.

Healthy and Safe Food: Safe and nourishing foods must be readily at hand (and less nourishing ones restricted); food (including wild foods) must not be contaminated with pathogens or industrial chemicals; and no novel food can be allowed to enter the environment or food chain without rigorous independent testing and the existence of an on-going tracking and surveillance system, to ensure its safety for human consumption.