Dear fellow CAFS members,

I can’t believe the annual assembly is nearly here. I hope all of you have had a productive and dynamic semester. The CAFS executive and conference planning committees have been busy planning and organizing this year’s conference. I am looking forward to our Annual General Meeting, learning about all of the diverse and exciting work of our members, and welcoming new board members. I want to send a special thanks to the conference organising committees and leads for those committees: Margaret Bancerz, Eric Cheng, Kathleen Kevany, and Fiona Yeudall.

The CAFS executive is busy looking for members to be involved in conference planning for our 2018 Assembly to be held in Regina in conjunction with the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities. Planning committee members from across the country are incredibly valuable to this process. There is still plenty of room to get involved if that is something you would like to do. Please email me at rschiff@lakeheadu.ca if you’d like to contribute.

I want to send distinct thanks to outgoing board member Mary Beckie for her dedication and support for CAFS over the past several years.

This newsletter is a reminder to me of the exciting and innovative work of the CAFS membership. It is full of information about publications, research, events and other news. The newsletter begins with announcements and descriptions of numerous recent and upcoming books and journal articles in French and English published by CAFS members. There are summaries of several ongoing and completed food studies research projects and workshops. There are announcements of events and a call for participants in a campus food report card project. There is a job announcement from Food Secure Canada for a Communications Coordinator position. The newsletter also includes a call for papers for a special issue in Canadian Food Studies on National Food Policy.

Once again I want to extend an invitation to all members to contact me if you have ideas about how CAFS can better serve the Canadian Food Studies community and if you want to make a contribution to the work we take on. I invite you to read and share this newsletter about interesting commentary and announcements from CAFS members with colleagues.

Rebecca Schiff
CAFS President
Lakehead University
Recent & Upcoming Books / Livres parus récemment ou à paraître


L’industrie du cidre a connu au cours des dix dernières années, en Europe, aux États-Unis, en Australie et au Canada, une forte croissance. Avec les développements récents, mais surtout sans précédent, du portefeuille de produits, des marchés de consommation et des reconnaissances marchandes, institutionnelles et internationales pour ses cidres, la filière cidricole québécoise n’est pas en reste.

Explorant une quinzaine de champs disciplinaires, le présent ouvrage traite d’autant de domaines de transformation des cidres au Québec. D’où viennent et où vont les cidres ? Quelles sont les évolutions possibles du portefeuille de produits et de la filière du cidre ? Quelles sont les conditions qui permettent d’élaborer de «grands cidres québécois» ? Comment évaluer le potentiel cidricole des variétés de pommes ? Quelle est l’influence du terroir sur le développement des saveurs et la qualité des pommes à cidre ? Quelles sont les origines du cidre de glace ? Quel est le rôle essentiel de la microbiologie dans la fabrication du cidre de glace ? Quelles sont les catégories commerciales et psychologiques dans le positionnement du cidre de glace ? Quel est le cadre juridique du cidre de glace au Québec, au Canada et à l’international ?

Ce livre constitue un partage d’idées et de réflexions issues d’une large perspective qui devrait éclairer tout lecteur, qu’il soit chercheur, cidriculteur, consultant, étudiant, analyste des politiques publiques, sommelier, consommateur curieux ou passionné des cidres.


This book is directed to food studies scholars and aficionados of street food alike. Given that the topic scarcely receives mention in food studies, the necessity of this book becomes obvious.

The studies at hand address combinations of the social, economic, political, ethnic, and religious aspects of street food in globalized cities. None of the topics are groundbreaking; rather, all of them represent solidified fields of research. However, with the addition of the spatial focus on streets in urban centers, the book sheds light on a scantily studied research question.

The focus on the interrelations between global migration and the ubiquity of street food in global cities makes the articles of this volume unique. The authors share various social science backgrounds and an education in global studies and/or global history. Additionally, they lend to this project the geographic variety of their origins, which brings a more comprehensive view to the subject as a whole.
What did you eat for dinner today? Did you make your own cheese? Butcher your own pig? Collect your own eggs? Drink your own home-brewed beer? Shanty bread leavened with hops-yeast, venison and wild rice stew, gingerbread cake with maple sauce, and dandelion coffee – this was an ordinary backwoods meal in Victorian-era Canada. Originally published in 1855, Catharine Parr Traill’s classic The Female Emigrant’s Guide, with its admirable recipes, candid advice, and astute observations about local food sourcing, offers an intimate glimpse into the daily domestic and seasonal routines of settler life. This toolkit for historical cookery, redesigned and annotated for use in contemporary kitchens, provides readers with the resources to actively use and experiment with recipes from the original Guide. Containing modernized recipes, a measure—ment conversion chart, and an extensive glossary, this volume also includes discussions of cooking conventions, terms, techniques, and ingredients that contextualize the social attitudes, expectations, and challenges of Traill’s world and the emigrant experience.


We are excited to announce our forthcoming publication that reflects on nearly a decade of Nourishing Communities research network’s collaborations. Most of the authors are CAFS members. For more information, please contact irena.knezevic@carleton.ca

From the publisher: This edited volume builds on existing alternative food initiatives and food movements research to explore how a systems approach can bring about health and well-being through enhanced collaboration. Chapters describe the myriad ways community-driven actors work to foster food systems that are socially just, embed food in local economies, regenerate the environment and actively engage citizens. Drawing on case studies, interviews and Participatory Action Research projects, the editors share the stories behind community-driven efforts to develop sustainable food systems, and present a critical assessment of both the tensions and the achievements of these initiatives.
The volume is unique in its focus on approaches and methodologies that both support and recognize the value of community-based practices. Throughout the book the editors identify success stories, challenges and opportunities that link practitioner experience to critical debates in food studies, practice and policy. By making current practices visible to scholars, the volume speaks to people engaged in the co-creation of knowledge, and documents a crucial point in the evolution of a rapidly expanding and dynamic sustainable food systems movement.

Entrenched food insecurity, climate change induced crop failures, rural-urban migration, escalating rates of malnutrition related diseases, and aging farm populations are increasingly common obstacles for communities around the world. Merging private, public and civil society spheres, the book gives voice to actors from across the sustainable food system movement including small businesses, not-for-profits, eaters, farmers and government. Insights into the potential for market restructuring, knowledge sharing, planning and bridging civic-political divides come from across Canada, the United States and Mexico, making this a key resource for policy-makers, students, citizens, and practitioners.

Recent & Upcoming Journal Articles / Articles de revues


In this study, we explore the emergence and early development of small-scale commercial urban farming in metropolitan Vancouver, British Columbia. Commercial urban farming represents a grassroots entrepreneurial activity, spearheaded by individuals and groups, who combine the practices of growing and direct marketing fresh food products, in urban spaces for urban consumers.
Considered as part of the agricultural renaissance occurring in cities and an example of the incremental shift toward more place-based food systems, commercial urban farming transforms underutilized and unproductive land traditionally zoned for residential, commercial, or institutional use into intensive food-producing spaces. Those pioneering this activity reported many benefits, including high job satisfaction, increased health and wellness, and making positive contributions toward the environmental health of the planet. Despite these advantages, they also faced many challenges in moving this model forward, including a lack of land tenure, low financial return, and the challenge of earning a living solely from farming activities. We employed an ethnographic methodology to assess the practice, opportunities, challenges, and responses associated with this emergent model of urban food production and retailing. In capturing the lived experience of growers over a five-year period, we are also analyzing and understanding how and why the very first innovators trying to move this model forward in metropolitan Vancouver are negotiating and staking claim to new spaces in the city for intensive food production. We are also interested in why these early adopters were choosing to make their lives through pioneering small-scale commercial enterprises and systems, and creating and engaging in new forms of work connected with the local food economy.

Bedore, M. (Forthcoming). Socio-spatial Relations of Care in Community Food Project Patronage. Social & Cultural Geography.

In light of greater attention to the ethical dimensions of consumption and consumer behaviour in recent years, researchers are increasingly excavating the ethical bases of consumer engagement in various food procurement channels. Only a fairly narrow range of usual suspects has been the subject of study, however, including conventional grocery stores and community supported agriculture. This article considers the same question about community food projects; specifically, it explores the nature of customers’ involvement in, and perceived benefits from, a Good Food Box (GFB) programme in south-eastern Ontario, Canada. Using qualitative evidence from mail-in surveys and interviews, the paper draws from Foucault’s later work to consider the construction and maintenance of particular socio-spatial relations of care for both self and proximate others through food provisioning. As a predominantly self-caring act, GFB participation is motivated by frugality and physical health. When participants care for others through their patronage, prominent themes include helping less economically fortunate others, local farmers and family. The paper concludes by emphasizing the pervasiveness of care in consumerist activity and with outstanding questions about caring at a distance and the politics of educating consumer-subjects for ethical consciousness-raising.


Temporary farm labour migration schemes in Canada have been justified on the premise that they bolster food security for Canadians by addressing agricultural labour shortages, while tempering food insecurity in the Global South via remittances. Such appeals hinge on an ideology defining migrants as racialized outsiders to Canada. Drawing on qualitative interviews and participant observation in Mexico, Jamaica and Canada, we critically analyse how Canada’s Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program is tied to ideological claims about national food security and agrarianism, and how it purports to address migrant workers’ own food insecurity. We argue remittances only partially, temporarily mitigate food insecurity and fail to strengthen migrant food sovereignty. Data from our clinical encounters with farm workers illustrate structural barriers to healthy food access and negative health consequences. We propose an agenda for further research, along with policies to advance food security and food sovereignty for both migrants and residents of Canada.
Ontario Vegetable Greenhouse Value Chains: Value Creation with Robotics Technology
By: Rita Hansen Sterne

An engineering team at the University of Guelph has developed a robot to assist managers in vegetable greenhouses. Part of the GIGAS (Guelph Intelligent Greenhouse Automation System) project, this greenhouse robot can assist with scouting for diseases and pests and could assist growers with yield predictions.

In partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, management scholars have joined those in engineering to understand the implications for Ontario's greenhouse vegetable value chain from the imminent adoption of robots. The timing of this research is particularly important because of a variety of greenhouse industry challenges: increasing competition; high labour and utility costs; and, changes in policy in the industry’s largest export market that may threaten continued industry success.

Although the greenhouse robot was designed to assist with labour issues, the development of the robot also creates the possibility of producing a “tomato with a story”. This new, information-laden tomato could be produced untouched by human hands (think food safety) and could be picked and labelled with quality guarantees including how long the tomato was on the vine, the specific harvest time and date, the nutrient content, and growing methods used by the greenhouse.

Two phases make up this research:

1. The first phase of research involved an in-depth examination of the greenhouse vegetable value chain in Ontario. This phase identified key issues, challenges and opportunities, and stakeholders in the value chain. Researchers also assembled data that support the importance of the greenhouse vegetable value chain to Ontario’s economy and to consumers who are increasingly choosing to consume fresh, local, nutritious vegetables year-round.

2. The second phase of research involves the use of strategic management tools to examine the impact on the value chain of the robotics technology. Researchers are currently gathering data in interviews with growers, marketers and retailers that may suggest where and how additional value could be created with the production of the “tomato with a story”.

Preliminary results suggest the strategy a grower uses to compete may be important to understand when considering future value creation opportunities. The use of robots in the greenhouse of the future may help to generate new business models, new collaborations, and new markets for the industry; the results will have implications for policy.

Preliminary results of this research will be presented at the CAFS 12th Annual Assembly in late May 2017 at Ryerson University in a session titled “Global Food Value Chains” on May 30th. We welcome your perspectives about the “tomato with a story” at rsterne@uoguelph.ca or at the conference session.
New report card uses a systems approach to uncover strengths and failings in Canada’s food system
By: Amanda Di Battista


A new report card, created by researchers at three Ontario Universities, includes 61 indicators to take a comprehensive look at the sustainability of Canada’s food systems. “Food Counts: A Pan-Canadian Sustainable Food Systems Report Card,” brings together already existing measures of social, environmental, and economic well-being to help researchers, policy makers, and community members examine food systems at the national level. The report card uses a food sovereignty framework to reframe food as part of an integrated systems perspective in food policy discussions at the national level in Canada. According to Dr. Charles Levkoe, Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems at Lakehead University, “The Food Counts Report Card recognizes the need to include and integrate a broad range of indicators to understand the state of Canada’s food systems.” The report card presents a picture beyond narrow economic goals, instead measuring the cross-cutting, multi-sectoral dimensions needed to assess how sustainable Canadian food systems really are. It also highlights major gaps in available Pan-Canadian indicators to understand food systems in a holistic way.

In response to growing, nation-wide concern about how Canadian food systems are organized and governed, the report card represents a fundamentally different approach which engages the broad range of actors across Canada to determine how to build healthy, ecological, just, and culturally relevant food systems. “Developing sustainable food systems is complicated,” says Dr. Blay-Palmer, director of the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems at Wilfrid Laurier University. “We need to think about how our food is grown, what we eat and then how this impacts our health and local economies, and also how we can reduce food waste. The Food Counts Report Card helps us understand where we are doing well, where we can improve, and where we need more information.”

The Pan Canadian Food Systems Report Card, as one practical tool for reimagining Canadian food systems, acts as a benchmark, identifies gaps in data and where case studies can elaborate on successes and limitations, and informs policy making at all levels of government. “The Food Systems Report Card highlights the limitations of existing indicators and the need to reassess the way we approach and advocate for social justice, ecological regeneration, regional economies and active democratic engagement,” says Dr. Levkoe. “There is a lot more research needed to understand the path towards sustainable food futures, and this Report Card is a step in that direction.” The Pan Canadian Food Systems Report Card will be released to the public in May 2017 and will be available on www.fledgedresearch.ca. For more information, please contact Amanda Di Battista at the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, adibattista@wlu.ca.

New Report: Purchasing Power: 10 Lessons on Getting More Local, Sustainable, and Delicious Food in Schools, Hospitals and Campuses
By: Amanda Wilson

As part of the Nourish: The Future of Food in Healthcare initiative, Food Secure Canada and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation have released a joint report profiling the lessons learnt on how to shift institutional food purchasing to sustainability—from defining local, to leveraging contracts, to building food cultures, to policy change—and what the opportunities are for scaling this work. Download the report here.
Workshop Report - Ecological Farm Internships: Modes, Experiences and Justice
By: Charles Levkoe

Over the past decade, growing numbers of interns, apprentices and volunteers have been working on ecological farms across North America and Europe. Increasingly, farmers are looking to young people seeking hands-on farm experiences as a way to train the next generation of ecological producers and meet the labour demands of their operations. Interns often exchange their labour for room and board, a stipend and importantly, training in agroecological and/or organic production methods. This is a relatively new and potentially defining trend within the ecological farming sector with considerable significance for farm operators, interns and the broader food movement.

Recently, public attention has been focused on the ethics and legalities of internships across the economy, and throughout political offices and the non-profit sector. At the same, several legal cases around ecological farm internships have transpired in the US and in British Columbia as interns/workers have sought and received back-pay for their ‘unpaid’ or ‘underpaid’ work. This heightened public attention has thrown into question the viability, legality, and potentially the fairness of the exchanges taking place between farm hosts and aspiring farmers.

On October 13, 2017, a workshop was held in Toronto that brought together farmers, interns, food and agriculture activists, researchers and legal experts to participate in an interactive discussion about the opportunities and challenges associated with emergent forms of farm work and training. The goal was to assess the possible trajectories that the issue may take while examining what ‘just food labour’ might mean for interns, farm workers, farmers and for those advocating for socially just and ecologically sustainable agriculture and food systems. The final report from the workshop includes submissions adapted from the presentations that examine these themes from a series of different vantage points that cut across organizations, geographical spaces and positions in the food system.

The report is available at http://www.foodandlabour.ca/.

Updates from the Community-Academic Collaborative for Food Sovereignty Working Group
By: Amanda Wilson

The Community-Academic Collaborative for Food Sovereignty (CACFS) is a joint-collaboration between CFICE (Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement) and Food Secure Canada. Our main objective is to strengthen community-academic collaboration in the pursuit of a national food policy that builds a healthy, just and sustainable food system.

This April marks the end of the first year of Phase Two of the CFICE project. Phase Two is about putting the key learnings and insights from the twelve demonstration projects (reported on in previous issues of the CAFS Newsletter) into action. The importance of brokering was a reoccurring theme that emerged out of Phase One– having the tools, resources and mechanisms that help to create, support and sustain partnerships and relationships between community and academic partners. As a result, the focus of our work has been on designing and experimenting with different brokering techniques and strategies as a means to enhance civil society engagement in national food policy processes.

One area of focus thus far has been developing a community-academic peer review process to determine the key considerations in developing a process of peer review that prioritizes both community and academic perspectives. We are exploring how we can use the review process as an opportunity to build relationships and mutual understanding. Having gone through two different iterations of community-academic peer review, our initial reflections highlight the importance of establishing a shared language and terms of reference from which to start a review process. How a paper or piece of research is ‘read’ and understood is deeply connected to one’s one context, specifically the nature and priorities of one’s own work – whether academic or community based. We look forward to sharing these reflections, as well as input from participants, in a more formal way in the months to come.

Visit the CFICE website for more information on this project, and contact Amanda Wilson at community@foodsecurecanada.org if you’re interested in becoming involved in some of our work around national food policy!
The 2017 conference examines how community, collaboration and complexity shape Canadian identities and Canada’s food systems and food movements. We are especially interested in food and its relationships with health, the environment, the arts and humanities, gender, indigenous peoples, education, security, public policy as well as how the roles of civil society, government and business impact food systems in Canada and the global context. Consistent with CAFS’ interests and mandate to promote multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary scholarship across multiple facets of food systems, we will feature a diverse array of submissions.

The full conference program can be downloaded online.
CAFS Pre-Conference / Pré-conférence de l’ACÉA
May 27th, 2017

Attention emerging researchers, students, post-docs, and new faculty! A day packed with panel discussions, student poster and pecha kucha presentations, a documentary screening, and networking, of course! All are welcome. Details here.

Calls for contributions / Appels à contributions

Vers une politique nationale intégrée en matière d'alimentation au Canada

En 2012, Olivier De Schutter, rapporteur spécial des Nations Unies sur le droit à l'alimentation, a visité le Canada pour examiner la façon dont le gouvernement protégeait les droits de la personne à l'alimentation. Tout en faisant l'éloge des nombreuses réalisations, il a également constaté une multitude de problèmes, notamment : des niveaux d'assistance sociale inadéquats, des problèmes de santé et des maladies chroniques dus à une mauvaise alimentation, des conditions de vie inacceptables dans les communautés nordiques et des Premières Nations et des interventions fragmentées et à court terme. En écho à de nombreuses organisations de la société civile, De Schutter a mis l'accent sur la nécessité d'une stratégie nationale intégrée en matière d'alimentation, enracinée dans le droit à l'alimentation, qui adopterait une approche démocratique et intégrée pour la gestion des systèmes de production alimentaire au Canada.

À la fin de l'année 2015, le gouvernement libéral a démontré une volonté renouvelée de définir une stratégie alimentaire nationale pour le Canada. Plus précisément, le ministère de l'Agriculture a reçu la consigne d'«élaborer une politique alimentaire faisant la promotion d'un mode de vie sain et de la salubrité des aliments en mettant sur la table des familles du pays un plus grand nombre d'aliments sains de grande qualité produits par les agriculteurs et les éleveurs canadiens». Cependant, d'importantes questions subsistent quant à la façon dont cette politique sera définie et mise en place et à quoi ressembleront ses priorités et ses mécanismes. Malgré l'ampleur de la documentation sur la complexité d'une politique alimentaire canadienne et ses possibilités, le débat sur les particularités d'une politique alimentaire nationale pour le Canada ne fait que commencer.

Le Réseau pour une alimentation durable (RAD), parmi d'autres, lance un appel à la mise en Œuvre d'une politique alimentaire nationale basée sur une approche systémique commune visant à mettre en lien les secteurs, les ministères et les compétences et à créer les conditions d'une participation significative de la société civile. Une politique alimentaire nationale efficace serait fondée sur le droit à l'alimentation, apporterait cohérence et continuité à la gestion des systèmes de production alimentaire au Canada et indiquerait des points d'intervention intersectorielles stratégiques. Plus fondamentalement, elle s'enracinerait dans des objectifs d'alimentation saine et de sécurité alimentaire, de justice sociale et écologique, d'économie florissante, de droits des peuples autochtones et de démocratisation du système de gouvernance.

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation/Canadian Food Studies, en partenariat avec le Réseau pour une alimentation durable et la Community First : Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE), fait appel aux contributions des universitaires, chercheurs et intervenants pour la publication de leurs travaux dans le numéro thématique : Vers une politique nationale intégrée en matière d'alimentation au Canada. On invite les collaborateurs et collaboratrices à présenter des articles de recherche originale, des commentaires, des points de vue, des rapports terrain et narratifs à partir de n'importe quelle discipline, que ce soit en français ou en anglais. La revue favorise également les propositions de travaux sur supports numériques (audio ou vidéo), artistiques ou photographiques.

Pour répondre aux critères de la revue, les articles doivent avoir un contenu canadien et être rédigés principalement...
Building an Integrated National Food Policy for Canada

In 2012, Olivier De Schutter, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, visited Canada to examine the way the government was protecting the human right to food. While praising the many achievements, he also noted a host of challenges, including: inadequate social assistance levels, health and chronic disease stemming from poor diets, the unacceptable conditions of Northern and Indigenous communities, and fragmented, short-sighted policy interventions. Echoing the call of many civil society organizations, De Schutter emphasized the need for a comprehensive national food strategy, rooted in the right to food, that would take an integrated and democratic approach to governing Canada’s food systems.

In late 2015, the Liberal government showed a renewed willingness to build a national food strategy for Canada. Specifically, the Minister of Agriculture was instructed “to develop a national food policy that promotes healthy living and safe food by putting more healthy, high quality food, produced by Canadian ranchers and farmers, on the tables of families.” Still, important questions remain about how this policy will be developed and implemented, and what the priorities and mechanisms will look like. In spite of considerable literature on the complexities and possibilities of Canadian food policy, the conversation is only beginning on the specifics of a national food policy for Canada.

Food Secure Canada (FSC), among others, are calling for a joined-up, systems-based approach to national food policy that aims to connect sectors, departments and jurisdictions, and establish opportunities for meaningful civil society participation. An effective national food policy would be premised on the right to food, provide consistency and continuity in the management of Canada’s food systems, and would identify cross-sector leverage points. More importantly, it would be rooted in the goals of healthy and safe food, social and ecological justice, a robust economy, the rights of Indigenous peoples, and democratizing governance.

Canadian Food Studies/La Revue canadienne des études sur l’alimentation in partnership with Food Secure Canada and Community First: Impacts of Community Engagement (CFICE) invites contributions from academics, researchers, and practitioners to publish their work in a themed issue on Building an Integrated Food Policy for Canada. Contributors are encouraged to submit original research papers, commentaries, perspectives, and field reports/narratives from any disciplinary perspective, in English or French. The journal also encourages submissions of digital (audio or video) and art/photography work. To meet the journal criteria, articles must contain Canadian content and/or have a Canadian first author. Please consult the “Submissions” menu at www.canadianfoodstudies.ca.

Please send your submission proposals or abstracts (300 words max) directly to guest co-editors Amanda Wilson (community@foodsecurecanada.org) and Charles Z. Levkoe (clevkoe@lakeheadu.ca). You can contact them for more information as well.

Deadline for a brief summary of your proposed paper: May 26, 2017
Deadline for full paper submissions: October 1st, 2017

Guest editors: Charles Levkoe, Amanda Willson, Peter Andrée and Diana Bronson.
Thanks to everyone that made contributions to the Spring 2017 edition. The CAFS/ACÉA newsletter is published three times annually. We look forward to more great content from the food studies community for the Summer 2017 issue.

If you are interested in getting involved and offering support as an editor or a translator on the newsletter team, email us! Please also send any comments, questions, concerns or future submissions to newsletter@foodstudies.ca, join the CAFS Facebook page and follow CAFS on Twitter!

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