



# Good Food and Farming Ideas for Ontario

Report from Bring Food Home 2017 Network Meetings

Building on Sustain Ontario Network White Papers produced for the Three Years to Prepare Menu 2020,  
Reviewing and Renewing Ten Good Food Ideas for Ontario Project

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## Introduction

This report seeks to summarize the policy papers prepared by each of Sustain Ontario's networks in advance of the Bring Food Home 2017 conference. The report also includes inputs from the discussion of these papers at conference and subsequent network meetings. This report is intended to update all Sustain Ontario members about the work currently being undertaken to encourage collective action. This is in an effort further Sustain Ontario's mission to promote a more productive, equitable and sustainable food and farming systems that support the health and wellbeing of all people in Ontario through collaborative action. The Common Ground section of this report highlights areas of overlap and potential for working across networks.

The complete policy papers can be accessed online at either the Bring Food Home website, <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/> or on Sustain Ontario's websites through each network page, <https://sustainontario.com/our-work/networks-working-groups>.

## Bring Food Home 2017

Bring Food Home (BFH) was the 5<sup>th</sup> province wide cross-sectoral conference for food system planning in Ontario. BFH was held in Ottawa on October 27-29<sup>th</sup> 2017. This year the conference was held in collaboration with the Eastern Ontario Local Food conference and local hosts Just Food. Bring Food Home conferences offer a forum to share experience and expertise, build the capacity and cohesiveness of Ontario's local food network, and plan and coordinate actions that will direct us in building a better food system in Ontario and beyond.

The theme for the 2017 BFH conference was Upstream Collaboration. Upstream Collaboration acknowledge the work and innovation being done in local food systems in Ontario. This theme recognizes our collective need to bring together diverse sectors to generate action on food and farm issues, as well as the need to ask and answer tough questions about these issues. Participants sought to collaborate as an Ontario community to work on issues and grow stronger together through breaking down barriers and forging new alliances.

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## Description of Sustain Ontario's Networks

### Sustainable Food Enterprise

Brings together people working to strengthen each level of the value chain to bring local sustainable food products to Ontario's tables. The network will tackle barriers to viability and success, and explore innovative approaches, in the local food sector.

### Community Growing

An Ontario-wide network bringing together a variety of community gardens, urban agriculture projects, and organizations. The network comes together to share resources, discuss new ideas and strategize for the future of growing in Ontario

### Farming and Farmland

Agricultural organizations and other allies coming together to share ideas and knowledge, re-imagine the future, advocate for policy change and other sustainable solutions that support Ontario's farmland, farmers, and food production.

### Municipal Food Policy

Brings together planners, community organizers, public health professionals, food producers, distributors and other food champions to share ideas and knowledge in order to develop and influence policies at the municipal or regional level. We pool resources and experiences to distill best practices and develop solutions to include food in municipal policy decisions.

### Edible Education

Across Ontario people are doing great work to connect children and youth with good food. This network (previously known as the Children and Youth Food Network) has been established to bring these groups together to make it easier for people across Ontario to get children and youth eating, growing, cooking, celebrating, and learning about healthy, local and sustainably produced food.

### Food Justice

Organizations working together in solidarity for food justice within the province of Ontario.

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## Common Ground

This section outlines some areas of overlap between Sustain Ontario's networks. These are presented as opportunities for the membership of Sustain Ontario to come together and support work being done across networks.

### Food Justice

It has been suggested that a Food Justice lens can be applied to work being done across all of Sustain Ontario's other networks. While the [Food Justice Network](#) is committed to meeting with the other networks to determine what that would mean for their work, their policy paper, "Building Understanding and Awareness About Systemic Inequities in our Food System", is an excellent starting point for thinking through a Food Justice lens.

More specifically there is overlap between the work being done by the [Community Growing Network](#) in their paper "Engaging Diverse Communities Through Community Gardening" which considers ways that community gardens can facilitate inclusive spaces for marginalized groups. Additionally, the [Sustainable Food Enterprise Network](#) supports the development of stronger food systems in Ontario which in turn supports the Food Justice Network's goal of increasing access to affordable and healthy food for all people in Ontario.

### Sustainable Food in Institutions and Schools

The [Sustainable Food Enterprise Network](#), [Edible Education Network](#) and [Community Growing Network](#) all support goals of increasing access to sustainable food in institutions and schools. The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network's paper "Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Institutions" looks at ways to encourage procurement practices that support local, sustainable and healthy food growers and producers. The Edible Education Network is committed to getting good food into schools both through procurement and school gardens. Their paper "Working with School Boards to Advance Good Food in Schools" could be a valuable resource to enable better procurement practices in Ontario schools. This work could also be used by the Community Growing Network as it works to establish urban gardens on school's property.

### Farmland Preservation

The [Farming and Farmland Network's](#) goal of "Farmland Preservation" could be supported through the work being done by many of Sustain Ontario's networks. The [Sustainable Food Enterprise Network](#) recognizes that need for strong supply networks, and many of these networks require access to farmland. Some of the potential policy recommendations that are discussed in this paper would be implemented at the municipal level and the [Municipal Food Policy Network](#) could to support their adoption into policy through their work. The goal of farmland preservation has been expanded to encompass urban lands where food is grown which would support the [Community Growing Network](#), particularly in their work to deconstruct the rural-urban divide. Work around farmland preservation also needs to consider the implications of Canada's colonial history and land which is unceded and unsurrendered or subject to Canada's treaty relationships with First Nations, and this could be informed by the [Food Justice Network](#).

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## Support for New and Young Farmers

The [Farming and Farmland Network](#) has identified a need to support “New and Young Farmers” which is very closely related to the work being done by the [Sustainable Food Enterprise Network](#) to secure “Innovative Financing for Sustainable Food Systems”. The [Food Justice Network](#) also recognizes the need to support marginalized and immigrant food workers, growers and suppliers. Further, the [Community Growing Network](#) has the potential to create new entrants into agriculture who would use these supports, as well as facilitate some learning opportunities.

## Network Building

The [Edible Education Networks](#) paper “Enhancing Local/Regional Collaboration to Support Good Food for Children and Youth” focuses on network building and is a valuable resource both for the other Sustain Ontario networks and membership organizations. The work presented there could be helpful as the networks strive to identify their purpose and goals, as well as determining how they will function.

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## Sustainable Food Enterprise Network

This network brings together people working to strengthen each level of the value chain to bring local sustainable food products to Ontario's tables. The network will tackle barriers to viability and success, and explore innovative approaches, in the local food sector.

## Sustainable Institutional Food Procurement: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Institutions

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

Public sector procurement has widely been discussed as a strong mechanism for facilitating food system transformation. Around the world as well as locally here in Ontario, there has been a strong movement to purchase local and sustainable food products to serve in primary and secondary schools, universities, hospitals and municipal organizations. This movement, however, has largely been a collection of solo efforts each guided by their own criteria for procuring both sustainable products and/or procuring these products in sustainable method. As such, this session will start with a board discussion deconstructing what sustainable food and sustainable food procurement means. From there we will explore what the challenges and possible solutions to these challenges for institutions today and end with the discussion of some promising models for supporting sustainable food procurement in Ontario institutions.

### Summary of Policy Paper

The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network identified sustainable food procurement as an important issue within their network. Procurement is generally defined as the purchasing of goods and services, normally obtained at the lowest possible cost in consideration with other qualifiers such as quality of the product. When considering what sustainability means in terms of procurement, the government of Nova Scotia defined sustainable procurement as “an approach to purchasing that considers the environmental, societal and economic impacts associated with the life cycle of the goods and services being purchased.”

Sustainable procurement is also commonly characterized by an element of ‘local’ procurement.

Although there is not an unanimous definition of local, many local food procurement policies in Ontario use the definition outlined by Foodland Ontario, which is based on Ontario's provincial border, as a baseline. Sustain Ontario recognizes a tiered approach to local, whereby food should first be sources regionally, then if impossible to obtain regionally from elsewhere in Ontario.

Two case studies were analyzed to develop recommendations for a way forward for Ontario. The first is a private certification system utilized in universities in the United Kingdom (UK), and the second is an example of public procurement efforts in transforming primary and secondary school meal programs in Italy.

### A) The “Food For Life” Catering Mark and Program

Food For Life, is a UK based private certification system led by national charities with public support. It awards bronze, silver and gold marks to university catering systems. This is coupled with a Catering Mark

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Supplier Scheme, with over 170 members, which connects suppliers that meet the Catering Mark standards with the universities. The Catering Mark represents a deliberate attempt to shift responsibility for sustainability in the food system away from individual consumers and towards the public realm. One important limitation to note is that the Catering Mark is menu-based, with a focus on health and culture and does not address issues such as waste, energy or wages.

Simplifying the plethora of certifications in the market, the Catering Mark is an overarching third-party sustainability certification. Evaluation of university catering systems includes four sets of criteria:

1. Food leadership
2. Food quality and provenance
3. Food education
4. Food culture and community involvement

To achieve silver and gold marks, caterers need to achieve points for food served in three additional categories (1) Ethical and Environmentally-Friendly Food; (2) Making Healthy Eating Easy; and (3) Championing Local Producers. The sustainability criteria on which certification levels are awarded is outlined in the full policy paper that was presented at the conference.

This is combined with the Catering Mark Supplier Scheme that is aimed at making it easier for university caterers to access food that meets Catering Mark standards by identifying suitable suppliers. One of the advantages of the Catering Mark is that it sets best practice standards while encouraging the private market to provide access to these certified products.

## B) Italian Elementary School Meal Procurement

The Italian school food procurement system is controlled by sustainable food procurement regulations. The regulation reads “To guarantee the promotion of organic agricultural production of quality food products, public institutions that operate school and hospital canteens will provide in the daily diet the use of organic, typical and traditional products as well as those from denominated areas, taking into account the guidelines and other recommendations of the National Institute of Nutrition”.

The regulation quoted above comes from the Measures to Facilitate the Development of Employment and the Economy and represents a multifunctional view of school procurement which supports both regional employment and sustainable food systems. Further, the regulations put on emphasis on organic, typical and traditional products. The regulation calls for culturally traditional foods, rather than local because European Union countries are forbidden from awarding contracts based on the geography of the bidder.

This system and others in Europe benefited from regular open table discussion between networks of policy makers, experts, public institutions, producers and suppliers. These networks were found to foster the process of socialization and knowledge exchange via positive competition between network members that increase pressure on members to achieve higher policy success. The regular meetings provided motivation to achieve what was done elsewhere, as well as positive feedback for participants

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own successes. This opened opportunities for positive comparison and revealed gaps as well as innovative solutions on how to replicate other cities' successes.

### C) Universities in Canada

Through discussion at Bring Food Home, it was shared the University of Toronto has successfully switched towards sustainable food procurement. Although it is recognized that food costs for the institution have increased, the increased quality of product has also led to an increase in sales.

In Canada, the University of British Columbia, Trent University, the University of Guelph, and Carleton University were also identified as having made commitments towards more sustainable procurement.

### Sustain Ontario Recognizes that...

Public sector procurement has widely been discussed as a strong tool for supporting the transition to more sustainable local food system and it is understood that it can harness the collective purchasing power necessary to achieve scale, thereby facilitating movement toward food system transformation.

Municipal level organization and policy adoption is proven to be critical in supporting the development as well as the effective implementation of sustainable food procurement regulations (SFPRs).

The Broader Public Sector (BPS) Procurement Directive does not apply to broader public-sector institutions that are owned and administered by municipalities, but municipal governments can be influential in sustainable food procurement through structural practices and governance mechanisms to support relevant groups.

While the Discriminatory Business Practice Act prevents discriminatory procurement, practices based on place of origin or geographical location of the bidder, institutions can ask for bidders to specify the place of origin of the product. In this circumstance, a local, provincial, national or international company may bid so long as they are able to provide local foods.

The Local Food Act is under review in 2018.

Sustainable procurement requires a strong supply of products which can meet the large demand required by institutions. This includes a need an infrastructure and resources such as storage, mechanization, labour and farmland.

### Policy Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network will seek to create an inventory of existing knowledge and policy around Sustainable Institutional Procurement, then identify gaps within that information, and put plans together to address any gaps found. The Network will then provide guidance and support for the development of good policy which will support the development of sustainable food businesses.

The following have been identified as ideas to be pursued through Network discussions:

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- Support the work being done by the Organic Council of Ontario towards improved/streamlined organics labeling to ease sustainable procurement. The support could come in the form of providing a consumer voice to the discussion.
  - Seek input from others researching and working in sustainable food procurement such as Nourish, Meal Exchange – Real Food Challenge, Local Food Plus and Ontario Student Nutrition Services to consolidate knowledge and identify gaps.
  - Continue building best practices for institutional procurement from knowledge of how this is being done in hospitals, universities and schools.
  - Look at past examples of frameworks for RFPs that favour local/sustainable for lessons to build upon.
  - Ensure existing legislation, such as the Canada Food Guide, does not create unnecessary restrictions as to which products can be supplied to institutions due to inflexible interpretation and implementation.

### Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network recognizes the need for strong supply networks which supports both of the Farming and Farmland Network's priorities of farmland preservation and support for new and young farmers.

In line with the Edible Education Network's goal for increasing good food in schools, the Sustainable Food Enterprise Network supports getting more healthy and local food into public institutions.

The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network support the development of stronger food systems in Ontario. This supports the Food Justice Network's goal of increasing access to affordable and healthy food for all people in Ontario.

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## Innovative Financing for Sustainable Food Systems

### Summary of Policy Paper

#### Objective

Small farmers and social entrepreneurs in Ontario find it difficult to access capital, limiting the possibility for building sustainable and resilient food ecosystems. This situation is not unique. Rather, it reflects a global trend in bank lending practices where traditional risk assessment dictates that an agrifood conglomerate is more likely to receive a loan than a smaller, innovative (and arguably more sustainable) company. However, the growing recognition of the unsustainability of industrial agriculture as well as declining rural communities and farm incomes have highlighted the need to innovate financing options for small, sustainable food enterprises.

In recent years initiatives have emerged as a response to the lack of financing for farmers and small food enterprises, which is promising. However, the landscape for innovative financing options lacks coherence. This document intends to address this situation by identifying and discussing the various financial avenues available to entrepreneurs across the province of Ontario who are focused on producing social and environmental as well as economic benefits. Examples from other Canadian provinces and the United States are also included as potential mechanisms to explore in Ontario. This is not an exhaustive list, but a starting point for discussions.

#### Context

Despite the multiple social, economic and environmental benefits generated by farming, the sector lacks access to capital. Typically, sustainable agriculture enterprises are expected to carry all of the risk, deal with regulatory challenges, and the costs involved in sustainable agriculture, compromising their competitive viability. While governments and the non-profit sector have and will continue to play an important role in fostering sustainable agriculture, more lasting and widespread impact requires the involvement of for-profit investors. According to Pons and Long, “A robust financial infrastructure will ultimately attract an increasing number of diverse investors, encouraging individuals, institutions, foundations, traditional banks, and other financiers to allocate more capital to the emerging [farming] industry” (2012).

In addition to the unfamiliarity of larger lenders with the business of farming, there are certain characteristics about the food system that make it a potentially challenging investment. As Young states, “Venture capital is difficult to place in the food system. Equity investors typically require scalability and the potential of significant returns to balance the risk and their large upfront investments. They may be looking for anywhere from 20% to 100% return on investment, which is why venture capitalists generally focus on web, technology or resource extraction sectors (2015).” However, Pons and Long propose that the inherent diversity of the food and agriculture sector means that it can appeal to a range of interests and risk appetites (2012). There are opportunities for the type of investment proposed by Woody Tasch of Slow Money - financial vehicles that “bring money back down to earth” and allow people to “invest as if food, farms and fertility matter” (Young, 2015). These opportunities are explored below.

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An important concern in Ontario relates to the availability and price of farmland, which is discussed more fully in the Farming and Farmland Network papers with regards to farmland preservation and supports for new and young farmers.

## Financing Options

See the full research paper for 40+ financing options and a discussion of them, available at <https://sustainontario.com/sustainable-food-enterprise-network>. This list covers loans, grants, programs, equity financing and crowdfunding that small farmers and food enterprises might pursue in their search for financial support. The list includes options in Ontario, as well as examples in Canada and the world.

## Case Study: FarmWorks, Nova Scotia

Information was gathered through a phone interview on July 24th, 2017 with Linda Best, founding member of FarmWorks as well as through the Good Food Network online recording “Pollinating Food Enterprises.”

Linda Best and a group of friends realized that the province of Nova Scotia required innovative socio-economic strategies to tackle the issues of declining farm populations and farm and food sector employment. Their vision was to provide strategic and responsible community investment opportunity in food production and distribution in order to increase access to a sustainable, local food supply for all Nova Scotians. So after meeting in 2010, Farmworks was incorporated in 2011.

Farmworks is plugged into the Nova Scotian community economic development investment fund (CEDIF) program which was legislated in 1998. To counter the large flow of money moving out of the province, the CEDIF matches local investors with local businesses. Money is raised for CEDIF through public offers. The sale of shares forms a pool of capital available to profit-oriented local businesses. Improving access to capital allows businesses to start or stay in communities. The enterprises cannot be charitable, non-taxable or non-profit. The CEDIF is strictly regulated by the Department of Finance.

To date, approximately 64 million dollars have been invested by over 8,300 Nova Scotians in the CEDIF program. In this model, program shareholders invest for 5 years for a 35% tax credit, reinvest at 5 years for an additional 20% tax credit, reinvest at 10 years for yet another 10% tax credit. Investments are eligible for RRSP tax deferral. Credits can be carried forward 7 years, back 3 years. In Linda’s view, CEDIF’s are an effective way to leverage local capital to help rebuild a sustainable farm and food economy. CEDIFs have a 90% success rate which is much higher than a typical small or medium enterprise survival rate.

Farmworks is completely volunteer run and is comprised of 14 directors and 25 advisors. Farmworks’ first offer was in 2012 for \$250,000. Now there are 42 businesses with a total investment value of \$996,000. The minimum share price is \$100, giving many people a chance to invest. Farmworks lends to qualified food-related businesses that are chosen to balance risk and achieve strategic goals. Loans range from \$5,000-\$25,000 and they are unsecured. The payback period runs from 2 to 5 years.

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Farmworks also provides mentoring to these businesses and works with other agencies and governments to help increase the awareness of food production in Nova Scotia.

Characteristics of loans:

- No application fee
- Specific criteria must be met – Farmworks spends a lot of time on due diligence
- Current interest rate 6% (2% for admin, 2% for any losses we may incur, 2% for dividends)
- Consultations as appropriate (before, during and after)
- Annual financial statements
- Early repayment without penalty

Investees are evaluated and receive a score based on the following criteria:

Comprehensive evaluation considers: character (1-20), commitment (1-20), management (1-20), business plan – markets (1-20), business plan – materials/methods (1-20), business plan – financials (1-20), visibility (1-60). Total 1-200. Less than 130 do not proceed, 130-160 reapply, greater than 160 proceed.

One of the main challenges for Farmworks relates to communication. These include: raising awareness of the benefits of local investing; gaining credibility with high net worth investors; dealing with retirement fund investments; selling through registered dealers; and raising awareness of the benefits of CEDIFs across Canada. Hosting Gentle Dragons sessions has been a useful communication and awareness raising tool. Based on the concept of the CBC's Dragons' Den, existing and potential clients present what they have and are hoping to achieve in an effort to gain access to funding.

### Policy Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

- Explore the viability of a financing incorporation such as FarmWorks in Ontario.
- Continue to analyze and understand financing options available in Ontario.

### Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

The issue of access to financing for farmland is closely tied with the work being done by the Farming and Farmland Network with regards to supports for new and young farmers.

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## Community Growing Network

An Ontario-wide network bringing together a variety of community gardens, urban agriculture projects, and organizations. The network comes together to share resources, discuss new ideas and strategize for the future of growing in Ontario.

## Strategies for Leveraging Community Resources

### Policy Discussions at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

The Growing Communities network has a need to share resources and solutions to common challenges in setting up community gardens. These topics include best practices in establishing community gardens that meet local and regional regulations, respect local partners and build relationships within and between community members. This session will include discussions of successes from other municipalities with the goal of helping other jurisdictions build successful community gardens in their own communities.

### Summary of Policy Paper

Community gardens provide more than space to grow food, they also provide community, learning opportunities, a space to learn new skills, promote biodiversity, support food security, promote active living, and revitalize neighbourhoods. However, many communities in Ontario face similar challenges when establishing community gardens in their neighbourhoods. This document contains common challenges and suggestions for how to address these individually and collectively.

The main concerns identified by the Network of included:

- 1) addressing provincial and municipal policies, especially around planning policies, soil contamination concerns, and accessibility needs;
- 2) insurance costs and needs;
- 3) building partnerships;
- 4) opportunities to establish land trusts;

### 1) Addressing Provincial and Municipal policies

The Smart Growth for Our Community Act includes provisions to protect and promote greenspace by encouraging municipalities to plan for parks and which provide an opportunity for community garden development. This Act also allows for community members to provide more feedback, an opportunity that community gardeners should be ready to take advantage of during city meetings on proposed plans for development in their community.

With respect to soil testing, the Ministry of Environment requires that a site assessment be conducted. However, since most community gardens do not own the land on which they grow, they may not be responsible for this process. With respect to liability insurance purposes and in order to guarantee the safety of gardeners, it is recommended that community gardens conduct a soil test. The City of Toronto Public Health has developed a set of guidelines regarding soil testing for urban gardeners including community gardeners (2017).

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Community gardeners should avoid establishing gardens in habitat for species at risk. If there is a concern that the garden may be disrupting habitat, the community garden can contact the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry regional and district office nearest them.

Noise and odour regulations are typically limited to occasional consideration to community gardens. Noise bylaws are set by municipalities and limit the volume and timing of running loud equipment such as rototillers. Similarly, municipalities set odour limits based on the Ministry of Environment regulations and complaints from neighbours about the smell of manure, for example would be addressed by municipalities.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires that community gardens meet accessibility requirements. The Act recommends that municipalities establish Accessibility Advisory Committees who follow provincially mandated Public Spaces Standards.

In Ontario, all pesticides including herbicides, insecticides, fungicides are prohibited for cosmetic use by the Pesticide Act (2017). Community gardens are not considered exempt because they are not deemed agricultural (ibid). Licensed exterminators can be hired if pest problems become significant, however, a variety of integrated pest management practices and soil management practices should be adopted as the community garden norms in order to reduce the risk of pest problems

Finally, if community gardeners wish to donate their produce, they must comply with the provincial government's Donation of Food Act (1994) which states that individuals and organizations are not liable for damages caused by the consumption of food unless the food was rotten or unfit for human consumption.

## 2) Insurance Costs and Needs

Navigating the details of insurance policies and the requirements for community gardens can be a burden to volunteers who often run community gardens. However, most municipalities require liability insurance for community gardens. In some jurisdictions, community gardens have negotiated a License of Occupation (LOC) with the municipality which covers the community garden activities under the city's own insurance policy, so long as they comply to the terms of the agreement. This only applies to community gardens located on public land where an LOC has been negotiated, otherwise, community gardens must find their own insurance. For example, a community garden on public land without an LOC would still need to have insurance, as would a community garden on private land. Some private landowners may be willing to extend their liability insurance coverage to the community garden. In addition, community gardens may be asked to sign a 'Hold Harmless' or 'No Harm' clause which would be signed by all participants in the community garden which would absolve the landowner of liability in the case of injury.

The American Community Garden Association (ACGA) provides liability insurance to eligible community gardens throughout the US. They have negotiated collective liability insurance for community gardens that become members of the ACGA and which agree to the terms listed on their website. Similarly, the Farmers' Markets of Ontario also provide this service to members. There is a potential to explore a

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collective liability insurance similar to this one in the US that would cover either all community gardens in the country, or province-by-province.

### 3) Partnerships

Community gardens should consider building partnerships to create new opportunities and success. Collaboration and wider public support can contribute to the long-term achievements towards improving food security, skill development, and increasing biodiversity.

- i) Community gardens and schools
  - Schools are community hubs and can provide both educational and social networking opportunities for garden
- ii) Community gardens and private entities
  - Establishing partnerships with private entities another opportunity to promote gardening to the public. In addition, many businesses are interested in being involved in their communities, in demonstrating corporate social responsibility, and in engaging their employees. Businesses may also be able to provide more than garden space, they may also be able to provide funding and in-kind support through employee volunteerism.
- iii) Community gardens and city property
  - Some municipalities have policies to promote community gardens including policies on how to establish gardens on public lands. Opportunities to develop community gardens exist with libraries and community centres since both of these can use gardens as learning spaces. Many community centres have dieticians who can use gardens as a tool to teach about nutrition, while regular children’s programming can also use the garden space for learning and play
- iv) Community gardens and utility companies
  - Utility companies own land that may be suitable for the development of community gardens including along power line corridors.
- v) Community gardens and universities
  - Like community gardens at primary or secondary schools, community gardens at universities can provide important educational purposes.
- vi) Social Housing and New Housing Developments
  - Opportunities to work with housing authorities and developers to establish gardens as part of the design of new housing developments are increasing as the benefits of gardening are being increasingly documented. Residents can enjoy the aesthetics of having a garden even if they themselves do not garden which can contribute resident retention.
- 5) Land trusts
  - Often formed to protect neighbourhoods from the effects of gentrification, land trusts have also been used to provide garden and farm space in urban areas. While land trusts are a relatively new initiative, the potential to promote community gardens and urban agriculture is significant as the community can set their own planning agenda.

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*This policy paper was developed by the Community Growing Network with the help of researcher Julia Laforge. For the full paper including references to works cited, please go to <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.*

## Suggested Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The following are recommendations for where Sustain Ontario and the Community Growing Network would be able to have the most significant impact.

1. **Developing Supportive Policies:** Sustain Ontario is ideally situated to help communities advocate for changes to municipal policies that support the development of more community gardens. For example, municipalities should be encouraged to develop Urban Agriculture Programs that would support a diversity of urban gardening and agriculture activities across city departments.
2. **Collective Liability Insurance:** As a province-wide actor, Sustain Ontario is well suited to following the example of the American Community Gardening Association and negotiate a collective insurance plan that covers all community gardens in the province. This could save individual community gardens from the burden of the cost while also sharing the risk involved amongst a larger network. Details such as how many gardens could be involved and what kinds of guidelines community gardens would have to follow in order to be eligible for such coverage would have to be negotiated with the insurance provider.
3. **Soil testing:** Sustain Ontario could also negotiate a suitable rate for soil testing from a reputable company. Since the needs of community gardens are not the same as farmers and others who use these services, by negotiating with a company and recommending that all community gardens use the same company, this could result in better services to community gardens while also ensuring the company is aware of the needs of community gardens and can provide them the services they need. This would also make it more feasible for community gardens to conduct soil testing, which regardless of whether or not it becomes mandatory required by provincial or municipal regulations, would usually still be in the best interests of the community garden.
4. **Rural-Urban Divide:** Highlight the common ground among urban and rural populations to deconstruct the rural-urban divide. Identify champions to help break down the divide (conservation authorities, OMAFRA, National Farmer Unions, Farmers Association of Ontario).

## Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

The Community Growing Network recognizes schools as possible locations for urban gardens and this could be supported by the work of the Edible Education Network.

The Farming and Farmland Network in seeking to protect farmlands in Ontario and expanding this goal to encompass urban lands where food is grown which would support the Community Growing Network.

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Community Gardens are closely tied to issues addressed by the Food Justice Network both through inclusive community spaces around food and through increasing access to healthy foods.

The Community Growing Network could seek support from Municipal Food Policy Network where they encounter issues with existing government policies, including the rural-urban divide and described above.

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## Engaging Diverse Communities Through Community Gardening

### Policy Discussions at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

Urban agriculture movements have the potential to be transformative, providing multiple important benefits to individuals, neighbourhoods, and cities. However, critics have pointed out the complicated, contradictory, and sometimes destructive role they can play in relation to broader structures of injustice, exclusion, and oppression. The research for this network session explores the ways in which community gardens can best meet the needs of a diversity of people in the neighbourhoods in which they are situated. In particular, this research will examine the best practices of several community garden initiatives that engage with and involve – in meaningful ways – members of marginalized and/or vulnerable communities including racialized people, newly arrived immigrant and refugee, people with different abilities, and people who are living in poverty.

### Summary of Policy Paper

Community gardening, generally considered part of the non-profit urban agriculture movement, has grown steadily in North American cities and in some rural areas, particularly in the last two decades. While community garden projects have the potential to be transformative, providing multiple important benefits to individuals, neighbourhoods, and cities; critics have pointed out the complicated, contradictory, and sometimes destructive role they can play in relation to broader structures of injustice and oppression.

Nevertheless, community gardens have the potential to bring greater social justice and inclusion to urban neighbourhoods. In this paper, I will explore the ways in which community gardens can best meet the needs of a diversity of people in the neighbourhoods in which they are situated. In particular, I will look at the best practices from four community garden initiatives that meaningfully engage and involve members of marginalized and/or vulnerable communities including racialized people, newly arrived immigrant and refugees, and/or people who are living in poverty.

- Part 1 examines the importance of community gardening in North America.
- Part 2 examines the challenges and barriers experienced by marginalized and/or vulnerable communities in community garden projects.
- Part 3 examines projects that have been successful at integrating vulnerable and/or marginalized communities.
- Part 4 proposes strategies to increase diversity in community garden projects in Ontario.

### 1) The importance of community gardens

The benefits of community gardens are widespread and diverse including increasing access to fresh fruits and vegetables; providing people with practical gardening skills; promoting a sense of individual wellbeing and health; building community ties and social capital; connecting people to the cycles of the earth; regenerating vacant, neglected, or disturbed urban landscapes; promoting cross-cultural communication; and encouraging people to develop critiques of the global food system.

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## 2) Challenges and barriers to diversity

Community gardens do not always reflect the diversity of the cities or neighbourhoods in which they are situated. Even with the best of intentions, community gardens can be exclusive spaces in which marginalized people do not feel comfortable participating or do not participate in the numbers anticipated by garden coordinators. Community gardens have also been implicated in the process of urban gentrification and dislocation.

Some researchers argue that NGOs or city staff that often manage community gardens adopt an individualist framework that may keep some projects from addressing the deeper structural issues that have led marginalized people to be interested in participating in community gardening. An individualistic approach can particularly be seen in community gardens based on allotment plots instead of collectively cultivated gardens, particularly as it reinforces access based on purchasing power. On the other hand, a collective framework may be subject to problems such as lack of democratic decision-making, interpersonal disputes, and disagreement about structure, design, roles, and resources.

Projects aimed at marginalized people and communities (especially low-income and racialized), are sometimes not led or coordinated by members of the communities in which they operate. Further, grassroots projects in low-income, racialized communities are not always able to access the same funding and resources as projects located in higher income communities. When grassroots projects do succeed in gaining support of larger, established NGOs or city staff; often they do not retain the right to control the direction of their projects, particularly if they don't have top-down, officially-sanctioned programs and initiatives.

Although community gardens are often presented as particularly important for marginalized people living in lower income neighbourhoods, sometimes community garden projects are not located those neighbourhoods, requiring people to travel to their garden plot.

Community gardening can play a complex role in urban gentrification and displacement. In some cities, urban gentrification and dislocation, can be seen as a continuation of colonialism, forcing urban Indigenous people out of neighbourhoods.

It seems very important for anyone creating or facilitating a community garden project to be very deliberate in creating gardens that are accessible, inclusive, and diverse. As researchers in Vancouver found “unless there is intent behind building inclusion, bridging soft and technical barriers, and providing programming around culture, new immigrants, seniors, and those with accessibility challenges are unlikely to participate fully in community gardens”.

## 3) Case studies and best practices

**H.O.P.E and Milky Way Garden** are located in Parkdale, Toronto and are managed by the non-profit Greenest City. H.O.P.E.'s strength is in the democratic decision making carried out by it's gardeners, and the community building through workshops and potlucks. Milky Way Garden's strength is that it is located on land owned by a community land trust.

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**Farmers on 57th** is in Vancouver and managed by the BC Coalition of People with Disabilities and is located on the grounds of George Pearson Center which is home to 120 people living with disabilities. This garden's strength is in its therapeutic garden with wheelchair accessible pathways and raised beds, as well as garden tools provided for people with various mobility issues.

**La Finca del Sur in the Bronx, NYC** was created and is led by a board of directors made up of women of colour. The garden's strength is in its interest not only addressing food insecurity and injustice in their neighbourhood but in linking these issues, through their programming, to global inequality and systemic systems of oppression.

#### 4) Strategies to increase diversity in community garden projects in Ontario.

1. Meaningful consultation – outreach to grassroots organizations from a diversity of communities; involvement in planning of organization and individuals in a democratic and participatory way; community mapping to determine location of garden that is easily accessible;
2. Accessible information and communication – multi-lingual and in multiple formats materials, signage and meetings
3. Accessible, welcoming garden design – designed with differentlyabled people, seniors and other with mobility issues in mind; cognisant of legislated accessibility requirements
4. Inclusive and engaging programming – workshops, speakers and field trips; culturally appropriate; relevant for wider community as well as gardeners;
5. Community empowerment beyond gardening – experience practice and learn democracy; address wider social issues within the community; outdoor community center
6. Encouraging attachment to place – need relatively permanent location; also consistent plot allocation;

*This policy paper was developed by the Community Growing Network with the help of researcher Rebecca Ellis. For the full paper including references to works cited, please go to <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers>.*

#### Network Focus for 2018

- Take leadership on streamlining the interpretations of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA 2016) requirements in different districts when working on municipal lands, and the contrast with private lands to make the standards easier for community gardens to adhere to.
- Seek ways to secure provincial funding for community gardens.
- Encouraging partnerships between different levels of government and institutions to give communities secure access to land.
- Develop programs to assist in development of community land trusts.
- Build meaningful relationships with others. This could be done through going to other communities and events, supporting their work,

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## Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

Community Gardens are closely tied to issues addressed by the Food Justice Network both through inclusive community spaces around food and through increasing access to healthy foods.

The Community Growing Network could seek support from Municipal Food Policy Network where they encounter issues with existing government policies.

While the Farming and Farmland Network is seeking to increase supports for new and young farmers in Ontario, the Community Growing Network has the potential to create new entrants into agriculture who would use these supports.

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## Farming and Farmland Network

Agricultural organizations and other allies coming together to share ideas and knowledge, re-imagine the future, advocate for policy change and other sustainable solutions that support Ontario's farmland, farmers, and food production. Developing recommendations to protect agricultural land and support a viable agricultural system.

## Farmland Preservation

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

The population of Ontario continues to accelerate, which has placed significant development and land use conversion pressures on our limited amount of prime agriculture land. Ontario has instituted several policies, policy statements, and growth strategies in the past two decades making it more challenging to convert farmland use. However, these initiatives remain limited to a patchwork of regional plans or subject to municipal cooperation and interpretation. Furthermore, existing policy does little to regulate the growing phenomena of financial investors purchasing farmland to profit off its increase in value rendering it inaccessible for farmers to own. This workshop seeks to develop a set of policy positions aimed at strengthening Ontario's capacity to preserve farmland for agricultural use, and limit investment, development, and conversion pressures that may result in its degradation.

### Summary of Policy Paper

This policy paper was written to survey the evidence and policy options to inform advocacy to keep Ontario farmland in agricultural production.

#### A) Evidence of Farmland Loss

Ontario has been facing a steady decline in its agricultural land base since the early 1970s. The total amount of land on farms in Ontario has decreased by 11.5% from 1986 to 2016. The amount of land actively in use for crops and pasture has decreased by 8.9% over the same period (over a million acres). Only 5% of the national agricultural land base is considered prime agricultural land (classes 1-3). This trend is especially problematic in Ontario, where 51% of Canada's prime agricultural land is located. Despite this abundance, Ontario only uses about 7% of its best quality (class 1) farmland, with the remainder increasingly being converted to urban development. In total, Ontario saw a 7.2% reduction in the available farmland between 2006 and 2016, which is a yearly rate of loss equal to a quarter the size of Toronto. Ontario is also seeing a decline in farmland accessibility, where socioeconomic pressures of agricultural production (i.e. farm debt, input costs, commodity prices, and farmland values) are increasingly rendering farmland inaccessible to farmers. The challenge of keeping farmland in agricultural production requires addressing both the protection of farmland from conversion as well as ensuring that farming on such land remains viable.

#### B) Drivers of Farmland loss

1. Urban expansion

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- Increasing rates of population growth in urban centers have resulted in the expansion of housing development at the peripheries of cities, which is where most of Ontario's prime agricultural land is located
  2. Decreased Farm viability/ accessibility
    - Farmers are increasingly faced by mounting debt, input and equipment costs, market uncertainty, and property values. These factors make the already diminishing supply of farmland inaccessible to farmers
  3. Land consolidation and severance
    - The consolidation of farmland is when an individual or business purchases a number of agricultural properties to combine into one larger property. Often what follows are severances—when the owner of a farm property has their land broken up into smaller properties, often done to remove surplus housing from the property
  4. Financialization
    - This is where the inputs into the production and distribution of food increasingly become owned by financial entities investing for the purposes of speculative profits
  5. Regressive public expropriation
    - The Federal Government and the Province of Ontario both have powers to compel owners to sell their farmland for purposes deemed to be in the public interest

### C) Regional Difference

The loss of farmland in Ontario is experienced differently in different regions. Its governance also varies based on differing ecological/climatic/geological, socioeconomic, and political contexts in which farmland is located.

1. Geography
  - Measures for farmland preservation needs to take into consideration the diversity of climates, soil-types, pest and wildlife pressures, and water and precipitation in determining the types of agricultural practices and land use designation
2. Socioeconomic
  - Socioeconomic regional differences in Ontario—as they relate to agriculture—have been categorized by Troughton into three geographic zones: the exurban fringe surrounding cities, the hinterland which constitutes Ontario's traditional rural-agricultural territory, and the periphery expanding into remote unincorporated areas. A category for the recently increasing amount of urban agriculture should also be noted.
3. Jurisdictional
  - Categories of land use governance are then determined by the legal jurisdiction of Canada's various levels of government.
    - privately-owned, and located within an incorporated municipality
    - Provincial Crown Lands
    - Federal Crown Lands
    - unceded and unsurrendered or subject to Canada's treaty relationships with First Nations

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## D) Existing Policy Framework

Ontario has historically trailed behind other provinces in terms of implementing measures to preserve farmland. There isn't an explicit imperative to preserve prime agriculture land throughout the province. In fact, to this day, what exists in Ontario is a patchwork of policies governing land use, relying on municipal initiatives and interpretations in the implementation provincially-directed priorities. These policies are outlined below:

- Ontario adopted a Foodland Guidelines policy statement in 1978, which was replaced 1997 by priorities given in Provincial Policy Statements, updated periodically since.
- Farmland preservation in Ontario is governed through the land-use planning process. Municipal land use decisions, however, are subject to appeals by an independent provincial tribunal called the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), which has the power to approve, refuse, or modify decisions in the case of a conflict.
- Ontario has numerous regional land use and growth policies, which are accompanied with implementation plans that inform specific land use priorities in their application.
- The Local Food Act, 2013 also provides some policy support for local food production that impacts land use decision making with recommendations outlined in the Local Food Strategy.
- The Province recently drafted the Places to Grow Plan, 2017 for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Provisions included in the Plan are greater mapping and identification of prime agriculture land, stricter criteria for how development on farmland is permitted, and the requirement for agricultural impact assessments in the approval of development. Consultations have also taken place surrounding the implementation of the proposed Farms Forever Program, where the Province has detailed farmland protection as one of its policy objectives.
- The Provincial Government has recently tabled Bill 139, Building Better Communities and Conserving Watersheds Act, 2017, which is intended to amend the Planning Act to include significant reforms to the current appeals process. The bill, if passed, would create a Local Planning Appeal Tribunal to replace the OMB, supported by a Local Planning Appeal Support Centre. It would also weaken the board/tribunal's ability to interfere in municipal land use decisions, offering planning suggestions rather than overturning rulings (except in the case of a failed second appeal).
- Farmers in Ontario have ability through the Conservation of Land Act, 2005 to place a Conservation Easement on their agricultural property, which is an agreement made between property owners and a conservation body or land trust organization. The terms of the easement then determine permissible forms of land use, which are tied to the title of the property.
- There are also regulations on agricultural practices governed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), such as Minimum Distance of Separation

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(MDS) standards, which requires an easement distance for residential areas from agricultural production facilities to prevent land use conflicts. Such policies are effective at preventing conversion around existing agricultural production facilities. However, these regulations have tended to work against farms located close to residential areas when they seek expansion.

*This policy paper was developed by the Farming and Farmland Network with the help of researcher Christopher Kelly-Bisson. For the full paper including references to works cited, please go to <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.*

## Sustain Ontario Recognizes that...

There are a broad varieties of possible policy change that can impact farmland preservation that range from minor amendments to major overhauls. Below is a list detailing possible policy options categorized by their correspondence to existing policy. The policy options are listed within the categories in order from least to greatest magnitude of change.

1. Stand-Alone Municipal Policy Initiatives
  - a. Promoting greater public awareness for the need to preserve farmland.
  - b. Conduct robust soil mapping studies that take into account a holistic approach to food production, such as the Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study conducted by the City of Ottawa.
  - c. Formation of Agricultural Advisory Committees in municipalities to consult local farmers on farmland use planning.
  - d. Urban temporary-use permits & interim control bylaws so that arable urban land that is currently not in use can be used for food production.
  - e. Review of urban animal control policies to permit livestock production on urban land.
  - f. Development of urban neighbourhood risk-management policies to more easily facilitate the development of urban agriculture on arable urban lands.
  - g. Conduct community growth and improvement plan consultations, and include farmer organizations and food policy councils, to establish best locations for future development.
  - h. Have municipal staff available to educate and facilitate farm succession, and seek-out potential new farmers to the region.
  - i. Zoning Bylaw (ZBL) and Official Plan (OP) amendment to provide greater protection for farmland from conversion and development, and to reflect modern agriculture practices. Greater definition is needed in ZBLs and OPs regarding "small-scale", "minor", and "farm" in order to avoid challenges for small-scale producers in obtaining approval for their operations.
  - j. Identification and inventory of municipally-owned agricultural land
  - k. Active engagement with NPs and farm organizations to assess opportunities to make municipally-owned farmland available for beginning farm programming and operations.
2. Changes to the Planning Act and Growth Plans
  - a. Revise exemptions to categories permitted for severance.

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- b. Requiring provincial approval for farmland conversion, rather than just municipalities.
  - c. Adopt an all-of-government approach, and include farmers organization and development consultation, on Agricultural Systems policy.
  - d. Greater engagement with civil society and industry groups, and clearer indication of what to expect to be included in the Farms Forever Program.
  - e. Establish alternative system of small-scale land tenureship, such as easements, farm incubators, and lease arrangements, to transition new farmers into land ownership.
  - f. Include provisions encouraging municipal policy initiatives in the Provincial Policy Statement and Incentivise good municipal practices with financial assistance in planning and awards.
  - g. Adoption of a province-wide development plan similar to Places to Grow including funding for development of necessary infrastructure.
  - h. Greater policy and financial support for near-urban farmers to ensure their viability, including funding for the rehabilitation of degraded land.
  - i. Revise policies on the development of mining for aggregates to exclude aggregate mining and accompanied land uses from being permitted on agricultural land.
  - j. Greater fiscal support to municipalities to prevent the economic pressures to encourage development.
  - k. Amend Planning Act and include in Provincial Policy Statement the ability for second residences to be built on farmland to accommodate interns and new farmers.
  - l. Expansion of Permanent Agricultural Districts (PAD) throughout Ontario: Involves planning controls, farming support, and property tax incentives similar to the Greater Golden Horseshoe Greenbelt. Combination of measures needs to be well-coordinated. Protects entire regions for agricultural production.
  - m. Institute local ownership capital controls on farmland: Currently used in Quebec and formerly in Saskatchewan. Places limits on the quantity of farmland that can be owned by individuals or entities located outside of Ontario.
  - n. Institute a system of Agricultural Land Reserves (ALR): Currently administered in British Columbia and Quebec. Entails the formation of a public commission or council to govern lands in the reservation with a mandate of promoting agriculture as the primary use.
3. Easements, Land Trusts, Succession, & Tax Incentives
- a. Expansion of urban agriculture tax credits to municipalities throughout Ontario.
  - b. Provide financial support and raise awareness for land trusts & agricultural easements.
  - c. Incentivize the preservation of farmland for its public provision of ecosystem services.
  - d. Develop program to spread awareness about and facilitate process of farm succession planning.
  - e. Extend the same tax benefits between family members to transfer of farm properties to new farmers.
  - f. Include and recognize the work of civil society organizations in the preservation of farmland.

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- g. Develop system of Purchase of Development Rights (PDR): Generally used by municipalities throughout the United States. Entails public compensation to farmland owners for the placement of conservation easements.
4. Agricultural Monitoring, Classification, and Standards
- a. Greater support for the monitoring and analysis of farmland in Ontario. Including studying the impacts of development in proximity to farmland.
  - b. Decouple or nuance assessment of agriculture land from soil quality to account for regions that have a great deal of agriculture taking place on subprime farmland, and farmland that can be rehabilitated.
  - c. Adopt a program that measures soil health / soil organic matter on farms in Ontario every three years, using a robust and consistent methodology. Tie this indicator of soil health directly to financial instruments, such as farmland taxation rates and crop insurance subsidies.
  - d. Revise MDS standards to include different approaches to smaller-scale and alternative mixed-production categories.
  - e. Multiple agricultural land designations should have categories that use firm-scaled setback for small-scale and mixed-use agriculture as an alternative to MDS formula for large-scale livestock production.
  - f. Municipalities could form mixed-use clusters that are exempt from MDS formula.
  - g. Formula could be created to determine minimum farm size appropriate for a series of different categories of agricultural production. Needs to balance the need to keep parcels large enough and in agricultural production in order to prevent development.
5. Federal Policy (note, d. Could be provincial)
- a. Inclusion of the preservation of farmland as a national priority within a National Food Policy, and inclusion of farmland preservation civil society groups and farmer organizations in any food policy councils responsible for its governance.
  - b. Inclusion of farmland preservation as a condition for the availability of funding and access to risk management tools in any future inter-governmental agricultural frameworks.
  - c. Consultation (directed primarily at First Nations in a manner respecting the provision set out in the RCAP and UNDRIP) and accompanying order-in-council for the prioritization of agricultural use of prime agricultural Crown Lands.
  - d. National (or provincial) controls for the ownership of farmland.
  - e. Public expropriation of farmlands under the management of financial investment firms and sovereign wealth funds for the establishment of a national ALR.

## Policy Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The Farming and Farmland Network will analyze the policy options available and seek to identify specific policy goals to focus on in the future.

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## Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

The Sustainable Food Enterprise Network recognizes that need for strong supply networks. This is in support of the Farming and Farmland Network's two priorities of farmland preservation and support for new and young farmers.

The Municipal Food Policy Network has the potential to support the Farming and Farmland Network move some of these potential policy goals forward.

The Community Growing Network's work to secure urban growing space could support efforts to preserve land for food growing in Ontario.

The Food Justice Network could support the Farming and Farmland Network as it seeks to address issues of land which is unceded and unsurrendered or subject to Canada's treaty relationships with First Nations.

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## New and Young Farmers

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

Across the province, the agricultural industry is in a state of flux, as the average age of a farmer steadily increases, farm succession is not guaranteed and the future viability of farming is unknown. For new farmers, significant financial barriers exist related to the cost of equipment, training and farmland. Given the aging farm demographic, the future of farming in Ontario is dependent on a new generation of farmers but these barriers must be addressed and long-term support provided both at the provincial and local level. This session will explore the barriers facing new farmers and provide policy recommendations related to supporting a new generation of farmers and enhancing the long-term viability of the agricultural sector.

### Summary of Policy Paper

The full policy paper explores reasons that have led to the decline in farmers in Ontario, as well as barriers to those seeking to enter into farming.

Agricultural entrepreneurship remains the largest source of self-employment in rural/small-town Canada (Statistics Canada, 2015). However, long term out-migration from farms has eroded the population of farmers in Ontario by 30% between 1991 and 2016, and farmers under 35 dropped by a staggering 64% over the same period.

Along with ongoing attrition in the farming population, the total amount of land on farms in Ontario also decreased by 11.5% from 1986 to 2016. The amount of land actively in use for crops and pasture has decreased by 8.9% over the same period (over a million acres). Farmland loss is explored in depth in the Farmland Preservation policy paper.

Increasing awareness of the real challenges for farm viability, the impact of farm loss on rural economies, as well as the growing consumer “eat local” movement, are early indicators that opportunities exist for creative new farm businesses to thrive with the right support. New entrants of all ages have begun to investigate and pursue farming; however, in Ontario, they have been met with a policy vacuum that does not comprehensively address their needs.

There are three significant challenges that impede the success of new and young farmers: access to land, business financing tools, and knowledge or training. Each of these challenges will be discussed and policy recommendations will be made.

#### 1) Access to Farmland

There is no lack of farmland available in Ontario; however, purchasing a farm has become increasingly difficult for new farmers, unless they have access to significant amounts of capital. The price of farmland has been on the rise across the province, especially in recent years, as shown by data from Farm Credit Canada (see policy paper).

Farmland, at current prices in many parts of the province, can no longer be realistically built into the cost of production of farm products. This makes buying a first farm, plus any capital infrastructure

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needed to operate a new business, very challenging compared to the capital cost of beginning other entrepreneurial businesses. While new entrants coming to farming as a second career may have savings that enable them to purchase a farm, young people seldom do.

Farmland succession is a way for new and young farmers to access land. It is important to note that the success of the farm industry should not be dependent on intergenerational succession, as new entrants can reinvigorate stagnant industries. For farmers not prepared to fully retire or sell their land, partnership arrangements with young or new farmers can benefit both parties. As such, farm succession plans should consider new entrants and work to establish these relationships when a family successor is not easily identified.

In Canada, with the exception of preparedness, there are no significant benefits for a farmer to transfer ownership early. The government of France has, in the past, recognized the benefits of earlier farm succession and sought to increase earlier rates of succession by providing early retirement incentives. Under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), European nations that adopted policies related to early retirement, could provide farmers with a pension for up to ten years, upon the sale of their farm to a farmer under 50 years of age. The goal of this policy was to encourage the transfer of farms to younger generations. Providing a pension to farmers as an incentive measure for farm succession could be implemented in Canada. As a well-defined succession plan influences the future development and success of a farm, policy in support of the early creation of such plans is imperative.

In situations where farmers cannot purchase the land, farmland rental arrangements are often sought and are viewed as a viable land access solution, at least at beginning stages for new entrants and young farmers. Rental arrangements are viewed as mutually beneficial as they provide the property owner with income and the renter with access to farmland. However, in some regions, access to farmland for rental purposes may not be as readily available as in the past. In fact, between 1996 and 2016, the total area of farmland rented decreased by 14% in Ontario

For new and young farmers, farm rentals can provide an opportunity to access land and actively farm; however, in the longer term, almost all farmers want to own the home farm. Moreover, they require long-term access to land when building their businesses. It takes time to become familiar with fields, improve soil, develop infrastructure and processes, and proximity to specific markets may be critical to success. Few farmers want to build a business in one location and then move it to another and start over.

## 2) Access to Business Financing

For new farm entrants, access to capital, as well as operating loans, can be challenging. It can be difficult to find support to develop a business plan for a new farm enterprise; however, a detailed business plan is essential in helping new and young farmers to critically assess their agricultural enterprise and plan for a viable farm endeavour. A few organizations in Ontario offer business planning support for new entrants, including Everdale, Farms at Work, RAIN and Just Food, while most government-funded programs continue to focus on business planning and assessment for existing farms. Even when a solid business plan is in place, many lenders are unwilling to take the risk of funding

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innovative enterprises, preferring to deal with farm businesses that fit into standard models and supply-managed sectors. This is stifling change in the industry, and eliminating a pool of potential purchasers who would keep farmland in production.

Grant funding programs, while important, have their own drawbacks and cannot substitute for long-term relationships with lenders. Grant funds are generally available to farms for specific projects. For example the Agricultural Framework funding (most recently Growing Forward 2) and funder such as the Greenbelt Fund or the Sustainable New Agri-Food Products and Productivity Program (SNAPP) for northern Ontario, while important, are not consistently available, and only a limited number of projects can be funded each year.

### 3) Access to Knowledge and Training

One final challenge facing new and young farmers is knowledge and training. Agriculture tends to be a labour-intensive field that is continually requiring new skills and specialized training to match innovation within the industry. While farm families tend to pass knowledge down through generations, new farm entrants are not exposed to the same mentor relationships. A better understanding of innovative and informal networks of peer-to-peer learning and mentorship that occur outside of formal training environments is necessary and formal mentorship arrangements should be encouraged through policy and facilitated at the local level.

Training programs that provide the transfer of such knowledge from experienced farmers to new and aspiring entrants, is necessary. New entrants seek workshops, conferences, volunteer opportunities, mentorship and informal discussions with other farmers as a means of broadening their knowledge and farm skills. Further, the knowledge new farmers require is not limited to technical skills and includes marketing, financial planning, business planning and management. New farmers have also identified a need for regional-specific training regarding production, business and networks as key to farm viability. Farm organizations that offer such regional services for new farmers include:

- Everdale (GTA): <http://everdale.org/farmertraining/>
- Farms at Work (East Central Ontario): <http://farmsatwork.ca/>
- Just Food (Ottawa): <http://justfood.ca>
- Rural Agri-Innovation Network (Sault Ste Marie, NorthEast Ontario): <http://rainalgoma.ca/rain-agriculture/>

Provincial commodity and production-focused organizations are increasingly interested in how to transfer knowledge to new generations. Other programs, such as CRAFT, encourage farm-level training in concert with on-farm experience.

In Ontario, unpaid farm internships are growing in popularity as an opportunity to gain skills through experiential learning. While the benefits of such arrangements to a new entrant are obvious, they also fill a crucial labour need. For small and medium sized farms, the financial benefits of such unpaid internships are significant and contribute to the resilience of these farms. It is important to note, however, that these agricultural internships, particularly ecological farm internships, tend to be filled by educated, middle class individuals that can better cope with unpaid positions. For other populations,

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particularly those that with lower incomes, including New Canadians with agrarian backgrounds, such programs are not readily accessed. The newly formed Agricultural Youth Green Jobs program is promising to support on-farm learning by supporting paid positions.

*This policy paper was developed by the Farming and Farmland Network with the help of researcher Sara Epp. For the full paper including references to works cited, please go to <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.*

## Sustain Ontario Recognizes that...

Considering the vast changes occurring throughout the agricultural industry in Canada, the future stability and viability of agriculture is dependent on new and young farm entrants. These farmers face significant challenges associated with land access, capital and training which impede their ability to establish a farm. Policy must be established to encourage early succession planning and innovative farming partnerships that provide new and young farmers access to land. As part of this, assistance is needed in accessing capital to purchase and sustain a farm, as well as receiving the training necessary for successful ownership, operation and management. Through such assistance, new and young farmers will be better situated to establish a viable farm enterprise.

## Policy Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The numbered recommendations below are taken from the policy paper, while the lettered bullets are additional related recommendations that emerged during the discussion at Bring Food Home.

1. Policies should be put in place that recognize the strategic significance of farmland in providing food security and ecosystem services to Ontarians. Ownership and control of Ontario's farmland must remain in the hands of Ontario's farmers, and should be immediately protected from further commodification by investors, as well as ownership or control by foreign interests.
2. Retiring farmers and farmland owners should be incentivized to work with new entrants and family members to ease financial access to land and avoid transition under duress.
  - A. Retiring farmers should also be supported provincially in seeking out a suitable farmer to take over their farm.
  - B. Long-term secure tenure for rented farms should be part of the discussion to help encourage land renting as an interim option, however, renting is not the optimal way to access farmland.
3. Qualifying new entrants to farming should be provided with financing options that reduce and/or spread over time the cost of acquiring farmland. These could be tied to business success, to ensure that they are directly related to lasting new farm entrepreneurship. Land trusts could facilitate this process.
  - A. How land trust could be used should be informed by the Ontario Farmland Trust – they have paper in progress

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- B. Land preservation needs a multi-jurisdictional approach, policies at federal and provincial level will empower municipalities. This is considered more completely in the Farmland Preservation policy paper.
  - C. Ontario should consider implementing a system like that in Quebec where a commission must approve all farmland purchases to counter financialization of land.
4. To drive the incubation and commercialization of new farms in Ontario, a funding program should be developed that assists new farmers with the cost of pursuing farm and business training. This program should also assist existing farmers to accelerate or expand their business through training opportunities.
- A. There is a need for regulated and government funded apprenticeships, experienced farmers cannot be expected to pay to train new farmers. Training should be on farm and paid.
  - B. Need to recognize the strengths of the current piecemeal farmer training that exists, and that is rooted in communities and reflects what is best for each region. This system should stay, but needs to be supported
  - C. Consider a Red Seal program for farming? This would open opportunities for OSAP funding.
  - D. Farmer training should happen before a farmer decides if they want to go into business and farm for themselves.
  - E. There is a need for ongoing training before and after starting to farm. 0-10 years is still a new farmer and they continue to require supports.
  - F. Should include support for new comers to Canada, including opportunities for migrant workers to become Canadians.
6. Develop specific recommendations for regional agricultural economic development.

### Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

There is significant overlap between the need for support for new and young farmers and the efforts to secure financing for farmers being done by the Sustainable Food Enterprise Network. Further the Sustainable Food Enterprise Network recognizes the need for strong supply networks for sustainable procurement and this is in support of the Farming and Farmland Network's two priorities of farmland preservation and support for new and young farmers.

There is overlap between the Food Justice Network with regards to supports their identification of a need for support for marginalized and immigrant farmers, food workers and producers and the Farming and Farmland Network's goals of supports for new and young farmers.

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## Municipal Food Policy Network

Sustain Ontario’s Municipal Food Policy Network brings together planners, community organizers, public health professionals, food producers, distributors and other food champions to share ideas and knowledge in order to develop and influence policies at the municipal or regional level. We pool resources and experiences to distill best practices and develop solutions to include food in municipal policy decisions.

## Food Policy Councils: Governance, Success, Challenges

### Policy Discussions at Bring Food Home – Description of Sessions

#### Session 1:

This session covers how local food policy councils across the province are governed, outlining the advantages and disadvantages of each model. This session explores whether food policy councils’ relationship with government affects their ability to maintain core funding, for example. Attendees will be given the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of various food policy councils and network with food policy council members from across the province.

#### Session 2:

The ‘measuring success’ session examines what success means to different food policy councils and aims to help respective food policy councils adopt metrics of success. This session also explores the various challenges facing food policy councils and what this means for food policy council success. Attendees will be given the opportunity to learn about the inner workings of various food policy councils and network with food policy council members from across the province.

## Summary of Policy Paper

Food Secure Canada defines a food policy council (FPC) as “a group of stakeholders from across the food system that meets to discuss and act on food issues.” FPCs have appeared across North America since the 1980’s and many emerged in response to the environmental, health, and social impacts resulting from the dominant agri-food system. A FPC should ideally consist of representatives of each of five main sectors (production, processing, consumption, distribution, and waste recycling) to maximize its influence on the food system.

There is no correct way to organize a FPC as different models have proven to have different advantages and disadvantages. Councils vary in their membership and governance models, priorities, and programming. These differences are usually dictated by sources of funding or lack thereof and geographic limitations.

### A) Session 1 – Relationship with government and what this means?

The aim of the earliest FPCs was to form close relationships with local governments, however over time, and as more FPCs were created, they often came in the form of grassroots or non-governmental organizations. It has been argued that FPCs with closer ties to government are in a good position to make policy recommendations as well as being afforded stability through support and resources

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received. Alternatively, some argue that formal associations with government restrict the ability to propose changes and may restrict some funding options. A tactic that has proven useful for FPCs is having formally designated staff support from government departments or agencies that act as liaisons.

Six different models of food policy council governance in Canada were identified by MacRae & Donahue (2013). These categories are largely dependent on the membership of the council, its funding level and the link it has to government. These categories are:

**Category 1:** Municipality-driven food policy initiatives.

**Category 2:** Hybrid model with direct links to government.

**Category 3:** Hybrid model with indirect links to government.

**Category 4:** Food policy organization linked to government through a secondary agency.

**Category 5:** Civil society organization with limited government funding and participation.

**Category 6:** Civil society organization with no direct government involvement.

Further, MacRae & Donahue (2013) identified the following keys to success for FPCs, regardless of governance model:

- staff and members have extensive knowledge of and expertise in food systems, a sophisticated approach to food system change
- funding that is stable and sufficient for at least a lean organizational effort
- national and provincial networks to share information and best practices and build capacity for food policy work

## I. Interview Results

### Civil Society Governance Model

The three interviewees in this category generally had similar governance models. They all had either government officials or city staff sit on the council that provided some in-kind support. They all felt that the presence of city representatives was helpful as they were able to update the FPC on the discussions had by city council. It also gave them insights and hints on what council is more likely to listen and pay attention to. Two interviewees mentioned that these councillors joined their respective FPCs for political reasons. Thus, finding ‘food champions’ in the form of city councilors is important for FPCs who wish to have government representation on their council. The government representatives act as allies and a link between the city and the FPC, both in a formal and informal manner which could lead to the FPC acquiring more resources but also more legitimacy and political capital. The three interviewees also identified that not having to formally deal with government bureaucracy made projects move faster as they didn’t need to seek approval from others. All FPCs in this category identified the lack of funding as an issue and a limitation to them fulfilling their organizational goals. However, since they receive no municipal funding there is a lot of freedom for the FPC to pursue whatever project they like. It also gives them freedom to apply for funding from any community partners or funding bodies without restriction.

While there are positives and negatives to this model, everyone mentioned that they could use more funding. Whether they would prefer that funding to come from the municipality or other sources

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remains unclear. One FPC which doesn't have any official representation from government mentioned that lack of official representation is an issue and limitation because FPC members have to spend time fostering relationships with elected officials or staff. It is also harder to get institutional buy-in on policy recommendations, for example. Because there are no formal links, city council are under no obligation to pursue or listen to recommendations that a FPC might have.

### Hybrid Governance Model

The two interviewees in this category had indirect funding from the municipal body through allocated time from city staff and official representation from municipal committee members. Similar to their counterparts, they believed that their indirect link with the municipality is an advantage as they are still free to govern and organize themselves however they want. Within a two-year period both FPCs in this category have had their priorities change in one way or another which possibly could have been made more difficult should they be fully funded by a municipal body.

One membership and governance model that stood out was that of The Greater Sudbury Food Policy Council. The council has merged the two by having 'resource members' and 'council members'. "Resource members" are those whose professional work and occupation is related to the work of the council. Those members are often city or regional staff who use their staff time to feed into the work of the FPC. Volunteer members consist of anyone in the community who has time to volunteer to the council.

Another finding that stood out was a revelation by an interviewee who mentioned that the FPC isn't efficient at all. This former FPC chose to rebrand, and detach themselves from the FPC model and merely operate as a volunteer-run non-profit organization doing food advocacy work. The interviewee identified that the group is split into separate working groups. Each working group had a certain issue they were working on and the working group was free to organize themselves as they please, which proved to be more effective, according to the interviewee. It's worth noting that this group has more limited government involvement than the other FPC in this category.

## B) Session 2 – Measuring Success

In an increasingly neoliberal age, funding and resources for work on enhancing food security rates, or for supporting local farmers and other food producers, are often dependent on results from evaluations. For that reason, among others, FPCs ought to strive to document and evaluate their work. If FPCs are seeking funding and are applying for a grant, being able to outline and point to previous successes will greatly benefit the FPC or group. Another benefit is that, as part of a network of food organizations, FPCs can share what works and what doesn't with their peers across their respective networks.

In documenting and evaluating their work, FPCs can have a chance to systematically review their goals and programming to identify if they are aligned with each other and adjust them if necessary. Another reason institutionalizing evaluation can be helpful to FPCs is that the work that often goes unrecognized can be documented. This can help members feel more of a sense of accomplishment, which can strengthen their ties to the council. Finally, since membership of some FPCs is constantly changing, it is

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important to document all the work that is done to retain institutional memory for future members of the council.

Four ways in which to define 'success' or 'failure' with respect to FPCs have been identified:

- 1) in terms of their own goals;
- 2) in terms of the nature and scope of proposals adopted in their local context;
- 3) in terms of their contribution to educating political leaders, government officials and the public on food system issues; and
- 4) in terms of larger and longer-term goals relating to sustainability

Food systems and any interventions within them are inherently complex because of the large number of actors and stakeholders involved. Thus, an ideal mode of evaluation for FPCs would be a systems model. A systems model considers everything in relation to the program, including the intended consequences but also exterior variables are brought into the evaluation frame. However, a systems approach requires more knowledge and understanding of a program's activities which is more expensive financially and effort wise.

A stakeholder focused approach like Utilization Focused Evaluation, developed by Patton (1978), could be helpful. Utilization Focused Evaluation focuses on the goals of the program and how do the outcomes of a program contribute to the original goal or question posed. Adopting this system requires careful planning from the beginning of the program as the goal of the project is central to its evaluation in this model.

The main theory and method of defining success proposed in this paper is the sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA). A livelihood comprises the capacities, assets (material and social) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, while not undermining natural resource base.

The most important resources needed for a sustainable livelihood are:

- 1) Human capital in labour but also skills, experience, knowledge and creativity.
- 2) Natural capital such as land, water, forests, pasture, and minerals.
- 3) Physical capital such as food stocks, including livestock, equipment, tools and machinery.
- 4) Financial capital, which is any economic resource that can be equated with monetary value.
- 5) Social capital specifically, the quality and strength of relations between people in a community.
- 6) Political capital that includes citizenship, membership in political parties, and informal political bases – which help in obtaining or maintaining rights over other assets.

A food systems approach needs to assess the effects on each sector of the food cycle, including but not limited to: food production, processing and packaging, retailing and distributing, and consumption. All of these processes have potential to affect the six modes of capital mentioned above that are needed for a sustainable livelihood.

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Evaluation typically focuses on results, however processes can also be evaluated as they can be beneficial. One easy criteria for FPCs to evaluate processes relates to the enhancement of social capital around the food system. Measuring social capital could be an asset to FPCs. It's also an effective way of influencing funders and policy makers as these institutions prefer to invest scarce resources in activities that can be measured and that have tangible outcomes. As the effect and shape of social capital is very context specific, a one size fits all measurement impact is not recommended as it can lead to misleading or loose results. Two methods of measuring social capital are social network mapping and free-form storytelling. "Social network analysis assumes that relationships are important. It maps and measures formal and informal relationships to understand what facilitates or impedes the knowledge flows that bind interacting units".

While we mentioned that standardized evaluation criteria could lead to loose results, there are tools that exist such as the "Get it Tooltogether: Assessing Your Food Council's Ability to Do Policy Work" developed by Palmer & Calancie (2017). This tool can be helpful should a policy council want to be evaluated solely on their ability to achieve policies. The authors note that should a group's focus expand beyond policy work, that this tool is not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation for all of the group's work.

If evaluation is something a FPC is interested in, some quick common evaluation metrics which can be done collectively according to the interviewees include measuring:

- i) Media mentions;
- ii) Mentions of the FPC during city council meetings;
- iii) Public event attendance;
- iv) Volunteer hours, in-kind hours (used to apply for grants);
- v) Changes in bylaws and plans from year to year related to food.

### Suggested Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

- Continue sharing relevant resources through the Sustain Ontario Food Initiatives Greenhouse;
- Create resources that educate and enable Food Policy Councils to speak policy and government language;
- Create a checklist of things and resources to be considered for the effective running of a Food Policy Council;
- Create a video or webinar for new Food Policy Council members to inform them how councils are run and what the potential goals/work done could be;
- Recognize the similarities in key priorities across geographical regions so that Food Policy Councils can work together to affect policy change at a provincial level;
- Addressing issues of urban sprawl.

### Network Focus for 2018

In this election year, the Municipal Food Policy Network will focus on the following goals:

- 
- Creating a social media strategy that can be implemented by different organization about how to reach candidates.
  - Identifying and compiling talking points, questions, or other materials that could be shared with candidates.
  - Building upon work from prior election strategies (e.g., Vote On Food) and FSC community kitchen table meetings
  - Bridging the rural /urban divide as per the work done by the Community Growing Network.

### Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

The Municipal Food Policy Research Network members have the potential to support policy goals that are brought forward by any of the other networks to their individual councils.

The Edible Education Network is also considering how to evaluate their work, including considering what would be important to measure and how best to communicate their findings in order to use their evaluations for advocacy work.

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## Edible Education Network

Across Ontario people are doing great work to connect children and youth with good food. This network (previously known as the Children and Youth Food Network) has been established to bring these groups together to share resources, ideas, and experience, to work together on advocacy, and to make it easier for people across Ontario to get children and youth eating, growing, cooking, celebrating, and learning about healthy, local and sustainably produced food..

## Enhancing Local/Regional Collaboration to Support Good Food for Children and Youth

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

Groups that are connecting children and youth with healthy food systems are coming together in many regions across Ontario to learn about each other’s activities, align efforts, and even form local networks. Participants at this working session will hear short presentations about some of the efforts that are taking place and then will have the opportunity to consider how they could enhance collaboration within their own region of Ontario. The session will explore questions such as: What opportunities exist to support local collaboration relating to good food for children and youth? How have other regions collaborated on issues such as local advocacy, professional development for teachers, networking, and information sharing? What types of networks exist that could be modeled and learned from? Could a collective impact framework be useful for local/regional groups to apply? How could Sustain Ontario’s Edible Education Network support more local/regional collaboration?

### Summary of Policy Paper

All of the information in this background document has been sourced from:

**Network Weaver Handbook: A Guide to Transformational Networks**, written by June Holley. Published by Network Weaving Publishing, Athens, Ohio, USA, February 2012.

The handbook is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. Visit [www.networkweaver.com](http://www.networkweaver.com) for more information.

### Definitions

**Intentional Network:** a network of people and organizations that are working on the same issue or vision, together with structures that have been created to mobilize the energy of these organizations

**Formal Intentional Network:** a set of organizations comes together and creates a new organization or a set of agreements about membership, governance, and goals. Formal intentional networks have clear boundaries and purpose.

**Informal Network:** many intentional networks are informally organized. This means that they do not have a membership, they don’t meet as a whole network, and they don’t have a set agreed-upon purpose. Those who belong to the network may simply share information and self-organize into action

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clusters to work on different projects. An informal structure may be an excellent model for networks that put an emphasis on breakthroughs, innovation, and going viral. These networks work when many people take the initiative to organize different projects to experiment and discover what works.

## Types of Networks

**Movements:** Movements happen when networks of people raise issues to the public and often political attention. Movements are often informally structured and tend to be made up of a variety of different networks that are working towards common aims. (e.g. the women's movement)

**Advocacy Networks:** An advocacy network is a collaboration of individuals and groups that are advocating for specific goals and are taking action around a specific issue. These tend to be informally structured. They can be identified as SPIN networks – Segmentary (many diverse & changing groups); Polycentric (multiple, often temporary, sometimes competing leaders / centres of influence); Networked (multiple linkages including speaking tours, joint activities, common reading matter). (e.g. women's right to vote)

**Coalitions/campaigns:** These are very tightly defined advocacy networks with clear membership that form to advocate for a specific policy initiative. These tend to be formally structured and members need to agree on a clearly defined set of objectives. Coalitions are often short-term and often organize campaigns as a means to achieve what they are asking for.

**System Development Networks:** Rather than raising issues and changing policy related to identified problems (as is typically done by advocacy network), these networks focus on developing a new system. (e.g. farmers working to develop new distribution systems; community gardens). These networks typically focus on experimentation, innovation, and engagement.

**Multiscalar Networks:** When System Development Networks include horizontal networks (i.e. when regional / local networks encourage small self-organizing groups to implement opportunity-driven projects) and vertical networks (linked regionally / nationally to learn from each other and to work on policy and new infrastructure).

## Network Focus

A network typically chooses a focal point to rally its work. This focal point is usually one of the following:

- An issue (e.g. food policy)
- A problem (e.g. hunger)
- A geography (e.g. a neighbourhood network)
- A system (e.g. a sustainable food economy)
- A vision (e.g. healthy eating)

## Network Function

It is valuable when a network identifies its key functions and what types of activities it will take on to achieve its purposes. A network can seek to achieve many different functions including one or more of:

- Sharing information
- Coordinating action, events or services
- Organizing joint training and skill-building
- Setting up joint purposes
- Organizing joint research
- Organizing joint learning
- Forming a joint publicity or educational campaign
- Setting up a joint referral system
- Developing a joint brand, standards or criteria
- Developing new collaborative programs or services
- Moving a policy or advocacy agenda forward
- Advocating for a specific group or issue
- Generating new system elements: programs, services, activities, institutions, etc...
- Engaging stakeholders or mobilizing a base
- Generating innovation and breakthroughs for the field

These can be loosely structured as:

- Networks that have Light Functions (such as sharing information or holding a joint training event). These activities are typically low-risk. What is needed is clear coordination by an individual or small group. These can be a great place for a network to start to build trust and relationships.
- Networks that require explicit agreement (about a brand, message, or campaign) can be referred to as One Front Functions as they need to move forward in a united way. Clarity about membership, commitment and principles are essential.
- Networks that are more about Engagement and Experimentation. In this case subsets of the network are trying out new approaches or developing new parts of a system. A network can connect people and make sure that different activities fit together and add up to something.

## Network Structure and Governance

“Networks are different than organizations: there is no boss who can fire members if they don’t do their job, there are no weekly staff meetings to ensure that the communication and learning are taking place, and there are no teams or departments to organize the work and distribute funds. This means that networks need to create an explicit support network that ensures accountability, makes sure communication is happening, and supports leadership and action.”

There are 3 basic types of network structure:

1. **Organization-Like Network Structure:** These networks function very much like an organization. People join the network and make financial and time commitments. They engage in goal-setting and planning processes (often by a governing board). Work is accomplished through committees or task forces. A challenge of these types of networks is that they sometimes have difficulty engaging members and so they benefit from building relationships among members, increasing opportunities for input, and spending time distributing work. Organization-like networks need to agree on:
  - Purpose
  - Guiding principles
  - Goals
  - Membership
  - Operations
  - Planning or prioritization
  - Governance
  - Action
  - Money / resources

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2. **Self-Organized Networks:** These networks are very loosely structured and operate in a decentralized way. Decision-making is located in the many self-organized projects that emerge. This is often the case for System Development Networks. Some of these networks offer an online platform for discussion as their main contribution. Others are more structured but still have no membership: those who want to initiate projects are part of the network. These can include monthly meet-ups or joint projects among members. These networks are most effective when many people in the network work to foster relationships and make sure that support systems are set up.

Self-organized networks depend on some people to guide the network and provide aspects such as:

- A catalyzing function
- Training and support for those who want to build and connect the network
- Coaching for self-organized projects
- System mapping and identification of opportunities
- Venues for reflection
- Social web training

3. **Hybrid Network:** This model is adopted for the majority of networks. Network facilitators organize the work of the network so that people within the network can take initiative. These networks may or may not have a membership or a governing board.

Hybrid network needs to select thoughtfully from the above elements. Minimum specifications include:

- Purpose
- Guiding principles
- System mapping and prioritization
- Working groups
- Innovation fund for supporting decentralized action

### Leadership Roles that Support a Network

**Network Connectors:** These people identify aspects of the network that are undeveloped and work to link and connect people (e.g. introduce people to each other who can collaborate – such as an academic with a population that they are trying to research and support). The network connector also looks for clusters of people who are not connected (e.g. teachers and not-for-profits).

**Network Facilitator:** This role involves helping a group of people with a common interest set up a more formal structure. The network facilitator is involved in:

- a. Catalyzing the network, which can happen by providing information about networks; helping people see the benefits of a network approach; and bringing people together to help the group map and understand the network.
- b. Supporting the network in developing an appropriate structure and terms of reference.

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- c. Coordinating the network, which can include bringing network members together to accomplish tasks, providing social media outreach, organizing action by developing and regularly revising a plan, and helping members organize projects.
  - d. Helping network members build and strengthen relationships of trust and understanding. A network should be able to clearly frame its values. Every meeting and call can include relationship-building activities.

Most networks hire a network facilitator to coordinate the network. The facilitator needs to have skills in meeting facilitation, agenda development, listening, negotiation and persuasion, conflict resolution, planning and prioritization, reporting, and social web skills for communication.

**Project Coordinator:** This role is valuable once enough people have become connected and have started self-organizing. This person can:

- a. Be a project catalyst (i.e. help the group organize itself)
- b. Coordinate projects in a way that is transparent so that others in the group can see what's happening
- c. Be a project coach – i.e. help interested people become strong project coordinators

**Network Guardian:** This role takes a broad perspective to pay attention to the network and help determine what the network needs (e.g. what is going well, what are the challenges, are resources flowing well and fairly). Network guardians also notice and take action to help networks develop systems (communication and engagement, support for network weavers, fair access to resources, and reflection and integration).

## Forming a Network

There are two activities that are critical to forming a network. The first is to determine the structure of the network. BUT it's just as important to spend time helping people build relationships that will help them make decisions together. Successful networks start by helping people get to know each other and help them gain a deeper understanding of the issue they're working on. Often this starts when certain people act as network weavers by starting to connect people in the network, two and three at a time.

Other times a network catalyst may bring everyone together to facilitate discussion on the issue. These 2 activities are sometimes pursued by two separate working groups.

“When a network decides to completely determine its structure before doing anything else, it is often condemning itself to failure, since the structuring process can drag on for years and momentum for working on the issue may be lost.” Rather than spend much time on structure, some networks choose instead to make as few decisions together as a whole network as possible. However, all networks can benefit from developing Ground Rules for Interaction.

## Key Strategies to Develop and Strengthen Networks

**1. Map the network.** This involves visually mapping relationships within the network in a way that enables members to take responsibility for improving it. Mapping can be done by hand (sticky notes on a big sheet of paper) or electronically using a software tool such as <https://bubbl.us/> or

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<https://kumu.io/>. This will let the group see who is connected to the core of the network, how strong those connections are, and who are at the periphery that could be better connected. The group can then ask questions such as whether all stakeholders are at the table, if there are any isolated groups, and who else needs to be brought into the network.

2. **Develop Term of References (TORs) for the Network** to guide the governance structure (see the network structure section above).

3) **Close triangles.** This involves connecting two individuals so that these people can collaborate on their own. This can be a first step in getting more people to initiate and implement action. It is particularly important to use this method to bring new people in, to connect clusters, and to connect people with little access to power to those who can open doors.

4) **Implement action projects.** Right from the start, while the network structure is still developing, it can be useful to experiment with network action whether by developing an action plan or taking on activities of interest. Networks that seek to take action can be very effective when they focus “on opportunities and leverage points that have the greatest chance of making a difference.

Spending time on drawing and understanding the system you are trying to change and then identifying areas where focused action would make the most difference right now can lead to substantial change in a short period of time.” Taking action can involve setting up ‘twosies’ – two people who can work together to take something on – or sub-groups that can draw others in and report back to the larger network. A critical part of a network is to make sure that there are systems in place for this type of self-organizing. “Self-organizing is, without a doubt, the aspect of networks that is most likely to bring transformation.” “When self-organizing is encouraged and supported, many more people will initiate collaborative projects.”

5) **Train members in network building/weaving.** Right from the start, those who are developing the network can gather and share information about networks and how to strengthen them. A key part of building a network can be to keep extending this training to others.

## Overlap with Other Networks

All other Sustain Network’s and member organizations could benefit from this information about networks.

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## From Evaluation to Advocacy: Making the Case for Good Food Programs for Children and Youth

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

This working session will follow from the “Evaluation and Making the Case for Good Food Programs for Children and Youth” presentation session to allow participants to explore in more depth how we can collaborate to make a stronger case for good food programs for children and youth. The session will explore what tools, resources and knowledge we already have and know and where significant gaps exist that we could work to fill in collaboration with each other.

### Summary of Policy Paper

The following list shows some existing initiatives along the continuum from evaluation to making the case (primarily Ontario-based) and offers some ideas about how we, as a movement, can work together to strengthen aspects along the continuum.

First the paper explored, capacity in terms of the training required for evaluation, determining the best metrics for measurement and tools for evaluation. Next there is a discussion of the available evidence to date, and its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, current efforts and needs to communicate findings will be discussed.

#### Capacity – Training:

Are we ready to perform evaluation that can support our sector to do advocacy for good food programs for children and youth?

Have those involved been trained in evaluation, including purposes and methods?

#### Examples of existing initiatives / knowledge:

- The Growing Out: Evaluation and Impact Youth-Grown Tools project (led by Sustain Ontario and FoodShare) is intended to empower youth who participate in food programs throughout Ontario to evaluate and share their experiences of the impacts and processes of these projects, in ways that are authentic to them. A part of this project is training youth evaluators.
- Canadian Evaluation Society: Essential Skills Series - <http://www.evaluationontario.ca/professional-development/upcoming-events/essentialskills-series/>
- Ontario Not-for-Profit Network Evaluation Resources Site - <http://theonn.ca/ourwork/our-structures/evaluation/>
- Liberating Structures (US) - <http://www.liberatingstructures.com>

#### Capacity – Metrics:

Have priority outcomes been agreed upon that are worth consistent measurement?

Do we know what to measure? Do we have the right language / categories to measure? Have we developed a logic model to elaborate our theory of change?

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### Examples of existing initiatives / knowledge:

- **The Ontario Society for Nutrition Professionals in Public Health (OSNPPH)** has been undertaking a process as a part of a Locally Driven Collaborative Project to develop a tool for measuring food literacy and its attributes within the context of public health practice. The project has recently undergone a broad public process to define and prioritize food literacy attributes. The project's aim is to develop a tool that public health professionals can use to assess food literacy levels and evaluate any work that is being done in the community and schools.
- **PGP Evaluation Project:** Sustain Ontario, Eco-Ethnomics and FoodShare partnered to review evaluation projects and tools and build a Collective Impact Map for Ontario's Food Movement. This collective impact map was developed with input from hundreds of sector stakeholders and communicates many child & youth-focused indicators and outcomes.
- **The Ontario Food and Nutrition Strategy** is an expert and evidence-informed plan for healthy food and food systems in Ontario. While the OFNS has not identified priority outcomes, it has established a number of broad goals to work towards along with directions and action areas, many of which focus on children and youth.
- **Evaluation for Transformation:** A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School (US): This document provides an evaluation framework for farm to school. It aims to help move collective Farm to School work forward "by identifying practices and policies that have demonstrated benefits and by recommending areas for additional exploration." It is also intended to guide "how sites consistently articulate and implement program elements, evaluate efforts and report on outcomes". Table 26 (beginning on page 91) has a summary table of priority outcomes that have been identified using a collaborative process.

### Capacity – Evaluation:

Are strong tools available to perform evaluation? (Survey instruments, interview or focus group schedules, appropriate software, etc...)

### Examples of existing initiatives / knowledge:

Groups and projects across Ontario have been performing evaluations to assess their programs. These have not been collected or compiled.

- **Evaluation for Transformation:** A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School (US): Links to sample tools for some of the measures (see Appendix 5). A fuller repository of Farm to School evaluation tools is available at [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org).
- **Bearing Fruit:** Farm to School Program Evaluation Resources and Recommendations (US): This resource is a resource guide for planning farm to school evaluation. The report includes a compilation of farm to school evaluations and tools to conduct evaluations (in the appendix). It provides a summary of key evaluation results from farm to school projects.

### Evidence:

What findings are available?

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Are these results based on strong studies? Are these easily accessible? Have they been gathered in one place? Do we need additional information to make our case?

#### Examples of existing initiatives / knowledge:

- The Ontario Edible Education Network website shares a summary of impacts relating to good food education for children and youth. These include primarily US data from peer reviewed journals.
- Food Secure Canada's Coalition for Healthy School Food's position paper points to the positive impacts of meal programs. The Coalition will soon be releasing a more extensive research paper relating to impacts and best practices of school food programs.
- Farm to Cafeteria Canada will soon release a "Benefits of Farm to School in Canada" factsheet summarizing scholarly and/or grey literature exploring outcomes in Canadian schools.
- Feeding our Future offers the results of an evaluation of the effects of a Universal-Free School Breakfast Program in the Toronto District School Board.
- Many groups across Ontario have been performing their own evaluations.
- Evaluation for Transformation: A Cross-Sectoral Evaluation Framework for Farm to School (US): provides many references

#### Communications:

Have publicly available tools been developed to communicate the existing evidence to the appropriate decision-makers / funders? (infographics, videos, key messages, etc.)

Do we have a common language to communicate our messages? Are we using language that matters to key decision makers (e.g. school boards, the Ontario Ministry of Education, etc...)?

Do we have the needed stakeholders involved in this issue? Should we be linking with environmental education, Community Food Centres, and other intersecting movements in this effort?

#### Examples of existing initiatives / knowledge:

- Sustain Ontario's Say Yes! to Good Food in Schools materials include briefs, key messages and case studies. These tools can be used and adapted to help others make the case for good food in schools.
- A broader Say Yes! campaign and tools are being developed by the Coalition for Healthy

School Food to help everyone make the case for good food in schools.

- Groups have been making submissions to the Government of Ontario. The Ontario Edible Education Network's submissions to the Ontario government are available online.

### Suggested Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The following were presented and discussed as ideas for future initiatives at Bring Food Home.

#### For Capacity:

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- Evaluation webinars / trainings to develop strong tools and methods (Evaluation 101)
  - Online evaluation toolkit on the Greenhouse
  - Identify and make use of assessment measures from government strategies such as:
    - Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario (with its 4 goals of Achieving Excellence, Ensuring Equity, Promoting Well-Being and Enhancing Public Confidence).
    - Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy
    - Food literacy goals set by OMAFRA
  - Develop an evaluation toolkit with examples/links to tools and methods that others can use to evaluate programs in a meaningful way
  - Share software recommendations and tracking tools.

#### For Evidence:

- How could we better point to, collect, and/or communicate evidence / findings?
- Common projects from across Ontario could come together to work on a common evaluation project.
- There is a need for data that demonstrates behavioural change. It would be valuable to study if the changes are long term or short term.

#### For Communication:

- We need to think about what motivates policy change.
- Broaden the Say Yes! campaign. It would be valuable to expand the Say Yes! to Good Food in Schools advocacy campaign AND to train people to be able to communicate / do advocacy work effectively using the Say Yes! materials. It would also be valuable to share tools to allow people to capture and measure outcomes.
- Compile stats from other programs (existing info) regarding food and children that might inspire people. This could also be used to support conversations on how to shift the stats.
- Connect the stories of impact in communities across Ontario to the supporting research and data. This can bring to life the visions we have for school food and the impact that programs have on the health and well-being of students across Ontario.

### Overlap with Other Networks

The Municipal Food Policy Research Network has also been looking at ways which they could evaluate their work, including what to measure and what it means to be successful.

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## Working with School Boards to Advance Good Food in Schools

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

This session will follow from the “How to Work with School Boards to Advance Good Food in Schools” presentation session. It will engage participants in discussion about how to support school food champions to work and communicate more effectively with school boards. The session will provide time for participants to ask questions of each other and will engage everyone in discussion about what tools, resources and knowledge we already have and know and where significant gaps exist that we could work to fill in collaboration with each other.

The session may explore questions such as: “At what levels are people working with school boards? What are they doing?” “What role can the Edible Education Network play to support this issue?” “How can we continue to collaborate and share information?”

### Summary of Policy Paper

Across Ontario communities are working to advance healthy school food environments, often relying on school board approval and support. This is the case across issues including: establishing and maintaining school gardens, bringing educational programs into the classroom, local food procurement in cafeterias, cooking programs, integrating Student Nutrition Programs into the curriculum, and field trips to local farms and community gardens.

Members of the Ontario Edible Education Network, who are championing these types of initiatives, have repeatedly commented on their need for help with school board advocacy.

- How can they navigate school board culture?
- How can champions effectively make their case to improve the health and wellbeing of children and youth through a range of school food programs and initiatives?

### Presentations

The following are descriptions of presentations made at Bring Food Home with regards to working with school board.

**Presentation 1: Sunday Harrison (Green Thumbs Growing Kids in Toronto)** presented a brief background about school boards in Ontario and the scope of GTGK’s work. School boards are responsible for determining their own policies; however, most do not have policies relating to good food. There is more policy at the provincial level; however, food policy seems to be limited to PPM 150. This means that there are typically no agreed upon metrics or assessment and no budget for this kind of work. There is typically no dedicated funding for school grounds as instructional spaces (no grants tied to student learning). Sunday offered a number of tips for working with school boards including: Policy is important but relationships with key people at schools and boards are critical. Find champions! Winning projects will fit into policies.

**Presentation 2: Kim McGibbon (Roots to Harvest in Thunder Bay)** spoke about the Get Fresh Café initiative. They started with Farm to Caf programs once a month (cooking in the classroom and serving

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the cafeteria) and have now scaled up to serving these meals every day in one school as a pilot (Thanks to Greenbelt Fund funding). The cafeteria provides daily meals cooked by staff with help from food and nutrition classes – pizza dough, muffin mixes, soup bases, sauces, croutons. They spent years building relationships with the school board to get the necessary buy in to support healthy food for kids. They also needed to build relationships with the chef, cafeteria staff, parents, students, and all other stakeholders. More information about the project and an inspiring video are available at <http://www.rootstoharvest.org/education.html>.

**Presentation 3: Jen Coorsh (Growing up Organic (GUO) in Ottawa)** spoke about GUO's work establishing and supporting school gardens in the Ottawa area and their current partnership with the OCDSB. They built a strong relationship with the school board in part through a GUO advisory committee that met monthly; a member of the school board was on the advisory. It is important to understand school boards and their interests. GUO helps to support: Curriculum connections by helping create conditions for learning; Inquiry-based and student-led learning (for example, gardening is a critical entry point for learning); Flexibility and personalization (i.e. flexible programming that responds to the unique needs of the school); and Helping to connect students to the world around them through gardening and food. It is also important to think about links to a school board's strategic plan and exit outcomes when making the case for good food programming.

**Presentation 4: Britt McKee (Ecosource in Mississauga)** spoke about a number of Ecosource's initiatives that have been achieved in collaboration with school boards. Alternative Avenues to Local Food in School: Ingredients for Success provides tips to bring more local food into school settings. Tips include: Find the win-win (what can all sides buy into); Start with a pilot and then scale up; Provide communication support, training for staff, and bring people together in facilitation dialogue; Partner up with other organizations that have funding. The following are some key elements for partnerships with school boards: Plan early - months/years; Champions are key but you need the right person.

## Suggested Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The Network has come up with the following ideas for tools that could help champions to advance good food in schools:

**1) Examples of School Board Policies that Model Healthy Food Environments:** We would like to document and share some model school board policies so that anyone who is approaching their own board can refer to existing examples.

- The model policies should cover a range of issues (school gardens, local food procurement, curriculum links, etc.).
- Ontario-specific examples are the ideal to have at hand though we may expand this to Canadian examples or broader (if no local examples are available).
- This could include a tip sheet with some discussion about how groups might make use of the policy/policy language to inspire their own school board to adopt such a shift.

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2) **Tip Sheet:** This would be a general info sheet about how school boards work, what motivates them, how to best approach and work with them, etc. It would include stories from those who have had successful partnerships with school boards relating to good food programs.

Ideas include:

- Find an internal champion
- Link into programs with significant funding attached (e.g. SHSM).
- Speak their language (e.g. current conversations are about student wellbeing,

Innovation, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship (ICE) training,

3) **Pocket Guide to address common school board concerns:** This would be a guide about how to answer common concerns of school boards, facilities managers, public health etc... and how to mitigate any of the common risks that are identified.

Different focuses might include:

- Local Food procurement (cafeterias, parent-led meal services, hospitality programs, catering...)
- Gardens
- Food Skills / Culinary programs
- Curriculum (i.e. getting into the classroom)

## Overlap with Other Networks

These resources could also be used by the Community Growing Network in order to work with school boards to establish gardens on school property.

These resources could also be used by the Sustainable Food Enterprise Network in order to work with school boards to encourage sustainable procurement in schools.

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## Food Justice Network

Organizations working together in solidarity for food justice within the province of Ontario. Looking at a just and sustainable food system that is rooted in food sovereignty.

## Building Understanding and Awareness About Systemic Inequities in our Food System

### Policy Discussion at Bring Food Home – Description of Session

Sustain Ontario's Food Justice Network is committed to building understanding and awareness about systemic inequities in our food system. As well, we are working toward solutions that will improve access to food in Ontario and the resources required to grow, gather, and consume it. At Sustain Ontario's Bring Food Home conference, the Food Justice Network will be hosting sessions dedicated to identifying and analyzing systemic inequities in food and agriculture, while prioritizing space for communities most affected by oppression and injustice in the food system.

### Summary of Policy Paper

Following from longstanding racial and environmental justice (EJ) research and activism, “food justice seeks to ensure that the benefits and risks of where, what and how food is grown, produced, transported, distributed, accessed and eaten are shared fairly. Food justice (FJ) includes issues often ignored by more privileged groups and movements in the food system, such as food worker rights, affordability of healthy, sustainably produced food, economic justice, the role of the military and the criminal justice system in maintaining racial and economic injustice, and specifically seeing these issues as deeply connected to the food system.

A central feature of the food justice movement is that it emphasizes the role of race in its critique of, and solutions to, problems in the food system. Racial equity, requires empowerment-based social change that directly confronts cultural, political and economic marginalization.

In the Canadian context, issues of food justice must be placed within a broader structure and understanding of settler colonialism, as settler colonialism is the foundation upon which land and food systems have evolved. Settler colonialism should be understood as a structure and not an event, whose patterns and logics are sustained today, and done so to maintain white settler (social, cultural, and material) domination.

Concerning food specifically, the settler colonial government (the same government posed to establish a national food policy) continues to suppress Indigenous agrarianism and other forms of food gathering. Since European contact, nearly all forms of Indigenous food growing, gathering, and trading have been banned. Meanwhile, Indigenous peoples have been prohibited from practicing colonial forms of farming and have been restricted from accessing the land and resources it requires. At the same time, Indigenous land dispossession allowed for the white, male-centered system of “conventional” agriculture to be established—land that was not the Crown's to give away to white-European immigrants in the first place.

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Meanwhile, Canada has concurrently been built on a system of racial hierarchy more broadly, which is expressed clearly through our immigration system and the longstanding exploitation of racialized immigrant labour. Concerning food provisioning specifically, racialized labour exploitation manifests acutely through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP). Current research “identifies the SAWP as a legally sanctioned form of labor unfreedom”, because the worker is only authorized to provide labour to the assigned employer. Furthermore, SAWP workers have no formal route to permanent residency.

A central issue concerning FJ in practice is that, as it has increasingly been adopted in U.S. food movements, it has become fused or conflated with—and even dissolved under—more institutionally legitimized concepts of food access, security and local food. Specifically, more common, or mainstream food movements in the U.S. and Canada—such as local food movements, farmers markets, food banks, and food access initiatives more broadly—often have an optimistically reformist view of the state, wherein they see public health and government-led agri-food, and environmental programs as central to the goal of food security. A central concern being that these food movements are commonly led by white and/or economically privileged identities. It is not surprising then that those with privilege would view the state as an ally, or at least as capable of, and essential to supporting sustainable food systems of ‘all’.

From a food justice lens, the solutions are in the communities, and are context specific. Therefore, big policy ‘solutions’ should be defined by those most affected, while ensuring communities are supported to create the solutions that work for them. The point being, those most marginalized should be prioritized when discussing food system solutions, and such discussions should focus on localized communities concurrent with communities of identity.

Additionally, within the structure of settler colonialism in Canada, alternative modes of governance must be considered, and such consideration should specifically include the role of land repatriation. Such efforts ought to thus prioritize shifts toward Indigenous governance structures. Of course, Indigenous governance structures are not monolithic, and differ based on the nation/community and their specific relation to their lands and water. In effect, these processes, and their relationship to settler institutions and authorities, are for Indigenous nations/communities to direct and determine for themselves.

## Food Justice Work

A food justice lens focuses on root causes, transformational change, and promotes systemic solutions rooted in equity. Taking from energy justice, food justice should also be rooted in tenets of:

**Distributional justice:** Focuses on land, resources, labour, and ecological systems more generally. Currently, the distribution of the benefits and ills of our food system are significantly unequal. FJ calls for fair distribution of benefits for all members of society regardless of income, race, etc alongside the dismantling of environmental ills.

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**Procedural justice:** Demands equitable procedures that engages those most affected by a project/process/action in a meaningful and ongoing way. A central component of both food justice and food sovereignty is community decision-making power over food systems.

**Recognition justice:** Recognition justice is more than tolerance, and states that individuals must be fairly represented, that they must be free from physical threats and that they must be offered complete and equal political rights. But, some argue that recognition may often not go far enough. Especially concerning Indigenous sovereignty, rooting justice in the politics of recognition assumes a set of powers onto the settler colonial state, and relies on this state formation to acknowledge and uphold Indigenous sovereignty and rights. Therefore, Indigenous resurgence combined with settler reckoning may be a better means to envision 'recognition justice' moving forward.

FJ work ranges in scale and scope, from grassroots organizing and programming, to policy development, advocacy and activism. Slocum and Cadieux (2015) identify 4 broad areas through which food justice organizing and action may occur:

1. Acknowledging and confronting historical, collective social trauma and persistent race, gender, and class inequalities.
2. Designing exchange mechanisms that build communal reliance and control. Most obviously, this includes various co-operative and community supported networks and models. Food and agricultural exchange co-ops include models across the food system (from production to retail). That said, it is still unclear about the extent to which CSA's and co-ops are able to address socio-economic inequalities in food and land access, especially concerning marginalized groups.
3. Creating innovative ways to control, use, share, own, manage and conceive of land, and ecologies in general, that place them outside the speculative market and the rationale of extraction.
4. Pursuing labour relations that guarantee a minimum income and are neither alienating nor dependent on (unpaid) social reproduction by women.

*This policy paper was developed by the Food Justice Network with the help of researcher Sarah Rotz. For the full paper including references to works cited, please go to <http://bringfoodhome.com/bfh-papers/>.*

## Goals for Sustain Ontario

The following are suggestions that were raised in discussion at Bring Food Home as ways that Sustain Ontario could apply FJ:

- Encourage a shift from food justice as a topic to food justice as a lens that is integrated across all networks/issues. Consider what these principles should look like and how they could be applied to each of Sustain Ontario's networks.
- Consider how Sustain can build sustained relationships and collaborations with those most affected so that marginalized voices are included and centered when quick policy/interventions/briefs/letters of endorsement need to be developed and delivered.

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- How do we gather those voices and keep them close? Consider if there is a way to push back against rigid timelines to ensure our members are meaningfully consulted about an issue.
- Need to secure funding in order to break down barriers to participation for marginalized folks (e.g. child care, conference costs, etc.). This includes ensuring that food justice education and training, which is often borne by marginalized folks, is compensated. Consideration should be given to how the Bring Food Home conference can be made more accessible in the future.
  - Sustain ought to review Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations as a Board and to think more broadly and concretely about ways to decolonize Sustain.
  - Allow for a focus on alternative forms of knowledge transfer/transmission: e.g. conversational learning, storytelling, artistic, etc.
  - Seek ways to build cohesion with other organizations to collaborate for grants and briefings so that we are not scrambling at the last minute before deadlines.

### Policy Goals for Network and Sustain Ontario

The following policy goals arose in discussion at Bring Food Home. While the Food Justice Network has not yet determined a policy direction on these goals, they may be considered by the network in the future.

- Determine how food justice can intervene on current regulations. E.g. the ‘Ontario Food Premises Regulation’.
- Seek to better connect with immigrant groups and organizations and to develop recommendations to support immigrant food growers and suppliers.
- Identify ways that farmers and food activist organizations can build relationships and collaborations with Indigenous land and treaty defenders. How can farmers and food justice activists stand in ongoing solidarity with Indigenous Nations and land defenders?
- Inform what food justice work looks like for advocacy organizations. Determine how organizations can be ‘goal-based’ about food justice organizing.
- Explore the role that food waste has in food justice.
- Consider ways to build discussion between white settlers and marginalized group. Non-Indigenous, settler, white folk reading groups and discussions might be useful, they can then educate each other about how our systems are reified.

### Overlap with Other Sustain Ontario Network Priorities

A Food Justice lens can be applied to work being done across all of the other networks.

There is overlap between the Food Justice Network with regards to supports their identification of a need for support for immigrant and marginalized farmers, food workers and producer and the Farming and Farmland Network’s goals of supports for new and young farmers.

The Community Growing Network with regards to engaging diverse communities is closely linked to the Food Justice Network’s work.

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