# Growing Local Food: Scale and Local Food Systems Governance

Phil Mount
Dept. of Geography
University of Guelph
pmount@uoguelph.ca

Abstract

'Scaling-up' is the next hurdle facing the local food movement. In order to effect broader systemic impacts, local food systems (LFS) will have to grow, engaging either more or larger consumers and producers. Encouraging the involvement of mid-sized farms looks to be an elegant solution — broadening the accessibility of local food while providing alternative revenue streams for troubled family farms. But many barriers stand in the way of such a development. The logistical, structural and regulatory barriers to increased scale in LFS are well known. Less is understood about the way in which scale developments affect the perception and legitimacy of LFS. This value-added opportunity begs the question: Is the value that adheres to local food scalable?

Many familiar with local food discourse might suggest that an important piece of added value within LFS is generated by the 're-connection' of producer and consumer, the direct exchange through which this occurs, and the 'shared goals and values' that provide the basis for reconnection. However, these assertions are based on tenuous assumptions about how interaction within the direct exchange produces value, and how LFS are governed. An exploration of these assumptions shows that they do not properly acknowledge the hybridity, diversity and flexibility inherent in LFS. A clear analysis of the potential of scale in LFS will depend on understanding both how value is determined within LFS, and the processes through which these systems are governed. Such an analysis shows that, while scaled-up LFS will be challenged to maintain legitimacy and an identity as alternative, the establishment of an open governance process – based on a 'negotiation of accommodations' – will help to ensure their viability.

## 1.0 Introduction

Across North America, new urban foodscapes are dotted with grazing locavores, marking the territory of their '100-mile diets', twittering of 'buy local' and 'field to fork' campaigns, and flocking to resurgent farmers' markets. Their enthusiasm has captured the attention and imagination of a constantly growing number of consumers, journalists, chefs, politicians,

academics, farmers, and food retailers (Dale 2008; Feagan 2007; Hein 2009; Rance 2008). The buzz over local food has reverberated across the developed world, become a cacophony of newsletters, blogs and media stories, and spawned multiple foodie bestsellers, big-budget films, an iPhone 'app' for locavores, and even gardens at Buckingham Palace and on the White House lawn.

While the 'buzz' has largely been supportive, some academics have examined critically - and challenged – some of the assumptions and expectations that underlie local food systems (LFS) (Born and Purcell 2006; DuPuis and Gillon 2009; Hinrichs 2003), including the benefits of reduced food miles (Desrochers and Shimizu 2008), and the potential of LFS to be more than elite niche markets for relatively small numbers of specialized producers (Allen et al. 2003; DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Goodman 2004; although, see Seyfang 2008). Increasingly, LFS analysts assert that – in order to capitalize on the momentum of this movement and broaden accessibility – local food will have to scale-up, engaging either more or larger consumers and producers (Born and Purcell 2006; Donald 2009; Friedmann 2007; Hinrichs and Barham 2007; MacRae et al. 2009), in commodities and regions where this is appropriate (Andrée 2009).

Growing numbers of intermediary initiatives are actively seeking to engage farms that have been excluded or left behind by the local food movement. The president of Local Food Plus – one such intermediary group – provides a compelling motive:

> We're very supportive of smaller projects like direct marketing and farmers markets, but these only encompass about two per cent of the market, which will not transform agriculture — so we have to start engaging farmers who are not part of those systems. (Stahlbrand in Biggs 2009, p. 13)

Involving mid-sized family farms in local food looks to be an elegant solution: achieving scale in LFS while providing a much-needed source of value-added for a large cohort of struggling farm households. Over the past decade, farm commodity groups, industry analysts and

commentators throughout the developed world have both encouraged and discouraged family farm pursuit of the value-added opportunities of local food (Charlebois 2008; Dale 2008; Gooch 2007; Hinrichs and Barham 2007; Stevenson and Pirog 2008).

However, the opportunities presented by value-added local food chains have been debated without a thorough accounting of what lies behind the local food premium, and beg important questions related to scale. The scholars at the Agriculture of the Middle project have suggested that scale of operation has trapped these farms in an agricultural purgatory: "mid-sized farms are the most vulnerable in today's polarized markets, since they are too small to compete in the highly consolidated commodity markets, and too large and commoditized to sell in the direct markets" (Kirschenmann et al. 2008, p. 3).

In order to understand the true potential of growth in LFS, it is first necessary to explicitly identify the various sources of added value, and determine whether – and to what extent – such premiums are accessible to those operating at increased scale. The following section will identify sources of added value that will be difficult to access at larger scales without overcoming logistical, structural and regulatory barriers. This will set the context for the remainder of the analysis, which will focus on the perhaps more significant – and less understood – set of intangible qualities that influence the perception of participants, and the added value within LFS.

### 1.1 Barriers to Scale Growth in LFS

While the picture is complex – and regional and sectoral variations are apparent in most of the developed world – over the last generation off-farm income has come to play a major role in the development path of family farms (Alasia et al. 2009; Oberholtzer et al. 2010; Pritchard et al. 2007; Smithers and Johnson 2004). In a story familiar to many regions, the most recent Canadian Census of Agriculture shows that almost half (48.5%) of *farm operators* identify

their occupation as non-agricultural (Statistics Canada 2008), while the majority of gross farm revenue comes from off-farm employment (OMAFRA 2009b). These realities will shape the decisions of family farms: for instance, if it is widely believed – within the farm community at large – that accessing added value from local food requires an increase in farm-related labour, their already significant off-farm commitments will give pause to many families considering such a transition.

The notion that local food can help these farms is contingent on a degree of scale-neutrality: the logic, practice and principles of systems based on small-scale production must in some way apply across all scales of production. And yet, this is clearly not the case with key aspects of local food. Research on short food supply chains in Europe (e.g. Renting et al. 2003; Ilbery and Maye 2005; Sonnino and Marsden 2006), suggests that a significant portion of the added value for farmers comes through the elimination of profit-taking intermediaries (i.e. processors, distributors and retailers) in the food chain. But the potential of these short food supply chains, as with LFS, has been demonstrated by producers that can easily take advantage of geographical proximity, direct sales to consumers, and minimal processing requirements. Farmers who produce commodities that require processing, or operate at a scale – of production volumes, markets and geographic extent – greater than typical of LFS, will be challenged to access these advantages, and that portion of the local food premium that is attached.

The primary focus of many mid-sized farms is the production of livestock and commodity crops – where processing is a necessary intermediary. In order to retain value-added, while adding processors and retailers between themselves and consumers, these farmers would have to create – or become a part of – vertically integrated food value chains, controlling process and profit from farm to consumer. This has become more difficult where regional processing, distribution and retailing have succumbed to the efficiencies of scale and concentration, as well

as to regulations that favor large-scale processors and retailers (Baxter 2008; Marion 2009). It is clear that – absent a developed local food infrastructure – mid-scale producers will not engage in local food without a significant investment or re-focus of time, effort and money.

However, these barriers are not insurmountable, and many possible solutions have been identified (Andrée 2009; Baker et al. 2010; Donald 2009; Harvie and Steffey 2010; Lyson et al. 2008). For example, loss of processing infrastructure in the beef sector has generated protests over the enforcement of inappropriate regulations, and translated into targeted policies, including money for new regional slaughtering facilities, as well as innovative private sector solutions – such as mobile slaughter facilities (Adelman 2009; OMAFRA 2009; Vannahme 2009). In fact, the difficulties of inadequate finance, disappearing infrastructure and inappropriate regulation have been so compelling that the emphasis in the development of scale in LFS has been on solving the logistical problems that prevent farmer participation. This emphasis conceals an implicit assumption that local food can be treated as a typical value-added niche; that – once logistical barriers are overcome – family farms will be free to sell 'local food'. It may not be that easy.

### 1.2 Accounting for the Rest of the Local Food Premium

A full assessment of the local food premium must account for the possibility that local food is not simply another familiar value-added niche opportunity requiring only a distinct commodity, and the strict control of the commodity production process. Virtually all accounts of local food benefits includes a multiplier effect from the interaction or reconnection of producers and consumers, that generates *intangible qualities* and, through these, some piece of added value that is difficult to quantify because it relates to the perception of participants. The emphasis on logistical barriers discounts the value of these intangible qualities, or suggests that they are natural outcomes of selling local food. But clearly a change in the scale of

production that alters how the participants interact may in turn affect the creation of intangible qualities and the perception of both added value and the resulting price premium.

In fact, many have suggested that these intangible qualities – generated within the direct exchange between farmer and consumer – are critical to the success of local food systems (Feagan 2008; Henry 2008; Ostrom and Jussaume 2007). In this account, the relationship formed through direct marketing creates the opportunity for a personal exchange of ideas, stories, questions and reassurances. The potential for interaction and transparency in this relationship delivers accountability and trust, and, through this, security and confidence – qualities that can only be assumed, or accepted as given, without this interaction. Moreover, this direct exchange of ideas provides the opportunity for participants to establish a shared set of goals and values that will govern their relationship and serve as the basis of their alternative identity. This interpretation suggests that local food is more than a commodity; that a significant part of the local food premium reflects the delivery of intangible qualities; that this delivery would be more difficult if the form of exchange is altered to accommodate scale; and that increased scale, therefore, will not be achieved simply through increased volume.

Calls to grow the local food system may thus beg two fundamental questions:

1. Would the value that adheres to local food be lost with greater scale?
2. Is it possible to develop local short food supply chains, involving larger family farms, without violating the basic tenets of local food?

As reflexive systems, LFS develop because of challenges to the legitimacy of the practices, externalities and outcomes of conventional food systems (Beck et al. 2003). Critical to the viability of these growing LFS, therefore, is understanding the perception of the participants, and maintaining legitimacy in the process of scaling-up. Given the farm-level constraints of scale and sector, creating space for mid-sized family farms in LFS may sever the direct relationship, and demand scale structures and mechanisms typical of conventional food

systems, such as branding (to transmit a story of quality and authenticity); certification (to transmit a guarantee offering reassurance and trust); and retail (to connect with a large number of consumers). These changes bring into question the potential of such LFS to deliver intangible qualities and maintain a distinction as an alternative to conventional food systems. This in turn would challenge their ability to retain legitimacy, as well as any premium attached to local food within the direct exchange.

In short, while it is primarily the local food premium that attracts family farms to local food, in this value-added assessment the premium is almost entirely accounted for by processes, relationships and structures that may be ineffective – or difficult to maintain – at scale. If an important part of the local food premium is, as this account suggests, intended to compensate the producer for intangible benefits that are generated by reconnection within the direct exchange, then the introduction of scale brings into question the ability of producers to deliver local food, as they will be challenged to maintain a direct exchange with their consumers.

However, it must be acknowledged that these conclusions are based on tenuous assumptions about how intangible qualities – and added value – are produced, the nature of interaction within the direct exchange, and the very nature of LFS governance. To truly understand the potential of scale within local food systems, these *intangible qualities* cannot be black-boxed, and treated as both indispensable and a natural outcome of LFS – either generated by the direct exchange, or embedded in underlying shared goals and values.

The following analysis will challenge these assumptions, and show that many of the presumed basic tenets of LFS literature are in fact based on normative expectations which, while incompatible with greater scale, are not explanatory of LFS governance and reality. A focus on the process behind the establishment of LFS in the same literature points to a set of fundamental principles that govern such systems – principles that, while sensitive to scale,

may not preclude scale development. A clear analysis of the potential of scale in LFS will depend on understanding both how value is determined within LFS, and the fundamental principles on which these systems are based.

## 2.0 Unpacking The Fundamental Principles of Local Food

The most common portrayals – from academia to popular media – suggest that the fundamental principles of local food systems must surely include the *re-connection* of producer and consumer, the *direct exchange* through which this occurs, and the *shared goals and value*s that provide the basis for the system. Closer inspection shows that these portrayals speak to the potential of LFS, and not their realities. The notions of 're-connection', 'direct exchange', and 'shared set goals and values' are reductionist caricatures that essentialize both form and participants, and overlook important evidence of hybridity, flexibility, and fetishization. In order to have explanatory value, the principles that shape the governance of these systems must capture the varied, hybrid and flexible reality, and not simply reflect their potential. But these common portrayals are worth a closer look because, while the assumptions that surround them often distract, they also offer clues to the processes and principles governing local food systems, clues that will help growing LFS determine their best route to viability.

### 2.1 Reconnection of Consumer and Producer

Local food is often presented as offering an alternative to the dis-connected relationships found in conventional food systems, where the interaction of producer and consumer in a direct exchange will inevitably lead to the 're-connection' of the food system (see e.g. Grey 2000; Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002; Kirwan 2004; Morris and Evans 2004; Sage 2007; Venn et al. 2006). In a recent paper, Morris and Kirwan (2010, p. 132) found that "both policy

makers and academic analysis has [sic] tended to treat the concept of reconnection normatively, as something to be worked towards as a desirable end goal rather than a process that needs to be subject to critical analysis". These words echo others who have problematized such characterizations as insufficiently nuanced (Goodman 2004; Higgins et al. 2008; Hinrichs 2000; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Winter 2003). Criticism is most often reserved for dualistic portrayals, and stresses a need to recognize the wide range of embeddedness (Chiffoleau 2009; Winter 2003), 'marketness' (DeLind 2003; Hinrichs 2000) or alterity (Allen et al. 2003; Kirwan 2004) found in local and conventional food systems, as in all networks of exchange.

But the notion of *return* implicit (and often explicit) in these tales of re-connection (see e.g. Grey 2000; Kirwan 2004; Venn et al. 2006) is problematic not only because it suggests a straight forward return to an historical (implicitly simpler, more authentic and fulfilling) food system based on direct relationships, but also because it minimizes the recent fundamental transformations of the participants and sites of such reunions. The most significant influences on the current and future configuration of food systems in the developed world is the context provided by conventional food system failures *and benefits*, and the lasting effects on consumers and producers of their experiences within both conventional and alternative systems.

Re-connection requires more than a re-coupling of farmers and consumers separated only by the lengthening food chain that has stretched between them – a distance structurally imposed by conventional food systems. This reunion must also acknowledge and accommodate the changes introduced by both separation and time. The transformation of the rural landscape – through the processes generated by the industrialization of agriculture – has created a differentiated farm community, exhibiting a range of adaptations informed by diverse experiences of change (Johnsen 2003; Marsden 1999). This has produced competitive spaces

occupied by conventional *and* alternative food systems, as well as rural development schemes and manufacturers looking for the (relatively) cheap labour available in rural regions. These new "micro-geographies of rural space" (Sonnino and Marsden 2006, p. 194) make for uncomfortable neighbours, with intensive confined livestock production facilities, cash croppers, small-scale organic vegetable growers and accountant/beef farmers competing for land (rented by city-dwelling 'farm cottage' owners) on power corridors servicing new wind farms. The practices, infrastructures, target-markets and side-effects of these neighbours create diverse interests and priorities – and conflict – within the farm community as well as without. Re-connected LFS will not be immune to the perceptions and power dynamics that underlie this continual renegotiation of rural space and governance. A public broadly perceived – by farmers – to lack understanding, empathy or appreciation (Smithers et al. 2005) will have to accommodate modern farm families with 1) little or no experience addressing diversity in consumer demand (or diversity in their consumers); 2) a greater familiarity with (and perhaps affinity to) productivist practices (Schneider and Francis 2005); 3) a restricted ability to adapt production practices (Ostrom and Jussaume 2007); and 4) a perceived loss of control over on-farm decision-making (Dedieu et al. 2009).

Conventional food systems have failed farmers and consumers in different ways, produced divergent priorities, and influenced how they might re-connect in an alternative. For small and mid-scale farmers, the declining share of the consumer food dollar and the resulting cost-price squeeze of commodity production has meant an increased reliance on off-farm income for survival. For these family farms, any viable alternative must necessarily address this shortfall (Chalmers et al. 2009; Goodman and Goodman 2007; Kirwan 2004; Ross 2006; Watts et al. 2005), and offer significant incentives as well as reassurances.

For consumers, the problems of conventional food systems have fostered concerns over the source and content of their food, environmental impacts of production, food scares, food miles,

and declining food nutrition and taste (Blay-Palmer and Donald 2007; Ostrom 2007; Sage 2007). It is clear that, in the abstract, the theoretical value attached to local food comprehensively maps these consumer concerns, reflecting the broader public and scientific discourse, and increasing the likelihood that perceptions of 'safety', 'authenticity', 'trust', 'transparency', 'sustainability', 'confidence' and 'risk' become a part of the prioritization process governing consumer food choices. However, the perception of such problems and their solutions will be approached and prioritized differently by (for instance) new, old and young farmers, aging boomers, new parents, and 'scuppies' (socially conscious urban professionals).

At the same time, it must also be recognized that the benefits of conventional food systems – including variety, low prices and convenience – have had a fundamental impact on consumer priorities (DeLind 1999; Hinrichs 2000; Miele 2006; Ross 2006; Smithers et al. 2008). Any notion of re-connection must acknowledge and problematize the influence – on both consumers and producers – of their (historic and on-going) engagement with conventional and alternative food systems, and the hybridity exhibited by both systems as a result.

### 2.1.1 Alternative in a Hybrid World

There is broad agreement that the value of local food is contingent upon a representation as alternative (Chalmers et al. 2009; Cox et al. 2008; DuPuis and Gillon 2009; Ilbery et al 2005; Seyfang 2008), as both consumers and producers are seeking that which conventional food systems do not provide. But local food systems arise *within* a context largely shaped by the prevailing systems, and with which they will necessarily interact and co-evolve (Allen and Kovach 2000; Maxey 2006; Goodman 2004; Seyfang 2006; Sonnino and Marsden 2006). To take Granovetter's (1985) description of embeddedness seriously is to acknowledge that engagement within an alternative food system does not exempt participants from the influences of wider systems and relationships that provide the context for personal and LFS

decision-making and governance. That is, if economic relations are embedded in social networks (as Granovetter suggests), alternative social networks are equally embedded within material conditions shaped by the economic and discursive dominance of conventional systems.

As such, it should be no surprise that LFS often create hybrid spaces (Smithers and Joseph 2010), and employ hybrid strategies (Jarosz 2008). For example, maintaining an exclusive strategy of direct sales is not simple in practice: even small-scale local food producers find it difficult to dispose of product exclusively through the direct exchange (Ostrom and Jussaume 2007). As a consequence, many local food producers sell to both local and conventional markets (Oberholtzer et al. 2010; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Watts et al. 2005), just as most consumers purchase from both. In fact, recent research comparing mainstream and local food supply chains in different U.S. markets found not only that the processors, distributors, and retailers were often shared by both, but that many producers targeted both markets in a conscious strategy: using the profile and relationships generated through one to facilitate entry into the other (King et al. 2010, p. 62-68). This echoes research from the U.K. showing similarly hybridized marketing strategies (Ilbery et al. 2010, p. 972).

But 'hybridity' is not only a function of shared mechanisms or practices, but also a reflection of the social embeddedness shared by systems and their participants. Alternative and conventional food systems do not exist as isolated ideal types (Maxey 2006): hybridity is therefore the natural state of both types of systems. What is important for the purposes of this discussion is the perception of hybridity, and how that in turn influences the perceived identity of any system that constitutes itself as an alternative. LFS that lose sight of the importance of alterity risk the wrath of consumer skepticism – another by-product of engagement with conventional food systems (Eden et al. 2008; Little et al. 2009).

Hybridity in LFS cannot be interpreted as problematic in and of itself. In fact, recognition of hybridity may be a sign of an adaptive, more reflexive localism. DuPuis and Goodman (2005, p. 361) suggest that such a process can "take account of the unintended consequences, ironies and contradictions involved in all social change, and treat ongoing conflicts and differences between various groups not as polarizing divisions but as grounds for respectful— and even productive— disagreement". Such awareness may also prove to be a useful defence mechanism: as local food grows, conventional food purveyors will increasingly contest meaning through marketing (Seyfang 2008; Sonnino and Marsden 2006); make use of alternative discourse (Jackson et al. 2007); and imitate or reproduce aspects of the hybridity exhibited by growing local food initiatives (Morgan et al. 2006; Sage 2007). As Buttel (2006, p. 214) has made clear, adaptability is one of the characteristics that has given 'unsustainable agro-food systems' their tremendous staying power.

An implicit assumption of re-connection is that the most significant aspect of the value-added in the exchange is the result of simply bringing these parties back together. That is, re-connection of consumers and producers leads to the effortless re-establishment of known and familiar outcomes, and it is the desire to re-create these outcomes that motivates re-connection. The biggest problem with this approach is that it ignores – or treats as insignificant – an equally important motivation: that all participants are looking for an alternative to conventional food systems. Legitimacy demands careful attention to establishing and maintaining an alternative identity. 'Re-connection' implies that legitimacy is inherent in LFS, when in fact, in a society characterized by hybrid systems, alternative is a moving target. Rather than re-producing familiar outcomes through reconnection, LFS must create outcomes that are perceived as familiar, while matching expectations that have been shaped by exposure to a market dominated by ever-adaptable conventional food systems.

Legitimacy at the very least demands that LFS must avoid the appearance of being or becoming that which they have replaced. Growing LFS must identify space in which they can maintain an alternative identity within a context of hybridity. Niche products are not a long-term solution, as successful distinctions are inevitably copied and the value-added dispersed by saturation. Delind (2006, p. 126) supplies a further reason why LFS that rely on product differentiation or niche commodity production to add value will not be able to maintain the essential distinction as alternative:

> Without an emotional, a spiritual, and a physical glue to create loyalty, not to a product, but to layered sets of embodied relationships, local will have no holding power. It will be reconfigured by market rationality into new consumable products, entertainments, and exchangeable and interchangeable attributes.

That is, an alternative identity must go beyond brand loyalty and product quality, to stake out territory, spaces and bonds that cannot be replicated through conventional food chains. This echoes Watts et al (2005), who see quality food production as a weaker alternative than that which emphasizes the networks through which the food is exchanged. The direct exchange – as the most obvious method of creating and maintaining such unique bonds – offers an important means of maintaining an alternative identity within a context of hybridity. However, the bond – or the direct exchange – is not an end in itself; added value comes from what passes through these bonds, including an identity as alternative and, therefore, legitimacy.

## 2.2 Direct Exchange

For many LFS analysts, local food *is* the direct exchange. This is easy to understand, as the quintessential local food initiatives – from the farm gate to the farmers' market – are symbolized more by this face-to-face interaction than by the food that changes hands. The direct exchange is often presented as an essential component of LFS (Feagan 2008; Ostrom and Jussaume 2007), creating opportunities for interaction, engagement, and embeddedness that simultaneously deliver information, transparency, accountability and authenticity, while

generating confidence, satisfaction, trust (Hunt 2007; Ostrom 2006; Ross 2006) and 'regard' (Kirwan 2004; Sage 2007). In this account, it is easy to see how the direct exchange would be credited with a crucial role in creating both the intangible qualities and the associated added value of LFS.

However, these portrayals speak of the *potential* of the direct exchange, rather than the reality, and flirt with misleading reductionism when they rely on caricatures of the factors and processes involved. Given the tangled web of perceptions, interactions and outcomes present in the direct exchange, single factors and causal relationships are difficult to isolate, characterize or measure. For instance, Hinrichs warned that the presence of social interaction in the direct exchange should not lead to the assumption that *embeddedness* was the inevitable result: "A more critical view of embeddedness recognizes that price may still matter and that self-interest may be at work, sometimes even in the midst of vigorous, meaningful social ties" (2000, p. 297).

Just as Hinrichs sees a tension between embeddedness and marketness (2000) Carolan interprets 'active trust' as one pole on a spectrum balanced by 'virtual (or assumed) trust', and suggests that only thick relationships could lead to the 'purposeful acts' involved in active trust (2006, p. 328). Similarly, Dubuisson-Quellier and Lamine (2008, p. 58) place *engagement* on a spectrum ranging from 'empowered' to 'delegative'. For the delegative consumer, engagement is largely passive, and relies on the transfer of control and responsibility, whereas empowered consumers "participate as political actors in decisions that refer to the production, retailing, logistics, and consumption choices made about products" (2008, p. 62). In this analysis, without engagement on the part of consumers, market mechanisms and certification regimes become symbols that act as a substitute for meaningful exchange.

However, the authors warn against dualistic assumptions based on this typology:

> Alternative food networks suggest a framework for mixed behaviours of consumers that associate multiple types and degrees of consumer involvement… Between these two very specific positions on the character of consumer involvement, most consumers adopt intermediary behaviour, combining delegation …at certain times and participation in collective choices about production and consumption in others. (2008, p. 63)

That is, not only is it necessary to avoid reductionist assumptions about the nature of the factors involved in the direct exchange; it is also necessary to remember that participants employ different rationales and priorities in different contexts. This leads to some interesting tentative conclusions: if the intangible qualities – and the associated added value – of the direct exchange are produced only with *active,* engaged, embedded participants, then perhaps *passive* (delegative, fetishized) engagement produces a different type of value, one that is attached primarily to the commodity, rather than the relationship through which it is exchanged. And this distinction between an *active* and *passive* engagement may also reflect a difference in kind between a more political cultural embeddedness – based on group identity, interdependence and coherence (Carolan, 2006; Kirwan 2004; Moore 2006; Trabalzi 2007) – and a 'relational embeddedness', based simply on personal interaction, as Chiffoleau (2009) suggests.

The direct exchange can certainly play a symbolic role for passive consumers seeking an alternative food experience (Little et al. 2009). Since it cannot easily be replicated within conventional food systems, the direct exchange holds a symbolic alterity that adds value (Cox et al. 2008; Rosin 2007; Sage 2007). For other passive participants, the *potential* for interaction, embeddedness or verification may be enough to deliver added value in the direct exchange. Whether it symbolizes the alterity or the potential of LFS, this analysis would suggest that the *passive* direct exchange does not create the same intangible qualities and added value as an *active* direct exchange, but instead produces a symbolic value of similar worth *that becomes an attribute of the commodity*. In this symbolic role the direct exchange

provides an opportunity for delegation, disengagement and fetishization; a proxy for further thought and engagement (Cadieux 2005; see also Allen and Hinrichs 2007).

Research on certification shows that similar issues arise with ethical commodities, where the product comes to symbolize the practices or principles that are – in theory – adding value to the exchange (Eden et al. 2008; Mutersbaugh and Lyon 2010; Guthman 2002). This is significant because in its creative role, the direct exchange – as a conduit for information and embeddedness – is often credited with the de-fetishization of food (Kirwan 2004; Watts et al. 2005). While neither the symbolic nor creative visions of the direct exchange fully describes the interactions and engagement of LFS participants, they confirm the need for a conceptualization of value that has broad explanatory capacity. Not all value present in the direct exchange passes through the direst exchange.

### 2.2.1 Enhanced Exchange

LFS participants have an expectation that the exchange will be enhanced in a manner that satisfies personal priorities. While those priorities are diverse, one basic insight about the exchange can be drawn: the choice to participate in itself can be taken as a sign of a desire to fill voids and address problems produced by large scale industrial food production, processing and retailing. Implicit in the choice to participate in LFS – in the decision to actively seek an alternative – is a reflexivity that questions the legitimacy of the practices and outcomes of conventional food systems, and finds fault with their rationales and unintended side-effects (Beck et al. 2003). The process of reflexivity, however, produces diverse priorities: to lessen environmental impacts or food miles; to find a source of safe, nutritious food; to find a steady source of on-farm income; or to keep food dollars in the local economy. Even this brief list shows that both legitimacy and an alternative identity are key components of the value that LFS must create. However, it is clear from the preceding analysis that any attempts to further

clarify this description – by identifying an universal value that enhances the exchange, and the source of that value – must rely on a set of reductionist assumptions that do not explain the actions of large subsets of LFS participants.

Research on participation in LFS has demonstrated that, where active participation is not valued, the potential for interaction and engagement in the farmer / consumer relationship often remains unfulfilled (Moore 2008); that, in the direct exchange, "trust frequently trumps the need for details" (Smithers et al. 2008, p. 345). But if this trust is not in some way generated by information passed through the direct exchange – if trust in fact precedes that exchange – then what is its source? Three factors come to mind:

i. Conventional food systems rely on virtual or assumed trust, and leave little room for the active expression of trust (Sonnino and Marsden 2006). Since the direct exchange stands as a symbol of alterity, LFS participants may look to it as a relatively safe space to express meaningful trust;
ii. As the outcome of reflexive processes and a symbol of alterity, the direct exchange owes its legitimacy as much to skepticism and distrust of conventional food systems as it does to trust of LFS (Eden et al. 2008; Little et al. 2009; Sage 2007);
iii. In opinion polling, consumers consistently and overwhelmingly indicate a willingness to grant trust to 'farmers' as a generic group, and exceptional levels of trust to small and / or 'local' farmers (CFI 2009; Ipsos Reid 2006 and 2008; NFU 2009; OFAC 2009; Roper 2004).

That is, trust in the direct exchange may be as much a predisposition as an outcome; as much an absence of distrust as it is the creation of trust. The direct exchange reinforces – and provides an outlet for – a predisposition to trust, and serves as both a symbol of the alterity of the consumer's decision and a buffer against distrust. When the literature speaks of a desire to re-establish trust (Morris and Buller 2003; Watts et al. 2005), this points to trust as a predisposition of LFS participants, not as an outcome of the direct exchange.

However, Morris and Kirwan (2010) suggest that moving beyond direct contact between producer and consumer exposes the exchange to the vagaries of the communication and interpretation of information, leading to the potential for fetishization, cynicism or distrust.

That is, even with a predisposition to trust, where there is no direct contact, consumers are more willing to challenge the facts behind the production of their food purchases. Without a direct connection, cynicism and distrust are more likely because information alone is not enough to overcome systemic dis-embedding forces that promote consumer detachment from producers. LFS that scale up may be advised to maintain some form of contact between producers and consumers, to take advantage of its symbolic attachment to alterity, and to fend off cynicism, skepticism and distrust – reflexive qualities that have been nurtured through consumer interaction within conventional food systems.

The direct exchange has also become a symbol on the battleground between alterity and hybridity. Research with customers at farmers' markets has shown that flexibility in the consumer's demand for or interpretation of local is often related to other priorities, including a desire for variety (Kirwan 2004; Smithers and Joseph 2010). For Kirwan, the tension of variety and authenticity demanded by consumers at the farmers' market (FM) "begs the question as to how much flexibility there is within this alterity, before the farmers' markets start to lose their identity as an alternative strategy and the ability to deliver their espoused benefits" (2004, p. 407). But Smithers and Joseph show that flexibility can be as important to the sustainability of some FMs as 'authenticity' is to others. Balancing vendor returns and viability against consumers' expectations and assumptions is crucial to FM governance:

> This [balance] both permits, and even encourages, diversity in the characteristics of FMs, as individual markets find their own comfort level in the presence of different types of producers and sellers of food—a situation that is welcomed by some and highly problematic for others. (Smithers and Joseph 2010, p. 3)

A certification regime that aims to protect the alternative identity of FMs (Kirwan 2004), and polices authenticity by certifying the vendors at FMs (Smithers and Joseph 2010), may lead to delegation, and therefore the potential to fetishize the form of the exchange; enabling consumers to assume authenticity, rather than identify it through engaged interaction

(Chalmers et al. 2009; Eden et al. 2008; Feagan et al. 2004; Miele 2006). The tension between maintaining both an alternative identity and engaged participants, and the resulting conflict between competing functions and outcomes, requirements and expectations within the direct exchange, highlights the complexity of LFS governance, and also the multiple points of perception where legitimacy can be reinforced – or challenged.

To focus on the direct exchange itself as fundamental to added value within LFS treats this complexity as incidental. The research on participation in LFS shows a constant, multi-polar tension in the direct exchange, between embeddedness and marketness, between participation and delegation, between trust, distrust and verification, and between reflexivity, flexibility and fetishism (Alkon 2008; Chalmers et al 2009; Feagan and Morris 2009; Kirwan 2004; Smithers and Joseph 2010) This suggests that diversity may be more relevant to governance than the direct exchange itself. LFS participants – whatever their level of engagement, embeddedness and trust – all have an expectation that the exchange will be enhanced in a manner that satisfies their priorities. This serves as a reminder that legitimacy and alterity – key components of the value in the direct exchange – are also measured differently by participants. Reductionist assumptions about intangible qualities and the source of the value created by the direct exchange, lead to further overly simplistic assumptions about both the level and nature of the engagement of participants. The concept of *enhanced exchange* captures the diversity of intangible qualities delivered to local food consumers, as well as the diversity of priorities through which they determine value and commensurate compensation.

But this is not simply a case of recognizing the complexity of the direct exchange for complexity's sake. Rather, by acknowledging such variability, sources of tension become clear: tension that exists between the symbolic and creative roles of the direct exchange, and between a value that is attached to relationships vs. value attached to a commodity. And it is in recognizing this tension – rather than a focus on simply maintaining a direct exchange – that

LFS of any scale will find the key to long-term viability. Just as efforts towards re-connection may encourage LFS to ignore or avoid – rather than embrace and address – hybridity, a focus on the direct exchange as fundamental to LFS may lead to complacency, commodification, an inability to reconcile different priorities, and a loss of legitimacy. Recognition of this variability demands that any model of governance with the goal of long-term viability must acknowledge the diverse and ever-changing balance of interests to be maintained.

### 2.3 Shared Goals and Values

In the attempt to establish a basis for governance in LFS, the literature often turns to a set of shared goals and values, most often related to sustainability and social justice objectives (Allen et al. 2003; Hinrichs 2003; Sage 2003; Jarosz 2008). This approach again speaks of potential rather than reality, and frequently accompanies cautionary tales of LFS that fail to aspire to these 'shared goals and values' (Allen et al. 2003; Hinrichs 2003; Sonnino and Marsden 2006). Some have challenged this approach, stating that the large number of market-based, entrepreneurial (Goodman and Goodman 2007), 'defensive' (Hinrichs 2003; Winter 2003) or merely alternative (Allen et al. 2003) local food initiatives, cannot be dismissed as incoherent, inconsistent or incompatible with local food system ideals (Hinrichs 2007). Rather, such instances must be explained in order to uncover different needs and adaptations (ibid.), or power dynamics and social relations (Goodman and Goodman 2007).

While common goals and values may be shared between forms, these do not extend across all: diversity would appear to be the rule, rather than the exception (Holloway et al. 2007; Ilbery and Maye 2005; Morris and Buller 2003; Ostrom and Jussaume 2007; Sonnino and Marsden 2006; Venn et al. 2006). Diverse goals and values are exhibited *within* LFS as well; local food tends to be approached, experienced and perceived by each participant based on their unique priorities, anxieties, capacities, goals and values (Cox et al. 2008; Kneafsey 2010;

Lamine 2005; Morris and Kirwan 2006). This is not surprising, given that research also shows that choice and perception play central roles in local food systems development. While many farmers may share the concerns of consumers, their priority of on-farm economic viability can obscure other goals (Ross 2006). Given the multi-faceted priorities of farmers and consumers (Chalmers et al. 2009; Cox et al. 2008; Jarosz 2008; Magne and Cerf 2009; Pirog and Rasmussen 2008), establishing a broadly-based approach to governance within LFS involves reconciling diverse goals and values, rather than identifying shared goals and values.

Attempts to describe or identify shared goals and values within LFS overlook the power imbalances and exclusions that take place when food networks are formed (Harris 2009; Rosin 2007), and distract from the actual processes by which LFS established, maintained and adapted. DuPuis, Goodman and Harrison (2006, p. 263) suggest that, with a focus on process and politics, one is less likely to lose sight of the fact that such systems are not "defined by a consensual, monolithic set of values". Borrowing from Marsden, they hold that the broader social impacts and replicability of LFS are mediated by pre-existing regional inequalities (DuPuis et al. 2006, p. 254; see also Kneafsey 2010, p. 183), as well as the strategies of founding and controlling actors (i.e. consumers, producers). Put another way, LFS are defined not so much by their shared goals and values, as by the *processes* through which goals and values come to be shared.

### 2.3.1 Prescription vs. Negotiation

Central to this discussion is the self-reinforcing nature of the processes that determine governance, legitimacy and identity in LFS. In a seminal piece, DuPuis and Goodman (2005) describe 'reflexive' and 'unreflexive' approaches to governance, where unreflexive LFS identify problems and prescribe solutions, whereas reflexive LFS are open to an inclusive dialogue that attempts to recognize multiple perspectives on problems, and negotiate over time an

appropriate, mutually satisfactory course of action. Clearly, the choice between these two approaches, characterized by *prescription* and *negotiation*, will have a significant influence on the creation of legitimacy and group identity within LFS. However, it is important to note that identity and legitimacy, in turn, both justify and set parameters that constrain the options of the chosen approach to governance.

In the unreflexive or *prescriptive* approach to governance, the discourse of shared goals and values provides a cohesion that encourages the exchange of trust and loyalty, and the establishment of boundaries that clearly identify the LFS as alternative. In this approach, the focus is on giving participants a clear sense of who is involved, who is excluded, and why. Identity has its basis in common motivations and, as a consequence, legitimacy is bounded by the extent to which, over time, these goals and values remain as the primary focus.

In the *reflexive* approach, identity and legitimacy are strengthened by a process based on negotiation, which demands concessions but – in so doing – reminds participants that such accommodations produce an unparalleled strength of shared responsibility (Wallington and Lawrence 2008, p. 286). Central to the notion of reflexivity is an understanding that collective decision-making will reflect a diversity of interests, interpretations and priorities and, as such, will generate legitimacy more through a general satisfaction with the nature of the process rather than the nature of the consensus (Beck et al. 2003). Pimbert (2010, p. 44) captures the essence of this process:

> The form of negotiation is often seen as containing value over and above the 'quality of the decisions' that emerge. Participants share a commitment to the resolution of problems through public reasoning and dialogue aimed at mutual understanding, even if consensus is not being achieved or even sought.

Within reflexive systems, value is generated in the process of governance itself, whereas in prescriptive systems, the process establishes boundaries which must be maintained, and criteria which must be satisfied in order to produce value.

To be clear, boundaries and negotiations are common to both reflexive and prescriptive approaches. What is significant is that the chosen approach to governance determines whether boundaries or negotiation becomes the cornerstone of group identity and legitimacy, and that cornerstone, in turn, plays a role in determining the flexibility and adaptability of the governance process. This is the case because, whether established through prescription or negotiation, all LFS are subject to reflexive processes: prescribed boundaries will not prevent unforeseen challenges that threaten cohesiveness, direction or viability. Given that the influences of hybridity are internal to these systems, neither will these boundaries relieve the constant tension of operating within a context framed by competition with the attractions, benefits and hybridity of conventional food systems (Delind 1999; Maxey 2006; Sage 2007). As a consequence, LFS that establish an open governance structure, and a familiarity with the (re)negotiation of boundaries – will be better positioned to adapt to inevitable challenges than those based on a fixed set of standards that prescribe and defend boundaries (DuPuis and Goodman 2005).

### 2.3.2 Negotiation of Accommodations

Placing the negotiation of accommodations as the cornerstone of governance in LFS emphasizes the importance of flexibility and ongoing adaption to the viability of these systems. At the same time, a reflexive approach suggests that the process of negotiation itself can play a strong role in the creation of value, attaching legitimacy and identity to democratization and openness. This approach echoes a body of literature that sees democratization as a messy, cumbersome, but essential part of making collective decisions in a context of uncertainty (Beck et al. 2003; DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Hassanein 2003). Some go as far as to suggest that public and continual negotiation is necessary for the re-creation of identity (DeLind 2010) and legitimacy (DuPuis 2009; Pimbert 2010). For Wallington and Lawrence (2008), ‘responsive

governance' only generates broadly accepted, shared responsibility *because* it is a flexible, collaborative approach that is open to scrutiny and criticism by all affected parties.

Such reflexive, responsive governance will be all the more important as LFS increase in scale, and integrate producers and consumers with an even more diverse set of perspectives and priorities. And no doubt this will be fraught with difficulties, including acknowledging the contributions of first-adopters, and integrating pre-existing initiatives within those that are larger, and more diverse (DuPuis 2009). At the same time, this approach holds the potential to bring together in open discussion producer and consumer perspectives that are often the product of speculation – exposing a broader audience to the full diversity of reasons for participation in an alternative system.

## 3.0 Conclusions

A growing number of family farms – throughout the developed world – are attracted to the potential of local food as a value-added, multi-generational alternative to the poor profitability and dwindling prospects of conventional commodity production. Research into the effects of scale on LFS is necessary both to understand the barriers and adaptations that are required of the participants, and to clarify the relevance of local food for these commodity-producing farms – a focus that has been missing from much of the research on local and alternative food systems. The logistical, structural and regulatory barriers to increased LFS scale are the focus of a good deal of attention and explanation. However, even if these barriers are addressed, farmers and farm groups operating at increased scale may have difficulty delivering the set of intangible qualities that are expected to accompany local food – qualities including trust, authenticity, safety and confidence.

The intent here has been to broaden the discussion, to question the ways in which scale developments may affect the perception and legitimacy of LFS, and hinder the ability to

generate and capture the added value of local food. At the heart of this inquiry is an analysis of three familiar concepts, often used to represent the source of intangible qualities and their added value – and therefore the basis of LFS governance: *re-connection;* the *direct exchange;* and *shared goals and value*s.

*Reconnection* implies that participants in LFS are looking to re-establish familiar outcomes. And yet, most are motivated by a desire to find an *alternative* to the only outcomes with which they are familiar: the negative outcomes of conventional food systems. At the same time, while participants are shaped by the failures of conventional food systems, they are also exposed to the benefits – including price, variety and convenience. As a result, LFS are often expected to deliver hybrid results, while maintaining an alternative identity, in a context where the 'conventional' and 'alternative' constantly adapt. Added value is better enhanced and protected when attached to a familiar relationship, which can act as a buffer against the development of cynicism, skepticism and distrust.

The *direct exchange* is everywhere in LFS, but does not work in the same way for everyone. A range of motivations, expectations and preconceptions combine with variable levels of engagement to produce diverse outcomes for participants. This brings into question the assumed causal relationship between the direct exchange and the creation of both intangible qualities and value. Legitimacy and alterity – key components of the value in the direct exchange – are measured and appreciated differently by participants, but yet each will have an expectation that the LFS exchange will be enhanced in a manner that satisfies their priorities. This suggests that governance within LFS will be measured by an ability to reconcile such diversity.

The promotion of *shared goals and values* suggests a prescriptive approach to governance that leads to a reliance on boundary formation and exclusion as the basis for group identity and legitimacy within LFS. This approach does not account for the flexibility – or the ability to

reconcile diversity – demanded by circumstance. A reflexive approach to governance, based on the *negotiation of accommodations*, acknowledges the inevitable influence of the unexpected, the diverse priorities of participants, and the need for flexible yet tenable decision-making in a context of uncertainty. This approach draws the basis for identity and legitimacy from an inclusive, open and responsive process, which increases the potential for a sense of shared responsibility.

### 3.1 Next Generation 'Local Food'

This analysis was undertaken to both reassess how LFS produce value, and initiate a discussion of what this means for the possibilities and limits of increased scale in LFS. The results suggest that alternative identity and legitimacy are key components to insuring added value and long-term viability. Both will be difficult to establish and maintain without careful attention to the development of relationships and an approach to governance that can respond to and incorporate diverse priorities. Where can local food initiatives – incorporating the production of family farms – come together with a sufficient consumer base, yet in a manner that encourages closer relationships, and shared responsibility? There are no easy solutions, and many of the current alternatives – including institutional procurement, values-based value chains and regional consumer or producer cooperatives – often sacrifice interaction and shared responsibility in favour of practical logistical considerations.

One promising option, gaining in popularity, is the regional food hub, which typically brings together regional supply and demand using an online marketplace. The collaborative nature of the enterprise – and the exchange – shows the potential for open, responsive governance while delivering the benefits of both scale efficiencies and direct relationships. While many have operated successfully at smaller scales, the food hub format has the possibility to include – as active members – producer and consumer groups, restaurant

service and institutional purchasers, and regional food councils. Because they offer the promise of alternative identity and legitimacy, reflexive governance and added value in a LFS operating at increased scale, food hubs deserve intense scrutiny. How will external forces and the practical realities of governance – including group decision-making on an epic scale – affect their ability to deliver on this promise? Does more democracy inevitably lead to a system dominated by the more numerous voices of consumers? Will the influence of new voices – perhaps less or differently committed – lead inevitably to the watering-down of the local food movement?

The scale of the possibilities is matched by the scale of potential problems, and this ambiguity has contributed to the general unease that has gripped many involved in the local food movement who contemplate increased scale. While the potential to reach a broader audience and effect change on a larger scale is undeniably enticing, the concern becomes that this new animal might somehow escape, grow beyond control, and quickly develop into a mythical, hybrid beast: local, yet not; connected, yet disjointed; intimate, yet isolating – in short, that scale may turn local food into a chimera with the power to both slay dragons, and become a dragon.

References

Adelman, J. 2009. Locally killed is latest trend in high grade meat. AP. http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/businesstechnology/2009501706_apusfarmscenemobileslaughterhouse.html. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Alasia, A., A. Weersink, R.D. Bollman, and J. Cranfield. 2009. Off-farm labour decisions of Canadian farm operators: Urbanization effects and rural labour market linkages. *Journal of Rural Studies* 25(1): 12-24.

Alkon, A. 2008. Paradise or pavement: The social constructions of the environment in two urban farmers' markets and their implications for environmental justice and sustainability. *Local Environment* 13(3): 271-289.

Allen, P., M. FitzSimmons, M. Goodman, and K. Warner. 2003. Shifting plates in the agrifood landscape: The tectonics of alternative agrifood initiatives in California. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 61-75.

Allen, P. and C. Hinrichs. 2007. Buying into 'Buy Local': Engagements of United States local food initiatives. In *Alternative food geographies: Representation and practice*, eds. D. Maye, L. Holloway, and M. Kneafsey, 255-272. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Allen, P. and M. Kovach. 2000. The capitalist composition of organic: The potential of markets in fulfilling the promise of organic agriculture. *Agriculture and Human Values* 17: 221-232.

Andrée, P. 2009. Growing Right. *Alternatives* 35(1): http://www.alternativesjournal.ca/articles/growing-right. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Baker, L., P. Campsie and K. Rabinowicz. 2010. Menu 2020: Ten good food ideas for Ontario. Metcalf Foundation. http://www.metcalffoundation.com/downloads/Metcalf_Food_Solutions_Menu_2020.pdf. Accessed 15 March 2011.

Baxter, M. 2008. Growers left in lurch as CanGro plant closures go ahead. Better Farming. http://www.betterfarming.com/online-news/growers-left-lurch-cangro-plant-closures-go-ahead-390. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Beck, U., W. Bonss, and C. Lau. 2003. The Theory of Reflexive Modernization. *Theory, Culture and Society* 20(2): 1-33.

Biggs, S. 2009. Lori Stahlbrand: Friend or foe?. Country Guide. http://localfoodplus.ca/author/michelle. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Blay-Palmer, A. and B. Donald. 2007. Manufacturing fear: The role of food processors and retailers in constructing alternative food geographies in Toronto, Ontario. In *Alternative food geographies: Representation and practice*, eds. D. Maye, L. Holloway, and M. Kneafsey, 273-288. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Born, B. and M. Purcell. 2006. Avoiding the local trap: Scale and food systems in planning research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26: 195- 207.

Buttel, F. H. 2006. Sustaining the Unsustainable: agro-food systems and environment in the modern world. In *Handbook of rural studies*, eds. P. Cloke, T. Marsden, and P. Mooney, 213-229. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Cadieux, K. V. 2005. Engagement with the land: redemption of the rural residence fantasy?. In *Rural change and sustainability: Agriculture, the environment and communities*, eds. S. Essex, A. Gilg, R. Yarwood, J. Smithers and R. Wilson, 215-229. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Carolan, M. S. 2006. Social change and the adoption and adaptation of knowledge claims: Whose truth do you trust in regard to sustainable agriculture?. *Agriculture and Human Values* 23: 325-339.

Center for Food Integrity (CFI). 2009. Consumer trust survey. http://www.dairyherd.com/news_editorial.asp?ts=nl2&pgid=675&ed_id=9652. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Chalmers, L., A.E. Joseph, and J. Smithers. 2009. Seeing farmers' markets: Theoretical and media perspectives on new sites of exchange in New Zealand. *Geographical Research* 47(3): 320-330.

Charlebois, S. 2008. Food safety fears shouldn't be dismissed. CBC commentary. http://www.farmcentre.com/News/CBCCommentary/Article.aspx?id=c6efa54b-226b-4fd7-bfce-f342be3995fc. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Chiffoleau, Y. 2009. From politics to co-operation: The dynamics of embeddedness in alternative food supply chains. *Sociologia Ruralis* 49(3): 218-235.

Cox, R., L. Holloway, L. Venn, L. Dowler, J. Ricketts Hein, M. Kneafsey, and H. Tuomainen. 2008. Common ground? Motivations for participation in a community-supported agriculture scheme. *Local Environment* 13(3): 203-218.

Dale, G. 2008. Eat local concept catching on. Better Farming. http://www.betterfarming.com/online-news/eat-local-concept-catching-805. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Dedieu, B., I. Darnhofer, S. Bellon, K. de Greef, F. Casabianca, L. Madureira, R. Milestad, M. Paine, P. Steyaert, D.J. Stobbelaar, and S. Zasser-Bedoya. 2009. Innovations in farming systems approaches. *Outlook on Agriculture* 38(2): 108-110.

DeLind, L.B. 1999. Close encounters with a CSA: The reflections of a bruised and somewhat wiser anthropologist. *Agriculture and Human Values* 16: 3-9.

DeLind, L.B. 2003. Considerably more than vegetables, a lot less than community: The dilemma of community supported agriculture. In *Fighting for the farm*, ed. J. Adams, 192-206. Philadelphia, USA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

DeLind, L.B. 2006. Of bodies, place, and culture: Re-situating local food. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19: 121-146.

DeLind, L.B. 2010. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars?. *Agriculture and Human Values* Advance Online Publication. DOI 10.1007/s10460-010-9263-0

Desrochers, P. and H. Shimizu. 2008. Yes, we have no bananas: A critique of the "food-miles" perspective. Mercatus policy series policy primer No. 8. Mercatus Center: George Mason University.

Donald, B. 2009. From Kraft to craft: Innovation and creativity in Ontario's food economy. Ref. 2009-WPONT-001. Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.

Dubuisson-Quellier, S. and C. Lamine. 2008. Consumer involvement in fair trade and local food systems: Delegation and empowerment regimes. *GeoJournal* 73: 55-65.

DuPuis, E. M. 2009. Alternative food market governance: Current research and unanswered questions. In *Critical food issues: Problems and state-of-the-art solutions worldwide*, Vol. 2, ed. L. Walter, 17-31. Santa Barbara, USA: Praeger.

DuPuis, E. M., and D. Goodman. 2005. Should we go "home" to eat? Toward a reflexive politics of localism. *Journal of Rural Studies* 21(3): 359-371.

DuPuis, E. M., D. Goodman, and J. Harrison. 2006. Just values or just value? Remaking the local in agrofood studies. In *Between the local and the global: Confronting complexity in the contemporary agri-food sector*, eds. T. Marsden and J. Murdoch. London, UK: Elsevier.

DuPuis, E. M. and S. Gillon. 2009. Alternative modes of governance: organic as civic engagement. *Agriculture and Human Values* 26: 43-56.

Eden, S., C. Bear, and G. Walker. 2008. Understanding and (dis)trusting food assurance schemes: Consumer confidence and the 'knowledge fix'. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24: 1-14.

Feagan, R. 2007. The place of food: mapping out the 'local' in local food systems. *Progress in Human Geography* 31(1): 23-42.

Feagan, R. 2008. Direct marketing: Towards sustainable local food systems?. *Local Environment* 13(3): 161-167.

Feagan, R.B. and D. Morris. 2009. Consumer quest for embeddedness: A case study of the Brantford farmers' market. *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 33: 235-243.

Feagan, R., D. Morris, and K. Krug. 2004. Niagara region farmers' markets: Local food systems and sustainability considerations. *Local Environment* 9: 235-254.

Friedmann, H. 2007. Scaling up: Bringing public institutions and food service corporations into the project for a local, sustainable food system in Ontario. *Agriculture and Human Values* 24(3): 389 – 398.

Gooch, M. 2007. Beware of the local food hype. CBC Radio commentary. http://www.farmcentre.com/News/CBCCommentary/Article.aspx?id=3705c623-c8d6-4cd9-a5d0-f09788f9a137. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Goodman, D. 2004. Rural Europe redux? Reflections on alternative agro-food networks and paradigm change. *Sociologia Ruralis* 44(1): 3-16.

Goodman, D. and M. Goodman. 2007. Localism, livelihoods and the 'post-organic': Changing perspectives on alternative food networks in the United States. In *Alternative food geographies: Representation and practice*, eds. D. Maye, L. Holloway, and M. Kneafsey, 23-38. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Granovetter, M. 1985. Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3): 481-510.

Grey, M. 2000. The industrial food stream and its alternatives in the United States: An introduction. *Human Organization* 59(2): 143-150.

Guthman, J. 2002. Commodified meanings, meaningful commodities: Re-thinking production-consumption links through the organic system of provision. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 295-311.

Harris, E. 2009. Neoliberal subjectivities or a politics of the possible? Reading for difference in alternative food networks. *Area* 41(1): 55–63.

Harvie, A. and H. Steffey. 2010. Rebuilding America's economy with family farm-centered food systems. Cambridge, USA: Farm Aid Inc.

Hassanein, N. 2003. Practicing food democracy: a pragmatic politics of transformation. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 77–86.

Hein, T. 2009. 'Speed networking' connects farmers to local markets. Better Farming. http://www.betterfarming.com/online-news/'speed-networking'-event-helps-connects-farmers-local-markets-1905. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Hendrickson, M.K. and W.D. Heffernan. 2002. Opening spaces through relocalization: Locating potential resistance in the weaknesses of the global food system. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 347-369.

Henry, T. 2008. Local food isn't like the rest of the food business. CBC commentary. http://www.farmcentre.com/news/CBCCommentary/Article.aspx?id=50fe320b-3756-4acd-9fad-45698fcbcf88. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Higgins, V., J. Dibden, and C. Cocklin. 2008. Building alternative agri-food networks: Certification, embeddedness and agri-environmental governance. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24: 15-27.

Hinrichs, C. 2000. Embeddedness and local food systems: Notes on two types of direct agriculture market. *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 295-303.

Hinrichs, C. 2003. The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 33-45.

Hinrichs, C.C. 2007. Introduction: Practice and place in remaking the food system. In *Remaking the North American Food System*, eds. C.C. Hinrichs and T. Lyson, 1-15. Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska Press.

Hinrichs, C. C. and E. Barham. 2007. A full plate: Challenges and opportunities in remaking the food system. In *Remaking the North American Food System*, eds. C.C. Hinrichs and T. Lyson, 345-356. Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska Press.

Holloway, L., M. Kneafsey, L. Venn, R. Cox, E. Dowler and H. Tuomainen. 2007. Possible food economies: A methodological framework for exploring food production–consumption relationships. *Sociologia Ruralis* 47(1): 1-15.

Hunt, A.R. 2007. Consumer interactions and influences on farmers' market vendors. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 22(1): 54-66.

Ilbery, B., P. Courtney, J. Kirwan and D. Maye. 2010. Marketing concentration and geographical dispersion: A survey of organic farms in England and Wales. *British Food Journal* 112(9): 962-975.

Ilbery, B. and D. Maye. 2005. Food supply chains and sustainability: Evidence from specialist food producers in the Scottish/English borders. *Land Use Policy* 22(4): 331-344.

Ilbery, B., C. Morris, H. Buller, D. Maye and M. Kneafsey. 2005. Product, process and place: An examination of food marketing and labelling schemes in Europe and North America. *European Urban And Regional Studies* 12(2): 116-132.

Ipsos Reid. 2006. Canadians see many benefits of locally grown food. http://www.ipsos-na.com/news/pressrelease.cfm?id=3298. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Ipsos Reid. 2008. Poll of public opinions toward agriculture, food and agri-food production in B.C. http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2009AL0006-000554.htm. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Jackson, P., P. Russell, and N. Ward. 2007. The appropriation of 'alternative' discourses by 'mainstream' food retailers. In *Alternative food geographies: Representation and practice*, eds. D. Maye, L. Holloway, and M. Kneafsey, 309-330. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Jarosz, L. 2008. The city in the country: Growing alternative food networks in metropolitan areas. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24: 231-244.

Johnsen, S. 2003. Contingency revealed: New Zealand farmers' experiences of agricultural restructuring. *Sociologia Ruralis* 43(2): 128-149.

King, R.P., M.S. Hand, G. DiGiacomo, K. Clancy, M.I. Gómez, S.D. Hardesty, L. Lev, and E.W. McLaughlin. 2010. Comparing the structure, size, and performance of local and

mainstream food supply chains. *Economic Research Report Number 99*. Washington, USA: United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

Kirschenmann, F., S. Stevenson, F. Buttel, T. Lyson, and M. Duffy. 2008. Why worry about the agriculture of the middle?. In *Food and the Mid-Level Farm: Renewing an agriculture of the middle*, eds. T.A. Lyson, G.W. Stevenson, and R. Welsh, 3-22. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press.

Kirwan, J. 2004. Alternative strategies in the UK agro-food system: Interrogating the alterity of farmers' markets. *Sociologia Ruralis* 44(4): 395-415.

Kneafsey, M. 2010. The region in food—important or irrelevant? *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 3: 177–190.

Lamine, C. 2005. Settling shared uncertainties: Local partnerships between producers and consumers. *Sociologia Ruralis* 45(4): 324-345.

Little, J., B. Ilbery, and D. Watts. 2009. Gender, consumption and the relocalisation of food: A research agenda. *Sociologia Ruralis* 49(3): 201-217.

Lyson, T.A., G.W. Stevenson, and R.Welsh, eds. 2008. *Food and the Mid-Level Farm*. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press.

MacRae, R., R.C. Martin, M. Juhasz, and J. Langer. 2009. Ten percent organic within 15 years: Policy and program initiatives to advance organic food and farming in Ontario, Canada. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 24(2): 120–136.

Magne, M-A. and M. Cerf. 2009. How information becomes a resource for action in an uncertain and complex world: Sense-making and contingency in the knowing process. *Outlook on Agriculture* 38(2): 157-165.

Marion, M-A. 2009. Small meat shops caught by stricter government rules. Brantford Expositor. http://www.theexpositor.com/ArticleDisplay.aspx?archive=true&e=1668423. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Marsden, T. 1999. Rural Futures: the consumption countryside and its regulation. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(4): 501-520.

Maxey, L. 2006. Can we sustain sustainable agriculture? Learning from small-scale producer-suppliers in Canada and the UK. *The Geographical Journal* 172(3): 230–244.

Miele, M. 2006. Consumption Culture: The Case of Food. In *Handbook of rural studies*, eds. P. Cloke, T. Marsden, and P. Mooney, 344-354. London, UK: SAGE Publications.

Moore, O. 2006. Understanding postorganic fresh fruit and vegetable consumers at participatory farmers' markets in Ireland: Reflexivity, trust, and social movements. *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 30(5): 416–426.

Moore, O. 2008. How embedded are organic fresh fruit and vegetables at Irish farmers' markets and what does the answer say about the organic movement? An exploration,

using three models. *International Journal of Agricultural Resources, Governance and Ecology* 7(1/2): 144-157.

Morgan, K., T. Marsden, and J. Murdoch. 2006. *Worlds of Food: Place, Power and Provenance in the Food Chain*. Oxford, UK. Oxford University Press.

Morris, C. and H. Buller. 2003. The local food sector: a preliminary assessment of its form and impact in Gloucestershire, UK. *The British Food Journal* 105(8): 559-566.

Morris, C. and N. Evans. 2004. Agricultural turns, geographical turns: retrospect and prospect. *Journal of Rural Studies* 20: 95–111.

Morris, C. and J. Kirwan. 2006. Vegetarians: Uninvited, uncomfortable or special guests at the table of the alternative food economy? *Sociologia Ruralis* 46(3): 192-213.

Morris, C. and J. Kirwan. 2010. Food commodities, geographical knowledges and the reconnection of production and consumption: The case of naturally embedded food products. *Geoforum* 41: 131-143.

Mutersbaugh, T. and S. Lyon. 2010. Transparency and democracy in certified ethical commodity networks. *Geoforum* 41: 27-32.

National Farmers' Union (NFU). 2009. Farmer favorability survey. England Marketing. http://www.nfuonline.com/Media_centre/2009/Importance_of_farming_is_high_and_on_the_increase/. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Oberholtzer, L., K. Clancy and J.D. Esseks. 2010. The future of farming on the urban edge: Insights from fifteen U.S. counties about farmland protection and farm viability. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 1(2): 59-75.

Ontario Farm Animal Council (OFAC). 2009. 2009 OFAC Farm issues study. http://www.ofac.org/news/2009/national-study-090312.php. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). 2009. Province invests in local food initiatives. http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/infores/releases/2009/070609.htm. Accessed 18 January 2011.

OMAFRA. 2009b. Farm operators' income from farm and off-farm sources, by region, 2006. http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/stats/finance/reginc06.htm. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Ostrom, M. 2006. Everyday meaning of "local food": Views from home and field. *The Journal of the Community Development Society* 37(1): 65-78.

Ostrom, M.R. 2007. Community supported agriculture as an agent of change: Is it working?. In *Remaking the North American Food System*, eds. C.C. Hinrichs and T. Lyson, 99-120. Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska Press.

Ostrom, M.R. and R.A. Jussaume Jr. 2007. Assessing the significance of direct farmer-consumer linkages as a change strategy in Washington state: Civic or opportunistic? In *Remaking the North American Food System*, eds. C.C. Hinrichs and T. Lyson, 235-259. Lincoln, USA: University of Nebraska Press.

Pimbert, M. 2010. Towards food sovereignty: reclaiming autonomous food systems. IIED, London. http://www.iied.org/pubs/display.php?o=G02612. Accessed 3 March 2010.

Pirog, R.and R. Rasmussen. 2008. Food, fuel and the future: Consumer perceptions of local food, food safety and climate change in the context of rising prices. http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/pubs/staff/consumer2/report.html. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Pritchard, B., D. Burch, G. Lawrence. 2007. Neither 'family' nor 'corporate' farming: Australian tomato growers as farm family entrepreneurs. *Journal of Rural Studies* 23: 75 –87.

Rance, L. 2008. Canadian planners put food on menu. Winnipeg Free Press. http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/historic/32972379.html. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Renting, H., T.K. Marsden, and J. Banks. 2003. Understanding alternative food networks: exploring the role of short food supply chains in rural development. *Environment and Planning A* 35: 393-411.

Roper Public Affairs and Media. 2004. Food and farming 2004. http://www.organicvalley.coop/pdf/roper_survey.pdf. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Rosin, C. 2007. Justifying the 'alternative': Renegotiating conventions in the Yerba Mate network, Brazil. In *Alternative food geographies: Representation and practice*, eds. D. Maye, L. Holloway, and M. Kneafsey, 115–132. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Ross, N.J. 2006. How civic is it? Success stories in locally focused agriculture in Maine. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 21(2): 114-123.

Sage, C. 2003. Social embeddedness and relations of regard: Alternative 'good food' networks in South-West Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 47-60.

Sage, C. 2007. Trust in markets: Economies of regard and spaces of contestation in alternative food networks. In *Street Entrepreneurs: People, place and politics in local and global perspective*, eds. J. Cross and A. Morales. New York, USA: Routledge.

Schneider, M.L. and C.A. Francis. 2005. Marketing locally produced foods: Consumer and farmer opinions in Washington County, Nebraska. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems* 20(4): 252-260.

Seyfang, G. 2006. Ecological citizenship and sustainable consumption: Examining local organic food networks. *Journal of Rural Studies* 22: 383-395.

Seyfang, G. 2008. Avoiding Asda? Exploring consumer motivations in local organic food networks. *Local Environment* 13(3): 187-201.

Smithers, J. and P. Johnson. 2004. The dynamics of family farming in North Huron County Ontario: Part I. Development trajectories. *The Canadian Geographer* 48(2): 191-208.

Smithers, J. and A.E. Joseph. 2010. The trouble with authenticity: Separating ideology from practice at the farmers' market. *Agriculture and Human Values* 27(2): 239-247.

Smithers, J., A. Joseph, and M. Armstrong. 2005. Across the divide (?): Reconciling farm and town views of agriculture–community linkages. *Journal of Rural Studies* 21: 281–295.

Smithers, J., J. Lamarche, and A.E. Joseph. 2008. Unpacking the terms of engagement with local food at the farmers' market: Insights from Ontario. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24: 337-350.

Sonnino, R. and T. Marsden. 2006. Beyond the divide: Rethinking relationships between alternative and conventional food networks in Europe. *Journal of Economic Geography* 6(2): 181-199.

Statistics Canada. 2008. Ontario's farm population: Changes over a lifetime. 2006 Census of Agriculture. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/agpop/on-eng.htm. Accessed 18 January 2011.

Stevenson, G.W., and R. Pirog. 2008. Values-based supply chains: Strategies for agrifood enterprises-of-the-middle. In *Food and the Mid-Level Farm: Renewing an agriculture of the middle*, eds. T.A. Lyson, G.W. Stevenson, and R. Welsh, 119–143. Cambridge, USA: MIT Press.

Trabalzi, F. 2007. Crossing conventions in localized food networks: insights from southern Italy. *Environment and Planning A* 39: 283-300.

Vannahme, A. 2009. Flaherty's budget confirms ag spending plans. Alberta Farmer Express. http://www.albertafarmexpress.ca/issues/ISArticle.asp?aid=1000090076&PC=FBC&issue=01272009. Accessed 4 August 2009.

Venn, L., M. Kneafsey, L. Holloway, R. Cox, E. Dowler and H. Tuomainen. 2006. Researching European 'alternative' food networks: some methodological considerations. *Area* 38(3): 248–258.

Wallington, T.J. and G. Lawrence. 2008. Making democracy matter: Responsibility and effective environmental governance in regional Australia. *Journal of Rural Studies* (24) 277–290.

Watts, D.C.H., B. Ilbery, and D. Maye. 2005. Making Reconnections in Agro-food Geography. *Progress in Human Geography* 29(1): 22-40.

Winter, M. 2003. Embeddedness, the new food economy and defensive localism. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 23-32.