

COVID 19 + Food Security: The Intersection

Video Transcript

00:06

Gwen Chapman: Good morning everybody I'm Gwen Chapman. I'm the Dean of Social and Applied Human Sciences here at the University of Guelph and I'm delighted to welcome people to the first in our COVID-19 series of webinars, this one is looking at COVID-19 and food security the intersection. I'm really pleased to have a wide variety of people joining us today in what I am sure is going to be a really stimulating discussion.

Black Lives Matter. June is Indigenous History Month and June is Pride Month. These statements are important to today's conversation and about food security which is often more of a challenge for racialized and other minority groups. The same systems that can cause food insecurity for these communities often also result in COVID-19 hitting many of those same communities harder. The intersection of COVID and food security affects different people, communities and industries in different ways which is why we have assembled such a diverse set of speakers for today's discussion

I'm very pleased to welcome today's panelists who are Leticia Deawuo, Leticia want to give us a little wave, who is the Black Creek Community Farm, the Director of the Black Creek Community Farm and winner of the 2018 Arrell Community Food Hero Award. Elizabeth Finnis, associate professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Guelph. Robert Friendship, who is a professor of in the Department of Population Medicine, and Arvinder Pannu who's a Master of Science candidate in the Capacity Development and Extension program again at the University of Guelph. I'm going to start by asking each of our panelists to talk about the food security challenges that they think the people in the groups that they work with are experiencing. I'm going to start with Beth, so Beth what COVID-19 food security challenges do you think that small-scale family farmers might be experiencing?

02:16

Elizabeth Finnis: Thanks so much Gwen and thank you for inviting me to this discussion today. I just want to put my comments in context, so most recently I've been working with smaller scale family farmers in the Parry Sound district, which is just on the edge of Northern Ontario and I've been looking at food production, local food production challenges and innovations. This is not what is typically considered a core farming area, but it does support dairy, market garden, and livestock farms and most of these are small or medium scale mixed-use farms relying on farmers markets and farm gate sales and on family and local labor so I'm drawing on this work to frame most of my comments today. A lot of what smaller scale farmer family farmers are facing right now is going to be shaped by the factors that that they are embedded within. Things like their locations, there are specific markets and their overall access to resources, both the sort of general agricultural resources and the resources that are going to help them adapt to the pandemic context. For example, in the Parry Sound district farmers experienced a number of pre-existing challenges including marketing issues, limited resources, climate and geographical challenges, aging farming populations and land pressures particularly in terms of tourism and Recreation development. COVID-19 is adding another layer to

this because it is further affecting their marketing options the connections that they have with customers. Their access to key supply chains like feed animal feed and so on and the ability to get support and resources in a timely manner. Moreover, some of these farms are quite isolated and quite difficult to physically get to so while there are some new online sales options in the area, including through local farmers markets and social media marketing, there are actually still places where people have very slow or non-existent internet making these kinds of internet marketing routes inaccessible for some people. For parts of the Parry Sound district, one of the key markets is tourists, as specifically people who come up to cottages or rental cabins or provincial parks and they pick up the produce meat and eggs that local farmers sell on the way to their destinations, and then they pick it up again on their way home. This influx of tourists represents an important income for or important source of farm income and the reduced tourism that we're seeing now and also likely to continue to see for a while means increased economic pressures for farmers.

05:07

Gwen Chapman: Thanks Beth I'm going to turn it over to Bob. Now your area of expertise and interest is the swine industry and consumers of their product. What do you see as the food security challenges relating to COVID-19 in your in those areas?

05:27

Robert Friendship: I'd like to start by just thanking all the farmers, they sometimes get missed out when they're listing essential workers and there's nothing more essential than farmers. In the in the swine industry is a nice contrast with what Beth was saying about the small holding of small farmers. The swine industry is large and it's very, it's a mature industry that has very sophisticated infrastructure. It's different I think than some of the other Supply Management sectors, like dairy and poultry, the swine industry is a really free enterprise and competes in the world market. 65% percent of the pork produced in Canada is exported, which becomes a problem when borders are closed, and trade is disrupted. The other aspect to the pig industry is that it's very tightly tied with the US industry, much like the automobile industry is; where parts go back and forth before the car is assembled, pigs go back and forth, feed goes back and forth, parts of pigs go back and forth so where things that happen in the US really affect Canada. Of the challenges that Canadian pork producers are facing, one is low prices they are terrible financial problems because of COVID-19 and a lot of this is related to the packing industry, that it's been exposed as a weak link in the food chain. If a packing plant closes it creates a lot of stresses to the where the producers are going to send their pigs, so on top of poor prices the producers are just worried about not being able to even market their pigs. It's yeah I think it's been a very stressful time for them and then they face also the same issues that everybody else is trying to keep their business going during this time worrying about what happens if they get sick or their family or some of the workers, how do you keep everybody isolated and healthy? And that's probably one of the strengths of the pig industry as they understand biosecurity, they I think very quick to adopt ways to try and keep farms running and keep everybody safe and it's meant changing things a little bit with the way they do procedures and lunch rooms etc. Just a very challenging time for the pig industry and pig farmers and I think that they just that's probably shared in other agricultural sectors, it's just that's the group that I know about.

09:16

Gwen Chapman: Thanks Bob I'm going to turn to Leticia now and maybe a bit more of a focus on consumers and urban food production, also particularly the Black community and Toronto. What is your sense of COVID-19 related food security challenges that you're seeing?

09:37

Leticia Deawuo: Thank you so much for having me today. It is no surprise that Black racialized communities, when the City of Toronto shared the COVID map it was no surprise that visualize, and Black communities had high rates of COVID. Black people are on the front lines in terms of if you look at the farms across southern Ontario, racialized people on the front lines of that, racialized people are on the front line too in terms of senior care homes they are also in the front lines in terms of the grocery stores. They're in the front lines in terms of all of these works and during COVID it is when people are realizing that these are essential work, and these are essential services that we need within our community, so you can imagine what the challenges that our communities had before and the challenges that our communities will be facing now. It's very much tied to the systemic inequities that were facing so if the Black Creek Community Farm when we started the emergency food program very quickly the numbers grew to over 2,500 people who are you know seeking support and seeking, need food needs for their families because our communities again are the ones on the front lines are the ones that I impacted most by COVID.

There are also the ones that are all paid right and get paid really really low wages. In terms of what's happening within our communities there's no different in terms of what was happening before COVID except with COVID now the issues of course have is at a higher proportion. Part of this is really looking at some of the gains that we've made during COVID with some of, for instance the danger pay, how do we ensure that that danger pay is also increased for people who's at risk for COVID as well thanks.

11:49

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. Now I'll turn it over to Arvinder, and what can you tell us for the promise a student perspective?

11:58

Arvinder Pannu: Let me start off by telling you a little bit about myself. My name is Arvinder and I'm a student candidate of master's candidate capacity building extension. I've done a lot of extracurriculars around my campus, I worked for universities fighting world hunger where I did bi-weekly lectures for students teaching about food security. I'm going to start off by explaining what food security is; well it's based on three pillars and that is food access, food availability and food adequacy, and it's always been a problem.

COVID-19 has you know just compounded itself on top of this problem. COVID-19 did not create food insecurity but it made it worse or for marginalized communities on the periphery or edge of the system. That includes indigenous populations on & off reserves, rural communities, you can learn a little bit more about that you can check out our R2B2 projects, senior citizens and old-age in homes and hospitals, if you want to learn another program or more about that you can go check out our Allan Hasan's research on that, people with disabilities and especially our homeless communities but

the thing is the list goes on. In terms of a student perspective, we're not just millennials running out of baking supplies, no no no no you know some of us are actually having to travel long distances for food, we don't have cars sometimes, there's no bus routes. These regions are called food deserts just limited access to fresh produce and we're doing a study at the University of Guelph there are many organizations that are helping to alleviate this problem. One organization is called the SEED, which has mobile food markets on a sliding scale, there's also a cool initiative started up by Andrew Nixon, Zerogrocery which is a ecommerce website where you can order online groceries at zero where there's no there's zero waste.

The thing is that not every community is fortunate enough to have these kinds of communities. Where my parents live in Brampton, Etobicoke, North York students are having to travel long distances for food they're carrying these white heavy grocery bags in the heat, the rain, the cold and that's after working sometimes 8 to 10-hour shifts right. I can attest to this because my cousin just immigrated from India to go to school here and she's going through the same kind of ordeal. Students, we're under we're under financial stress we have tighter budgets um it's teaching us how to stretch our dollar which is you know which is a good thing, but when you run out of money to pay for rent pay for essential goods, buy baby formula, the picture becomes a lot clearer that you know there are some issues in our food system. We're also under many cultural, institutional, and societal pressures which is all impacting our mental health, which is even worse in the Indigenous populations, Indigenous students, and there's a lot bigger of a conversation that needs to go on in that realm of things as well. At the University of Guelph, it has helped a lot of us but that's because everything is done in-house with hospitality services. The thing is not every University has a food University, that being said there's a lot of students who are falling through the cracks, I mean slipping through cracks cracks [CENSORED] sorry for my language. I'm one example, being international students their tuition prices are higher, they have limited social capital in other words they didn't have as many friends and family to rely on if something goes wrong, they also don't they don't get CESB which is a really you know important thing just you know understand look at, they don't get those same kind of you know privileges that we as Canadians do. If you didn't know, last week I believe or two weeks ago 18,000 kilos of food were shipped to Cape Breton Nova Scotia from Toronto to support international students. All I can say is that it's not just a student problem, it's impacting many marginalized communities within the food system and you know we should be investing our students because that's basically us investing in the future.

16:08

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. Between all of the panelists it's been a great overview of the variety of ways in which COVID-19 is affecting the food system, from the producers through to consumers and various vulnerable groups, particularly on the consumer side so that's sort of what's happening now and what some of the impacts are what can we think about in terms of the future? What does all of this mean for the future, and maybe I'll start with you Leticia in terms of where you see this going?

16:40

Leticia Deawuo: I think if we don't address the inequities within the system, the future will not look any different from COVID and pre-COVID. I think in terms of for us to look at the future we must look at the past and look at what's happening during COVID and really look at policies

that—equitable policies that really support migrant farmworkers, that supports people that work in the hospitality and food industry, people that work in hospitals so from nurses PSW workers, to really provide stuff you really need to look at the whole food system and look at the inequities within the food system and really push for policies to change that, because if we don't do that I don't think there will be a post-COVID. We're just literally just going back in to the way that things were, and we honestly cannot go back to that way because we know that the way that this system is set up, the system is set up to kill people like literally. People are dying with issues that we can fix, so for instance if we look at the migrant farm worker program, we knew they were coming we knew about COVID, why was there not enough done enough plans made to house people safely right? And that's because we don't value the people that are actually using their labor to do the work to make sure that we have food in our fridge to eat. So I think in terms of looking at the future it's saying that enough is enough, it's making sure that they are huge systemic changes made to make sure that people have access to good, healthy, culturally appropriate food but also that people's labor is also compensated and compensated well. If there are essential workers now, there should be essential workers post COVID. If we're giving them danger pay, it doesn't mean even if COVID is gone that that danger is gone. We need to recognize that, and we need to make sure that we're putting in all the policies and systems and regulations in place to make sure that people have of course, a healthy affordable access to food but also the work safety, which is really really important

19:16

Gwen Chapman: Thank you, Arvinder, how about you? What do you see is happening or needed for the future?

19:23

Arvinder Pannu: Currently students are faced with new challenges, a new system that we're going to need to learn how to navigate and new demands from the public. I think that all students in the field of food and especially capacity and extension students, we're all well-positioned to support and find solutions for food and security problems we now have the opportunity to learn innovate create and act to make our food system better. Throughout the last couple of months, I've actually seen a lot of interesting initiatives pop up and I'm just going to list a few of them to just show you that you know there is a lot happening right now and show the more optimistic end of this

I could quickly talk a little bit about the SEED, which is the social enterprise that has these mobile food markets set up throughout the community throughout the Guelph community on a sliding scale, and they're also now shipping and delivering food boxes and food packs to individuals. I also saw a rise of online farmers markets and that's happening a lot of that's happening in British Columbia and also here Ontario as well. There's been a lot of conversations about AI and e-commerce marketing. To give you a quick little story, while working this past semester I worked for hospitality services marketing team and I was doing marketing and also developing websites for my professor I saw a brand new market being created by small-scale farmers that Melissa was talking about on needing these services of a website development and encoding so I taught myself— a few friends of mine and I got together here we learned how to code we learned to develop websites and now we're kind of you know you know dabbling in this world and it's this new field and we're just kind of you know

exploring it's all a process there's a lot of challenges but it's very quick, its quick, there's a lot of information being thrown at us. I'm sorry if I'm talking too fast, I just talk a lot and talk fast sorry about that.

There's a lot of cool podcasts being treated right now, there's a lot of ways that students can be creative. The feeding 9 billion program has a few cool podcasts out, there's been garden gardening kits being delivered at homes in Alberta. The thing is yes, there are a lot of you know a lot of new opportunities, but thing is there's still much more to be done. We can't forget why we're having this conversation we need to start investing in our communities, we need to start working with interdisciplinary teams with a systems lens. We can't alter the past, but we need to learn from it. Reconcile with what's happened, pay reparations if you have to if we have to and create a basically a brighter future.

22:08

Gwen Chapman: Great thank you, thank you. Beth how about you, what do you see as what this means for the future particularly for that for the small family farmers?

22:21

Elizabeth Finnis: Though unfortunately, in terms of the farmers that I work with, I suspect that COVID-19 may end up being the last straw for some of them. In the same sense that bovine spongiform encephalopathy or mad cow was the last straw for some farmers in the area in the early 2000s. What this did was farms closed down it created a contraction of the agricultural landscape in the Parry Sound District. Unfortunately, I think that our current situation may result in some farmers closing down operations or possibly reducing some of the diversity of what they produce. It may mean that some of their lands get sold for recreational or other uses given the high demand in the district for that kind of land use, and that will result in further shrinking of local food production in the district. Although there's a lot of diversity in the agricultural sector I suspect that we will also see some of this in other parts of Ontario and in other parts of Canada. This is likely to put further pressures on farm sustainability agricultural biodiversity and people's ability to purchase locally produced foods and exercise choice in their local food systems which then contributes to food insecurity more broadly. That said I do think it we're also seeing some potential for positive shifts and I like to also try and look at the positive elements of this. As Arvinder mentioned, this idea of ordering online from a local producer an online order that can be delivered or picked up from the farm gate or picked up from an open-air farmers market I think is becoming increasingly attractive when people are concerned about shopping indoors. If this becomes a norm for more people now, then it could remain so in the future which I think means the potential for farmers to engage with new and expanded customer bases, as well as a sort of broadening of demand for food that is produced and consumed locally and that isn't transported as far or for as long. This I think may encourage some farmers smaller scale farmers especially to expand the nature of what they produce and may also create spaces for new farmers which is important. More broadly, given what we've seen lately in terms of outbreaks on large farms in Ontario this situation is as Leticia has pointed out creating additional pressures to confront and address long-standing critiques of the working and living conditions for some seasonal agricultural workers.

25:19

Gwen Chapman: Thank you, Bob how about you what do you see is the future with the swine industry?

25:29

Robert Friendship: Well with what COVID-19 is doing to the swine industry is creating a great deal of financial stress on them and I think maybe other farms as well. This is not just the you know the small local farms that Beth was talking about, but these are you know large family farms that are very specialized and have a great deal of investment and employees, and service people, feed mills and other farms growing crops for them so there's a huge ripple effect that a lot of jobs. I think because of you know whatever you like whenever there's these types of crises that occur, farmers will go bankrupt, farmers will leave the sector and I think people have been emphasizing growing local and all of this, but I think Canada has this very large landmass with a relatively small population, and I think we have a moral obligation to grow food for the world. Exporting food and supplying food needs I think is really important and in an industry like the pork industry, it's more than just making sure we have enough food for ourselves, but it is a way of sending food to lots of other countries. Right now, I worry about the state of the industry and the financial issues but also has been brought up the not just the farm workers but workers in in abattoirs and processing areas that there's weakness here that we I think we knew before and it's been more clearly identified. We need to be addressing that and moving ahead and taking this as an opportunity as well as a very severe challenge and trying to straighten some of this out and maybe also working out some of the issues with our you know interconnection with the United States and our reliance on goodwill and things running smoothly in other countries. It's frustrating when the challenges aren't part of something that you have control over and can't fix within your own house I think is a issue

28:35

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. You've all been giving us lots to think about. We're going to have one more round of questions with the panel and we'll be following that with the QA from the people who are who are listening in, so if you're out there if you want to start thinking about some questions that you might have and use the Q&A box. You can start sending questions in anytime for the panelists to answer after we get through our last round of their comments. You've all certainly given us lots to think about and really pointed out a number of the vulnerabilities in the whole food system, from the economic vulnerabilities of food producers the weaknesses in that food production system, whether it's the migrant farm workers, the people working in large farms or in the meatpacking plants, consumers who are struggling with their own economic situation, such as students, such as members of other vulnerable and marginalized communities. You've talked a bit about the future but I'm wondering if in our last round you could talk a little bit about some specifics about what you would like to see and how what are some steps maybe some specific steps that you think that we might be able to take to get there. Bob I'll start with you this time

29:55

Robert Friendship: I think what I would like to see is certainly government support for farmers in general. It makes sure that this cash flow problem you know that people aren't losing their farms over something that like COVID-19 that people had they had no control over. I think it means

guaranteeing some loans and encouraging them to carry on because for instance, in the pig industry things look very promising for the Canadian industry that there's a real-world shortage of pigs—pork right now that countries like China have been devastated with disease problems, African swine fever, and they're you know there's this huge shortage. I think that yeah support financial support and I think we can also you know take advantage of this to you know change the way we do things like an abattoir, more robotics and technology, and ensuring worker safety and improving what we've got. I think the wrong answer to this would be what we hope for in the future is to go back to the way it was. I think you know this is an opportunity and this is a way to move forward as well

31:43

Gwen Chapman: Thanks. Beth, how about how about you what are your thoughts about what you'd like to see in how we could get there?

31:57

Elizabeth Finnis: I would say that there's actually a lot of potential for innovation and expansion. For example, Arvinder's a point about finding ways to support farmers in online ordering platforms and helping with tech support and setup for that is critical because a lot of farmers don't have time to develop those skills themselves and having like meaningful engagement and support would be very helpful. I think the trick to supporting the diversity of the farm industry is to pay attention to that diversity and to make resources and supports available in meaningful ways to different kinds of farmers, in different geographical areas who have different needs and challenges. The supports that a smaller scale mixed-use farm is going to need are very different from some of those needed in other agricultural sectors and we need to pay attention to that. Some of the current discussions we've seen around expansion of rural access to high-speed Internet for example will be critical to some farmers and this is a meaningful change both now and for the future of their operations. We need governments to show that they value the range of farming out there and that they support a space for that range of farming.

I also think that the COVID-19 situation has the potential to get more of us thinking critically about things like supply chains and production and processing, the labor and the environmental contexts of how our food is produced. How many hands it passes through, and who gets access to things like locally produced foods? This is I mean it involves community and political engagement and pushing hard for policy in action that supports equitable access to local foods as part of strengthening food security overall. I see right now as having the potential to continue the fight for equitable food access, while supporting and building on a smaller scale and other farms during uncertain times and for the future.

34:06

Gwen Chapman: Thanks. Arvinder, how about you what are some of your thoughts on this?

34:13

Arvinder Pannu: I think that we need a system-wide solution. Our food system is complex, and it's made up of you know interconnected chains and we're going to need solutions for you know various communities, various institutions. We can start off with food waste from farm to fork or any better

policies for marginalized communities. I think that we're going to need to invest in agriculture technology, storage. We also need to start talking about poverty alleviation. That all looks you know different for four different groups it's all context and site-specific. I think that we need to start promoting farmers who use agronomy practices and we need to incorporate food sovereignty principles. I've been a real big activist for food literacy programs, especially bringing gardeners to high schools and middle schools. I think when you start creating an ecological mindset you know at younger ages and teaching people about sustainability. We need a cultural shift and I think food should be a universal right. How do we do this? We need to make sure that science is brought to action, we need to bring researchers policymakers and private organizations to work in parallel and we just start bridging cross-cultural communication, just like getting everyone to talk and bringing up onto the table which I think these webinar series are doing.

35:46

Gwen Chapman: Thank you thank you. great and Laticia, how about how about you?

35:55

Leticia Deawuo: Just add to what Arvinder and Beth also shared, I think you know during COVID when the government started announcing the funding supports and programs, we all saw that a lot of the financial supports were again, to big agribusinesses and very little sort of left over for small-scale growers. Even to even think about Black and Indigenous growers within that context or even urban agriculture as well within that context which I don't think is valued in the same way. I think we need to decentralize the way that our food system is set up around agribusinesses and really look at supporting small-scale growers, but specifically looking at the fact that Black, Indigenous and other racialized people do not have access to land in the same way, so how do we create programs specifically to support Black, Indigenous and racialized people within agriculture? And also making a good chunk of our federal and provincial funding to support our small-scale growers I think is one key piece that we really really need to look at. The other piece I wanted to add is the increase of wages, I'm making support of the 15 and fairness campaign, of course, I'm sure it's like \$20 an hour now but people really need to live a decent way. I think really increasing wages for our farmers, especially migrant work and farmers, making sure that they get permanent status upon entrance because that's what is going to allow them to be able to access health benefits *that they already pay into*. I think is also important, and then looking at housing for migrant farmworkers, once they arrived is also crucial and is important and it is imperative to their health as well and I think you know going back because I'm involved in urban agriculture and I think it's high time that we do look at urban agriculture as playing a key role within our food system and within our local food system, for the fact that again over sixty percent of the world population live in urban centers, so what are the ways that urban farms or urban you know urban farms urban gardens can also align themselves with your small scalable their farms to really push some of these forward. I'll leave it there thank you.

38:38

Gwen Chapman: Great thank you. We've had a number of questions coming into our Q&A box. I'm going to start with a couple of them and see if some of the panelists want to tackle them. There are a couple questions that I'm going to put together around some issues of the cost of food. One that one person is asking how we balance the increased costs of improving the food system particularly the

labor issues and the fact that cost of food for those and the fact that there's a problem with cost of food for those who don't have financial access, so it's basic income the answer? Another person has certainly gone on the cost of food as well saying to pay farmers more and pay our seasonal workers more does it make sense to ask consumers to pay more for the food on the shelves? Is the average consumer shopping at the grocery store for the food not paying enough? I think there's sort of those two sides that on the one hand we need to support the food production system pay the workers appropriately give them appropriate supports which will likely raise the cost of foods and perhaps food is relatively cheap in some ways already, and yet we have men people who already can't afford the foods and so what are your what are your thoughts on that? Does somebody want to start with that?

40:06

Leticia Deawuo: I'll just start. I think we have a concentration of wealth, the food industry globally is the trillion right, trillions of trillion industry, but the money is concentrated at the top. Then when you come to the bottom you have farmers and the growers at the bottom are the people that are processing the food that are not gaining from the whole wealth as well. I think we really need to look at the way the pyramid that is set up within our system and the way that we can share the wealth, like why should one company or one family like own so much of the food system that we eat if food is based on profits and the profits is only shared at the very top we're going to have this problem that we're having. So yes I don't agree that you know the cost should be put on consumers, I think that we really need to look at the way that the whole structure of the food system is set up and really look at ways that that can shift to make sure that the wealth is shared evenly across the board so that people have access to the food that they eat but also the wealth is circulating among people, specifically among the people who are actually growing the food on the ground

41:36

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. Beth do you want to weigh in on this one around sort of financially supporting both people working in the farm system and the food production system adequately, but also ensuring that consumers particularly vulnerable consumers are able to get the food that they need.

42:00

Elizabeth Finnis: Sure yeah thank you I agree with Letitia that we're not seeing in the even distribution of the profits that come from food production, although that's very you know diverse depending on the industry that we're talking about. Things like the cost of processing of livestock can really affect you know the income that farmers make, and that is shaped by things like the consolidation of processing centers. I also think that the cost of food issue is it's not just about the cost of food itself, it's also about the wages that are being made outside of the food sector as well. Peoples salaries and living wages are critical to ensuring that people have access to are able to afford good culturally appropriate nutritious and valued foods, the foods that people want to be able to eat and access. Whether that's through a basic income or sort of a concerted effort, well not just effort but an you know specific action to ensure that people are being paid living wages. There are different ways to address this, but I really do think it is partly about what people are earning and whether they're earning a living wage.

43:25

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. I'm going to move on to another question Alice Raine has asked for consumers, do panelists have any advice on how we can act to improve food insecurity? Should we be acting local other suggestions for consumers? Arvinder, can I start with you?

43:46

Arvinder, Pannu: On that one, absolutely. From the student end I would say we should all start gardening in our backyards. I know a lot of my colleagues and fellow students are currently taking part in you know this is backyard adventure. I've actually started growing microgreens in my garage and I also have a decent you know garden in the backyard, and I'm using my microgreens to make [indistinct] which is a Indian food and it's like the chapati or rotis, you just mix it in with in the dough and it makes this on this amazing bread dough that you eat with other lentils or like yogurt. I would say start acting local start supporting your local farmers, start because that just reinvest all the money back into the community. I think just like we need some we need to like educate ourselves, there's a lot being thrown at us right now, there's a lot being thrown at us right now, and I think it's just start asking, just take a step back and just like take a breather and try and do the most you can right now, we are in a pandemic. What else what else I think that's all chime back in if I think of something else.

45:00

Gwen Chapman: yeah great if anybody else has something they want to add on that just go ahead, otherwise, I will move on to another question from Jeff, which tell this is a policy question. He says as bad as this pandemic has been, the next one could necessitate more severe movement control of food products across borders and even within provinces, so to assure Canadians food security during future emergencies, what is the single most influential policy really request we could make of governments today while COVID is still fresh in our minds? Bob do you want to tackle that one to start with?

45:42

Robert Friendship: Not really, because it's a really tough question. um I don't think anybody has the the real answer, but so some of the, as a veterinarian some of our policies about closing borders because if there's a disease outbreak in Newfoundland, the Canadian border closes and you can't ship pigs from Manitoba to Minnesota because of an issue in Newfoundland. This is where politics gets in the way and borders cause problems. That's what one of the disease problems is being able to create a way of regionalizing, and just like in Ontario today we've got you know Toronto and Hamilton being treated little differently than rural or other areas in Ontario because the danger is different. International policy has not been like that that one case of mad cow disease in Alberta closes the whole border and it's not really rational, I think governments take advantage of this sometimes just to create a barriers to help their own you know farmers maybe or something but I don't know if that answers Jeff's question, but it's my best guess.

47:34

Gwen Chapman: Well as you say, it's a really difficult question and no clear answer. Wondering if any of the other panelists have other comments on particularly policy requests that we could be making to government, it might not so much be about you know moving food products across borders and so on but you know what would your request to government be on the policy and to address food security during emergencies. Yeah go ahead.

48:00

Elizabeth Finnis: I agree with Bob that this is a really hard question because I'm not sure that there is one single policy that would address, this in fact I'm sure there isn't but I do think that that I would like to see more infrastructure readily available within smaller distances, so that we don't have to necessarily ship livestock for processing it to long distances to abattoirs. We could perhaps be looking at smaller scale abattoir that are a little bit closer and in the event of a pandemic, can be more quickly monitored and set up for health and safety pandemic regulations and things like that. Rather than a sort of more decentralized perspective or sorry-sorry rather than a more centralized perspective I'd like to see more decentralization of some of the infrastructure that is critical to a range of farmers. I think that puts us in a potentially better position should we see significant restrictions being placed on the movement of food products and the things that we need to support the food production.

49:36

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. One question that has come in that is very close to my own interest is, what are we doing to educate consumers to make wiser choices in food purchases which would help offset potential increase in food prices? We have abandoned teaching this in school and so sort of overall, I know Arvinder you'd mentioned food illiteracy and so what are what suggestions and thoughts do you have about food education for consumers?

50:09

Arvinder Pannu: Well food education it doesn't have to be a formalized institutionalized thing. I think we need to start you know promoting it within our household well, we're you know this learning is not just done in institutions and universities it's also done at home. I think that we need to start promoting at home education, my grandparents taught me a lot about farming I come from a long line of farmers and regeneration farmers from Punjab, India. They've all taken a time out of the day to know explain to me the significance of food, of making your own food, growing your own food, and trying to promote trying to promote your local food system.

Right now, as Laticia mentioned earlier, the pyramid is upside down and needs to be more in a circle and there's been a cool initiative that started up in Guelph, we actually got a grant ten million dollar grant from the government from Impact Canada, and that was for the circular food economy concept. It just means that we're supporting local food within the system but we're not losing any of its resources and we're trying to reinvest, and somehow put the waste back into the system to get something out and make it more make it more circular, make more sustainable. I've had the about the first time experience of witnessing all this happening at the SEED social enterprise which is something which is a I mentioned early it's a social enterprise in Guelph where they grow their

own food and they have their own farms, where they employ at-risk youth and senior citizens, sold at a mobile food market around the community for marginalized community members, as well as on a sliding scale and whatever food does not get sold it gets up cycled within their upcycle kitchen where senior citizens and at-risk youth come and bond here and make these delicious dishes, and then that's food is sold and whatever is not sold during if they just saw it is donated and they just like try and make the most of it. I think that we start teaching concepts of sustainability then schools, food literacy, it's a lot there's a lot that goes within it. Canada's Food Guide you know had a lot of points in terms of food literacy and why it's important, and some of the steps that education institutions need to take but I think it's also a lot you know self-learning at home because you know you learn in different ways everyone learns in different ways.

52:33

Gwen Chapman: Great. Leticia do you have anything to add particularly to that?

52:39

Leticia Deawuo: I wanted to add in terms of food education for consumers, I think in our community for the most part, I always say like our auntie's are knows how to stretch a small amount of money that they have and knows how to prepare some of the best healthiest food you could ever imagine, and I don't think in that context for low-income Black Indigenous racialized folks that's the issue the issue is it's systemic. You work all years 30 years in Canada you have nothing to retire to, you don't have the luxury to fly to Florida for the winter right. So you learn in different ways how to manage your resources very well, so I think in our community it is more of looking at the systemic issues that are impacting them that is making it hard in terms of, that's having an impact in terms of different choices and also in terms of your health.

53:47

Gwen Chapman: Thank you. I think we have time for one more question, and I'm going to ask a question that is it has a more global focus and it is what lessons do you think the Canadian food system can offer to the world in terms of best practice and what is our responsibility to the global community in terms of food insecurity? Bob do you want to give a little start on that and I'll ask some other people as well.

54:14

Robert Friendship: Yeah. That's a that's a really good question that kind of, as people were talking about being growing local and concentrating on supporting the local farmers etc., yeah, I have some you know disagreement with that in that we're part of a globe and we are food producers and we're a very wealthy country and have a responsibility to try and help the rest of the world. Most famines have been a result of eating local, that they haven't been able to access food from you know it often is a local phenomenon, it's a war, climate catastrophe and we need to be able to keep borders open and move products. I should stop there and let everybody else speak.

55:22

Gwen Chapman: Thank You, Beth anything any thoughts that you have on Canada's responsibility to the global community?

55:35

Elizabeth Finnis: Yeah, I think it's important to recognize that it's not a sort of local food or global food only that we need to balance, there are there are things that we can't grow in Canada there are things that we grow really well in Canada that other people can't, and so that it is important to contribute to the global food system and be part of that discussion and part of the practice not simply focus only on local production. There is also place for local production that that does need to be supported, so I think what is our responsibility to the global community in terms of food insecurity? I would say our responsibility as a country is to ensure that we have farmers who are able to farm, right, that farming is a is a livelihood in an industry that allows for people to have, to support their families and you know do the kinds of work that they want to in a way that is rewarding to them and that is supported by the government so that it doesn't become a situation where only you know certain people who have the resources or who inherit the land or you know and whatnot can farm, it shouldn't just be sort of that consolidation. We as a as a country need to create and ensure spaces for the expansion and the sustainability of food production in this country.

57:12

Gwen Chapman: Thanks, Letitia do you have something to add to that?

57:14

Leticia Deawuo: I just wanted to just quickly to respond to Bob's argument in regards to the famine, I think you know and I think when we're looking at famine and local food systems predominantly in whether it be on the continent of Africa or in parts of Asia, they always have direct links to foreign entities that are either coming in mining extracting resources, or wars and things that are created that create sort of some of the challenges and issues that these countries or these communities end up having. That was just the one point that I wanted to add, that like this famines whether it be or droughts whether it be climate change, all are very much related globally to how different countries or different entities are interacting or are coming in to loot or to extract resources right. I think it's important to always make that connection that these things don't happen on their own, they're always connections with other entities as well. That was just the only part of what I said.

58:31

Gwen Chapman: Well thank you and thank you to everybody we are out of time here so unfortunately we are going to have to end it there. I do want to really thank all of the panelists you've given us a lot to think about and a lot of diverse perspectives we could have gone on a lot longer I think and continue this discussion, also a lot of great questions that we weren't able to get to as well, but we have certainly stimulated our thoughts from this. The recording of this webinar will be posted on the Arrell Food Institute, Food from Thought, and One Health sites at the University of Guelph. I also want to let people know that the next webinar in this series will be a week from today, Tuesday, June 16th from 11:00 until noon again, and it will be on AG tech and labor. The registration information will be sent out to everybody on that so with that I will say good bye to everybody and again thank you for attending, thank you to the panelists for participating bye-bye

59:34

Leticia Deawuo: Thank you so much for having me.

59:38

Elizabeth Finnis: Thank you.