

IN THIS ISSUE
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Scaling up through economies of community



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This fall of 2022 issue includes open-call papers on a wide range of food systems topics, with a cluster focused on the concept of economies of community. Economies of community occurs when stakeholders in a collective action project or program scale up, not by growing individually, but by growing as a group—by treating each other as equal partners, maintaining transparency in communications and in other transactions, and generating regular feedback for continuous improvement. Several examples of economies of community are provided in this issue.

We begin with THE ECONOMIC PAMPHLETEER column, in which **John Ikerd** makes crystal clear to us how affordability and accessibility of good food for all could well be a key to the ecological, social, and economic sustainability of local and regional food systems.

Next are commentaries from activist-scholars. Freshly minted Ph.D. **Antonio Roman-Alcalá** offers an optimistic view of the future of food systems in his *Five practical strategies for those who work for food systems change*. Similarly, **Marco Ginanneschi** proffers a thoughtful take on regional food systems as a “third way between the corporation model delivering standardized food and our idealized imagery of vegetable growers and home chefs” in *Manifesto for a regionally oriented food industry*.

In our first peer-reviewed paper, entitled *Economies of community in local agriculture: Farmers in New London, Connecticut, respond to the COVID-19 pandemic*, **Rachel Black** and **Adalie Duran** show how direct engagements between consumers and producers made it possible to nimbly make adjustments to thwart some of the worst impacts of the pandemic.

On our cover: Kanoa Dinwoodie (at right), the owner and operator of organic-certified Feral Heart Farm in Sunol, California, shows children how to properly harvest blackberries. Kanoa specializes in seed production and diasporic Asian crops. He participated in the “agroecology encounters” research described in author Antonio Roman-Alcalá’s commentary in this issue, “Five practical strategies for those who work for food systems change.”

Photo by Antonio Roman-Alcalá

Next, **Ronan Le Velly**, **Mathieu Désolé**, and **Carole Chazoule** use a hybrid intermediated beef value chain in France to underscore three characteristics of partnerships in *How to create an intermediated local food system partnership? Collective performance, collective negotiation, and collective learning*.

Continuing our informal theme, **Laura Florick** and **Chul Hyun Park** apply Darnhofer's farm resilience framework to reveal how a group of local farming operations and smaller-scale value chain partners appeared to be more able to adjust to challenges posed by COVID-19 in the Northwest region of Arkansas than other farmers with less community collaboration in *A pilot study exploring the impacts of COVID-19 on small-scale direct marketing farmers in Northwest Arkansas and their responses to the pandemic*.

Next, *Communication and building social capital in community supported agriculture* by **Ella Furness**, **Angelina Sanderson Bellamy**, **Adrian Clear**, **Samantha Mitchell Finnigan**, **J. Elliot Meador**, **Susanna Mills**, **Alice Milne**, and **Ryan Sharp** reveals how CSAs are fertile ground for building food system resilience through bridging capital (connecting people who do not know each other) and bonding capital (building personal relationships), as well as linking capital, which connects people of different social statuses.

In her reflective essay entitled *Sustainable food procurement by the University of California's health systems: Reflections on 10 years and recent COVID-19 challenges*, **Sapna Thottathil** describes the results of the sustainable procurement goals and practices of the University of California's healthcare system from 2009 to 2021—a relatively long stretch of data to study in the food systems literature.

The above papers reveal the power and potential of economies of community. However, an economies of community approach still has vulnerabilities to external threats. In *Adaptations and innovations: Analyzing food system organizations' responses to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic*, **Colleen Hammelman** and **Dylan Turner** discover that while many positive innovations and quick responses were generated during the height of the pandemic, ongoing challenges from the mainstream food system that limit the ability of stakeholders to pursue transformational change.

In the next group of papers, we shift the issue's focus to food system policy analysis, although one might draw connections to the role government can play in fostering economies of community.

Amy Carrad, **Lizzy Turner**, **Nick Rose**, **Karen Charlton**, and **Belinda Reeve** find that local government policies are emerging to support resilient food systems, but still need encouragement and financial support from larger state and federal government to be sufficiently robust in *Local innovation in food system policies: A case study of six Australian local governments*.

In *Sustaining New England's iconic tourism landscapes: An exploratory study to examine perceptions of value from farmers and fishermen*, **Caroline Paras**, **Tracy Michaud**, and **Matthew Hoffman** put the spotlight on how traditional dairy farming and lobstering industries could benefit from and maximize their contribution to the regional economy through public investments in agritourism and "aquatourism."

Next, **Chantelle Dacunha**, **Eric Ng**, and **Sarah Elton** present an analysis of Canada's new national Food Guide and see the potential for nationwide transformation in diet equity and sustainability in *The School Food Solution: Creating a healthy school food environment with Canada's Food Guide*.

And finally, In their reflective essay, *A decade of the Missouri Hunger Atlas: Information for action*, **Steven Henness**, **Bill McKelvey**, **Darren Chapman**, **Gloria Mangoni**, and **Mary Hendrickson** discuss the process of creating their state-of-the-art Atlas, the choice of indicators and data acquisition, the evolution of the Atlas over time, and how various groups use the Atlas or policy and action.

We wrap up this issue with two book reviews. **Lars Chinburg** reviews *Perilous Bounty: The Looming Collapse of American Farming and How We Can Prevent It* by Tom Philpott. And **Matthew Hoffman** reviews the newly revised edition of Philip Howard's *Concentration and Power in the Food System*.

In this issue we learn that food system-based collective action projects and programs can benefit from economies of community approaches. The cases presented in this issue clearly show that building scale through social capital in local food systems not only helps address a short-term crisis like a pandemic, but

when combined with other capitals supplied by government and business sectors, communities can move closer to the goal of sustained, long-term food security and equity.

Let us hope that another pandemic is not necessary to teach this lesson.



Peace, health, and happiness to all,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Duncan Hilchey".

Duncan Hilchey
Publisher and editor in chief