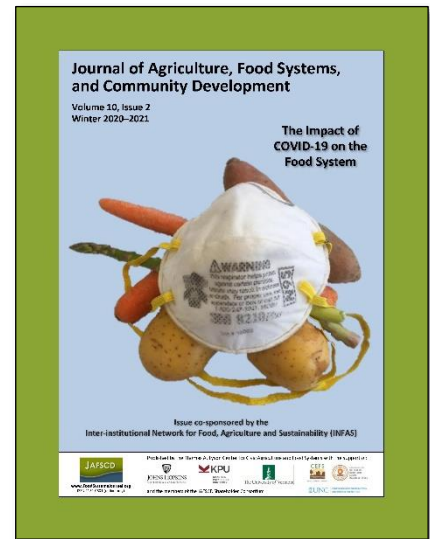


**IN THIS ISSUE**  
**DUNCAN HILCHEY**

**The impact of COVID-19 on the food system**



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In April 2020, the world was at the beginning of what would become the worst pandemic since the emergence of HIV/AIDS. One year later we have lost nearly 3 million souls to COVID-19. Disproportionately impacted have been lower-income families and individuals who provide the backbone of the global food system—farmworkers, processing-plant workers, food-service and restaurant workers, and many others who provide life-sustaining food for all of us.

Over the last year, organizations and governments have worked feverishly to maintain food supply chains, and—after some adjustment—alternative food networks throughout the world came to our rescue. We are not out of the woods yet, and new variants of the coronavirus are evolving that appear to be stalling our return to normalcy. Yet, with a year of experience under our belt, we now know more about maintaining food supplies during a pandemic, and what we need to do to prepare for the inevitable future crises. Researchers and organizations around the world managed to collect data during the first year of the pandemic, through interviews, surveys, secondary data analysis, and observation, to learn more about impacts and coping strategies.

Indeed, the response to our call for commentaries and papers on the topic of “the Impact of COVID-19 on the Food System” was overwhelming—so much so that we are having to publish commentaries and papers over three issues (fall 2020, winter 2020–2021, and spring 2021)—and likely beyond. In the current winter issue (our largest issue ever), we present applied research papers and commentaries reflecting a broad sweep of these initiatives related to COVID-19, along with a collection of open call papers covering a wide range of food system and community development topics.

We begin this issue with the Economic Pamphleteer. In his column *Realities of regenerative agriculture*, **John Ikerd** implores us to immediately confront the challenges of transitioning from our industrial-based food

system to one that is more “authentically sustainable,” and not merely half measures with slogans.

Following this column, we present 14 papers in response to our special topic call on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Food System (writ large).

In their paper *Dedication, innovation, and collaboration: A mixed-methods analysis of school meals in Connecticut during COVID-19*, **Katherine Connolly, Molly Babbin, Sarah McKee, Kevin McGinn, Juliana Cohen, Sandra Chafouleas, and Marlene Schwartz** explore how food service workers managed to continue feeding children after school closures during the pandemic.

Next, **Dana James, Evan Bowness, Tabitha Robin, Angela McIntyre, Colin Dring, Annette Aurélie Desmarais, and Hannah Wittman** draw on both the general food sovereignty and Indigenous food sovereignty movements to reconfigure our food system after its weaknesses were exposed, in *Dismantling and rebuilding the food system after COVID-19: Ten principles for redistribution and regeneration*.

In *Food hubs play an essential role in the COVID-19 response in Hawai'i*, **Saleh Azizi Fardkhales and Noa Kekuewa Lincoln** report on the performance of food hubs in Hawai'i that initially struggled but quickly adapted to the pandemic.

This is followed by **Catherine Campbell**, who identifies the need for more training for public officials in the value of local food during a public health crisis in *the impact of COVID-19 on local government stakeholders' perspectives on local food production*.

**Nurcan Atalan-Helicke and Bürge Abiral** then provide case studies of two Turkish alternative farm networks as they responded to not only the pandemic but also new public health requirements in *Alternative food distribution networks, resilience, and urban food security in Turkey amid the COVID-19 pandemic*.

Next, in *Lockdown farmers markets in Bengaluru: Direct marketing activities and potentials for rural-urban linkages in the food system*, **Neda Yousefian, Soubadra Devy, K. Geetha, and Christoph Dittrich** identify the barriers to increasing direct supply chains between farmers and consumers during a public health crisis.

This is followed by *Introducing an innovative design to examine human-environment dynamics of food deserts responding to COVID-19*, by **Chyi-Lyi (Kathleen) Liang, Lyubov Kurkalova, Leila Hashemi Beni, Timothy Mulrooney, Manoj Jha, Haoran Miao, and Gregory Monty**, who present a framework for food system planning in order to respond to future public health crises.

**Brittney Cavaliere, Carson Drew, and Katie Martin** reflect on their involvement in the development of a creative food distribution system in *Food bank drive-through distribution during COVID-19: A reflective essay*.

In *SNAP participants' purchasing patterns at a food co-op during the COVID-19 pandemic: A preliminary analysis*, **Molly Parker, Valisa Hedrick, Sam Hedges, Elizabeth Borst, Meredith Ledlie Johnson, Maureen McNamara Best, and Sarah Misyak** explore how a food co-op coped with and minimized the impact of declines in patronage during the pandemic.

This is followed by *Media coverage of a pandemic's impacts on farmers and implications for agricultural resilience and adaptation* by **Douglas Jackson-Smith and Hadi Veisi**, who find that news outlets largely focus on the negative impacts of the crisis, rather than on the potential for a long-term transformation to a more resilient food system.

In *Cass Clay Food Partners: A networked response to COVID-19*, **Noelle Harden, Robert Bertsch, Kayla Carlson, Megan Myrdal, Irena Bobicic, Abby Gold, Kim Lipetzky, and Tim Hiller** present a reflective essay on a county's coordinated strategies (including social network analysis) to cope with the pandemic.

Next up, **Indra Noyes and Nicola Lyle** share how a school nutrition program in Ontario, Canada, was able to transition to a more general food security support program for families in *COVID-19 and school food: The impact of the early stages of the coronavirus pandemic on student nutrition programs in Ontario*.

**Alessandros Glaros, Chloe Alexander, Jodi Koberinski, Steffanie Scott, Stephen Quilley, and**

**Zhenzhong Si** then explore household- and community-level COVID coping strategies in Canada in *A systems approach to navigating food security during COVID-19: Gaps, opportunities, and policy supports*.

In our final paper in this special issue, *Missouri's specialty crop beginning farmers cultivate resilience during COVID-19*, authors **Amy Patillo, James Curtis Millsap, Patrick Byers, Jamie Gundel, Katherine Peregoy, Amy Lake, Sarah Denkler, Eric Meusch, and David Burton** explore the efficacy of digital/online training that needed to replace more tradition in-person farm visiting and one-to-one engagement.

Our research papers are followed by commentaries from NGOs, extension educators, and others who share their experiences during the pandemic.

## COVID-19 COMMENTARIES

1. *Perspectives from the front line: The post-pandemic emergency food system in North Carolina*, by **Amanda Hege, Nikki McCormick, Peggy Robinson, Kina Charles, Jan Jones, and Eric Aft**.
2. *Farming in the time of pandemic: Small farms demonstrate flexibility, innovation, and hope*, by **Nora White**.
3. *A collaborative response to equitable food access during COVID-19: Building from Mass in Motion practices*, by **Kim Etingoff and Jessica del Rosario**.
4. *Activating the local food system in emergency food response*, by **Andy Ollove and Samiha Hamdi**.
5. *Immediate impacts of COVID-19 measures on bean production, distribution, and food security in Eastern Africa*, by **Eileen Nchanji, Cosmas Kweyu Lutomia, and David Karanja**.
6. *Nimble in a pandemic: Lessons learned from Concrete Jungle's grocery delivery program*, by **Rachel Blacher and Nichole Fields-Kyle**.
7. *The impact of COVID-19 on food security and income of women farmers in South and Southeast Asia*, by **Neha and Kaustubh Kumar**.
8. *Case study of a food relief grocery model: The Neighborhood Pop-Up Grocery Project*, by **Hallie Casey, Jenifer DeAtley, Carissa Rodriguez Eckle, Mia Burger, Jarred Maxwell, and Eric de Valpine**.
9. *A food nonprofit's response to COVID-19: The Common Market leans on its mission to serve*, by **Caitlin Honan**.
10. *Walking the nutrition talk: The impact of a community-engaged nonprofit in Selma, Alabama*, by **Susan Raymond and Chad McEachern**.
11. *Cultivating community resilience: How North Carolina's Food Council is facilitating an effective response during COVID-19*, by **Angel Elisa Cruz, Alice Ammerman, Nancy Creamer, Barry Nash, Ethan Phillips, Martha Przysucha, and Amanda Hege**.
12. *A collaborative approach to COVID-19 response: The Center for Environmental Farming Systems community-based food system initiatives*, by **Shorlette Ammons, Sarah Blacklin, Dara Bloom, Shironda Brown, Marcello Cappellazzi, Nancy Creamer, Angel Cruz, Janie Hynson, Gini Knight, Laura Lauffer, Kathleen Liang, Lee Menius, Abbey Piner, Arneisha Smallwood, Robyn Stout, Caroline Stover, Tessa Thraves, and Bevelyn Ukah**.
13. *A global food systems framework for pandemic prevention, response, and recovery*, by **Anastasia Lambrou, Isha Berry, Amelie Hecht, and Alain Labrique**.
14. *New survey shows COVID-19's impacts on South Carolina oyster farmers and offers hope for recovery*, by **Steven Richards and Marzieh Motallebi**.

## VOICES FROM THE GRASSROOTS

In addition to the above commentaries, we offer one Voices from the Grassroots essay: *Food access initiatives: An integral piece of the Revere, Massachusetts, COVID-19 response*, by **Molly Babbín, Rachel M. Zack, Jean Granick, and Kathleen Betts**.

## OPEN CALL PAPERS

Our open call papers in this issue lead off with *Operating principles for collective scholar-activism: Early insights from the Agroecology Research-Action Collective*, by **Maywa Montenegro de Wit, Annie Shattuck, Alastair Iles, Garrett Graddy-Lovelace, Antonio Roman-Alcalá, and Jahi Chappell**, who offer a reflective essay on the development of a research approach that balances the interests of researchers and grassroots collaborators.

Next is *Where do “localphiles” shop? A mixed-methods case study of food-buying habits*, in which **Emily McKee** identifies a gap between the knowledge of local food supporters and their actions and proffers alternative strategies to close the gap.

**Saugat Khanal, Pankaj Raj Dhital, and Stephen Christian** then present the results of a survey of Nepalese youth, which indicates a general lack of interest in farming as well as barriers to entrance in *Farming the future: Youth enthusiasm and transforming Nepal’s economy through agriculture*.

In *Community engagement and the promotion of sustainable diets: Lessons from a grassroots meat reduction campaign*, **Rebecca Ramsing, Kenjin Bryan Chang, Zoé Mistrale Hendrickson, Zhe Xu, Madison Friel, and Ellen Calves** present the case study of one community’s approach to fostering more environmentally responsible food consumption.

In *Stories as indicators: Lessons learned using the Most Significant Change method to evaluate food systems work in Michigan*, **Lilly Fink Shapiro, Lesli Hoey, and Kathryn Colasanti** reflect on their adaptation of a creative qualitative evaluation approach.

*How health-conscious urban gardeners aim to increase vegetable consumption in their community while simultaneously supporting Black entrepreneurship*, by **Rachel Soper**, then sheds light on a creative approach to encouraging plant food consumption in a community of color.

Next, **Christian Kelly Scott and Robert Richardson** find that farm-business success relates to the scale and scope of one’s social networks in *Farmer social connectedness and market access: A case study of personal networks among emerging farmers*.

In *A system dynamics approach to examining household food insecurity* by **Kyle Metta, Laura Schmitt Olabisi, and Renee Wallace**, the authors find that multiple, interrelated strategies are more effective than single interventions in promoting food security.

**Kaitlyn Harper, Emma Lewis, Lisa Poirier, Bengucan Gunen, Antonio Trujillo, and Joel Gittelsohn** explore how small stores can cheaply and effectively identify customer demand in *Application of free-listing in identifying desirable foods and their accessibility in an urban nonprofit supermarket*.

In *Assessing sense of community at farmers markets: A systematic review*, **Jennifer Russomanno and Jennifer Jabson Tree** find that the literature suggests that a market’s success could be linked to how well it provides a sense of belonging to its patrons, especially to people of color living with low incomes.

**Nigel Forrest and Arnim Wiek** follow this with *Growing a sustainable local grain economy in Arizona: A multidimensional analytical case study of an alternative food network*, in which they explore in great detail the emergence of a regional grain value chain and suggest research using similar techniques in other regions working to relocalize grains.

Next, **Amelie Hecht, Roni Neff, Tam Lynne Kelley, and Keshia Pollack Porter** explore the views of school food-service staff regarding increasing free school meal participation in *Universal free schools meals through the Community Eligibility Provision: Maryland food service provider perspectives*.

Finally, in *Civic agriculture in review: Then, now, and future directions*, **Allison Kaika and Alexis Racelis** identify gaps in understanding of the links between local food systems and social welfare.


We also included one open call commentary: *Agritourism around the globe: Definitions, authenticity, and potential*

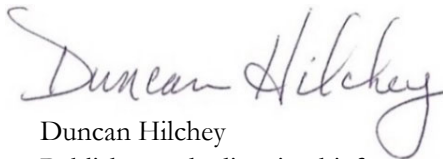
*controversy*, by **David Lamie, Lisa Chase, Emilio Chiodo, Claudia Schmidt, Sharon Flanigan, Lori Dickes, and Thomas Streifeneder.**

## BOOK REVIEWS

We wrap up the issue with six book reviews. We appreciate these reviewers for persevering through the distraction and complications of the pandemic world to share their reviews. We also thank our volunteer book review editors, Lauren Forbes and Matthew Hoffman, for their helpful guidance during this time.

- **Cassandra Hawkins** reviews *Civil Society and Social Movements in Food System Governance*, by Peter Andre, Jill Clark, Charles Levkoe, and Kristen Lowitt.
- **Hannah Lohr** reviews *A Small Farm Future: Making the Case for a Society Built Around Local Economies, Self-Provisioning, Agricultural Diversity, and a Shared Earth*, by Chris Smaje.
- **Robert Kluson** reviews *Stirrings: How Activist New Yorkers Ignited a Movement for Food Justice*, by Lana Dee Povitz.
- **Lauren Forbes** reviews *Black Food Matters : Racial Justice in the Wake of Food Justice*, edited by Hanna Garth and Ashanté Reese.
- **David Kay** reviews *Wealth Creation: A New Framework for Rural Economic and Community Development*, by Shanna Ratner.
- **Emily Duncan** reviews *Local Is Our Future: Steps to an Economics of Happiness*, by Helena Norberg-Hodge.

Again, we wish the JAFSCD community well and hope for some relief from the many negative impacts of the pandemic. Let us not be complacent but continue the discipline and redouble the effort to not only defeat COVID-19, but also to build a more equitable and resilient food system for the future. 



Duncan Hilchey  
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