

Food sovereignty rejects genetic modification and other technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems.

DALE BEAUDOIN, MAYMONT, SASKATCHEWAN



Dale Beaudoin has a 640 acre organic farm where he has 25 cows and grows wheat, oats, flax, borage and alfalfa. In 1999, he signed a contract to supply a buyer with Certified Organic canola, which prohibits GMOs. At harvest, tests on Dale's canola showed GMO contamination, so his buyer rejected his harvest. The contamination was most likely caused by pollination of his plants by the neighbour's GMO canola.

Dale became a plaintiff in a class action lawsuit against Monsanto and Bayer seeking to recover losses due to contamination of organic crops and fields by GMO canola. "If a big company could eliminate one of our main cash crops, what would stop them from doing the same with other crops?"

- Certified Organic agriculture prohibits the use of GMOs, while federal regulations allow GMOs to be released into the environment. Federal government policy actively promotes biotechnology, saying that Canada's economic future is tied up with biotech.
- The issue of liability for contamination losses is still undecided by the courts (as affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Hoffman et al v. Monsanto et al case). In the meantime, organic farmers suffer from losses due to contamination without compensation.

Food sovereignty values biodiversity in nature and in food producing environments like farms.

CINDY, DOUG AND NATASHA, ERICKSON, MANITOBA



Cindy, Doug and their daughter Natasha are 4th generation family farmers. Their 480-acre organic farm has animals, forage and crops all united in a self-sufficient and sustainable system. Small-scale farms along with small / medium-scale abattoirs and meat processing businesses improve the local economy.

According to Cindy, "If you had ten farms raising food like this instead of one company doing it, the benefits would be enormous." Finally, it's not just the economy that benefits; mixed farming systems have a high level of bio-diversity, making them resilient and more adaptable to climate change.

- The benefits of mixed organic farming include a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and improvements to soil fertility, and fosters biodiversity amongst others. Industrial agriculture – using petrochemical fertilizers and pesticides – emits almost as much greenhouse gas as both vehicles and heating/cooling houses.
- AgriStability is a new subsidy program in Canada designed to stabilize farm income. It encourages farmers to specialize in one or two commodities, further industrializing their production methods, decreasing biodiversity and increasing farm size.

Food sovereignty values and strengthens the intimate relationship between people and their environment.

LARRY MCDERMOTT AND JEFF BEAVER, LANARK COUNTY, ONTARIO



For decades, Anishnabe elders Larry McDermott and Jeff Beaver have been harvesting wild rice (manomin, meaning "gift from the creator"). The traditional methods they use to grow and harvest wild rice using sticks and canoes are now being passed on to hundreds of native families thanks to a new training and support program to broaden community access to traditional skills. "Our Traditions Our Future," a program of Plenty Canada, fosters traditional knowledge and uses low energy, biologically diverse methods to produce healthy foods. Larry says, "When you understand that we are all connected, it is a matter of looking after the whole. In strengthening the community and our natural environment, I am also strengthening myself."

- Traditional wild rice management allows for a large area of wetlands to be reseeded, maximizing the resilience of the crop to invasive species and ensuring its survival.
- Food that is harvested traditionally lightens Canada's carbon footprint and maximizes the contribution of the diverse aquatic ecosystems and their beneficial functions for Mother Earth.



STORIES OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

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The People's Food Policy Project links people from across Canada to find ways that ordinary people can reclaim decision-making power in our food system. This is the core of food sovereignty, and the base of our project to create Canada's first comprehensive federal food policy. The People's Food Policy will reflect and support the work of Canadians to create a food system based on care and respect for humans and the natural world.

This pamphlet is one in a series from the People's Food Policy Project. It illustrates one of the interlinked principles of food sovereignty.

WORKS WITH NATURE



Beehives: Cynthia Wesley-Esquimau

Please share your food stories of hope and struggle with us at: www.peoplesfoodpolicy.ca as well as your policy recommendations for a food sovereign Canada.



Pour une politique alimentaire populaire

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