

Table 8 – The BIG Picture

Exercise #1-Idea Generation

Affordability

- Want healthy, organic food to be more affordable, new immigrant families cannot afford it
- Urban farming relates to nutritionally vulnerable people
- But we should pay more for food- We're not paying what it is worth
- How do we pay the true cost of food production and have it be affordable?
- It's accessibility that's the problem, not affordability
- Must remove subsidies of conventional agriculture
- Pay for the real cost of food, but know that in doing so you're investing in other valuable things –jobs, support local food system, etc
- Ontario has an innovative ministry of agriculture/food connection- A way of paying farmers because they know it feeds people- this was then compared to BC Environmental Farm Plan
- BC Environmental Farm Plan – get money initially but how do you sustain this over time – great program but has limitations on what it can do
- Are urban farmers eligible for the farm plan?
- what's the equivalent for an urban farm setting?
- People want to farm but they are unaware of best practices, involving water use, etc – need better education
- Important to educate about “URBAN FARMING”, not hobby, but a sound, sophisticated, beneficial process – not for fun, ultimately fits in to the need to eat – people understand the need for food security, etc
- Important to explore practical farming solutions
- Important to consider growth of nutrient dense crops in city environment
- Want to see urban agriculture become agriculture not gardening
- Gardening doesn't run on an economic model, farming/agriculture does
- “Community garden”, “urban farm”, etc – needs a common term to increase the credibility of urban farming
- Need to evaluate input/output ratio
- Key analytical things, credibility, business

Climate Change

- How can urban ag reduce greenhouse gas- to prevent climate change
- Interesting models of carbon sequestering exist
- Edible landscape – fascinating concept, shifting culture from Kentucky blue grass to the norm being food- shifting to biodiversity – this helps to connect everyone with food
- Apples on streets provide opportunities for community – harvesting, eating – food for community centre – community building opportunities

Connections –with community, other communities, broader systems

- Urban ag helps us connect to where food comes from
- Connecting to global food systems as well as rural food systems

- Opportunity for community economic development – green jobs – supports local economy
- Year of the cooperative was mentioned
- Ties into health – food is health
- Urban ag improves health because access to fresher food – addresses sodium consumption – diabetics – obesity
- Also addresses mental, spiritual health – also community health- as well as farmer’s health
- Community building – food connecting community is historical
- Connects to existing community as well as ancestors- how your grandmother grew/processed food, etc
- Neighbourhood stewardship
- To be in walking distance of farm- compact communities
- Community/urban design – walk-ability- rather than having to take kids out of city in order to see a farm
- To prove you can live with all other animals, not just dogs and cats
- Demystifying vision of a farm – having a farm exist in neighbourhood provides education – makes it “normal” – in five years an urban farm will be considered “normal”
- Turn lawns into food production- likely chance pesticides were previously used on lawns – testing is so expensive therefore maybe not-so-safe to grow food on this land – need food safety
- Need how-to guide to (example) convert Kentucky blue grass lawn into a productive farm – maybe knowing some methods would be enough and not need a guidebook – or provide a guidebook
- Creates problems when people just jump on movement(just follow methods), guidebook would be beneficial to prevent this – or ensure those who jump on the train do it in a sustainable manner
- Metered water – do/should you meter water used on community gardens?
- Converting lawn to garden demonstration projects – allow people to actually see process- this would be helpful
- Interested in production manual - these guidelines would be useful to people
- There is production guide for specific crops but urban ag has multiple scales – container, ground, etc – hard to create one guidebook that addresses all of this
- Inequality – universal access
- How does urban farming influence the bigger system- big food producers – will Whole foods buy more local?
- How can urban farming somehow penetrate multinational control of the food system
- Neighbourhood scale- if grow food in neighbourhood you can by-pass the bigger distribution process

Exercise #2 – Idea Additions and Refinement
Affordability

- Where subsidies are currently and where they should be – understand that crops such as corn, soy, etc are subsidized, should these be shifted towards different crops
- Can we make this work for urban farmers- where they can get subsidies
- Look at ecosystems values – ex/ air quality is low –land used for agriculture would not worsen this, but help this
- We don't have control on subsidies in other countries
- Maybe need a taxation system based on how food is produced, ex/ if used pesticides, tax food
- Adjust food system from an economic basis
- People are spending historically much less on food based on ratio of budget- how can we help people re-work their budgets
- Urban ag is in people's consciousness, if we push the education we can inform people how hard the work is
- Urban ag being in people's face provides this education/informing –acquaints people with how much work goes into it
- Ratio of budget –rent, food, etc – needs analyzing
- There is a connection between cost of housing and food – if housing is more affordable, food will be more affordable
- Allowing farm-gate sales would improve economic viability and allow to bypass large food distributors

Climate Change

- Need to be realistic with climate change in terms of the scale of production
- Do we aim to produce all our food or are we just increasing local food production to reconnect people with their food?
- What farming practices can be used to remediate topsoil destruction
- Get people more familiar with their food system, this will encourage people to buy local, make better choices which will in-turn reduce climate change
- Nutrient cycling – waste out of city, bring compost/fertilizer back in – inefficient, should instead work to nutrient recycle

Connections

- Know food system is not sustainable, but engaging people at a personal level is difficult, how do we make this tangible – could do this with LFS theory of learning with head, heart and hands approach- need academic awareness first, then actually getting to learn hands-on creates an emotional context – can this approach also address public health – this can better communicate the value of sustainable food systems
- If we can prove urban ag does improve public health, people will be encouraged to participate in urban ag
- Need to restructure food system- people's behaviour (what they want, etc), and policy (allow farm-gate sales), etc – ultimately if we want to have any quality of life things need to change now - healing physical space, our behavior and economic systems is necessary
- Farmers now are willing to work respectively with the current system, but economy is collapsing and things need to change, people need to be open to change
- Occupy movement- people have shown that they want their voice to be heard- growing food for yourself is super empowering- regain control over not simply your food but

‘blank’ – not ‘life’, maybe ‘head, hearts and hands’, maybe ‘well-being’, maybe ‘citizenship’ – had difficulty filling the blank, never came to an agreement

Exercise #3 – Idea Clarification

Affordability

- Take oil costs out of food production-with amount of time that goes into farming and the cost of farming is this enough to make food affordable – anticipating changes to cost of oil, local food will become the only food
- It’s very difficult to distill this down – there is not one specific thing that can be done to make food affordable
- Need some sort of plan for how to less depend on price of oil and how do we put this plan into action
- In order to take oil costs out of food- must develop more urban farms then make them big enough/functional enough to feed community- do we have enough space/land to feed entire community? There are a lot of potential farms. And urban farms are a more efficient use of land for food production then conventional farms because you don’t waste space for tractors and other machinery.
- Can’t rely just on our urban farms-because what if farms fail one year, where would we get our food-plus have to ensure this is nutritionally sufficient to feed community- need a nutrition assessment of our local food system

Climate change

- As green as urban ag is, there is a lot of inputs- trucking in soil, water systems
- Need to create more sustainable systems in existing urban farms
- Some urban spaces should be for soil-building, some parts of every garden should be for soil-building
- Granville island trucked in soil when there was a ton of available compost from the island’s public market- need to better utilize these sources
- Make compost with local garbage-prevent waste from going to waste, utilize it instead

Mission-critical addition- Seeds-must re-gain control over seeds

Exercise #4 - Idea Prioritization

(did a vote- little discussion)

1) re-structuring food system-addresses a lot of the following issues

-transparency in food system

-re-graining control

2) climate change

3) public health and environment

4) Affordability