

FOOD POLICY

FROM
PERSONAL TO POLITICAL

What does it mean for our farm activities that we are in the Agriculture Land Reserve?

Does this farm have a water license that provides water for their growing needs?

Did they need a building permit for this barn?

Are they managing their farm waste so it doesn't harm the river?

Did the farm workers get paid fairly?

Do farmers have a reliable farmers market for selling their harvest?

Does the zoning permit this farmers market?

Do farmers need a business license from the city?

If we harvest more than we can eat can we sell it off our property?

Can we compost our food waste or does our municipality collect organic waste?

Does this tomato fit my budget?

I wonder how this tomato was grown?

I wonder who grew this tomato?

Can I safely process my tomatoes?

Was the scale used to weigh this tomato approved by the government as accurate?

Does this processing plant rely on new immigrants?

Does it provide a safe workplace for its workers?

Does it source tomatoes from local farmers?

Do we need to update the Canadian Food Guide to better reflect current science and the diverse food cultures of Canada?

Are the workers unionized?

Does the bus route and schedule make it easy for low income households to get to the grocery store?

Do the profits from this store stay in my local community?

GROCERY
SALE



Food Policy: From Personal to Political

Policy is about how we make choices.

A young child makes food choices primarily based on taste and texture.

By the time we are adults, we will have a food policy that is based on a multitude of factors: our finances, allergies, cultural practices, and cooking skills. We make choices about what to eat that may include seeking out local food, eating in season, avoiding animal products, and wanting to address climate change. This is our personal food policy.

Our personal food policy is inevitably linked with the choices that governments are making on behalf of citizens. In our towns, cities and countrysides, local governments establish zoning to determine what kind of activities can happen where, in order to minimize conflict between neighbours, between businesses and homes. They can allow or ban the growing of food in front yards, the keeping of chickens or bees, they can make sure that farmers have ready access to space for a farmers market and that citizens have access to locally grown food.

Within the provincial governments, food policy is found in diverse ministries. Access to a safe and secure supply of water is found in provincial water policy. The movement of food across our landscapes cannot happen in trucks larger than those allowed to safely travel on highways. Provincial labour laws seek to ensure that those whose work on farms, in processing plants, and in grocery stores are protected from unreasonable working conditions.

The federal government has policy that is about making sure that scales used to weigh food for sale are accurate. What seeds are available for sale is covered by federal policy. What information has to be on food labels and in what language is covered by the federal government. At the farm and at processing plants, food safety practices are determined by federal government policy. And the federal government controls how fish is caught for our dinner plates.

As individuals the choices we make for ourselves and our households have an impact on how food is produced.

As food citizens, we have the ability to become engaged with our local governments, with the provincial and the federal governments in order to influence their policy so that it better aligns with how we want to eat and to live together on this planet.

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Basin trust

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