Scaling up local food systems in Quebec and Ontario: Actors, Institutions, and Change in the Governance of Two Regional Food Systems

By Équiterre and the Center for Trade Policy and Law

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Abstract

Local food systems can be an effective mean to achieve food sovereignty, as defined as the right of people to local food production, healthy and ecological, realized in equitable conditions that respect the right of every partner to decent working conditions and incomes. To achieve the vision of food sovereignty, local food systems have to go beyond the distance travelled by food products before they reach the final consumers (food miles) and integrate social, economic, and environmental benefits.

The main types of initiatives that can be included in the broad concept of local food systems are farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, box schemes, institutional local procurement initiatives, and farm shops – all increasingly present in industrial countries' food systems though remaining marginal to the conventional industrial farming and mass distribution systems. We conceive of these initiatives as attempts to introduce notions of economic, environmental, and social sustainability into the food system.

We interviewed 31 local food system activists from groups and organisations involved in at least one node of the food value chain – production, distribution, retail, and marketing or public campaigning – to discuss past experiences and policy and other barriers to the scaling up of sustainable local food systems (LFS). Much of the barriers and policy solutions identified and proposed by the respondents are the same across both provinces and match those identified in a previous review of the international literature.

The in-depth interviews however offered valuable insights into LFS promoters interact with existing food system governance structures, particularly in the cases where lessons could be learned from the divergence of experiences between the two provinces. First, there appears to be a trade-off between highly centralised zoning regulations in Quebec that are too rigid and impede the development of small alternative farm projects and the decentralised and deregulated zoning in Ontario that in practice gives greater opportunities for land acquisition to housing and industrial development as opposed to LFS initiatives.

There is a second trade-off between freedom of association for farmers which gives a greater sense of empowerment in Ontario and the political clout that farmers get by being organised into a union monopoly in Quebec at the expense of greater democracy.

Third, unlike Ontario, Quebec boasts a strong network of cooperatives, associations, NGOs that have a history of collaborating on LFS-style projects, often in tandem with government institutions. Such networks likely will be crucial to setting up the next generation of local food initiatives. Finally, Quebec has launched a comprehensive reform of its agri-food policies that should produce a new, coherent, and holistic agri-food policy in 2011. Ontario might benefit from such a process.

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List of acronyms

AMPQ	Association des marchés publics du Québec
CAAAQ	Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire du Québec
CARTV	Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants
CFFO	Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
CPTAQ	Commission pour la protection des terres agricoles du Québec
CSA	Community-supported agriculture
LFS	Local food system
MAPAQ	Ministère de l'agriculture, des pêcheries et de l'alimentation du Québec
NFU-O	National Farmers Union of Ontario
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OFA	Ontario Federation of Agriculture
OMAFRA	Ontario Ministry of Agriculture
RMAAQ	Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec
UPA	Union des producteurs agricoles

1. INTRODUCTION

Building local food systems (LFS) is one of the six pillars of food sovereignty as defined by the Civil society forum on food sovereignty held in Mali in 2007 (Steering Committee of Nyeleni 2007 2008). Using somewhat less politicised discourse, mainstream international NGOs and academics alike have argued that shorter, more localized food supply chains are a vehicle for sustainable development (Lyson 2004; Halweil & Worldwatch Institute 2002; Rosset & Land Research Action Network. 2006; Desmarais 2007; Via Campesina n.d.). The literature on LFS is still relatively limited in terms of providing strong empirical evidence of the impacts of the existing initiatives. Research on such initiatives in Canada is even more limited. Existing impact studies do suggest however that local food initiatives such as farm shops, farmers' markets, box schemes, community supported agriculture (CSA), and institutional procurement policies can be associated with a number of positive economic, environmental, and social outcomes when compared to the low farmer incomes and rising farmer debt, environmental degradation, and consumer alienation that characterise the conventional food system (see Blouin et al. 2009 for literature review).[1]

In the last few years there has also been a growing interest by the public sector for local food, such as the 'buy local' campaigns funded by provincial governments across Canada, the renewed interest in promoting 'origin' labels such as 'Made in Canada', 'Ontario Fresh' or 'Aliments du Québec', and the Québec ministry of agriculture's recent announcement of a new $14 million fund for the development of direct marketing mechanisms. Given this surge in interest, there is a need for more studies on 1) the concept of local food chains; 2) their impacts on people and the environment (evidence which could be essential to securing state and popular support); and 3) the policy initiatives and reports that could support the movement.

This paper takes the third option: our primary research objective was to develop an understanding of the barriers to the scaling up of LFS initiatives as reported by LFS activists and organisations themselves. In addition to obtaining a narrative account of barriers and soliciting a few policy suggestions 'from the horse's mouth' that can complement our previous literature review (Blouin et al. 2009), we were able to compare experiences across the provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Our analysis draws some lessons learned from the diverging policies in the two provinces and identifies a few key areas for action.

2. METHODOLOGY

The working definition of LFS we adopted is the one used by the University of California Sustainable Agriculture Research programme: "a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies—one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the

[1] See Annex 1 for a summary table of LFS impact studies.

economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" (in Feenstra 2002: 100). As discussed in our previous literature review, the 'local' in LFS, is merely the geographic delineation of the system whereas the economic, social, and environmental objectives are its key features. Thus, the use of the term 'local food system' (LFS) is not an expression of 'localism for localism's sake': it is shorthand for 'economically, environmentally, and socially sustainable and equitable local food systems.'

In addition to locality and desired outcomes, any given local food initiative has a distinct organisational mechanism (i.e. a distribution system, a label, a roundtable, a co-operative, a policy, etc.) that underpins the movement of actual foodstuffs from a local farm to a local table (see Blouin et al. 2009: 6-15 for full discussion, see Annex 2 for graphical representation of the three dimensions). Keeping with that conception, our research considered over forty initiatives that sought to bring positive economic, environmental, and social impacts through action in at least one node of the food system (i.e. production, distribution, retail, public campaigning, or a combination thereof). Thirty one interviews were carried out with representatives from these organisations. For a full list of organisations interviewed, see Annex 3. To preserve anonymity, names of respondents have been omitted and wherever respondents are cited in-text, only the date of the interview and organisation's general area of expertise (e.g. production, distribution, retail, public education) are given.

While we started with an elaborate questionnaire of 16 questions and sub-questions, this proved to be unwieldy and our method quickly evolved into the 'interview by informal conversation' method used by economic geographers (Cloke 2004, p.123) where lines of inquiry are based on certain key talking points and the flow of the conversation. The advantage of this method is that it grants the respondent space to spontaneously offer information that the researcher would not have thought of – particularly useful in investigative research. Our key talking points were: a description of the organisation they represent and its specific local food initiatives and projects (if any); historical overview of the organisation and its work on local food; the barriers to the development of LFS; and recommendations for policies to promote LFS.

An attempt was made to augment the interviews with a full questionnaire asking respondents to rate the importance or relevance of a list of barriers to the development of LFS as identified in the previous literature review (Blouin et al. 2009, Table 3), but preliminary results showed that almost all identified barriers were rated as 'important' or 'very important.' As these results defeated the initial purpose of the survey, which was to empirically single out a handful of barriers, it was abandoned. The interviews did nevertheless generate a list of barriers that respondents said were present in their day-to-day work and we consider these to be the most pressing concerns. By discussing the obstacles faced by the interviewees and soliciting their ideas for improving (or 'localising') the food system, we were able to identify points of contestation as well as the spaces where this contestation takes place. This in turn allows us to make conclusions about how food policy is determined and where and how progressive groups could act to bring about the progressive change they wish to see.

The interviews also enabled us to complement our knowledge and understanding of the Quebec and Ontario food systems' economic, institutional and policy contexts. The sections that follow provide an overview of the two provinces' food systems. We believe that understanding the full context is paramount to understanding the barriers to the scaling up of LFS and accordingly significant space is given to the description of each province's food system.

3. THE QUEBEC FOOD SYSTEM

As in other industrialised regions, the Quebec food system is rather small with respect to the rest of the economy: agriculture, food processing, and retail together account for 6.8% of GDP and 12.5% of all jobs (the lion's share of these being in the 'tertiary' or 'service' sector, i.e., retail and catering). Quebec's food system is highly integrated with other markets, with food items flowing in and out of the province in large quantities at all stages of production (see flow chart in Annex 4). Overall, Quebec producers and processors sell $15.3 billion worth of products in 2008[2] while distributors and retailers buy $15.4 billion worth of products. Quebec thus produces slightly less than what retailers need to sell to consumers and yet retailers imported $6.9 billion[3] of fresh and processed foods that same year (MAPAQ 2009: 46). In fact, Quebec distributors and retailers tend to source less of their merchandise from within the province than is the case in other provinces – 55% versus a 70% average for the rest of Canada (Ibid. 2009: 24). According to a ministry estimate, only about 44% of Quebec's agricultural production and food processing is sold in Quebec's retail sector, the rest being exported to other Canadian provinces (30%) or overseas (24%) (Ibid. 2009: 22).[4]

As in most food systems, industrial-scale factory-farm production operates side-by-side with smaller-scale, artisanal production. However, Quebec has in fact experienced a steady decline in the number of farms, while average individual farm size increased (Figure 1). Today, agricultural production is relatively concentrated on a few large farms: the top one third of farms produces four fifths of output (CAAAQ 2008: 47). However, the number of very small farms is actually on the rise and so is the number of middle-income farms (MAPAQ n.d.), suggesting that these new small farms are specialising in high-value crops, high value-added activities, or cater to specialised niche markets (or all three) – which is exactly what some have suggested will be key to the survival of small-scale sustainable agriculture and is a phenomenon already noted in the United States (Martinez et al. 2010).

'Collective marketing' is a salient feature of the Quebec food system. The *Loi sur la mise en marché des produits agricoles, alimentaires et de la pêche*[5] allows producers to collectively negotiate a production and marketing contract with buyers – called a 'joint plan' (*plan conjoint*). It gives them significant bargaining power vis-à-vis the traditionally more powerful buyers, and thus redresses one of the most pervasive inequities in food systems. Currently, 17 'joint plans' exist, each governing the production and sale of one agricultural commodity.[6] Together they account for 85% of Quebec agriculture (CAAAQ 2008: 75). The actual provisions of each of these plans are varied and are comprised of one or more initiatives such as the funding of agronomic or market research, common advertising campaigns, or functional upgrading within the value chain (e.g., buying processing plants for the goods they produce). Four of the joint plans – milk, poultry, consumer eggs, and

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[2] This figure represents value added in Quebec, i.e. outputs minus inputs for the agriculture and food processing sectors as they appear on a flow chart produced by the Ministry of Agriculture (MAPAQ 2009: 46). Seeing that a portion of this value is being added to imported products (9% of producer inputs and 17% of processor inputs are imported) the value added to products grown in Quebec is somewhat lower than this figure.

[3] Evenly split between interprovincial ($3.7 billion or 54%) and international ($3.2 billion or 46%) imports.

[4] This figure simply represents the portion of Quebec retailers' purchases made from a Quebec producer or processor, although some of this value was created from imported inputs. Subtracting the value added to imported goods from the tally leaves us with an even less flattering 35%. Thus, just over a third of what retailers (and consequently consumers) buy is *value added derived from Quebec produce* while the remaining two thirds depend in some form or another on imported goods. Note that this does not mean that 35% of food products are fully produced and processed in Quebec. As the food processing industry relies on sugar, corn syrup, flour and other products that are mostly imported, it is extremely hard to find a product that is produced in Quebec from 100% Quebec ingredients. Another problem with the 44% figure produced by the ministry is that it is sometimes incorrectly quoted as being the 'proportion of Quebec agricultural output that ends up on a Quebecker's plate.' Although it would be extremely difficult to calculate such a figure, we can arrive at an estimate by assuming that the local inputs purchased by the processing sector have an equal likelihood of being sold within the province as do all the outputs of the processing sector. Thus, only $2.2 Bn (56%) of the $4 Bn of Quebec produce bought by processors will find its way to a Quebec retailer. Adding to this the $464 000 worth of produce sold directly to retailers, we obtain a figure of about $2.7 Bn. This represents 47% of total farm production in Quebec being sold, raw or processed, in Quebec.

[5] http://www2.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/dynamicSearch/telecharge.php?type=2&file=/M_35_1/M35_1.html

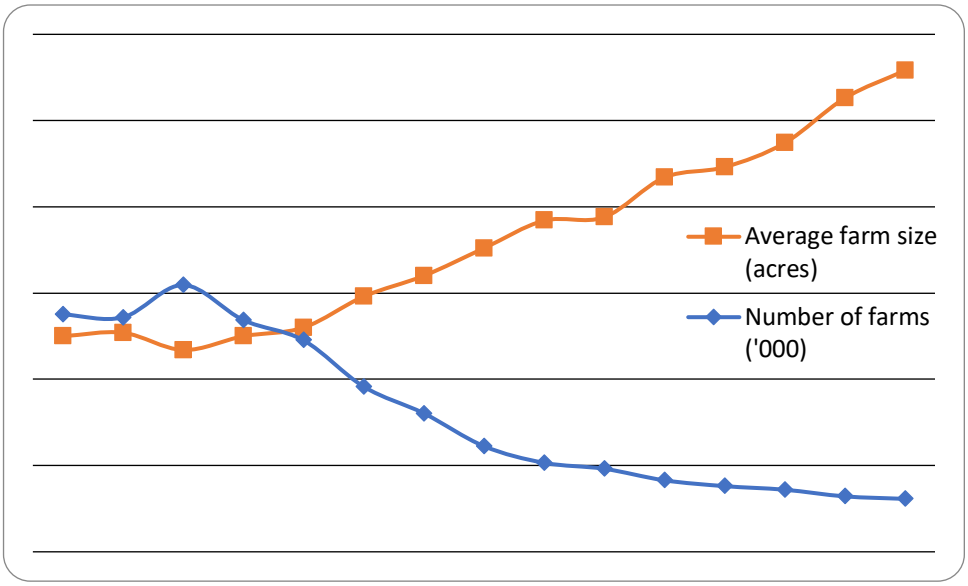
[6] These are: maple syrup, blueberries, cattle, goats, grains, strawberries and raspberries, milk, rabbits, vegetables for the processing industry, consumer eggs, hatching eggs, sheep, apples, potatoes, pork, yellow tobacco, and poultry. A further three plans exist in the fisheries sector: shrimp, lobster, and halibut.

hatching eggs – under 'supply management' proper and consist of a strict quota system that's protected by sizeable federal import tariffs. Supply management is said to contribute to food sovereignty by eliminating the need for imports and dumping.[7] These four commodities account for 26% of Quebec farms, 42% of agricultural production, and 58% of jobs in the sector (GO5 2006). For each of these commodities, the corresponding producer association therefore acts as a monopoly seller (with exceptions being made for very small volumes).

In parallel to the conventional food system, alternative arrangements that fall into our definition of an LFS do exist. The most important of these are:

- **Organic and other certified agriculture.** There are currently 316 certified organic livestock production units,[8] 341 organic maple syrup producers, and 585 certified farms (CARTV 2009). These farms tend to be smaller than conventional farms and downstream market concentration is, in relative terms, less pronounced (Ibid. 2009). The term 'organic' is protected by law and there are only seven organisations accredited to bestow organic certification. The same law also creates the possibility for legally defined and protected indicators of geographic origin, although only one (Charlevoix lamb) has been developed thus far.
- **Farmers' markets**. The *Association des marchés publiques du Québec* is a provincial network of 82 farmers' markets,[9] permanent or seasonal, whose mandate is to facilitate networking and collective action amongst its members. Montreal has four permanent markets that provide significant space for direct farm-to-market kiosks. *Nourrir Montreal* facilitates a network of almost 30 such markets in

Figure 1 – Number of farms vs. Average farm size, Quebec (1921-2006)



Source: Compiled from Statistics Canada, "2001 Census of Agriculture Data Tables," http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95f0302x/2001001/4122714-eng.htm#portrait., with additional data from Statistics Canada, "2006 Census of Agriculture," http://www.statcan.gc.ca/ca-ra2006/index-eng.htm.

[8] Some double-counting occurs in this category as one farm tends to have more than one type of animal production. The figure 316 does not therefore represent individual farms.

[9] See full list at http://www.ampq.ca/pages/membres.html, last accessed February 7, 2010.

Montreal alone, only one of which is a full member of AMPQ. Occasional one-off markets also take place across the province. Time commitments and (sometimes) unpredictable sales volumes are the major obstacles to sustained farmer participation in farmers' markets.

- **Community-supported agriculture (CSA).** The classic 'foodshare' box-scheme where consumers pay a seasonal subscription and receive regular deliveries of fresh seasonal produce. Équiterre runs one such network with over 100 participating farms and the Union paysanne runs a similar system for its members. There are a number of independent CSA projects as well that are linked with one or two farms (e.g. the student-run *Organic Campus* at McGill University). The model seems to attract very dedicated, new, or experimental farms. Demand outpaces supply, organisers struggle to find enough farms, and farm turnover is quite high, with many dropouts and new entrants every season.[10]
- **Solidarity markets**. A relatively new phenomenon, "solidarity markets," or *Écomarchés* as they are most commonly known, are a more flexible box scheme. No seasonal pre-payments ('foodshares') are required, eliminating the risk-sharing aspect of CSA. Instead, consumers place an order through a web portal, indicating exactly which products they need, and pay on the spot for each order. Deliveries are still made at pre-determined drop-off points on a specific day. The rapid rise of solidarity markets is probably due to the fact that they are more accessible to both producers (as an additional outlet for unsold stock that does not require drastic changes to farm management) and consumers (more control over food choices, quantities, and timing).[11]

3.1. Quebec Governance

Quebec's social economy (particularly the cooperative movement) has evolved and flourished with and in part thanks to government recognition and support (Vaillancourt & Favreau 2000). This merger of corporatist and cooperative interests is a product of historical circumstance specific to Quebec and still today characterises the governance of the agricultural sector. Quebec's major agricultural unions and cooperatives often resemble para-public corporations and yet retain many syndicalist features such as an active membership, active and meaningful representative bodies, and political representation of their members vis-à-vis the public authorities.

The various state and non-governmental institutions that govern the food system today are presented in Annex 5. We can identify three ways in which these institutions influence the food system:

1. **Regulatory institutions**. These include the Commission de protection du territoire agricole du Québec (CPTAQ), Quebec's agricultural zoning agency, and the Conseil des appellations reservées et des termes valorisants12 (CARTV), which governs the use of organic labelling and geographic indicators, as well as the bodies of legal texts that these institutions are meant to enforce. Municipalities and their respective municipal amalgamations (Municipalité de comté rural or MRC) have some leeway on

[10] Interview, 28 October 2009, distribution.

[11] Interview, 27 October 2009, distribution/processing.

[12] CARTV roughly translates as the "Council of controlled designations and value-adding terms."

environmental norms and regulation by means of municipal bylaws, but these are subject to judicial review and can be rejected if they interfere with the legal rights of farmers or other industry.[13]

2. **Institutions active in the market**. These are institutions that provide financing, investment, research and development, and business development services. This category includes public institutions such as the Centres de développement local (CDL), publically-funded research centres, or the various ministries that fund NGOs working on food issues. There are also cooperatives that provide services to their members: the Coop fédérée, for example, puts 350 consultants at their members' disposal (and also happens to be Quebec's largest pork and poultry exporter in its own right, grouping together about 25 percent of all of Quebec's food processing firms) while the Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA) also provides a number of services to its members through self-help groups. Finally, there are several partnerships between public and collective institutions, such as the federally-funded CDAQ agronomic research agency.
3. **Co-operative institutions**. These are the institutions that allow various actors to work in the common interest to advance their interests. While a number of business associations exist to promote members' economic gain, a number of institutions exist to promote ideas consistent with LFS. The Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA), Quebec's only legally recognised farmer syndicate, and its sectoral federations that organise collective marketing schemes are the prime example. Since the 'joint plans' cover such things as production quantities, prices, or quality standards, they give a surprising degree of control to producer associations over the value chain modalities in what is usually a buyer-driven business. However, mere notions of 'producer-drivenness' do not automatically translate into value chain outcomes consistent with LFS objectives. Next most important of the collaborative institutions are the 'Roundtables' (Table de concertation) that bring together various civil society and/or private sector actors to work on common goals or collective projects. In the 1990s, the Ministry of agriculture set up a series of 'value-chain roundtables' (Table filière) in order to foster coordination between different actors in a given value chain (producers, transformers/processors, and distributors). There are 21 such roundtables committed to a specific commodity or sub-sector, including organic produce, which has been an important vehicle for organic producers to organise their activities and lobby for policy change. To promote a more territorial approach to complement the industry-specific programmes, the MAPAQ set up regional 'Agri-food roundtables' in all but one of Quebec's 16 administrative regions.14 The Agri-food roundtables are mandated to bring together all actors in the food industry within a specific region, thus cross-cutting through all of the existing value-chain roundtables.

Environmental degradation and food insecurity are chronic features of the Quebec food system. A report by Équiterre (2007) highlights a number of negative impacts including water contamination, soil erosion and nutrient depletion, loss of biodiversity, generation of excessive waste, malnutrition, loss of culinary and dietary know-how, and the prevalence of food insecurity. Some of the institutions mentioned above have indeed facilitated equitable outcomes and progressive change. The supply management system has kept many producers afloat (perhaps to the detriment of others) despite long periods of low global commodity prices and

[13] Interview, January 14, 2010, production.

[14] Only the Montreal region does not have a ministry-mandated agri-food roundtable. The Montreal region is encompasses only the Island of Montreal, located at the heart of the Montreal urban agglomeration, which in fact stretches beyond the island itself. The Montreal region does boast a Bio-food Industry Council, which is composed of representatives from the city's food transformation industries. This council however is not mandated by the Ministry but operates as an independent business association.

the roundtable have proven to be an important vehicle for food system actors to lobby for policy change, funding, or new development programmes.

4. THE ONTARIO FOOD SYSTEM

Today there are nearly 57,000 farms in Ontario employing approximately 43,700 people. Agriculture is the second largest economic contributor and the third largest employer in Ontario. It should be noted that farmers make up 2.4 percent of Canadians compared to only 1.6 percent in Ontario. Ontario exports more argi-food products than any other province (a total of $8.4 billion in 2003). The demand for local food has increased in recent years. Some of this demand can be attributed to a recent marketing campaign supported by the Ontario government; however, the factors that attract people to local foods are the impacts on climate change – food items sold in southern Ontario have travelled an average of 4,500 km (Wuereb 2005) – and human health (Ontario Agriculture 2008). A second concern is the loss of arable land in Ontario. With increasing use of pesticides and fertilizers soil quality in southern Ontario is slowly deteriorating (Ontario Agriculture, 2008).

The Ontario government has attempted to increase local food sales by supporting marketing projects across the province. Since 2008, to promote the local foods that fuel the people, communities, and economies of rural Ontario, the province has invested in 12 new projects through the Ontario Market Investment Fund (Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs 2010). The fund aims to support innovative market research, communications, and/or marketing projects that encourage Ontarians to buy locally produced foods. Furthermore, in 2009-10, ongoing support by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) increased by 53 percent, compared to 2003-04 (Ontario Ministry of Finance 2010)**.** This includes $9 million over three years, starting in 2009-10, to promote and increase awareness of Ontario food products by the public at large. A further $1.5 million was pledged by OMAFRA to develop new agri-food research centres focused on livestock and crop production, renewable energy, nutrition, and health.

In parallel to the conventional food system, the most notable alternative arrangements – i.e. those that fall into our definition of an LFS – are the following:

- **Community Supported Agriculture**: Farms that do not wish to or do not have the opportunity to engage in large-scale agriculture production are seeking out opportunities on small acreages. They mainly fall into three categories: new/young farmers, lifestyle farmers, and second-career farmers. All these groups have different needs and expectations from a farm business perspective (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs 2008). CSA mainly supplies only fresh fruits and vegetables; this then forces consumers to shop elsewhere for their other groceries, particularly protein (meats). Other provinces, like Nova Scotia, have been able to start CSAs that includes fresh seafood; however due to Ontario's geography this poses a challenge.
- **Farmers' Markets:** In Ontario, farmers' markets continue to see growth. Between 1998 and 2008, it was estimated that annual growth in direct sales was 7.3 percent. In 2008, over 15 million shoppers-visits were made to farmers' markets. The economic impact of farmers' markets in Ontario is calculated to be in the range of $641 million to $1.9 billion based on a multiplier range of 1.5 to 3.0 (Farmers Market Ontario Impact Study 2009).

- **Organic Agriculture**: There are over 600 certified organic farmers in Ontario (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs 2001), accounting for roughly 25 percent of Canada's organic production comes from Ontario, which amounts to about 1-1.5% of Ontario's total agricultural product (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs 2001). While not a big proportion, the organic sector has been growing at approximately 20 percent per year for over ten years – an impressive growth record in any sector.

4.1. Ontario Governance

In what constitutes a significant departure from the Quebec system, Ontario boasts three independent organisations that represent various farmers' interests. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA) is a farmer-led, dynamic provincial lobby group which works to represent the interests of its farm members to government. OFA is the largest, voluntary general farm organization in the country, with more than 38,000 members, as well as 32 organizational members and affiliates representing most agricultural commodity groups**.** The OFA has 52 county and regional federations providing strong, local leadership, and 32 organization members and affiliates. The OFA has a long-standing history in the province and therefore has been able to establish political credibility and remains politically well connected. However, they are constantly faced with the challenges of dealing with too many issues at any given time (Ontario Federation of Agriculture 2009). It is not that the organization lacks focus but, rather, that there is a wide range of often conflicting views within the membership that need to be resolved.

The National Farmers Union (Ontario) (NFU-O) is democratically structured to assure members full control at all levels. Objectives include the betterment of the social and economic status of farmers through education, legislation and agricultural marketing structures, and reduction of costs and service charges. As a general farm organization, the NFU promotes policies that will resolve conflicts of interest between regions and between producers of various commodities. The NFU in Ontario works towards promoting policies that will revive agriculture within the province of Ontario by strengthening family farms. On local, national and international levels, the NFU advocates alternative structures and government policies that resist corporate influence within the food systems. With farmers and consumers, NFU works to encourage vibrant rural communities, environmentally sustainable practices and the production of safe, wholesome food.

Finally, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) has its origins in the Dutch neo-Calvinist movement of the last nineteenth and twentieth century and the migration of members from the movement to Canada after World War II. The CFFO is an organization with two main objectives: (1) to allow farmers to practices their Christian faith in their occupation as citizens, (2) develop policy applications of the Christian faith to agriculture. The CFFO attempts to delivery these two objectives via is mandate with focuses on public policy development and education and communication. The CFFO believes the Church, through its parishes, can help built broad support for the local food movement (CFFO 2010).

On the government side, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is the provincial ministry that supports Ontario's agri-food sector, enforcing food safety, protecting our environment, and strengthening Ontario's rural communities. The Ministry focus is to:

- Ensure food produced in Ontario is safe

- Contribute to a cleaner environment by supporting enhanced nutrient management practices and bio-fuels
- Create a more competitive business climate for the agri-food industry
- Support increased investment in jobs in rural communities, the food processing industry and in the bio-economy
- Promote and market Ontario's agri-food products
- Provide leadership to innovation in research and
- Transfer leading-edge technology to farmers

However, in addition to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, there are 18 other provincial ministries that have a stake in the local food movement. With no central ministry governing the sector, effective management is a constant struggle.

As Ontario's cities and towns expand, good agricultural land is being developed. However, the Greenbelt, which was established in 2005, protects over 700 000 ha of land in southern Ontario. The Greenbelt was created to protect key environmentally sensitive land and farmlands from urban development and sprawl. It covers an area larger than Prince Edward Island and surrounds the province's Golden Horseshoe; which is Canada's largest population centre. Despite the Greenbelt, there are thousands of hectares of farmland that are owned by developers, known as the 'whitebelt'. There is an on-going threat that the need for urban areas will increase, and developers will be allowed to develop these lands. Aside from the recently-created Greenbelt, Ontario lacks a provincial level agricultural land protection law or agency akin to Quebec's CPTAQ. Municipal and county governments instead have responsibility over zoning issues, making agricultural land protection a very localised issue.

5. RESULTS

5.1. Barriers to scaling up the local food system

After surveying LFS actors in both Ontario and Quebec we obtained a list of spontaneously-identified barriers to scaling up LFS, which we have grouped under three headings: (1) political/regulatory barriers, (2) structural barriers, and (3) social and cultural barriers. Additionally, the specific barriers were categorized into fifteen sub-groups in order to recognize similarities and differences between the two provinces. The results are presented below in Table 1. The numbers in the columns to the right indicate the number of respondents who spontaneously cited a barrier in the corresponding group/category. The omission of a specific barrier – such as those that have been identified in our previous literature review (Blouin et al. 2009) – does not mean that it is necessarily absent, just that it wasn't amongst the respondents' top everyday concerns.

Regulatory and political barriers

In Quebec, the CPTAQ (agricultural land protection commission) is said to systematically favour large farms and has been extremely reticent to allow the subdivision of agricultural lots.[15] Reportedly, the CPTAQ's logic is that smaller farms are less likely to survive financially in the long run and are more likely, post-bankruptcy, to be sold into non-agricultural uses than be re-integrated into a larger surviving farm. At the same time, the CPTAQ has been rezoning relatively large lots (16000 sq. ft.) as residential. Some cities have thus been spreading slowly but surely into agricultural land while innovative projects to diversify agriculture or increase farmer incomes have been met with disapproval by the CPTAQ because they do not match its preference for conventional farming.

[15] Interview, 14 January 2010, production.

TABLE 1: BARRIERS TO LOCAL FOOD MOVEMENT IN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC

Barrier Type	Specific	Ontario	Quebec	Total
Regulatory/Political	Regulations prohibitive for smaller or non-conventional enterprises	5	6	**11**
	Political will	5	3	**8**
Structural	Conventional distribution mechanisms create unfair competition due to social and environmental externalities	1	3	**4**
	Lack of local processing or storage capacity	2	5	**7**
	Lack of funding/support (conventional, i.e. start up costs, investment funds, BDS, etc.)	3	3	**6**
	Lack of funding/support for social mission or for expanding or further developing initiative	2	3	**5**
	Incentive structure unfavourable to sustainable practices	3	3	**6**
	Business skills	1	1	**2**
	Transaction costs (too much time and effort and money to deal with many small producers or buyers)	1	4	**5**
	Lack of supply (absolute)	2	3	**5**
	Lack of demand (absolute)	1	3	**4**
Social/Cultural	Consumer awareness about political and economic food issues (benefits of local (including health), negative effects of conventional)	6	1	**7**
	Consumer awareness about the market (prices, where to buy, when things are in season, etc.)	4	2	**6**
	Consumer budgets and preferences	0	1	**1**
	Consumer awareness among ethnic populations	2	0	**2**

Note: Specific details for each Barrier Type can be found in Annexes 6, 7, and 8.

Another concern is that health regulations enacted in response to certain risks inherent in industrial farming and food processing have been difficult for smaller producers and processors to implement without incurring significant, even punitive, costs – i.e., they feel they are being punished for the large-scale industry's mistakes and faults.[16]

[16] Interview, 26 October 2009, distribution.

While the supply management system was put in place to re-dress power imbalances between buyers and suppliers, there are complaints that the joint plans are generally unfavourable to small or peasant-style production.[17] The strictness of the quota system makes it hard for new and potentially innovative producers to enter the market. The size of the quotas essentially prohibits small production quantities, whether on a small or new farm, or on an existing farm wishing to diversify its production. Despite these complaints regularly surfacing and despite the mandate of the RMAAQ, the *Union paysanne*, the independent (and legally un-accredited) farmer association, points out that there is no systematic evaluation of whether or not these joint plans were actually good for farmers. Recently, the *Union paysanne* has contested the UPA's legitimacy by casting doubts over the referendum that created the syndical monopoly in 1972 and arguing that the UPA's bias in favour of large farms has contributed to the gradual disappearance of smaller farms – precisely those farms which were barred from voting on the UPA's creation (Union paysanne 2007).

Set against the context of dwindling farm incomes and the disappearance of small farms, the question of who benefits from the system is as pertinent as ever. The supply management system – and the UPA's role within it – is therefore an important point of contestation for LFS activists and the wider food sovereignty movement. However, while the UPA has reacted very defensively to anyone calling the supply management system into question, of the three respondents who criticised the system, none were in favour of abolishing it.[18] On the contrary, all recognised the importance of collective solutions to the problems faced by farmers and the importance of defending supply management against threats posed by international economic treaties. Rather, they claim that the system *as it is* does not necessarily benefit sustainable agriculture or foster truly equitable social and economic relationships.

In Ontario, a major obstacle cited by respondents is the tax system which discourages farmers from making changes to their farms in order to increase efficiency or switch to organic farming[19]. The majority of changes to a farm are considered 'adding value', which implies qualifying for new taxes thus making it less attractive for farmers to make changes towards sustainable farming practices. At the same time, new regulations ostensibly intended to raise standards for small-scale food processors were imposed; the cost of meeting these regulations turned out to be so high that many processors and abattoirs in Ontario closed in the 1990s, leaving many smaller scale producers scrambling to find new, often distant and industrial processors.

For years, many of the proponents of the local food movement have been pushing for regulation that prioritizes local procurement by public agencies. If the government sets the example for increasing demand for local food, private institutions will follow. In Quebec, rules placed on school boards' outsourcing practices – notably the prohibition of spending more than the lowest price offered in order to buy local or sustainable produce – were cited as a significant barrier to developing farm-to-school lunch programmes[20] such as the ones that have been popular in California and many other US states and in several countries in the European Union.

Structural Barriers

Alternative food organizations, whether community organizations, established NGOs, or private small and medium enterprises, all complain about the lack of funding. While credit market failure for small and medium

[17] Interviews, 26 October 2009, production; and 13 November 2009, production.

[18] Interviews 26 October 2009, production, 28 October 2009, distribution/processing, and 13 November 2009, production.

[19] Interview, 24 November 2009, 9 February, 2010

[20] Interview, 26 October 2009, consumption.

farms is not uncommon, the existing public financial institutions that in theory are meant to overcome this market failure have not met expectations. In Quebec, they tend to be risk-averse, which leaves young, innovative farmers out in the cold.[21] Additionally, it is hard for organizations with a primarily commercial mission to get funding for non-economic activities such as awareness-raising in the community,[22] while non-profit organizations are struggling to find stable funding for their programmes year-in year-out despite reporting high success rates.[23]

In Ontario, the average age of a farmer has been increasing and more and more farmers are retiring from the business each year. As farming has not proven to be profitable over recent years, many farmers find it challenging to turn their farms over to their children. One respondent pointed out that the major reason that young people are not entering the farming sector is because both maintaining and acquiring land is much too expensive, and the government provides little financial support for new farmers[24]. The lack of interest of young farmers to invest in learning the required technical skills (through college and university programs) has largely to do with the cost of land; a 25% down payment is required, a sum that is prohibitive for many people. In Quebec, the transfer of quotas and start-up financing were cited as an issue for new farms.[25] The cost and/or impossibility of acquiring land and other tools essential for farming deters young people from pursuing an education in agriculture. Reluctance to zone agricultural land for new small farms compounds this problem. The high debt burden on established farms is yet an additional structural economic problem that means finding the next generation of farmers will remain a major issue for the LFS and food sovereignty movement as old debt-ridden farms are gobbled up into the corporate industrial farming system (see National Farmers Union 2010 for full report on debt and the corporate land grab).

The challenge for many LFS initiatives is that they are competing against each other for limited resources and/or sources of funding. One informant noted that probably one of the most crucial barriers around building a sustainable local food system in Ontario is providing long-term financial support directly to farmers, non-profits organizations working with farmers, small business, and marketing campaigns[26]. In 2007, the Ontario government committed $12.5 million on a "Pick Ontario Freshness" marketing campaign which was a good start to raise awareness. Similarly, the Quebec government runs the "*Mettez le Québec dans votre assiette*" ("Put Quebec in your plate") advertising campaign aimed at consumers and have announced in 2009 a $14 million fund for promoting diversifications and the development of short food supply chains ('*circuits courts'*), defined as producer-to-consumer distribution mechanisms with one intermediary or less. It remains however unclear if these funds shall be sufficient, used effectively, or even who would fall under the MAPAQ's definition.[27]

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[21] Interview, 13 November 2009, production.

[22] Interview, 26 October 2009, production; interview, 28 October, consumption.

[23] Interview, 2 November 2009, consumption

[24] Interview, 9 February 2010

[25] Interview, 13 November 2009, production.

[26] Interview, 11, February 2020

[27] Interview, 2 November 2009, distribution. The informant argued that there is some confusion for box scheme initiatives because it is unclear whether the network organizer and individual drop-off points (that are often just a consumer group) count as two separate intermediaries between producer and consumer or if the drop-off point could be considered as the final point of consumption (thus making the network organizer the sole intermediary). Here we see the definitional and conceptual confusion – addressed fully in our literature review (Blouin et al. 2009) – at work. If unaddressed, they may lead to the arbitrary exclusion of some initiatives which we would consider as part of the LFS movement.

In both provinces, agricultural infrastructure – that is, the suppliers, processors, and service providers who support farming, such as equipment sales outlets and repair specialists, small-scale processing plants, or veterinarians who deal with farm animals – is disappearing from rural areas (The Metcalf Foundation 2008). The agricultural extension programmes that used to provide information and guidance to farmers were cut back in the 1990s (The Metcalf Foundation 2008). Many small-scale local abattoirs had to close down due to constant changes in food safety regulations (Metcalf Foundation 2008). A lack of abattoirs has also been cited in some regions of Quebec[28], particularly around the Montreal area where all meat processing goes to central processing plant in the city now owned by the UPA farmer's syndicate. However, in another region where the agri-food and other roundtables have been very active, small-scale cooperatives and abattoirs have thrived,[29] though no causal link can be yet established.

A higher-scale structural problem is that Ontario imports $4 billion[30] more food than it exports. According to expert Brian Cook, there are only three days of fresh food in Toronto at any given time.[31]The decline of Ontario's agriculture sector and its dependence on cheap, imported food has resulted in Ontario giving up its food sovereignty. Ontario is in a situation where the awareness of local food is increasing but the supply of affordable local food is lacking. Quebec's net food imports are far smaller – around the $100 million – though it remains dependant to a large extent on external markets for its inputs and outputs (see Annex 4), with only half of the province's food production consumed in the province.

The distribution, processing, and storage for the local food movement require innovation. Currently, the food system in both provinces features central processing, which is a factor in why food travels such a long distance. Informants suggested a processing; distribution, and storage system separate for local foods or a completely new system that is compatible for both[32].

Social and Cultural Barriers

Despite the cooperative movement's long history in Quebec, one respondent felt that individualism was a major obstacle to overcome.[33] Farmers, particularly those who are pioneers in their field (organic or artisanal production), instinctively think they can go it alone and find success based only on their own work and quality of their products. This desire for self-empowerment often overshadows practical considerations such as economies of scale. The respondent felt that there were many collective or cooperative arrangements that could be well-suited to artisanal production without forfeiting the sense of empowerment they so desire.

On the consumer side, the economic reality facing many families means that they often shop with their wallets: minimizing both money and time spent supplying their households with food[34]. Another facet brought up was that people in general have lost the ability and desire to eat seasonally, let alone sustainably.[35]

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[28] Interview, 26 October 2009, distribution.

[29] Interviews, 26 October 2009, production; 27 November 2009, distribution.

[30] Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Ontario Agri-food Trade by Commodity Group, January through December 2005, Toronto : OMAFRA, 2006

[31] Brian Cook « The State of Toronto's Food, » Discussion paper prepared for Toronto Public Health, October 2007, draft version.

[32] Interview, 17 February 2010

[33] Interview, 27 November 2009, distribution.

[34] Interview, 22 October 2009, consumption; Interview, 3 January 2010, consumption.

[35] Interview, 2 November 2010, consumption.

In Ontario, the issue of awareness and education was raised and it was suggested that a system needs to be established whereby consumers are ensured that the information they receive is accurate so that they can make an informed decision about the food they eat[36]. Promotion of local Ontario-grown food has increased since the Foodland Ontario strategy rolled out; however, lack of a labelling system for foods grown outside of Ontario and Canada leaves an information gap for the consumer. Many of the participants for this study were proponents of increasing awareness through schools creating a curriculum and also encouraging local procurement of the food supplied to school boards[37]. Another aspect of awareness that was highlighted through the interviews was new farmer education; many new farmers lack the technical skills required to operate a profitable and sustainable farm.

Lastly, an area of concern is working with ethnic populations, particularly in large urban areas like Toronto. The number of new Canadians arriving in Canada from various parts of the world has influenced food preferences (Ontario Rural Council 2007). The challenge is encouraging ethic communities to engage in the local food movement without severing them from their heritage. FarmStart, an organization based in Ontario, works with the new generation of farmers to develop locally-based, ecologically sound and economically viable agricultural enterprises. Currently, they are running a pilot project farm in Brampton, Ontario, where they work with the local ethnic community to encourage them to grow crops that are both compatible with Ontario soils and connected to their heritage (FarmStart 2010)

5.2. Policy suggestions

Our interviews generated some specific policy proposals for both Ontario and Quebec. The following highlights some of the most relevant discussions (see Annex 9 for complete list):

'Local Food Terminals': An interesting way to reduce transaction costs for intermittent farmers' markets, food-box schemes, and institutional bulk buyers with local content would be to create a corporation to co-ordinate supply for all these initiatives. In Quebec, for example, the corporation could be modelled on the existing Corporation des marches publics de Montréal, created to streamline the sourcing process and management of Montreal's four permanent markets. Similarly, the Toronto food terminal could be reformed, whereby a process to manage local food could be established. Granted these new processes would require innovative thinking and adequate funding; these new entities could act as a food terminal for local produce. Although this would do away with the direct consumer-producer linkage emphasized by many local food initiatives, it could still accomplish economic objectives by offering equitable prices and, conceivably, environmental ones, too, if ecological production criteria are included in the corporation's sourcing policy.

"Polluter-Pays" Principle: Another suggestion by participants in both provinces is to incorporate the 'polluter-pays principle' into agricultural regulations. Currently, organic certification or the implementation of sustainable farming practices require producers to incur significant costs. While some funding is available to smooth this transition, it remains inadequate as an incentive and in no way discourages environmentally damaging practices. As such, the regulatory incentive structure punishes environmental stewardship and gives a free pass to polluters. In order to promote sustainable agriculture, the incentive structure needs to be

[36] Interview, 24 November 2009

[37] Interview, 11 January 2010

reversed: farms using unsustainable methods can be taxed or fined and the revenue used as investment into sustainable farming or organic transition programmes. Imposing eco-conditionality for public funding – where the applicant must fulfil certain environmental practice requirements in order to be eligible – is another method to punish polluters, as opposed to environmental stewards. The polluter-pays principle has gained public and political currency thanks to the vocal public debates in the lead-up to the Copenhagen summit on climate change in 2009 and is probably a more realistic policy option in the current political climate than the outright banning of commonplace but unsustainable practices such as monocropping or GMOs and agrochemical use.

Funding: Though less specific, the other most common point brought up during the interviews is the inadequacy of funding for small or medium enterprises or unorthodox but potentially innovative projects, including pursuing social mandates for social economy enterprises. What is needed is:

- More research into the cost-effectiveness of sustainable local food system initiatives and related social, economic, and environmental benefits;
- Given that such research is scarce, readiness to invest in and nurture potentially innovative programs, enterprises, and organisations despite the risk;
- Changes to the tax system whereby farmers will not be penalized for 'adding value' to their farms.

Experimentation with public support for nascent industry was key to the development of the industrialised economies of the West and the newly industrialised countries of Southeast Asia. A similar approach could be successful in building a new food system. Again, it remains to be see whether the new funds announced by both governments will indeed help scale up LFS to any significant extent.

Political Will: There is a whole array of policies at governments' disposal[38] should they wish to promote a sustainable food system, yet our interviews revealed complaints across the board. It appears the regulators are reluctant to encourage innovation and change in the food system. The question to ask, therefore, is "do we want a sustainable, localised food system?" In Quebec, that debate took place under the guise of the *Commission surl'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire du Québec* (CAAAQ), also known as the Pronovost Commission, which toured the province and collected over 700 written submissions from the private sector, civic organizations, and private citizens through a series of public hearings. The commission recognised most of the negative impacts (social, environmental, and economic) of the conventional food system, and acknowledged that these need to be redressed somehow. Its seventy-eight final recommendations made public in 2008 cover everything from production to consumption and touch on many of the contentious points mentioned in this paper, including the UPA's monopoly over labour, financing for research on alternative crops or production methods, the lack of flexibility in the design and execution of collective marketing mechanisms, even the power of the Big Three distributors (the report however discouraged mandatory local sourcing). Despite the encouraging signs from the commission, its recommendations have yet to be implemented and even those do not live up to the expectations of local food campaigners – although most agree that it is a good start. Two years after the publication of the report, a new agricultural policy is still in the works and is expected before the end of 2010. Policy writing however is done mostly behind closed doors, and no official means to influence the process exist beyond the soapbox that was offered by the CAAAQ hearings.

[38] The only policy recommendation from our literature review and suggested by an informant (Interview, 26 October 2009, distribution) that is forbidden under international trade law is banning imports that do not match domestic social or environmental standards (in order to level the playing field).

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the dominance of the conventional industrial food system and all its drawbacks, there are certain positive aspects worth highlighting. First, the historic importance of the cooperative sector in Quebec society – and by extension economy – has clearly contributed to equitable outcomes. Cooperatives provide services for members ranging from consulting and expert advice to reducing transaction and overhead costs for members through collective action and by producing economies of scale. In addition, the producer associations play a lead role in the supply management system, which has maintained stable prices for producers and consumers alike and reduced the state's fiscal burden. The cooperative institutions prevalent in Quebec's food system thus play an important role in keeping members economically viable and competitive. They are, in theory, democratic in nature and reflect the desires and needs of their members. There is hope that the strong network of unions, cooperatives, and social enterprises could play a role in the future, promoting LFS objectives.

However, this heightened 'producer-drivenness' of the Quebec food system does not translate into the realisation of LFS ideals because not all members share LFS ideals; in fact, only a minority seem to. Large industrialised farms dominate these institutions and it is logically their interests that will emerge when their associations negotiate joint plans, determine the services they will provide for members, decide what political positions to adopt or how they will collaborate with agronomic research institutions – interests which may not suit smaller or alternative farmers and in some case may be detrimental to LFS objectives. Unlike in Ontario, there is only one official farmer's syndicate in Quebec and though it claims to represent all farmers democratically but given the diversity of voices in the farming sector it is likely inevitable that some opinions get marginalised.

A feeling of disempowerment within the UPA is in fact what led to the formation of the *Union pasyanne* in 2001. Union paysanne, a member of Via Campesina, promotes the 'peasant' model of agriculture, family-oriented, ecologically sound, and equitable. It remains however a civic association and is barred from becoming a legally-accredited union empowered to represent farmers. While Ontario can boast of a greater diversity of farmer voices being officially represented, the political clout of Ontario's three farmer unions is inferior to the UPA's influence in the Quebec political system. There appears to be a trade-off between representation of diversity and political efficiency. Ultimately, small farmers are the ones to suffer as their concerns are unlikely to reach a sympathetic ear in government in either province.

Other 'free' associations sympathetic to LFS principles, such as the *Association québécoise des coopératives en alimentation* or the *Association des marchés publiques du Québec* (see Annex 5) also provide important spaces for actors to organise LFS initiatives – examples include reviving abandoned public markets, creating a cooperative-based local foods labelling system, or simply encouraging its members to adopt LFS principles – and there is no reason why public policy shouldn't encourage such civil-society action. While Ontarians could be inspired by the strength of the Quebec cooperative movement, it remains that this strength is a product of specific social and historical context that cannot be simply transplanted.

The regional and value-chain roundtables are also an interesting initiative as they are a useful space for organising collective initiatives created by the state for the benefit of small enterprises, many of which have an interest in promoting local food systems. They also stand out for two other reasons. First, they are an 'invited space' created by the state and effectively used by actors who had previously not managed to organise

themselves spontaneously (i.e. in a 'created' space such as the industry associations cited in the previous paragraph).[39]

Second, contrary to expectations made about 'invited' spaces, the roundtables have not only been a forum for organising collective projects but have also at least in one case allowed LFS actors to play an important role in negotiating the most recent regional 5-year rural development plan ('*pacte rural*'). While it is true that policy decisions such as environmental regulations and zoning laws that could have greater and more widespread impacts on scaling up local food systems lie outside the reach of the roundtables (roundtables only address some minor structural issues, mostly those involving information asymmetries and transaction costs and have little to do with regulatory barriers), they nevertheless represent an important organising and potential policy space that LFS actors can use to achieve significant results on a local level and within the confines of the higher-level regulations, particularly if regional development programmes are designed and administered in a decentralised fashion as they are in Quebec.

Decentralisation can however be a double-edged sword. One informant in Quebec suggested that more freedom for municipal and county authorities could provide the space to unleash the local creativity and motivation that LFS need. In Ontario, where there is no provincial zoning body, municipal authorities have more say on territorial management than their Quebec counterparts. However, the Ontario experience shows that without proper vigilance from the progressive forces in society, municipal authorities will just as easily (or more easily, there being the danger) license land for urban or other development due to the promise of significant increases in municipal tax income. Based on this we conclude that it is imperative to have a body mandated to protect the agricultural land, such as the existing CAPTQ, but that this body should be made more flexible to meet LFS needs. In one case, the CPTAQ agreed to allow municipal authorities in Ste-Camille to take over management of a large farm that was for sale in order to help new young families establish small farms.[40] However, in order to do this, the CPTAQ de-zoned the land, technically empowering municipal authorities to develop it whichever way they want, though there was an understanding that the municipality would keep the land in agriculture. We conclude that there should be a formal way to make such arrangements without necessarily de-zoning the land and placing it at risk.

Private land trusts in Ontario have become a way to keep land in agricultural use: land would be donated or sold to an organisation (a private trust, or an NGO) that would then try to find ways for this land to stay in agricultural use, i.e. finding candidates to farm the land, looking for the investment required, coming up with a business plan, etc. This resembles what happened in St-Camille, except that it puts the burden on private citizens, raising concerns about funding. Keeping such projects in the hands of accountable and transparent local authorities might be preferable.

The contrasting situation of the producer unions in the two provinces is also worth highlighting. Ontario has three major farmer unions who represent different points of view emerging from farmers. In Quebec, the UPA's monopoly over farmer representation prevents this kind of diversity of opinion. However, the UPA has indeed increased the 'producer-drivenness' of the Quebec food system whereas Ontario's farmer organisations were unable to achieve such success within the Ontario food system. The problem in Quebec stems from the

[39] See Gaventa (2005) for a discussion of the use of spaces by civil society to influence state policy. Briefly, 'closed' spaces are decision-making bodies inaccessible to members of the public or open and free discussion, 'invited' spaces are those offered by the authorities to entice public participation, and 'created/taken' spaces are those set up by or independently controlled by civic groups.

[40] Interview, 15 January 2010, production.

fact that the UPA doubles as regulating authority and as the representative body that channels producer concerns to the government. Separating these two functions – that is allowing for several farmer unions to freely debate ideas while an independent body would fulfil the role of regulator that the UPA currently fulfils – may ensure that the diverse needs of diverse farmers are met without losing the producer-driven slant that the current system ensures.

It should be noted that none of these institutions are concerned with balancing the needs of society as a whole – something important when considering the food system in its entirety. The supply management boards come closest as they must balance the economic needs of consumers and producers – still woefully short of including everyone from farm to table. No existing institution is able or empowered to deal with the wide range of food-related issues 2006 when Quebec's provincial parliament created a special commission mandated to study the issues and challenges facing agriculture in the province, evaluate the existing policies, and make recommendations for adjustments to the system. The creation of the *Commission sur l'avenir de l'agriculture et de l'agroalimentaire du Québec* (CAAAQ) has opened a door for political contestation and a path towards a comprehensive agri-food policy. Ontario has had no such process. Many of the people interviewed in Ontario suggested that a separate ministry needs to be established in order to address the collective issues facing the local food movement. Alternatively, if establishing a provincial ministry is unlikely in the near term individual municipalities could show initiatives by establishing individual food policy charters. It might however be prudent for Ontarians to see how the CAAAQ process plays out (the new Quebec agri-food policy is due in 2011) and see whether such a process could be used instead of pushing for the creation of new ministries (which no one seems willing to do).

In conclusion, our interview results indicate that the local food movements in Quebec and Ontario face much of the same structural barriers (lack of funding, investment, and unfair competition from a conventional sector that externalises environmental and social costs while benefitting from government support) and relatively similar regulatory barriers (high emphasis on food safety instead of nutrition, difficulty setting up new or alternative farms). The governance structure of the food system however varies between the two provinces and the local food movement has had different opportunities to influence said governance. Notably, Quebec has more openings for participation (roundtables, regional development plans, and the Pronovost Commission process) although ultimately campaigners came up against rigidities in the system (e.g. zoning and the quota mechanism). Ontario, on the other hand, allows for greater diversity of farmer voices although their influence with government is less pronounced.

Quebec has a strong network of cooperatives, associations, and NGOs that have a history of collaborating on various projects. Other research on the development of local food systems suggests that such networks are key actors in the emergence of alternative, localised, and sustainable food supply chains. We have every reason to believe that these networks could be tapped for future initiatives, be they food terminals, political campaigns, or institutional purchasing initiatives.

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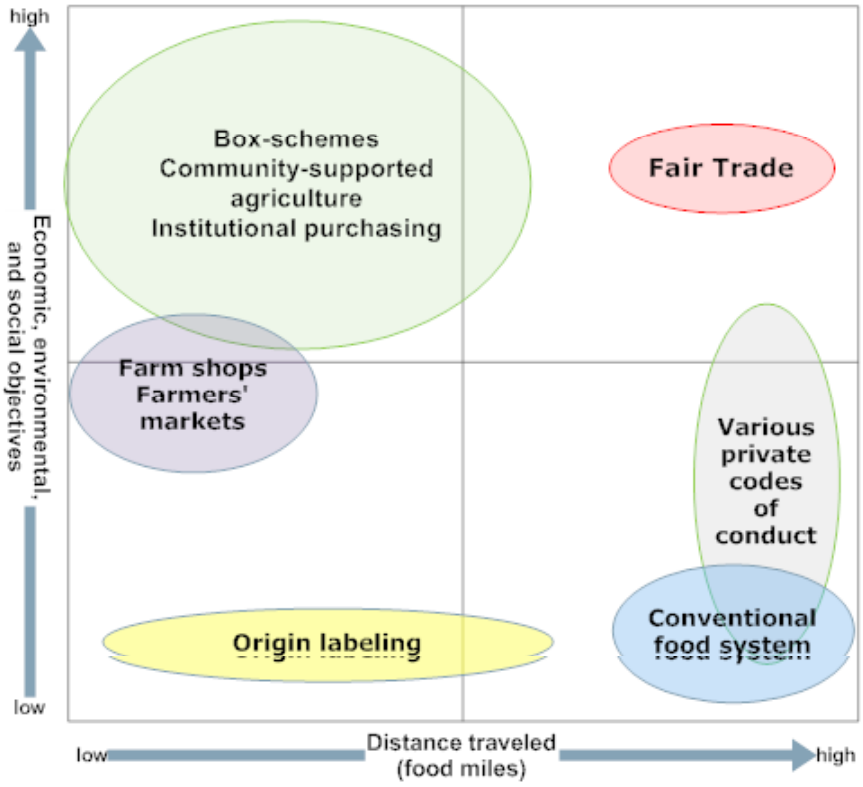
Annex 1: Potential benefits of a localised food system

Environmental impacts	
Reduced CO2 emissions	(Jones 2001; Pirog & Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. 2001; Hora 2001; East Anglia Food Link 2008)
Encourages sustainable agriculture (soil + water management, on-farm biodiversity, animal welfare):	(Chubb 1998; Tutt & Morris 1998)
Reduced use of fertilisers, pesticides, and other agro-chemicals:	(Norberg-Hodge et al. 2002)
Reduces packaging: and waste	(Tutt & Morris 1998; United Nations Environment Program 2008; Bord Bia, Irish Food Board n.d.)
Economic impacts	
Control over prices and sharing of risks:	(Lamine 2005; Bullock 2000)
Greater share of value added:	(Renting et al. 2003)
Greater income for farmers:	(Sanderson et al. 2005; Chinnakonda & Telford 2007; Chalopin 2007)
Better prices for consumers	(Sanderson et al. 2005; Sabih & Baker 2000; Conner 2003)
Economic spill-over	(Delgado 1998; New Economics Foundation 2001; Bullock 2000)
Employment:	(La Trobe & Friends of the Earth 2002; Hughes et al. 2008)
Business skills development	(Sanderson et al. 2005; Bullock 2000; Baker 2008; Ferris & Behman 1994; Festing 1998; Steele 1995)
Social impacts	
Creates social bonds between producers and consumers	(Sanderson et al. 2005; Davis 1978; Lyson 1995; Chalopin 2007; Soil Association 1999)
Food security for at risk populations	(Chubb 1998; Dean 1999)

Nutrition and healthy dieting	(Bullock 2000; Vogt & Kaiser 2008; Norberg-Hodge et al. 2002; Jones 2001; Pawlick 2006)
Equality: market access for small farms	(Chinnakonda & Telford 2007)

Annex 2: Sustainable food system initiatives – method plotted against geographical distance and number of desired sustainable development objectives



Annex 3: Organisations interviewed

Québec

Agriculture supportée par la communauté, Équiterre
A la soupe!, Équiterre
Solidarité rurale
Bonne boîte bonne bouffe (Moisson Montréal)
Nourrir Montréal (CRE Montréal)
Fédération des cooperatives en alimentation du Québec
Amis de la Terre Estrie
Union Paysanne
Union des Producteurs Agricoles, political department
Union des Producteurs Agricoles, commercialisation department
Municipalité St-Jude
Atelier 5 épices
Coop la mauve
Ecomarché (Nature Action)
Regroupement des cuisines collectives du Québec
CDEC Centre-Sud / Marché Frontenac
Table de concertation agroalimentaire de Chaudière-Appalaches

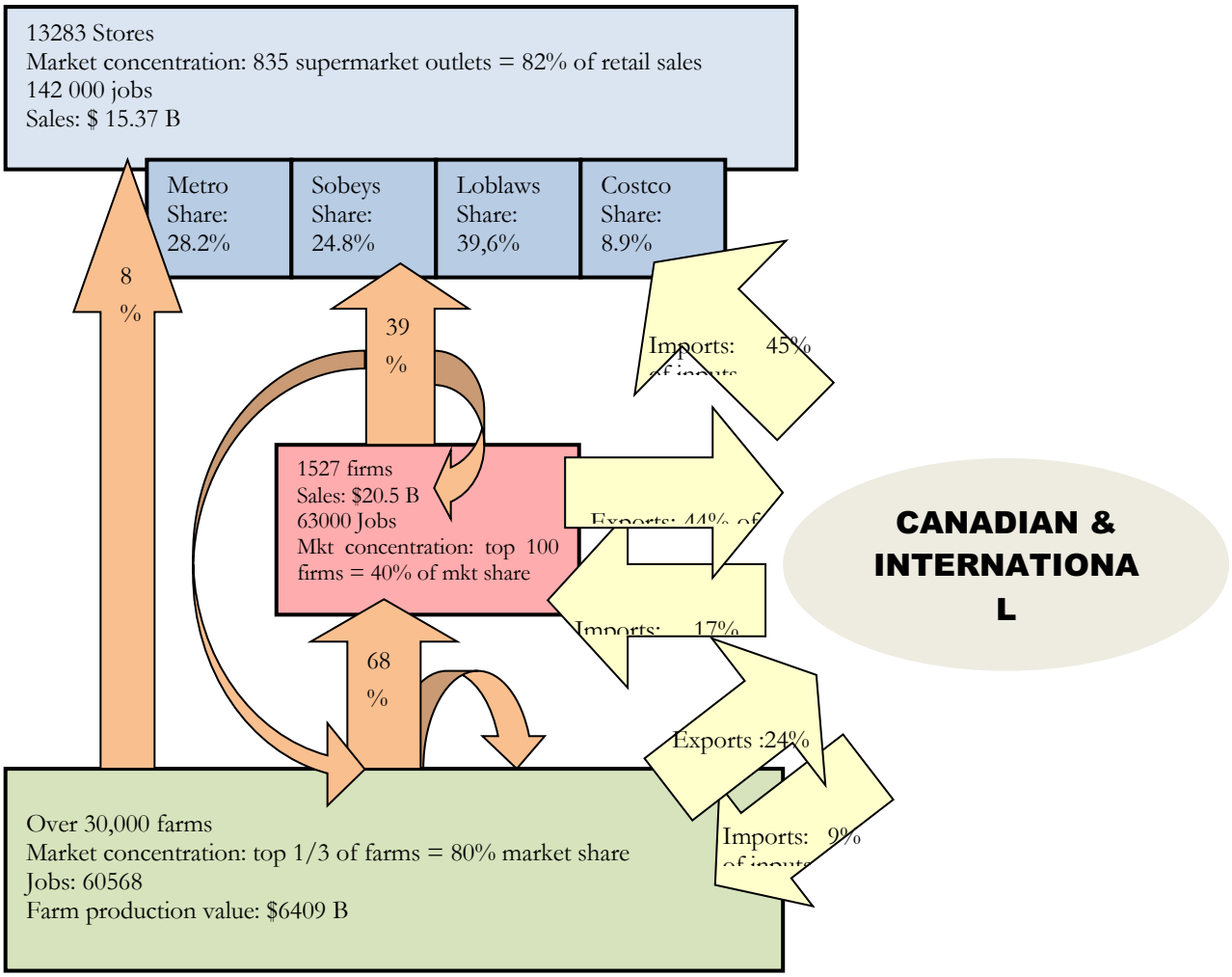
Ontario

Canadian Organic Growers
Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario
Farmers' Markets Ontario
Food Secure Canada
Foodshare
Greater Toronto Area Action Committee
Greenbelt Foundation
Just Food
Local Food Plus
National Farmers' Union
Organic Council of Ontario
Sustain Ontario
The Big Carrot

Annex 4: The Quebec Food System flow chart

Adapted from MAPAQ (2009)

- Consumers: 7.2 million
- Jobs: 487,093
- GDP (value added in Quebec): $16.7 Bn



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Annex 5: Principal public and collective institutions affecting the Quebec food system

Name	Description
Ministère de l'agriculture, des pêcheries et de l'alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ)	Its mission is to ensure the agricultural sector's success, by intervening in the production, processing, distribution, marketing, and consumption stages of an agricultural good. It's main roles are research, information sharing, and keeping tabs on the sector (e.g. statistics, registries, etc.) in order to be able to carry out public policies and programmes.
Commission pour la protection des terres agricoles du Québec (CPTAQ)	(Bureau within MAPAQ) Zoning commission responsible for protecting agricultural land from encroachment as stipulated by law. Changes in land ownership, use, or lots (i.e. subdividing or enlarging) must be submitted to the CPTAQ for approval.
Régie des marchés agricoles et alimentaires du Québec (RMAAQ)	(Bureau within MAPAQ) Regulates the administration of 'joint plans' by acting as mediator between producer association and buyers, a complaints office for producers and buyers, and evaluator of plans. Joint plans, by law, must be produced democratically and be in the best interest of association members and it is the RMAAQ's job to make sure they are.
Financière agricole du Québec (FADQ)	(Bureau within MAPAQ) Offers a range of services to ensure smooth and equitable financing of agricultural production: loan guarantees, protection against sudden interest hikes, financial aid for start-up farms, venture capital financing, crop insurance, and administrating the Canadian income stabilisation programme.
Conseil des appellations réserves et des termes valorisants (CARTV)	CARTV is mandated to implement the law on special designations (organic, geographical, and other) for food items. It establishes minimum standards and approves the creation of requirement specifications for new designation. It also accredits (empowers) some agencies to certify products against a given standard. Created directly by the government to work 'in partnership' with the MAPAQ but does not directly report to it.
Value chain Roundtables	Bring together all the relevant actors in a particular product's value chain for the purpose of increasing cooperation and collective projects, reducing transaction costs, and exploiting synergies.
Agri-food Roundtables	Bring together all the relevant agri-food actors in a particular administrative region for purpose of facilitating cooperation and realizing collective projects that can benefit the sector and the community as a whole.

Union des producteurs agricoles (UPA)	Only legally-sanctioned representative body for all of Quebec's agricultural producers. All other associations recognized by the law are affiliates or branches of the UPA. Certain sectoral federations within the UPA structure are responsible for administering supply management.
Ministère des affaires municipales, des régions et de l'occupation du territoire (MAMROT)	Responsible for the smooth functioning and development of the province's municipalities and regions. Runs and funds several programmes with the municipal or local governments under the guise of 'rural pacts' – formal rural development 5-year agreements(including funding) between local governments and the ministry.
Municipalité Régionale de Comté (MRC)	Municipal authorities in rural regions have some power over territorial management (zoning) and are the most present public authority at the local level, providing valuable logistical support, public infrastructure, and financing for local initiatives.
Centre local de développement (CLD)	Funded by the MAMROT and administered by the MRCs, CLDs are MRC-specific business service centres offering advice, logistical and financial help, trainaing and even facilitation of collective projects. CLDs employ 'Rural development agents' whose mandate is to facilitate collective projects and offer professional development advice. In urban areas, there are CLD equivallents called *Centre de développement économique et commercial* (CDEC).
Société d'aide au développement des collectivités (SADC)	Much like CLDs, the SADC network offers logistical and financial training and other business development services. It is however run by the federal government.
Ministère du développement durable, de l'environnement et des parcs (MDDEP)	Mandated to promote environmental protection within all other ministries and, amongst other things, to directly monitor and prevent the degradation of air, water, and soil quality and to preserve biodiversity and ecosystem integrity.
Direction de santé publique (DSP)	Regional public health authority mandated to monitor and promote public health. Has emerged as an important partner for health- and nutrition-driven local food initiatives.
Conseil régional des élus (CRE)	Regional grouping of elected officials from all levels of government meant to facilitate communication and cooperation between local, regional, provincial, and even federal representatives. Has emerged as a potential source of funding and logistical support for local food initiatives as a promoter of local development.

Centre de référence en agriculture et alimentaire du Québec (CRAAQ)	Provincially administered research and information sharing network comprised of almost 700 professionals from various fields operating as 40 specialised committees. A number of other sector-specific provincially funded research institutes exist and are mandated to conduct and disseminate original research.
Conseil pour le développement de l'agriculture du Québec (CDAQ)	Federally-funded agency created through an agreement between the UPA and Agriculture and Agri-food Canada. The CDAQ disburses funds to private-sector projects aimed at promoting innovation, improving market opportunities, and strengthening producers' business skills.
Conseil d'encadrement technique (CET) / Groupe conseil agricole (GCA)	Producer-driven self-help/horizontal knowledge transfer groups designed to help producers acquire and share agronomical and business skills.
Réseau agriconseil	Streamlined advice centre offering information on various funding and other aid programmes offered by either level of government.
Association des marches publics du Québec	Association of 78 'public markets', i.e. open-air multiple-retailer marketplaces which tend to have farm kiosks or some form of direct producer-consumer sales. The association facilitates networking between individual markets, usually established as corporations, and representing them in public fora.
Fédération des coopératives en alimentation du Québec (FCAQ)	Association of 63 food retail cooperatives, some independent, others franchises of the Big Three chains. The FCAQ's main tasks are networking and political representation/lobbying.
Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA)	Consumers (organised into designated 'drop-off points') pay an advance at the beginning of the season and receive regular deliveries of baskets (whose contents vary based on growing conditions and seasonal variation) directly from their partner. Équiterre and the Union Paysanne each run one such network.
Solidarity markets	Consumers, organised into designated 'drop-off points', select weekly or biweekly basket of goods from one or more participating farms. Started as a more accessible (for both consumers and farmers) internet-based offshoot of CSA. In the past two years, the number of such initiatives has rapidly multiplied.

Source: L'ABC du conseiller agricole, http://www.abcduconseiller.qc.ca, last accessed 30th January 2010

Annex 6: Regulatory/Political Barriers

Regulatory/Political Barriers	Details	Ontario	Quebec
Regulations prohibitive for smaller enterprises.	Regulations imposed on cheese manufacturers in response to Listeriosis outbreak in industrial cheese manufacturing are hard to comply with for artisanal producers, the costs are too high		x
	Zoning regulations: need to produce more than $5000 of something in order to have the right to transform it on-site		x
	Hygiene regulations: force division of labor along the chain, gives too much power to larger processors, makes for a lack of local processing capacity (some of our members want to slaughter only one cow per year so that they can eat, but it's impossible)		x
	CPTAQ does not like breaking up land into smaller parcels, which poses problems for new farms or simply when someone wants to start a new project.		x
	Need greater support from our government for farmers to make the switch to organic	x	
	Young farmers having access to land.	x	x
	Structural obstacles: regulator and policy obstacles.	x	
	Policy of marketing boards, these only y benefit the TNC's i.e. meeting federal exporting standard export standard, which are too expensive to small scale farm owners. Size of quotas prohibitive for smaller diversified farms. Marketing system inhibits on-farm transformation.	x	x
Political will.	Lack of democracy in existing structures (UPA leaves no room for dissenting voices, MAPAQ delegates too much responsibility to UPA)		x
	CPTAQ does not like breaking up land into smaller parcels, which poses problems for new farms or simply when someone wants to start a new project.		x
	Regulations imposed on cheese manufacturers in response to Listeriosis* outbreak in industrial cheese		x

manufacturing are hard to comply with for artisanal producers, the costs are too high. Attitude from public officials is not open to such projects, they tend to be more controlling than helpful	
Governments lack understanding root causes. Example Maple leaf case.	x
Governments are focused on food safety not food sovereignty	x
There is no Ministry of food security on food policy.	x
Some regions in the province are more interested than others. Need for consistent messaging.	x

Annex 7: Structural Barriers

Economic Barriers	Details	Ontario	Quebec
Conventional distribution mechanisms create unfair competition due to social and environmental externalities.	Unfair competition: imported goods don't respect same social and environmental norms		x
	Distributor/retailers (Big Three) aren't paid to revitalize rural areas or develop the land, they need to make money "If there's local produce on their shelves, it's because it suits them". Producers don't want to or don't have time to worry about distribution, they prefer to delegate that task to the distributors		x
	Production: convince the conventional farmer to transition and the new farmers to get on board.	x	
Lack of local processing or storage capacity.	Food to School Programs: Producers only willing to give their surplus (unsold product), but only a few farms are willing to participate. Secondary issues the lack of infrastructure in schools and establishments that permits preparation of food and also schools are closed during the agricultural season!		x
	St-Jude has a council that is very concerned with agriculture and food and also happens to have useful infrastructure (the cold storage). This is a rare combination.		x
	Example of need for changes: Hog Barns: Should be gotten rid of, the current model of raising animals is unethical. The infrastructure needs to change in order for there to be a better process, but this requires financing.	x	
	Lack of infrastructure to support local foods. It is difficult for us to get local food to the hands of chiefs and food producers.	x	
Lack of funding/support (conventional, i.e. start up costs, investment funds, BDS, etc.).	Financing structure encourages large farms (you can only start a farm if you plan to produce more than $20,000 of produce). Research tends to reflect the needs of monoculture/industrial agriculture. Financing available for well-studied markets (not peasant production)		x
	There is almost no capacity for self-financing in the short run (35$ per day per kiosk is a tiny fraction of overall budget) CDEC funds development projects for about 3 years, but something like this would take at least 5 to 10,		x

	it's bigger than our mandate. The idea of short food supply chains is romantic; it doesn't necessarily fit with the reality of producers.		
	Challenges in keeping staff, would like to extend our staff, however most funding is short term which poses a problem in employee retention.		x
	Funding for grassroots and community food initiatives that are out there.		x
	Production issues: Changes in how people acquire land. There is a need to invest in developing technical skills in new farmers.		x
Lack of funding/support for social mission or for expanding or further developing initiative.	Trouble finding money to fund projects that go beyond the delivery of goods (i.e. awareness raising and public campaigning).Unable to find funding to hire a development agent to help new farms join the system.		x
	Institutions don't have the budget to pay extra for better food, and better agriculture. Cooks don't know what's in season and expect the wrong stuff at the wrong time.		x
	Funding disappeared overnight		x
	Current tax regime makes it challenging for farmers to make any innovative changes to their farms without facing additional costs and/or fees	x	
	Really asking to change an entire system. How you source, require time and money	x	
Incentive structure unfavorable to sustainable practices.	There is no reward for protecting water, for being multifunctional (no funding specifically for this kind of project)		x
	Large actors with too much power: only a few companies and huge contrast which give them huge power, which define they access to local foods.	x	
	Policy making and championed experiences is limited in our sector.	x	
	Capacity to develop priority and see how one issue relates to another.	x	
Business skills	Transferability of enterprises. The next generation of farmers are here, we just can't get them on to farms often because they do not understand the business.		x

	Farmers: some are bus. Minded while others want to be local but don't want to do the work behind it. So finding ways to engage them.	x	
Transaction costs (too much time and effort and money to deal with many small producers or buyers)	Small volumes: daycare order about $100 max, and that's just not very worthwhile for a producer		x
	Transaction costs: the buying structure is more or less friendly to SMEs; our job is find structural solutions that will allow our producers market access.		x
	Distribution: the way the current system is designed smaller farmers must drop off produce themselves to distribution centers, which creates a higher cost for them.	x	
Lack of supply (absolute)	Food for Schools programs: Producers only willing to give their surplus (unsold product)		x
	Producers often work exclusively with the big distributors and aren't interested in dealing with us.		x
	Seasons are too short to meet supply. Programs that would assist farmers in lengthening the seasons are needed.	x	
	Lack of the development of localized food shed around the province.	x	
Lack of demand (absolute)	Natural food: not a big threat to organic – so many competition demands on the consumer… problem will go away once people are more educated. Eventually understand that there is nothing behind it…	x	

Annex 8: Social and Cultural Barriers

Social/Cultural Barriers	Details	Ontario	Quebec
Consumer awareness about political and economic food issues (benefits of local (including health), negative effects of conventional)	People don't know when and how to cook with local foods		x
	Education: Consumer confusion. Lack of awareness. False economy of conventional foods.	x	
	Challenges in Reaching our Target Audience	x	
	GMO's: Canadian wake up and fight every so often, however the movement is not consistent. Canadians, need a really become engaged and active population similar to E.U. Citizen. This is not only the job for NGOs'.	x	
	Lack of priority of food in our society	x	
Consumer awareness about the market (prices, where to buy, when things are in season, etc.)	Cooks don't know what's in season and expect the wrong stuff at the wrong time.		x
	Consumers aren't aware of what's available locally		x
	Institutional barriers In creating new food program. Resistance to implement this program. Example, in the planning Act people understand the role of school so it shows schools, but nothing for food. It's a hidden movement.	x	
	local food: solutions is like when our organization write papers where we get to the root causes… understanding that FS deals with empowering farmers… it's not just geography… fad… organic.. Long term.	x	
	Finding incentives to get main stream people to change in the main stream or pathway.	x	
	How to Determine which movement within the local food movement to promote, how to develop priorities within our own network		x
Consumer budgets and preferences	Transaction costs: the buying structure is more or less friendly to SMEs; makes it challenging for average consumer to have adequate access.		x
Consumer awareness among	Finding out the needs and requirements of NEW	x	

ethnic populations	CANADIANS coming into Canada.

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Annex 9: Barriers identified in both provinces and corresponding recommendations

Barrier	Ontario Policy Recommendations	Quebec Policy Recommendations
Regulations prohibitive for smaller enterprises.	Need changes to provincial tax structure so farmers are not tax for 'adding value' to their farms when making process changes.	Introduce flexibility into existing regulations
Political will.	Provincially: Need for a Ministry, which is dedicated strictly to Food Sovereignty. Federally: Need for a National Food Policy- with consistent messaging for the entire country.	Political campaigning
Conventional distribution mechanisms create unfair competition due to social and environmental externalities.	Provide small and organic famers with subsidies for the increased cost they face in the distribution network. Also, introduce polluter pays principle – greatly benefit organic and smaller farmers.	Introduce polluter-pays principle.
Lack of local processing or storage capacity.	Changes to migrant labour program.	Investment in public or collective infrastructure in relevant regions
Lack of funding/support (conventional, i.e., start up costs, investment funds, BDS, etc.).	Changes to land use policies.	Reform financing eligibility criteria to encourage sustainable food system and increase budget envelopes.
Lack of funding/support for social mission or for expanding or further developing initiative.	Greater commitment through grants programs from the federal government.	Valorise the socio-cultural aspect of food
Incentive structure unfavorable to sustainable practices.	Allow for the of compost (bio solids) on farms. (Decrease the cost of inputs and is sustainable). Changes to the source water protection Act	Reform financing eligibility criteria to encourage sustainable food system

Business skills	Encourage universities and collages to offer agriculture programs with a focus on business management.	Offer more support for LFS distributors.
Transaction costs (too much time and effort and money to deal with many small producers or buyers)	Increase competition for food service provides. Allow for greater competition, which would give more power to farmers.	Streamline local food purchases through a food terminal or public corporation
Lack of supply (absolute)	Changes for official plans that will allow for farming in urban areas. Shift away from export oriented agriculture, will increase supply in Canada.	Reduce costs of doing business locally (long-term)
Lack of demand (absolute)	Support food education initiatives in schools and community groups. Focus on local procurement programs. Create a food charter in each major city. Focus on low-income families by providing subsidies through programs similar to 'baby bonus' system.	Support food education initiatives in schools and through community groups
Consumer awareness about political and economic food issues (benefits of local (including health), negative effects of conventional)	Funding for green roofs initiatives. Healthy food in school programs. Programming around education. Create a national labelling program so that citizens can make informed decisions.	Support food education initiatives in schools and through community groups

Consumer awareness about the market (prices, where to buy, when things are in season, etc.)	Foodland's Ontario Program. Television, print and radio marketing Twin together low-income producers to low-income families.	Support food education initiatives in schools and through community groups
Consumer budgets and preferences	Introduce nutrition programs in schools at the elementary level, in order to increase awareness and change behaviour at a young age.	Vouchers for local food (e.g. redeemable at farmer's market) for low-income groups (short term). Reduce costs of doing business with local producers (long-term)
Consumer awareness among ethnic populations	Promote buy local program, i.e., Foodland's specifically to ethic populations.	