

Ecological resilience and a just food system

Transition to Cooperative Commonwealth: Ecological Resili...



Tim Crabtree. Introduction to Module 3: Ecological resilience and a just food system.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lpIIIH6wUw> (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lpIIIH6wUw>)



Module 3 synopsis

Although estimates vary, approximately forty percent of the earth's land surface is devoted to agriculture. The expansion of industrial agriculture over the last 80 years continues to severely impact eco-systems and bio-diversity. Corporate land grabs, particularly in Africa, are displacing small-holder farms and converting forest lands to monoculture commodity crops for export. Accumulation by dispossession in the global food sector continues apace, stripping people and nature of resilience and generating more greenhouse gases than any other single sector.

However, the food sector offers the single largest opportunity to drawdown carbon from the atmosphere. As we saw in the last module with the transformation of the Loess Plateau in China, restoring eco-system functions and securing livelihoods is a virtuous circle for advancing well-being, from the local to the global.

Awareness of this virtuous circle is exploding. Food alternatives are multiplying across the landscape. Relationships between growers and the natural world are changing. Moreover, as evidence grows of industrial agriculture causing illness and endemic pollution increases, a shift by consumers towards ecologically friendly food is accelerating. Experiments focused on shifting supply chains towards local, healthy food based on fair price are prevalent. Some have achieved considerable scale. Movements determined to make structural changes in the food system are growing too. La Via Campesina (International Peasant Movement) is the largest grass roots social movement on the planet in 2018, with almost 500 million members.

The stakes are high and the scope of the challenge is large. Nevertheless, as amply illustrated in this module, there are many ways of acting to advance systems change in food systems.

Objectives for this module

1. To understand the conflicting actors, assumptions, interests, and power relations embedded in the struggle to transition away from the industrial food system.
2. To become familiar with several transition alternatives of different size and scope, and their respective strengths and limits as pathways to transforming the food system.
3. To analyze one alternative food system transition strategy, using concepts and ideas from the module.

Suggested time allocation: 5 hours total

Review of commentary, required video and reading materials, note-taking	180 minutes
Weekly exercises	80 minutes
Weekly whole group discussions (https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43834)	40 minutes
Total	300 minutes

Module 3 discussion forum

As you work your way through this module, be sure to post your ideas and reflections in the [Module 3 discussion forum \(https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43834\)](https://learn.canvas.net/courses/2527/discussion_topics/43834) and read and reply to the posts of others.