



Handpicked: Stories from the Field

A production of the Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems

Season 3, Episode 6 – “Will the Pursuit of Limitless Growth Make Us Better Off?”: Redefining Progress in the Canadian Food System

Featuring: Naomi Robert

Glossary of Terms

Agri-food System

“The agri-food system spans diverse supply chains, from meat and fish to dairy, eggs, crops and produce. Each supply chain involves a variety of stakeholders from farmers, processors, distributors, retailers and consumers that operate at local, provincial, national and even international levels”

<https://www.ivey.uwo.ca/sustainability/for-researchers/the-agri-food-system/#:~:text=The%20agri%2Dfood%20system%20spans,national%20and%20even%20international%20levels.>

Doughnut Economics

“Doughnut Economics proposes an economic mindset that's fit for our times. It's not a set of policies and institutions, but rather a way of thinking to bring about the regenerative and distributive dynamics that this century calls for. Drawing on insights from diverse schools of economic thought - including ecological, feminist, institutional, behavioural and complexity economics - it sets out seven ways to think like a 21st century economist in order to transform economies, local to global.

The starting point of Doughnut Economics is to change the goal from endless GDP growth to thriving in the Doughnut. At the same time, see the big picture by recognising that the economy is embedded within, and dependent upon, society and the living world.”

<https://doughnuteconomics.org/about-doughnut-economics>

Economic Growth

“An economy grows when it has the capacity to produce more. Production is based on how much capital, labor, natural resources, and technology it has to produce. Policies that encourage the accumulation of any of these leads to economic growth.”

<https://www.khanacademy.org/economics-finance-domain/ap-macroeconomics/ap-long-run-consequences-of-stabilization-policies/economic-growth/a/lesson-summary-economic-growth>



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Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI)

“Described by its authors, the Genuine Progress Indicator (GPI) provides citizens and policymakers fruitful insight by recognizing economic activity that diminishes both natural and social capital. Further, the GPI is designed to measure sustainable economic welfare rather than economic activity alone. To accomplish this, the GPI uses three simple underlying principles for its methodology:

- account for income inequality,
- include non-market benefits that are not included in Gross Domestic Product, and
- identify and deduct bads such as environmental degradation, human health effects, and loss of leisure time.

The GPI developers identified 26 indicators, then populate them with verifiable data. As one example, the pure economic activity stemming from the explosive growth of urban sprawl contributes greatly to the GDP. Yet, along with sprawl come non-economic costs such as increased commuting time, increased traffic congestion, land use conversion, and automobile impacts. In short, just because we are exchanging money within an economy does not necessarily mean that we are sustainable or prosperous.”

<https://dnr.maryland.gov/mdgpi/Pages/what-is-the-GPI.aspx>

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

“GDP measures the monetary value of final goods and services—that is, those that are bought by the final user—produced in a country in a given period of time (say a quarter or a year). It counts all of the output generated within the borders of a country. GDP is composed of goods and services produced for sale in the market and also includes some nonmarket production, such as defense or education services provided by the government.”

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/fandd/issues/Series/Back-to-Basics/gross-domestic-product-GDP>

Migrant Labour Issues

“Shifts in demographic and economic patterns are pushing workers to cross borders for jobs in ever increasing numbers. Migrants often leave their home communities due to extreme poverty and face exploitation as they search for work in unfamiliar terrain. They are commonly subject to subcontracting schemes and precarious jobs in the informal economy. They make vital economic contributions to both their host countries and countries of origin, but confront a dire lack of workplace protection and social security.”

<https://laborrights.org/issues/migrant-labor>

Planetary Boundaries

“The planetary boundaries concept presents a set of nine planetary boundaries within which humanity can continue to develop and thrive for generations to come.



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Crossing boundaries increases the risk of generating large-scale abrupt or irreversible environmental changes. Drastic changes will not necessarily happen overnight, but together the boundaries mark a critical threshold for increasing risks to people and the ecosystems we are part of.

Boundaries are interrelated processes within the complex biophysical Earth system. This means that a global focus on climate change alone is not sufficient for increased sustainability. Instead, understanding the interplay of boundaries, especially climate, and loss of biodiversity, is key in science and practice.”

<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>

Canada’s Quality of Life Framework

“The Quality of Life Framework for Canada brings together data for approximately 85 key indicators on the well-being of people in Canada. The Framework enables the federal government to identify future policy priorities and to build on previous actions to improve evidence-based decision making and budgeting.

“The Quality of Life Framework for Canada is organized into domains, each of which includes a number of indicators, as shown on the [Quality of Life Framework for Canada infosheet](#). These domains were selected based on evidence of the determinants of well-being to reflect what matters most for quality of life in Canada: prosperity, health, society, the environment and good governance. In addition, the indicators of life satisfaction and sense of meaning and purpose are included as overall measures of quality of life.”

<https://www160.statcan.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>

Well-Being Economy

“A Wellbeing Economy is an economy designed to serve people and the planet, not the other way around. Rather than treating economic growth as an end in and of itself and pursuing it at all costs, a Wellbeing Economy puts our human and planetary needs at the centre of its activities, ensuring that these needs are all equally met, by default”

<https://weall.org/what-is-wellbeing-economy>