

IN THIS ISSUE
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Commentaries from the 2023 Agroecology Summit in the U.S., and open-call papers



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Our spring-summer 2024 issue is devoted largely to a set of commentaries prepared by more than two dozen participants in the U.S. Agroecology Summit 2023 in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. Their individual and collective voices challenge the hegemony of the dominant global industrial food system. However, they acknowledge that there are significant philosophical and pragmatic divisions between progressives in the agroecology “movement” that need to be openly addressed before significant progress can be made in building a cohesive movement.

Reflecting a shared vision of an agroecological future, our cover for this issue features a work by farmer **Ryan Tenney** from his Sankara Farm Agroecology Zine. According to Ryan, “This painting is a view into a Black Agrarian future, with geodesic domes and autonomous microtractor out in the fields behind two youth cultivating the soil, planting seeds for the future. The red, black and green hues signal a post-colonial ecology.” We appreciate Ryan sharing this work and vision on JAFSCD’s cover.

Also calling for unity among progressives is our Economic Pamphleteer, **John Ikerd**. In his present column, *Perspectives on past and future food systems*, he describes the evolution of the food system during his lifetime and argues that transformational change will not happen without a food sovereignty approach led by networks of like-minded activists—a pretty radical point of view coming from an agricultural economist!

The JAFSCD special section of commentaries from the U.S. Agroecology Summit 2023 is supported by The University of Vermont Food Systems Research Center and the UVM Institute for Agroecology. It begins

On our cover: The cover is a work by farmer Ryan Tenney from his Sankara Farm Agroecology Zine, depicting a view into a Black Agrarian future. Ryan’s work appears in one of agroecology commentaries in this issue, [Growing change at the intersection of art and agroecology](#).
Artwork by Ryan Tenney: 2020, gouache on paper. Used with permission.

with an overview editorial entitled *Toward care-full plural agroecologies: Lessons from the U.S. Agroecology Summit 2023* by **Catherine Horner, Karen Crespo Triveño, Ana Fochesatto, Antonio Roman-Alcalá, and Ivette Perfecto**. I will not summarize the content of this special section other than to say that it is an extraordinary collection of views and reflections that is a must read for scholars and practitioners who want to catch up on the state of the art in agroecology and related fields.

The open-call content of this issue begins with a *Voices from the Grassroots* essay by **Carol E. Ramos-Gerena, Allison DeHoney, Shireen Guru, Rachel Grandits, Insha Akram, and Samina Raja**, entitled *Reversing food-land relationships in the city: Insights from the Seeding East Buffalo Fellowship Program*.

Next are three commentaries, including *Pakistan's path to sustainability: Advancements in cleaner production, a circular economy, and climate-smart solutions* by **Amanullah**; an *Assessment of households' food consumption strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic in Ilorin-South LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria* by **Opeyemi P. Babafemi and Adetunji L. Kehinde**; and *Developing a nascent agriculture industry: Lessons learned with sugar kelp* by **Stacey F. Stearns and Anoushka Concepcion**.

Our collection of open-call papers begins with three papers focused on college student food security. In *Smart Little Campus Food Pantries: Addressing food insecurity at Virginia Commonwealth University*, **John C. Jones, Lauren Linkous, Lisa Mathews-Ailsworth, Reyna Vazquez-Miller, Elizabeth Chance, Jackie Carter, and Isaac Saneda** use a clever pantry door sensor to collect student usage data. They report the program costs, benefits, and limitations of self-contained pantry units.

Alisa T. Duong, Ayrone E. Walker, Amanda R. Bossert, and Matthew E. Arnold next explore stigma among college students regarding utilizing a food pantry and find that power hierarchy, financial burden, embarrassment, and feeling superfluous are barriers to pantry usage in *A sentiment and keyword analysis of college food pantry stigma among users and non-users*.

In *Are we meeting student needs? Developing a measure for college food pantry satisfaction*, **Kelsey D. Gardiner and Susan P. Harvey** create a survey instrument to measure student satisfaction with their campus food pantry.

Next, in *Toward a justice approach to emergency food assistance and food waste: Exploring pantry–urban gardener partnerships in California's Santa Clara County*, **Christopher M. Bacon, Ava Gleicher, Emma McCurry, and Christopher McNeil** develop a new, holistic strategy for helping volunteers more fully appreciate the issues of food justice and racial inequity.

In *Food democracy as food security strategy: The case of a Costa Rican tourism town*, **Mary E. Little, Taylor Horn, and Madeline Sit** document the challenge of build farm-to-fork value chains that actually promote food democracy.

Documenting another food supply chain disconnect, **Sasha Pesci, Jennie Durant, Gwyneth M. Manser, Ryan E. Galt, Lauren Asprooth, and Natalia Pinzon** find that producers with the capacity to use social media are more resilient than those without the capacity, in their study *Online tools helped direct market farmers during the COVID-19 pandemic, but resources are needed for equitable adoption*.

In *Care, agency, and social reproduction in the H-2A context: A case study from Ohio*, **Anisa Kline** highlights how a more nuanced understanding of Mexican workers' agency and humanity will lead to better farm labor policy in the U.S.

In *The food and agricultural nonprofit landscape*, **Alicia Papanek, Chelsea DeMasters, Micayla Richardson, and Kimberly Wiley** find that, despite competition for resources, there is a plethora of opportunities for collaboration across food and agricultural nonprofit organizations and Extension programs in the state of Florida.

Next, in *Barriers and opportunities to agrihood development in growing cities of the Rocky Mountain Region: A comparative case study*, **Amaia Sangroniz, Roland Ebel, and Mary Stein** explore this emerging alternative lifestyle neighborhood type.


Brittany Oakes then highlights how grantmaking supports, or otherwise influences, industrial agriculture

in the North America’s “salad bowl” in her study, *Grassroots organizing for food systems change in the San Joaquin Valley, California*.

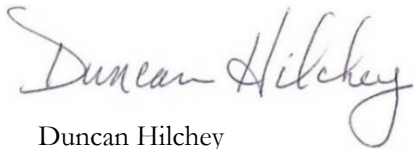
In *Challenging agricultural norms and diversifying actors: Building transformative public policy for equitable food systems*, **Johanna Wilkes** explores the use of advocacy coalition frameworks (ACFs) to build “thick legitimacy” in local food policy that elevates the voices of stakeholders in policy deliberations.

In our final peer-reviewed paper, **Nanna L. Meyer, Giovanni Sacchi, Camilla Sartori, and Christian Fischer** look at the differences and similarities—and what can be learned from both—in *Establishing alternative grain networks: A comparison of case experiences in South Tyrol, Italy, and Colorado, United States*.

Wrapping up the issue, we offer a book review by **Leland Glenna** of *Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry*, by Austin Frerick.

And with that we come full circle in this spring-summer issue. It is an issue with strong undercurrent of speaking truth to power. I would only add that while there is a time for confrontation and a time for compromise, to be truly transformative we will need to find ways to minimize “us-versus-them thinking.” The world needs us productively collaborating to find win-wins—regardless of scale, race, production system, country, political view, and so on. How to find the common ground is the existential question. 

Yours for a more equitable and resilient global food system,



Duncan Hilchey
Publisher and editor-in-chief