

**Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
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Transcript: Tish Woodley**

Jon Steinman: And welcome to Deconstructing Dinner, a syndicated weekly program produced at Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. My name's Jon Steinman. Each week on this program we learn more about our food by taking a closer look at the impacts our food choices have on ourselves, our communities and the planet. And in October 2006, this very subject was the foundation for a gathering of over 900 individuals from around the world. And that was the Bridging Borders Toward Food Security Conference held in Vancouver. The conference was organized by the California-based Community Food Security Coalition and the newly formed Canadian organization, Food Secure Canada. Deconstructing Dinner was on hand to record a number of the presentations and workshops taking place at the conference – a conference where both the history and future of food was carefully analyzed, discussed and celebrated. Truly a subject worthy of anyone's attention. And today's broadcast will showcase some of the highlights of the conference. All of the speakers heard on today's broadcast will be listed on the Deconstructing Dinner website, where this broadcast will also be archived, and that will be under the show title "Bridging Borders Highlights," and that website is cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

And here's Bridging Borders Toward Food Security.

soundbite

Andy Fisher: I'm Andy Fisher and I'm the Executive Director of the Community Food Security Coalition. This is Devorah Kahn who is the Co-ordinator of the Vancouver Food Policy Council, and on my left is Mustafa Koc, who is the Chair of Food Secure Canada. And we'd like to welcome all of you to Bridging Borders Toward Food Security. What an amazing gathering. We have a record 900 delegates from ten out of thirteen Canadian provinces and territories, 11 actually, 37 states, 7 countries, including South Korea, Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, Ecuador, Australia and Ireland.

Devorah Kahn: In 2004, the Deputy Minister of Health made a presentation showing that the incidence of diet-related diseases were increasing steadily in British Columbia, and that if this trend continued at the same rate until 2017, health care costs would consume 100% of the provincial budget, with the possibility of eliminating funds for any other Ministry. As a result, every Ministry was given the responsibility to take part in reducing those health care costs. What we are seeing now are partnerships between Ministries such as Education, Health and Agriculture, and piloting programs for healthy snacks for kids in schools, and we're also finding many other community-based programs to support food security initiatives. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the Minister of State for ActNow B.C, Minister Gordon Hogg, to open this conference.

Gordon Hogg: And it is our goal to have the healthiest jurisdiction ever to host an Olympics and Paralympic Games. You as leaders in promoting and supporting food security, we would require your assistance and support in achieving that. We know that having healthy eating, as part of our program to become the healthiest jurisdiction, is dependent upon secure, safe and timely access to healthy foods. We doubled our adolescent population in British Columbia, and it's not different across North America. We have doubled the number of them that are overweight and tripled the number that are obese in the past twenty years: a pretty significant fact. We are in danger of now having our youth be the first generation which does not likely have a life expectancy longer than that of their parents.

soundbite

Devorah Kahn: In July 2003, Vancouver City Council approved a motion supporting a just and sustainable food system for the City of Vancouver. So that's a food system where food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional well-being of our city. Soon thereafter, Vancouver City Council approved the establishment of a multi-stakeholder food policy council. I'd like to introduce Councilor Peter Ladner, the official liaison between the Food Policy Council and the City of Vancouver.

Peter Ladner: The City of Vancouver is among many jurisdictions that are waking up to the issues of food and food security, and we have done a few things in our city, and we have, I know, ambitions to do a whole lot more. But one of the things that we've done in our new southeast False Creek development, which will be the home of the athlete's village for the Olympics, we are going to integrate urban agriculture, as we never have before, into a new development. And there will be edible plants growing there. Our park board has taken up the challenge and will be planting, I think, it's 600 edible trees throughout the city in the next few years, beginning now, and then with the leadership of the Food Policy Council I was able to bring a motion to council to increase the number of food-producing community garden plots in our city, to buy 2010 plots by 2010. So we're going to have a whole lot more (*applause*), a whole lot more food being produced in our city.

Jacqueline Tiller: As we're talking this morning about food, and what it is and what it means in indigenous communities, we're talking about culture, and we're talking about health, and we're talking about whole communities of people, with the idea that food is the basis of people's livelihoods, as it is everywhere, and that much of the struggles that indigenous peoples face have to do with use of land, control of land, control of resources. But there are many, many struggles that indigenous peoples have been fighting for many, many years.

Michael Roberts: I don't think I can start today without noting some of the irony of being here today. Today is a national holiday in the United States as well, for those of you guys who are unaware: it's Columbus Day, a day not terribly celebrated by indigenous peoples in the western hemisphere.

Nicole Manuel: The voyage Columbus came here, it was a recon expedition, to explore new lands for market, for food market. They came here, and two days, two years later, first they came with three ships, when they came back two years later they came back

with 17 ships and all their soldiers, their military, with plans to occupy and settle our lands. They did this through massacres, tortures, rapes, scorched earth policies where they destroyed our entire food system, and within a century, tens of millions of indigenous people died through these massacres and diseases. This is important, because what we're trying to do is stop this process of colonization. Us indigenous people, we haven't been colonized yet.

Paul Smith: In the 2001 UN Food and Agriculture organization report on the right to food, there was an estimate there was about 826 million people who were chronically and seriously undernourished. That's a pretty big number. And much like the UN data on indigenous peoples in general, the data on indigenous people's hunger and malnutrition is particularly lacking, especially in North America, which is always surprising to me when you look at the governments of the United States and Canada and the well-documented census research that they do, that they could consciously, in my mind they must be consciously, missing what is going on in the communities of indigenous peoples within their borders.

The Euro Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition recognizes a couple of things, that the situation of peoples affected by hunger and malnutrition arises from historical circumstances, especially social inequities, including alien and colonial domination, foreign occupation, racial discrimination, apartheid and neo-colonialism in all of its forms. So now look at that list, and it's amazing to me. I think I'm looking at a list of Canadian and U.S. government Indian policy: alien and colonial domination – check; foreign occupation – check; racial discrimination – yah; apartheid – definitely; and neo-colonialism in all its forms – ya, we're there; I think that we have a couple of governments who should be ashamed of their policies toward indigenous peoples in general, and even more so with regard to indigenous peoples and food policy.

Indians often joke about being jonesing for an Indian taco. It is important to recognize that the origin of an Indian taco is not a pretty one. Fried bread was what creative minds and hungry stomachs came up with after the buffalo had been slaughtered, guns and horses had been seized and the residents of open-air concentration camp, all they had to eat with was a fire, a skillet, lard and white flour often of questionable quality. So the staple of our diet was a means of survival. Native peoples in 22 states received food from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's food distribution program, and included in that number are almost half of the 562 recognized U.S. tribes. A look at the list of foods in the food distribution program begins to tell the story of commodities like butter, peanut butter, cheese, shortening, macaroni and cheese and spam are the staples of the program. Commodity foods are the modern day tuberculosis-laden blankets for today's Indian policy.

Anonymous: Remember when the base age was 45 and up? We used to say this was the percentage of native people with type 2 diabetes; then we dropped it to 40, that was the base age, now we're down to 35 and up. I've got 3 children, by the time they were 22 they were type 2 diabetic, three! One of the highest rates than we've seen documented in the Tohono O'odham in Arizona is 80% of the population over 35 is type 2 diabetic.

Nicole Manuel: My grandfather, he died of heart disease, he was a world leader, an indigenous man, traveled the world talking about sovereignty and nationhood. He died from heart disease, from what he ate. My grandmother, she died of diabetes, as well as my uncle. So I see that as a direct result from the food and the colonizing of our diet.

Assimilation, it's the psychological attack on our belief system. This is very important when we talk about food sovereignty, because this belief system encompasses all the natural beings and what everyone considers like animate or inanimate objects or things, they all have a spirit. And that's what we believe, our food has a spirit.

Six years ago to this day, to this very day, Secwepemc gathered at a place called Skwelkwek'welt. The white man calls it Sun Peaks. It's a ski resort in our backyard, in our territory. There must have been almost 100 Secwepemc there. And when people start standing up and speaking about the land there, they start speaking about the hunting, how bountiful it was, how the fish were in the lakes, the creeks, the berries, the roots, all along the valley bottom of Skwelkwek'welt there was Indian potatoes, they were big, like potatoes, that was the staple of our diet. The elders, they spoke about running along the valleys there, and they'd feel lumps on the bottom of their feet, those were the Indian potatoes. They don't grow there anymore. Right now there's a day lodge, a village day lodge, there's a Delta Hotel, Nancy Greene's Cahilty Lodge, but no more Indian potato, and that hurts all of us. And when we heard those stories about our food, us women, and even men, cried for what that Japanese company, Nippon Cable, is doing to destroy our lands. But it was that, talking about our food and our connection to our food that caused us to take action.

So far there's been over 50 arrests of food gatherers, medicine gatherers, hunters. Our homes have been destroyed, and we've actually been banned from occupying lands that we've always occupied. We heard mentioned earlier the 2010 Olympics. These mountains that are untouched, that are now staked for ski resort development because of the 2010 Olympics, I'm not in support of that.

Anonymous: It was left it in one little village, in one Iroquois village, he identified 20, no I'm sorry, I had 23, he identified 30 some bean varieties from one village, different original heirloom bean, because we're the people of the corn, bean and squash. Destroyed and girdled all of our fruit trees and drove the people onto the Queen's side, which is now in Ontario, where we got several reservations, Iroquois reservations, in Quebec and Ontario. And I have a hard time, as I mentioned, visiting them, honouring them and sharing with them. So right off the bat, the history and the legacy of the governments that destroy our food systems, purposely, then they could access our resources.

Nicole Manuel: There are other food systems that are being destroyed by these colonial policies, like in fisheries. On the east coast there was the Burnt Church fight over the lobsters, where the Mi'kmaq Indians were fighting for what they've always done – caught lobsters for their food. On the west coast we have the Cheam, the Indians of Chilliwack, with the fish wars for the wild salmon that they harvest out of the Fraser River. I hear stories about elders, women within our Secwepemc Nation, going and picking medicinal berries and getting them confiscated by Parks, park rangers. But our food system is a lot different from mainstream food systems and we need help protecting it. When I seen the sign, Bridging Borders Toward Food Security, that's important. We need help protecting our forests from the ski resort and real estate developments up there, we need help protecting our fishing and hunting rights, that's our food security.

Anonymous: Every native person in here is struggling with liberation, but we struggle with liberation in a different way. So what I'm saying is, even we recognize that the land is sacred and our relationship to that, all of our ceremonies where I come from are based

on food, whether we got our seed ceremonies, whether we got our harvest where the U.S. Thanksgiving came from, whether we got our green corn ceremonies, whether we got out planting songs and our planting ceremonies, whatever it is it comes from that! Our relationship to those life forces were relatives.

Nicole Manuel: And I hope that through making alliances with indigenous peoples you can understand and feel the spiritual connection and start to understand it, 'cause we were all once tribal people. This land is our mother and we must take care of this land, otherwise we won't have any food. We have to learn how to simplify our lives, how to accept the very little, and the very, the very little that we, that we can take, until we can work to make our ecosystems the way they were before colonization: bountiful! We didn't just have enough, there was a bounty of food. Those people along with the surviving indigenous people hold the knowledge of how to take care of this land that you call Canada and the United States.

Anonymous: We're talking about bridging borders, we're talking about bridging borders here. It comes from this side of the border, though I was born on the other side of the border. Because our territory straddled, whether it's Mexico, or whether it's Honduras, or whether it's Canada and the U.S, all of our borders have somehow divided our peoples, separated our peoples, and so even for me to come visit my relatives and my peoples and share in the ceremonies, I'm always challenged at the border, a real issue, and it's this entity called Customs & Immigration, and it's at their discretion whether they want to let me in or not. And so I challenged them one time, I asked them what their customs were?

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Cathleen Kneen: I would like to tell you, because I know not all of you are that familiar with us, just to take a couple of minutes of your time to explain what Food Secure Canada is. It's a very young organization that has grown out of the desperate impatience of the people of Canada with what is happening to our food. It's grown out of our shame and our rage at the way in which our food has been contaminated, at the way in which the people who produce it and the people who want to eat it have been marginalized and abused. It's an alliance, if you like, a coming together to ensure that not only does everyone have access to adequate, safe, nutritious food, but that the people who work in that food system are able to earn a living wage in the process. And that the system is not defined by commercial agriculture and fisheries, but is understood as a series of relationships which all of us have with the land, air and water that nurture us.

Dena Hoff: So I'm going to challenge all of us during this conference and beyond in coming up with creative ways to build connections and bridges towards food sovereignty, so that we can use food sovereignty to replace the destructive industrial model of agriculture that's being forced on people all over the world.

My family is lucky enough to be almost completely food self-sufficient on our farm in Montana, but sadly this blessing is out of reach for most of the people in the world. And that's because there's no access to land, to water, to seed, to credit, to capital, and no voice in the policymaking that's going to decide who gets the resources, and on the other hand, who gets poverty, oppression, starvation and death.

And in our county, we are blessed with economic development in the form of a regional prison which, by the way, 37% of the budget is paid for by local farmers who are not 37% of the population. But this year we have this great, creative county agent, and he asked for help setting up a project at this prison in the form of a garden. So I was privileged to donate seed and plants to this garden, and the inmates take care of the garden, and they harvested a tremendous amount of food, which was good for the diet of the prison population, and also it was really good for the inmates. They got to work in the garden and we're planning to enlarge this program and find a place where inmates can be selecting seed and growing their own seedlings and involving more of the population.

If we are going to reverse the system that rewards exploitive and destructive industrial factory food production models which destroy family farms, the environment, workers, we are going to have to make this a priority. Whether you want to get involved in politics or not, there's no longer a choice. There's the Korean-U.S. free trade agreement that's being negotiated, and I think fairly soon the fourth round of negotiations will be held in Seoul, and if this is ratified, it will effectively end Korean subsistence farming on which their culture is based, and it's also going to enforce, let the United States enforce, indiscriminate trade liberalization policies for agriculture on other countries. So Korean civil society, mostly led by farmers, they're in the forefront, have, are mounting this huge wonderful strategic campaign to which they are absolutely dedicated and committed. It's been a privilege for me to work with them, because they are so absolutely well organized and committed to saving agriculture in their country. But they need our help. And we are going to have to pressure decision makers in this country to make sure that we have no more NAFTAs anywhere around the world.

Current low commodity prices are the planned result of over-production and the ignorance of the need to manage that production. Without food sovereignty as the basis for new farm and trade policies, we're never going to have food security, and we're never going to have this new policy unless we have the committed engagement of a huge portion of civil society. From farm to farm, from kitchen to kitchen, community to community, until we have a mass movement worldwide with a vision and a commitment so strong that policy makers all over the world are no longer going to be able to resist the will of the people, that they're either actually going to have to start leading or just get out of the way. Thank you.

Alberto Gomez (with Spanish translator): The situation of family farmers and campesinos is worse. Exported food is degrading our local markets and being sold at a lower price than the cost of production. La Via Campesina and the international campesino and family farmer movement which included farmers from Africa, Asia,

Europe and all of America, since the summit in 1996 we have proposed food sovereignty as an alternative. A few transnational corporations want to decide, completely decide, what we eat in the world, with the model of industrial agriculture, agricultural exports, and genetically modified organisms, with free trade agreements, NAFTA is one example, and the World Trade Organization. And so they are co-opting the government of countries for their own purpose, and the administrators of these countries for their own purpose, and Mexico is a classic example of this. On the other side are campesinos and family farmers. We are resisting them and they haven't defeated us yet. In the 21st century it is campesinos and family farmers that are feeding the world, not the transnational companies.

Since 1995 when the World Trade Organization included agriculture, La Via Campesina has opposed the principle of free trade as the engine behind development and proposed as an alternative food sovereignty. We have problems in the countryside where we're looking for solutions or alternatives, but in the world, we as campesinos and family farmers, we're resisting. So NAFTA and the free trade agreement are... the corn is an important part of our agriculture and an important part of our life in Mexico. In 1993 before the free trade agreement, Mexico produced 93% of the corn that we consume. So last year, as of last year, 43% of the corn that we consume was imported, and most of that is transgenic corn; 78% of the rice that we need for our own consumption is imported; 56% of the wheat that we need for our own consumption is imported; 58% of all the products that we need to eat in Mexico are imported. It is not possible, and it is not possible to get rid of our livelihood as campesinos, as family farmers. We're campesinos, we're family farmers, we're proud to be family farmers and we're going to keep doing it.

La Via Campesina and all of our organizations, we need alliances and we need a common agenda with respect for our own self-sufficiency. It's the only way to stop the commercialization of everything. For the right to continue to be campesinos and family farmers, for our right to continue to produce food, we say globalize the struggle, globalize hope. Thank you very much.

Carlos Marentes: Some people think that food sovereignty is a political slogan, a nice and trendy cliché, but for us, it is our alternative to challenge neo-liberalism, and more specifically, to challenge the current agricultural system that has failed to improve the life of the people, to improve the life of our communities. So today, we realize that the American government, North American government, in reality, in dealing with immigration, their intention is to stop, to limit, and at the same time control immigrants: sisters and brothers, who are the immigrants endangering their lives to make the journey from the south to the north. They are the displaced people from rural communities destroyed by our current narrow neo-liberal agricultural model and policies. They are the campesinos, the indigenous, the woman, the children, the victims of this inhumane and disastrous agricultural model, a model that imposes upon the farmers and the producers of the United States, and I believe it is the same for Canada, the mandate to produce more every time and to produce cheaper, are not better or healthier agricultural products. And, of course, the easiest way to produce more and cheaper is to have a supply of desperate labourers. And if we keep them in conditions of illegality, we can exploit them, we can abuse them, we can discriminate them and, you know what, we can deport them at any time. But the current model, the current agricultural system, not only depends on the exploitation of the undocumented labour force. In February, in Quebec, representatives of the migrant rights' groups informed us of the exploitation and

the violation of the rights of farm workers in Canada who are brought legally under the Commonwealth Caribbean and Mexcian seasonal worker program.

Karen Pedersen: You need to know that Agriculture and Agrifood Canada, the Government of Canada, actually most of the provincial governments, think the trade agreements have done a fantastic job. I mean look at that graph! That's our exports. I mean, they're happy. That's what farmers see, that's our net farm income without paying us for our labour. So, you put those two together, we're not very happy. In 2004, farms lost on average in Canada, when we look at net farm income, not counting labour, \$10,000 per year. That was exceeded only by 2003 where we lost \$16,000 per year. We compared companies in 2004 when we lost \$10,000 per farm, we looked at those companies in the food chain and we looked at 75 of them in Canada: 57 of them, or 76%, made record or near-record profit that year. Now, I don't know about you, but I don't think that's a coincidence. Consumers continue to pay more and more for the food that they're consuming and farmers continue to get paid what they were getting paid in the 70s. Agrium Corporation, which is one of the biggest fertilizer companies in Canada, published this particular graph in their 2001 agricultural, or, annual report. Nitrogen prices follow grain prices. What that basically tells you is when prices go up, they extract that extra profit; when prices go down they lower their prices. Those two lines almost follow each other perfectly, and so what this tells you is that farmers don't just need higher prices for their product, because if they get higher prices for their product it just gets extracted or stolen. What we need is power in the marketplace.

So what basically technology has done in the agricultural sector is we've taken what we used to do for centuries that didn't have any cost and we've created input costs. So now we have chemical costs, we have tractor costs, we have fertilizer costs, we've taken what used to come for free from the sun, and we've basically created ourselves this little addiction. So what's our solution? How do we solve this problem?

Well, let me tell you, buying local food and selling directly to consumers, that's a great individual response, a great individual response. But if we're going to change our direction, and if we're going to change our response, or change our system, we need to move that to a collective political response. If all we do is buy local, we're not going to stop going down the road that we're going down. What's going to end up happening is a few producers around urban centres, because Canada is very geographically diverse and the population is very centralized in certain areas, what's going to end up happening is producers around urban areas may be able to make a living, the rest of us will continue to go out of business, creating a vacuum. And what's going to fill that vacuum is factory hog barns, corporate agriculture, ethanol plants so that they can have feedlots. Do you think ethanol is about bio-diesel and environmentally sustainable stuff? Sorry, you're dreaming: it's about getting feedlots going. Food sovereignty isn't just about buying local, it's just not about acting local: what we do is we act local to create an international collective vision. And that's what we need to do in this country, it's what we need to do as we leave this conference.

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Ken Meter: We have 33 farmers’ markets now that are located in our hospital lobbies, our parking lots, our medical office buildings, and the two things that I’ll mention here, we’ve swapped out our vending machines and done some of the easy stuff and now we’re doing some of the hard stuff. And that hard, hard work is really trying to move to seasonal menu planning for the \$20 million or so of food that we buy every year. We have an RFI – request for information – out that has some very explicit sustainability criteria. We want to know, can you tell us what county the food is coming from, can you tell us about the use of non-therapeutic antibiotics, can you tell us about hormones that are used in the dairy products and, importantly, can you tell us, for the meat and poultry producers or suppliers, can you tell us about their OCIA violations, and the Clean Water Act violations, and the Clean Air Act violations, we want to know about that stuff.

Alisa Smith: We decided we would only eat for one year food grown within 100 miles of our home. We’re the kind of people who try to ride our bikes or the bus and reduce our use of fossil fuels and try to be as conscientious as we can be living in our modern world. But then when we started hearing, drifting around with these ideas of food miles, how many miles each ingredient in your meal has come from, and we were so shocked to find out that 1500 miles is a figure we’ve heard a lot, and in Canada up to 4400 kilometres each ingredient in a meal has come from. So we thought why are we bothering getting wet on our bicycles in the winter riding around if our food is merrily flying around in an airplane from New Zealand? That just didn’t seem right.

James MacKinnon: What we found is that the 100 Mile Diet is a classic kind of Trojan horse idea, where on the surface it seems very basic and very simple, old fashioned even, quaint even, almost, and it’s this quaint gesture of eating locally. But if I asked myself what makes an idea radical, then the answer is: a radical idea is something that, if it were embraced by a lot of people, it would transform society in a major way and, from our experience, that really is the case with local eating.

So I’m going to give a couple of examples from our experience. The first thing that we realized was that the 100 Mile Diet really does directly challenge an enormous, an enormously powerful industrial food and agriculture system. And to picture how great a change the 100 Mile Diet represents, you have to start at the standard point of intersection for most people and the industrial food system, and that’s the supermarket. So, the very first day of the 100 Mile Diet, Alisa and I wandered hopefully off to the supermarket to buy our groceries and, of course, found aisle after aisle after aisle of products that we couldn’t purchase. It was, it was sort of the first really concise lesson of the whole experience, was walking into these mammoth supermarkets with literally thousands of products and realizing that we would walk out of there with maybe two of those products. I think we walked out with potatoes and probably rutabagas, or something like that.

We live near, essentially, on the banks of the Fraser River, and yet when it came time to buy salmon and put them in the freezer for the winter we couldn’t get Fraser River salmon because the fishery is too weak and the fishing had been curtailed for that year.

So we turned to the Cheakamus system, which is a smaller river system to the north, and we thought, well, there's no fishery on that but we could go up and catch fish with a fishing rod. Unfortunately, a train derailed over a trestle up there and dumped a tanker of caustic soda into the Cheakamus River in August 2005, and completely eliminated, effectively eliminated all life in the river below the trestle, completely shut down the Cheakamus River fishery. That was a pretty minor news story, I mean it made the headlines for a couple of days but then it faded away. But for us, we really felt the shock of that, the shock of realizing that we live in one of the greatest salmon-producing areas, historically, on the planet, and we could not get local salmon.

Anonymous: Statistics about the price of food, that is, the overall price, showing that the price of fruits and vegetables between the last 15 years has gone up by almost 40%, whereas on the other end there are the price of things like soda pop, bath oils, sugar, has gone down. And so in terms of whatever your budget is, a lot of studies have shown that price plays a major role in food choices.

Michael Jahi Chappell: The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture in Iowa State University has calculated the average food item in the United States travels 1500 miles between the farmer and the consumer. That means that hogs raised in this region are getting shipped to Missouri, put in boxes, and brought back to our stores at considerable energy expense and, of course, as food prices, food prices will rise, energy costs rise too. In fact, the United States spends about \$139 billion each year paying for the energy of its food supply, according to studies from the Department of Energy, which show that 17% of all the energy consumed in the United States goes into our food system.

So all told, to summarize, the farm production losses, the purchase of inputs from outside and the consumer food purchases from outside, the region loses about \$84 million a year raising food just off the top of the production costs; loses \$500 million a year by buying inputs from somebody else; and loses about \$500 million a year buying food from somewhere else, which if you total it up is a total of over a billion dollars and, of course, that's more than the value of the entire crop and livestock produced by all the farmers in the region, we're about \$996 million worth of material. So you can argue, I wouldn't argue this, but one could argue that if this region produced nothing it would be better off than how it is now.

The folks in Wright County, Iowa, asked me to do a study of their economy because they wanted to get food to hungry people. So I asked them to go to the County court house and find out how many food stamps were given in their county. They came back and reported there were 400 hungry people in their county getting \$300,000 worth of food coupons a year. That's interesting because there are only 700 farmers in the county, and guess what those farmers get to produce food that nobody eats - \$25 million. We had this very poignant moment when I brought this data to the county, and I asked people who can explain to me why we give farmers \$25 million to produce stuff nobody eats because it's really a commodity for industry not for direct food, when we give poor people who don't have food such a small amount of money. And nobody had an answer, which I think was really good, it's that we want to think about this.

Loel Solomon: It means that if we approach agriculture the right way we can still conserve all these other organisms that live with us that we need and we depend on and think they have just as much as right as we do in the end without having to sacrifice our own well-being. And one way to do that is small family farms can be more productive

and they tend to be more environmentally friendly, which of course is not an absolute. There's a paper coming out next year that some of my colleagues worked on and I, looking at organic agriculture and writ large, meaning low pesticide use or no pesticide use, low or no fertilizer use, and looking at what really can't provide enough food for the world which, again, is a very complicated issue, I think all of us realize, but in a very broad scale because at least in academic circles it's very debatable. Dennis Avery is one author who wrote a book called "Saving the World with Pesticides and Plastics," saying that basically organic people want to kill the world because we'll starve if we don't use organic agriculture. We looked at all the things we could find and it's just not true. On average, organic agriculture can produce in the First World about 90 – 95% of what we have now. In the developing countries, that can be as much as 200%, maybe because some of them haven't switched completely to the green revolution methods and, alternatively, intensifying organic methods can produce as much or more food as we need as well.

James MacKinnon: So we started to see these links to community that we'd lost and that we suddenly wished we hadn't lost. All people, I think, in the modern world have a network of relationships that we rely on. We might have a personal hairstylist or an accountant or a libel lawyer, whatever; in our case we now have a beekeeper, we have a wheat farmer, we have a walnut grower, we have a fisherman.

Anonymous: I'm from local, I'm from Kamloops here, and where you are, I was there 25 years ago. I'm really good at what I do and now the government has caught up to me, so they will catch up to you. That's why here, you people, had better start realizing that. I'm sorry, but the emotion builds up here. I am losing the ability to farm...the regulation... I sell them in downtown Vancouver, I sell to about 10% of our people we sell to are vegetarians. I sell lamb to vegetarians. People had better be aware, we're being forced with the regulations of meat...this is the way, I'm really glad what you just said, this is the way they're going to start controlling our meat production. How do we get by that? Because I'm there and I'm totally frustrated. I see no future in this. That's why we're here actually, is to figure out how to do this politically. I sell over 700 lambs to this market here, direct market to Vancouver, and this is where I want answers to help us. This is what we really need to be talking about because it's only couple years away that we lose this control over our food system. And the farmers, we're working 3 hours, 3 jobs to stay on the farm for a lifestyle! The reason I got into it is... I'm lucky to have one kid ... you fight cancer and you fight this stuff, it's because of our food system. I'm doing 30 hours of volunteer work to help people out farming. I can't do it anymore. It's a joke at our place. Okay, today I'm actually going to farm! 'Cause I'm either helping or I'm marketing, I don't have a chance to farm anymore. Where's the answers to that because, I'm so glad you guys are here to say this, people here in the city need to hear more of that and policymakers and other people.

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Jon Steinman: That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner produced and recorded at Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host, Jon Steinman. Should you have any comments about today's broadcast or want to learn more about this topic you can visit the Deconstructing Dinner website at www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.