

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

AGRI-FOOD XXV, BRISBANE, 2018

**FRIDAY 30 NOV -
SATURDAY 1 DEC**

POSTGRADUATE WORKSHOP & FIELD TRIP

Hosted by the Global Change Institute, UQ
By application. Contact a.langford3@uq.edu.au

SUNDAY 2 DEC

FULL DAY FIELD TRIP, BOOK LAUNCH & WELCOME DRINKS

'Close the loop' in Brisbane followed by drinks in West End

MONDAY 3 DEC

CONFERENCE DAY 1 AGRI-FOOD TRIVIA NIGHT

Keynote address by Prof. Phil McMichael, Cornell U.
Expert panel: *Whatever happened to subsumption? 25
years of AFRN highlights*

TUESDAY 4 DEC

CONFERENCE DAY 2 CONFERENCE DINNER

Keynote address by Shalmali Guttal, Executive Director
of Focus on the Global South
Postgraduate student-led panel

**WEDNESDAY 5
DEC**

CONFERENCE DAY 3 DAVID BURCH PRIZE AFRN AGM AGRI-BAGRI AWARDS PUBLIC LECTURE

Expert panel: *Agri-food in the Anthropocene - Challenges
and opportunities for research, policy & activism*
Evening lecture with the Brisbane Fair Food Alliance

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Phil McMichael, Professor of Development, Cornell

Phil McMichael is one of the world's foremost political economy scholars of agrarian change, globalization, capitalism and food movements, and has been a long time AFRN member and participant. Food regimes analysis has been one of the most influential and highly debated perspectives to inform a world-historical approach to agrifood studies since its inception by Friedmann and McMichael in 1989. In his keynote address, Phil will reflect on the historical and contemporary relevance of the food regimes concept and consider its continued application to understanding current contestations around food security, food sovereignty and food politics reform. We are very pleased to have Phil join us again for the AFRN's 25th anniversary.

Shalmali Guttal, Executive Director, Focus on the Global South

Focus on the Global South (Focus) is an Asian research, advocacy and networking organisation with offices in Bangkok, New Delhi and Manila that aims to challenge neoliberalism, militarism and corporate globalization, while strengthening just and equitable peoples' alternatives. Focus has been the driving force behind the concept of deglobalisation as a systemic challenge and alternative to neoliberalism and global capitalism.

Shalmali has worked with Focus since 1997, and has researched and written on economic development, trade and investment, and ecological and social justice issues in Asia - especially the Mekong region and India - with emphasis on the commons and people's and women's rights to resources. In her keynote, Shalmali will present her recent work in responding to what she sees to be the most pressing challenges to embedding human rights into food system governance in the Global South, including questions of land development financing, the commons and small-scale food production. We are excited to have Shalmali join us to explore potential future directions for the AFRN.



SESSION DETAILS

1

**Sociomateriality,
Power, and Justice**

**James Hale and
Katharine Legun**

U.Otago

Thinking through sociomateriality emphasizes the hybridity and heterogenous associations of entities which are interwoven into the fabric of everyday action. It blurs the distinction between subjects and objects, highlighting the constant assembling process between different heterogeneous actors in efforts to perform action. While aiming to transcend modernist divides and tuning us toward collective networks of human and non-human entities, these approaches have been criticized as neglecting to attend to power and social inequality. For instance, how does thinking through sociomateriality help us examine the causes of the uneven distribution of exploitive labour practices, food insecurity, and toxic environments across socio-cultural categories (e.g. race, class, gender)? Is sociomaterial thinking inherently at odds with social justice concerns? Can it be used to address questions of power, or add to traditional frameworks to better understand and address injustices? Do hybrid frameworks, bringing together structural approaches and sociomaterial approaches, reproduce the divides once sought to be transcended? In sum, how might thinking through sociomateriality better integrate power while working toward more just and fair futures? This session will include papers dealing with such tensions.

CONTACT: james.hale@otago.ac.nz

2

**Organics as a
game changer**

Sandra Grimes

This panel will be united around the theme that Organics has operated as a game changer, as a creator of social change, albeit a matter of some controversy and dispute in agricultural, academic and other circles, including some activist ones. As game changer, what are the impacts and in what contexts? For example, has Organics contributed to changing non-organic farming practices (acknowledged or by appropriation)? Or has it played an ideological and social role in informing and changing health and environmental practices? Exploring beyond developed, primarily western, capitalist systems, what are the lessons of organic and holistically oriented traditional food production practices? As a game changer, how has this been achieved given that Organics has been and remains a minority practice in most developed capitalist systems? To what extent has networking and boundary crossing beyond the agricultural sector been important in getting the holistic message across that best-practice Organics is more than just a means of food and other production? The Panel may either assume or confirm that best practice Organics purports to be holistic, with benign impact on the environment and human health.

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SESSION DETAILS

3

**Finance Revisited:
Exploring new and
old intersections
between finance
and agri-food**

Sarah Ruth Sippel,
(U. Leipzig), **Geoff
Lawrence (UQ),
Nicolette Larder**
(U. New England)

The emerging intersections between agri-food and finance have been one of the major recent transformations in the global food system. Yet, while the drivers, strategies, and financial rationales of this 'financialization' of the agri-food system have been identified in a substantial literature, it has also become clear that the nexus between agri-food and finance deserves to be studied from a more encompassing, historically grounded, regionally sensitive and conceptually diverse perspective. We are particularly interested in empirical and theoretical contributions that speak to one or several of the following themes. First, we welcome contributions that engage in historicizing the agri-finance nexus. What role has finance historically played in agriculture and food and how has this changed over time? Second, finance has often been portrayed as a force coming from 'outside'. This overlooks the ways in which finance is sought and drawn into agri-food by various actors. How and in which ways are actors using, facilitating and actively forging linkages between finance and agri-food, and what are their motivations and interests? Third, linking finance and agri-food is not an easy undertaking and can be difficult to achieve. How are the linkages between finance and agri-food established on a daily basis? We look for contributions that consider these various kinds of 'work' as they are expressed in shifting practices, logics and devices as well as processes of framing, mediation, or value creation. Lastly, intersections between finance and agri-food are closely intertwined with the constructive, imaginative and affective, such as narratives, discourses, identities and subjectivities. We therefore invite contributions that engage the role of the 'imaginative' within the food-finance nexus. What kind of agri-food futures do actors envision when they seek to align food and finance? **CONTACT: sippel@uni-leipzig.de**

4

**Indigenous capital
in the food system**

Zannie Langford
UQ

Indigenous landowners hold substantial rights to land in Australia and New Zealand, and many are seeking to develop agricultural enterprises on this land. In addition, many Indigenous groups are large capital holders and are seeking to invest in Indigenous business. Indigenous businesses are also increasingly active in shaping food supply chains. This session welcomes papers that study the financial networks of Indigenous entrepreneurs, investors, advocacy groups and businesses in food production and food supply chains. Topics could address how food systems are shaped by social impact investment firms, indigenous agribusinesses or indigenous capital funds, or could consider other aspects of indigenous involvement in food systems.

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SESSION DETAILS

5

Dairy?

Carolyn Morris
and Matt Henry

Massey U.

Dairying has emerged in New Zealand over the last three decades as a profoundly important assemblage of relations transforming environments, landscapes, communities, labour relations, trade policy, and financial and material flows inter alia. Yet, we argue, despite these transformative effects dairying has received relatively little attention from agrifood scholars.

The purpose of this session is to start developing an understanding of how agrifood scholarship has approached dairying as a matter of concern, and the lines of inquiry that might frame an ongoing, future attention to dairying. This paper session calls for contributions that examine the agrifood network's past engagements with dairying, work to understand contemporary dairy relations, as well as outlines of future lines of inquiry. The organisers welcome contributions from any theoretical perspective and empirical context.

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6

Agri-food and
the SDGs

Kiah Smith

UQ

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 associated targets. Specific to improving food systems, SDG2 'Zero Hunger' connects hunger, food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture with poverty, livelihoods, economics, health, education, gender equality, rights and social development. SDG12 'Ensure sustainable production and consumption' includes targets to halve global food waste, improve supply chains, sustainable public procurement policies and action plans, and educate consumers. Indeed, most of the SDGs have some bearing on food system transformation, in terms of intersections with environment (#13 climate action, #14 oceans, #15 land), economy (#1 poverty, #8 decent work and economic growth, #17 partnerships) and social development (#3 health and wellbeing, #7 energy, #11 sustainable cities, #16 peace and institutions).

This session invites papers that explicitly connect agri-food studies with the SDG agenda. Papers are invited that engage theoretically and/or and empirically with any of the socio-political challenges associated with agri-food and the SDGs, including (but not limited to): intersections and trade-offs between goals; participation, power, winners and losers; meanings, discourses and social construction of 'transformation'; and localising the SDGs.

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SESSION DETAILS

7

**Identities in
Agri-food: Mixed,
multiple, mutated?**

**Chris Rosin
(Lincoln U) and
Hugh Campbell
(U.Otago)**

Over the previous three decades, the concept of identities has played a significant role in understandings of the role of farmers/producers/ growers in agri-food systems. Early tension around identities focused on whether these were determined by class-based processes or subject to differentiation located in the farming styles of individuals. Later, the influence of Bourdieusian and Foucauldian analysis began to shift discussion of identity into the areas of 'habitus' and 'field' or the subjectivities (and environmentalities) constructed in response to changing regulatory environments. More recently, the interest in identity has begun to shift beyond the human actors to incorporate the assemblage of elements that are territorialised within the meaning-making associated with agri-food production and consumption. Throughout this ebb and flow between more strictly structural and more openly individualist explanation of identity, the interest in the ethical norm of 'good' practice remains integral to the concept. In this session, we invite presentations that address the emergent nature of identity in agri-food research, with the objective of facilitating discussion and debate regarding its utility and to explore the relevance of its centrality to our imaginings of better food futures.

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8

**Agri-food Law:
Filling a gap?**

Hope Johnson

QUT

Law as a discipline has traditionally been, and remains largely focused on rules and legal doctrine in a value-neutral and technical way that is geared towards practical application by legal practitioners. It employs its own rules and language to perform, essentially, text-based analyses of legal sources - a method termed the doctrinal methodology or a "black letter" law approach. Although doctrinal methodologies remain a significant aspect of legal research, socio-legal research has become a well-established feature of contemporary legal research. This approach positions law as a social phenomenon. Common elements of socio-legal research include the incorporation of theories and methods from social sciences to move beyond an analysis solely based on the legal text. Drawing on doctrinal and socio-legal methods, a small but emerging body of work is framed as "agri-food law scholarship". This session will provide an overview of the work emerging in this area with the aim of delineating the contributions of agri-food law scholarship and identifying, if any, points of differentiation with other disciplines.

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SESSION DETAILS

9

Food Waste

Carol Richards

QUT

Food waste has been described as “Australia’s shameful \$10bn habit” (The Land, 2017) with food waste globally estimated at between 30-50% of total production. Beyond these ‘statistics’, however, food waste offers a lens through which to view a range of issues both within the global food system and beyond food. Food waste research has the potential to highlight the contradictions of capitalism and paradoxes of neoliberal forms of governance. For instance, the co-existence of food waste and hunger has given rise to a whole industry based on food rescue and food relief. Through these charitable mechanisms, food that falls outside of the market (due to overproduction, cosmetic appearance, etc) is linked to food insecure people who also exist outside, or on the margins of the formal economy. This suggests a failure of distributive justice not only in the global food system, but the global economic system, given that poverty is the key mediator of hunger.

Likewise, partnerships between government and industry have conceptualised ‘food waste’ as a problem of consumer behaviour, with retailers repositioning their own roles as ‘educators’ rather than ‘wasters’. This occurs whilst their strict cosmetic standards result in farmers dumping a large proportion of edible food that do not meet specifications. Elsewhere in the supply chain, the café and restaurant industry deals with a vast amount of food waste via disparate, small-scale businesses that are not connected by adequate food waste policies or support – leaving food waste as an *ad hoc* management issue. At the same time, efforts to systematically prevent food waste are situated alongside waste management as an industry – complicating efforts to prevent food waste in the first place. Despite this, some small scale, closed loop, systems are emerging via grass roots sharing/circular economy approaches demonstrating what might be possible into the future.

Papers are invited that respond to any issues of food waste that also bring to bear insights into other social, economic, political and environmental issues. The format can be traditional paper delivery and Q&A, or something different that might enliven and inspire the audience. Anything is possible.

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SESSION DETAILS

10

Agri-food experimentation: from the sharing economy to foodscapes of empathy and digitisation - rethinking food futures

Michael Carolan

Colorado State University

Does it feel like our ability to image the "alternative" in alternative food networks has become disappointingly stale over the years? Organic agriculture. Farmers' markets. Community supported agriculture. Local food. Beyond these well known tropes and practices, are there other ways to practice experimentation within and across foodscapes, which is to say, ways of making the unthought of thinkable and the undoable routine? This session is looking for studies that interrogate truly unconventional territory. Examples could include, for example, practices that reimagine "ownership" (i.e., sharing/collaborative economy), socio-technical platforms that include open source code and digital communities of practice, and spaces that bring together otherwise socially distant groups--physically or otherwise--resulting in ecologies of care. Building on this latter point, papers are also encouraged that think through what it means to engender what Carolan (2018) recently defined as more-than-active food citizens, eaters who are interested in challenging routine, understandings, and practices, including in terms of what it means to do politics. After all, before collective action can ever happen we need bodies that think social change ought to occur and who feel the need to collaborate with (versus merely consume alongside) others.

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11

Wither rural livelihoods? Looking back and looking forward on agrarian change research in the Global South

Mark Vicol, Bill Pritchard, Jeffrey Neilson (U. Syd), John McCarthy (ANU), Peter Dannenberg (U.Cologne).

Understanding processes of agrarian change and rural livelihood patterns in the 'Global South' has been a strong focus of Agrifood Research Network scholars over the last 25 years. Key themes in this debate have included the contours of the contemporary agrarian question and agrarian transitions under conditions of 21st century globalisation, the unique socio-economic identity of the smallholder or peasant household, the increasingly pervasive trend of livelihood diversification and the changing role of land in rural livelihoods, and the philosophical and practical distinctions between food security and food sovereignty. Looking forward, contemporary development challenges in the rural Global South raise important questions about the utility of the agrarian transition framework for thinking through issues of rural poverty, food and nutrition security and agrarian change. Such emerging issues include the impacts of climate change, the increasing precarity of work and fragmented livelihoods, new geographies of agricultural production and the spread of global value chains, the feminisation of agriculture, and new forms of social protection. We invite papers for this session that examine key themes in a historical perspective, consider recent advances in the field of agrarian studies, and/or address the question of where to now for agrarian change and rural livelihoods research in the Global South. **CONTACT: mark.vicol@sydney.edu.au**

SESSION DETAILS

12

**Towards a
postcolonial
conception and
practice of food
sovereignty**

**Christopher Mayes
Deakin U.**

The history of agriculture is deeply enmeshed with the history, and continuing legacy, of violence and dispossession in Australia and most of other settler-colonial societies. While mining only lasts as long as minerals remain to be extracted, agriculture has a permanence that enables the establishment and reproduction of a population, at the expense of Indigenous lands and livelihoods. This dynamic forced Indigenous peoples to either enter the new economy, usually in the form of unfree labour, or raid farms for food, which was often used as grounds for official and unofficial death squads. Considering the role of agriculture in denying Indigenous sovereignty, this session asks whether food sovereignty is an appropriate or useful concept to be used in Australia and other settler-colonial societies.

Food sovereignty is commonly defined as the right of people to control their own food and agricultural systems. The concept originated with peasant movements in South and Central America during their political struggles for land reform. In recent years it has been adopted by proponents of alternative food practices in settler-colonial societies such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. In these contexts, it serves as an organizing idea in the struggle for a more democratic, sustainable, and just food system. However, the vast majority of these advocates are neither Indigenous to the lands they occupy nor landless peasants. It is therefore important to ask if food sovereignty is an appropriate concept in settler-colonial societies? Can food justice be established without acknowledging and addressing the injustices done to Indigenous peoples wrought by agriculture? This session will explore these and other questions in order to determine whether a postcolonial conception and practice of food sovereignty is possible.

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ROUNDTABLE DETAILS

A

What we don't study and why

James Hale, Katharine Legun (U.Otago) and Matthew Henry (Massey U.)

What we don't study and why is a hidden but powerful force in research. Are there common patterns in what we avoid in our research? What might explain this avoidance? Do we not research something because of disciplinary or theoretical boundaries? Disinterest? Disagreement? Lack of time? Positionality? Institutional pressures? This panel discussion seeks to disrupt the hidden possibilities of researching by bringing them to the forefront of a conversation. We will also engage in a broader conversation around the determinants of what we study and how new spaces may be opened. Participants are invited to **email the roundtable organiser** with a note about what got missed from their research. Five minute discussions of 'what got missed' will be followed by an open roundtable discussion. **Contact: james.hale@otago.ac.nz**

B

Learning community food organising

Sean Connelly (U. Otago) and Kiah Smith (UQ)

Is there (should there) be a distinction between practice and research? In theory, the nature of food provides opportunities to address a range of societal goals, including health, nutrition, community-building, social justice and environmental integrity. However, the practice of community-based food system action results in prioritisation of certain goals over others in response to funding opportunities, competing values and objectives, limited resources and community interest. We invite participants from across the researcher – activist continuum to reflect on the degree to which they are able to be deliberate about prioritisation and the challenges they face in working across and between the theoretical space of research and the more practical space of local movements and policy activism. What has worked? What is challenging? Do these efforts fit with notions of justice, and for whom? Participants are invited to **email the roundtable organiser** with a note about the action they are engaged with and a few points on key learnings. **Contact: sean.connelly@otago.ac.nz**

C

The future of the Agri-food Research Network

Zannie Langford and James Boafo (UQ)

The AFRN has contributed a space for rich debate, quality analysis and strong networking for 25 years. But what will make our work continue to be relevant in future years? What 'big issues' should we be focusing on as we move into the Anthropocene and a world characterised by shifting power and knowledge dynamics? Are there issues that we have collectively missed? And what role can the AFRN play in building new dialogues around agri-food futures? This panel invites participants to present a 5 minute discussion on their vision for the AFRN's future, followed by an open roundtable discussion. Early career academics and students are especially encouraged to submit, please **email the roundtable organiser**. **Contact: a.langford3@uq.edu.au**