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# Food Politics: From the Margins to the Mainstream

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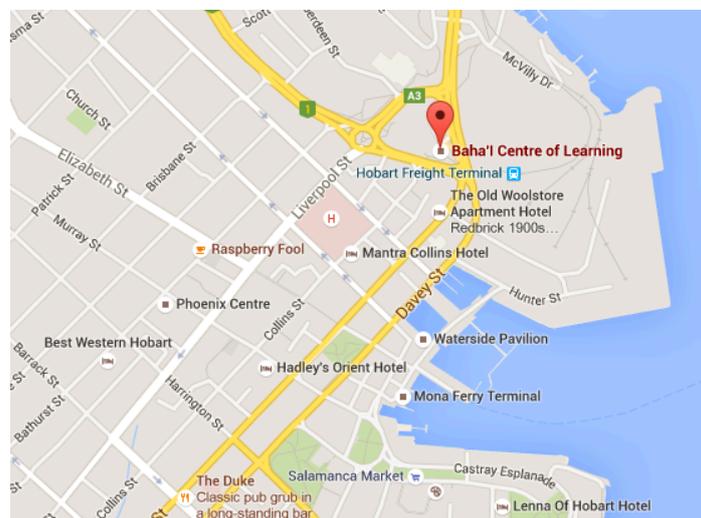
Critiques of global, industrialised food systems have proliferated in recent years, while food practices previously considered 'alternative' or 'marginal' now increasingly enjoy mainstream visibility. In the global North, concerns once limited to social and political movements motivated by animal rights, anti-corporate, health and environmental agendas appear on primetime television cooking shows, in the pages of best-selling non-fiction exposés, in produce-driven and provenance-focused restaurant menus, in the growing farmers' markets and community-supported agriculture movements, and in the labelling and advertising strategies of major food manufacturers. Elsewhere in the world, grassroots movements for food security, food sovereignty, seed and wage rights are gaining prominence in local, national and global contexts.

What are the implications of this 'mainstreaming' of food politics? Does it make ethical, sustainable food accessible to more people? Does it signal changes to global food systems? Or does it simply offer new opportunities for marketing 'spin' and corporate greenwashing? What does the mainstreaming of food politics mean for grassroots alternative food movements? Where does food politics go from here?

This 2-day symposium explores the key questions raised by this transformation of food politics from the margins to the mainstream.

## Venue

The symposium is held at the Tasmanian Baha'i Centre of Learning, 1 Tasman Highway, Hobart. It is a short walking distance from the Hobart city and the wharf.



UTAS is hiring the Centre facilities only. It is not connected to the Baha'i institutions in any official capacity.

## Wifi

Username: HBCLGuest

Password: Radiance

## Keynote Presentation: Professor Michael Goodman, University of Reading

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### Assessing Food (Studies) in the Anthropocene Across Three Moments (with Loads of Questions)

This speculative and broad talk – refracted through my UK-focused perspective – explores the ‘state’ of food and food studies in this contemporary moment of the Anthropocene. After quickly dispensing with what I think the Anthropocene is, I turn to the first of three ‘moments’ that will form the basis of my discussion: what I call the food ‘turn’ in society and academic study. Here, I want to tentatively explore some of the reasons behind this turn and its implications for how we think about food and food studies. The second ‘moment’ is the mainstreaming of alternative food networks (AFNs), specifically focusing on the massive expansion and mainstreaming of fair trade within the UK, the world’s largest market for fair trade goods. I aim to be particularly critical here, suggesting that in the UK, the figure of the consumer-citizen is dead and that of the corporate-citizen has arisen from its ashes through what I term ‘post-greenwash’, as a result of which corporations have become too big to ignore in the processes of making more sustainable food systems. Third, I open up a series of empirical, theoretical and decidedly political ‘matters of concern’ to develop new ways of knowing, performing and ‘doing’ food and food studies. Grounded (somewhat) in a few potted examples, I want to think – and ask questions – about future pathways for the sustainable production and consumption of food, the role and promise of AFNs, and the role of ‘citizen producers’ and ‘creative disruption’ in novel food futures. I will also quickly explore the possibilities of the different conceptual tools of eaters/eating, foodscapes and new food imaginaries as ways forward in the study of food networks and food politics. I will argue that a re-naturalisation and re-humanisation of food is needed and the social sciences should be at the forefront of these endeavours to take us into the post-Anthropocene.

**Michael Goodman** is Professor of Human Geography at the University of Reading. His research focuses on alternative food networks, food geographies and the cultural politics of



consumption, humanitarianism and food. He has produced several books, including *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice and Politics* (with David Goodman and Melanie DuPuis), *Food Transgressions: Making Sense of Contemporary Food Politics* (with Colin Sage), *Consuming Space: Placing Consumption in Perspective* (with David Goodman and Michael Redclift) and the forthcoming *Food Geographies: An*

*Introduction* (with Moya Kneafsey, Damian Maye and Lewis Holloway). He is also the series editor for Routledge’s *Critical Food Politics* and Bloomsbury’s *Contemporary Food Studies* series, and a fan of San Francisco burritos, home-made sushi, old steel bikes, and politically-minded metalcore.

## Keynote Presentation: Associate Professor Tania Lewis, RMIT University

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### Food Bytes: Eating, Cooking and Provisioning in a Digital Age

This talk offers a 'cook's tour', i.e., a guided but cursory journey through the contemporary digital foodscape. While food has long been a site of social, cultural and political struggles, the digitization of everyday life—at least in the Global North—has seen food politics and food culture invested with a new set of energies and intensities. From farmers connecting directly to consumers through digital platforms, and shoppers using apps to assess the ethical ratings of food products, to cookery clips and channels on YouTube and flows of highly aestheticized food imagery on Instagram, our everyday engagements with food have become thoroughly digitized.

In this talk I trace the impact of the digital across the food ecology, examining 'digital food' in the spaces of consumption, provenance, production, retail and culinary culture. In what ways might digital devices, practices and content be shaping and articulating our food engagements? What affordances does the connectivity of the digital realm have for modes of food politics concerned with making visible commodity chains and networks and reconnecting with the materiality and sources of food? How does the apparent immateriality and global virality of food images via Instagram and Facebook shape our relationship to food 'origins'? In this talk I offer a glimpse into the complex and paradoxical politics of digital food engagements, emphasising the importance of critical digital literacies to food citizens today.



*Tania Lewis is Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation and Associate Professor in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. Her research focuses broadly on questions of lifestyle, sustainability and consumption, and on global media cultures. Her books include Smart Living: Lifestyle Media and Popular Expertise and Telemodernities: Television and Transforming Lives in Asia (forthcoming 2016, Duke University Press) co-authored with Fran Martin and Wanning Sun. She is also a co-author (with Sarah Pink et al) of Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practices and editor and co-editor of 4 collections with Routledge, TV Transformations, Ethical Consumption, Green Asia and Lifestyle Media in Asia. She is a chief investigator on the ARC discovery project, 'Ethical*

*Consumption: From the Margins to the Mainstream' and on the three-year project 'Work-life ecologies: lifestyle, sustainability, practices', funded by RMIT's Sustainable Urban Precincts Project. She is also conducting research with RMIT colleagues on household digital media practices for KPMG.*

## Abstracts

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### **Marginal French food? The Implementation of the Republic's Disciplinary Power**

*Craig Adams, University of Tasmania*

In a society known for its love and appreciation of food it may be hard to imagine what might constitute a "marginal" food practice. Local food networks, such as markets which showcase local and regional products – in the vein of the so-called "farm gate to plate" market – have long been valued in France. Yet supermarket style shops which use short supply chains, eliminating intermediary wholesalers, have recently become popular. The current trend of "dumpster diving" is also not too far from removed from the older practice of gleaning, which continues today where people collect the scraps left from a harvest or a market. Gleaning is in fact enshrined in French law. These traditional cultural practices and values are now framed by wider political discourses about climate change, social disadvantage, and the demise of the agricultural sector, meaning that as they reemerge in a different guise they are also reflected back onto past practices. One place in which these issues are brought to wider attention is on French television. The public broadcaster France 2's nightly news frequently features extended social interest pieces which focus on both traditional and marginal food practices. These reports seem to exist to educate citizens about traditional food practices and draw attention to the changing role of producers and consumers. This paper then proposes to examine how these debates, represented on public television and elsewhere, emphasise notions of solidarity and egalitarianism. In doing so they show how Republican ideals are at the heart of diverse French food practices. Ultimately, this paper suggests that these Republican ideals are used to support the implementation of disciplinary power and thus regulate marginal practices, incorporating them within the mainstream.

***Craig Adams** is an early career academic who has published articles on the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet and Gilles Deleuze, and "The Gastronomic Meal of the French" protected by UNESCO. Currently he is working on the role of food in the novels of Michel Houellebecq, depictions of food in the French media, as well as the interaction between genre tropes and experimental techniques in the films of Alain Robbe-Grillet.*

## Wild Tradition

*Michael Adams, University of Wollongong*

All the Nordic countries and Australia have traditions of hunting. For most of Australia's human history, including colonial settlement, wild harvest from the sea and the land formed the human diet, and hunting was a normal part of activity and cuisine. These traditions continue in 2016, but are controversial and contested. In the Nordic countries, in part because of the historic traditions of *friluftsliv* and *allemansträtten*, wild food gathering including hunting is currently much more normalized, and in fact valorized in the rise of the 'new Nordic kitchen'. The percentages of the population that are hunters in all these countries are relatively similar, between 2-5%.

This paper uses empirical data on wild harvest by hunting to connect to discussions about hunting, food and nature in regional areas of Sweden and Australia. In many places food acquired by hunting and harvest is not monetized and is distributed through alternative food networks. The role of firsthand encounter – embodied relationships to the knowledge of nature – and how this interacts with concepts of time underpins my examination of hunting traditions.

**Michael Adams** is a geographer at the Australian Centre for Cultural Environmental Research at the University of Wollongong (UOW), Australia. His publications have examined relationships between Indigenous peoples and conservation agencies in Australia, Sweden and India, including World Heritage, national parks and tourism. Recent research examines hunting in Australia and India; the emergence and significance of free-diving; and cultural relationships with animals. He has twenty years employment and consultancy experience with Aboriginal and environment organisations prior to joining UOW. He is a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas of IUCN.

# Collaborating with Grassroots Stakeholders to Mainstream Food Issues in the National Development Agenda: a Case from Nepal

*Rajendra Prasad Adhikari, University of Tasmania*

Nepal, a tiny Himalayan country, faces a mounting challenge of ensuring food and nutrition security for more than 28 million people. In Nepal, corporate agribusinesses have little presence and value chains are rudimentary. The emerging agrifood issues that the developed world is contemplating such as organic movement, food miles, subsidy, free trade, food market regulation, food safety, obesity and environmental protection are of a concern for only a small but elite segment of the population. Rather, food security is a primary need for smallholder farmers and poor consumers. Clearly, food related issues are different in the developed and developing world; so are the pathways to mainstream food politics into the development agenda.

In a developing world where food is a limited commodity, issues such as agricultural production and access to, and distribution of, food take the major limelight in the public discourse. However, there is little evidence that such debates are truly reflected in policy and investment decisions. Investment in the agriculture and food related research and development is less than 10 per cent of the total government outlays (MOF 2015) in Nepal where more than one-fifth of the population suffers critical food insecurity during some parts of the year (MoAD 2015). In such circumstances, mainstreaming food policy in the national development agenda is considered an important pathway to ensure food and nutrition security (World Bank 2008). Despite having more than 50 policies in and around food and agriculture, most of these policies were not reflected in developmental programs due to inadequate investment from government and lack of support from major stakeholders.

This paper reflects on a policy process which engaged the grass-root level political institutions into the agrifood policy development process. The objectives of their engagement were to make the process more participatory and use these institutions' support to reach out to poor and remote communities. The process resulted in a significant time delay, almost jeopardising the whole process at one stage. However, once the process was completed in consensus, it brought far reaching positive consequences in the form of more transparency in the science (expert) sphere and more support from the political sphere of the policy community. The process also ensured increased ownership and accountability at all levels immediately resulting in increased investment commitment as well as more vigilance and follow up from all the corners of society. At a more specific level, the process helped translate the policy into a national flagship program for food and nutrition security and identify key interventions that incentivise indigenous products and processes. Since the process paralleled with the nation's constitution drafting stage, it is widely believed that the process complemented to ensure right to food provision in the human rights clause of the country's recently promulgated constitution. An important lesson learnt was engaging grassroots organisations in the national policy process helps internalise food politics in the national agenda provided the process results in a logical end.

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World Bank (2008). Agriculture and development. Berlin Workshop Series. G. Kochendorfer-Lucius and B. Pleskovic, The world Bank. 1: 1-233.

**Rajendra Prasad Adhikari** is currently working as a Research Fellow in Value Chain Management at Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. In his previous career, he worked as the Chief of Policy and International Cooperation Coordination Division in the Ministry of Agricultural Development Nepal. During the role, he facilitated the formulation and endorsement of the Agricultural Development Strategy (2015-35) for Nepal. He represented Nepal and the Ministry in various international bilateral and multilateral meetings and forums. He was a regular presenter at national and international conferences, symposia and panel discussions. His training and experiences include value chain development, monitoring and evaluation, right-based approach to food and nutrition security, regional development and policy analysis. He has a PhD in Agribusiness Management from the University of Queensland, Australia.

## **A 'Natural' Symbol: Nature, Morality, and Politics in Online Raw Milk Advocacy Communities**

*Heather Bray, Rachel Ankeny, Jessica Loyer, and Emily Buddle (presented by Jessica Loyer and Emily Buddle) – Food Values Research Group, The University of Adelaide*

This paper explores the way in which the concept of 'natural' food is constructed through moral associations, and how this sense of morality is extended to inform political action, by examining social media discourses about raw milk among advocates in Australia and Canada, where raw milk sales are illegal and have gained significant media coverage. We offer a review of the literature on consumer associations between 'natural' food and morality, followed by a discussion of the function of social media as a place where people create communities around shared values. Social media also provides a method for 'listening' to raw milk supporters without influencing the conversation; active Facebook groups supporting raw milk consumption in both countries provide a body of material that can be discursively and thematically analysed as texts. Findings confirm that raw milk advocates assign moral associations to 'natural' foods, and that 'naturalness' is largely defined by process rather than content: raw milk is deemed safer, healthier, and tastier than pasteurised milk. Advocates define 'natural' raw milk not only by the processes involved in its production, but also by the size of the party producing it, showing a preference for small scale production and an ideological bias against 'big' agribusiness. They claim that there is bias in public health and regulatory practices, which fail to represent the experiences and needs of the public, and argue that consumers should have the freedom to eat what they want. Thus raw milk's material qualities become entwined with its political significance as a symbol opposing both large-scale, corporate, and industrial food production, and high levels of government regulation that are seen to limit consumer choice. These connections are drawn via an overarching discourse of the virtue of nature, through which raw milk advocates weave together the superior material qualities of 'natural' foods with the morality of their political actions supporting 'food freedom', situated specifically in opposition to those processes and social institutions viewed as 'unnatural'. As one advocate puts it, "raw milk is a tonic against cultural and social homogenisation and sterilisation". We synthesise these findings by viewing raw milk as an 'anti-commodity', a concept referring to local production practices associated with non-economic values that implicitly resist processes of commodification and social control (Hazareesingh & Maat 2016), for example by skirting legislation prohibiting raw milk sales through informal herd share arrangements. In raw milk communities, this implicit action dovetails with explicit political advocacy for food freedom, in part because of increased negative media attention and government intervention in informal raw milk distribution schemes.

**Jessica Loyer** holds an MA in Gastronomy and is currently a PhD candidate and researcher within the Food Values Research Group at the University of Adelaide. Her research investigates contemporary food and nutrition culture, as well as seeking to conceptually connect food production and consumption through interdisciplinary research methods.

**Emily Buddle** has a Bachelor of Agricultural Science and Honours in Animal Science and is currently a PhD candidate within the Food Values Research Group at the University of Adelaide. She has a strong interest in how sources of information shape perceptions of agricultural production, in particular the role of social media in the exposure of animal welfare information to Australian consumers and how social media is used by the agricultural sector as a communication tool.

## **Mainstreaming Niche – Be Careful What You Wish For: A King Island Case Study**

*Lea Coates, University of Tasmania*

In Tasmania, and parts of the mainland of Australia, King Island is lauded for its excellent quality dairy products and fresh beef. The island brand is considered a clear and significant example of niche product branding able to underpin successful business expansion and this was true for many years. However, while the dairy and beef industries are still an important economic driver for the island they are clearly in decline. Today the local beef abattoir is closed and the parent dairy company that controls the local dairy industry has no plans to expand. What went wrong? King Island has been buffeted by political and global economic winds for much of its recent history and is a fascinating example of where the institutions of global food production meet small regional economies and the tensions that ensue. This paper is part of a PhD thesis that examined King Island through multiple sustainable food system lenses and found that while food production can underpin local economic development it is not a panacea.

***Lea Coates** is an adjunct researcher for the Institute for Regional Development based at the Cradle Coast Campus of the University of Tasmania, and Director and Secretary for a small business that specialises in value-adding Tasmanian red meat and poultry into unique, quality products sold across the North-West Coast. Currently she is working with a cross-disciplinary team on a methodology trying to capture the true value of agriculture to regions and their communities.*

## **Working with the Food Industry to Improve their Supply Chain Environmental Impact**

*Felicity Denham, University of Tasmania*

As consumers' awareness of environmental sustainability grows, the food industry has the opportunity to restructure their processes to potentially reduce their impact. Modelling environmental impacts such as greenhouse gas emissions through the application of life cycle assessment can identify areas of greatest emissions within the food product supply chain. A life cycle assessment takes into account all inputs (e.g. energy and chemicals) and all the outputs created (e.g. food products, waste and emissions) throughout the lifespan of the product.

Application of the life cycle assessment can be used to identify and model cleaner production strategies (operational changes implemented by industry to reduce the impact per kg of product). These strategies can be categorised into good housekeeping, input substitution, technological modification, product modification and recycling waste. Throughout this assessment, each business is able to identify methods of eco-efficiency which allows increased production using fewer resources.

A case study of the Western Australian finfish supply chain identified wastage during filleting as a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. Modelling of the finfish supply chain substituting the waste into fertiliser or biogas significantly reduced the emission of greenhouse gasses, particularly methane. Economic analysis of this supply chain showed that recycling the fillet waste produced potential long term profits.

The feasibility of cleaner production strategies is influenced by costs of the strategy implementation, production costs (e.g. increasing energy prices), government policies and marketing. For example, the phase out of R22 refrigerants to reduce hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) (which affected the ozone layer) forced many companies to replace their refrigeration equipment. However, this government policy may have inadvertently increased greenhouse gas emissions through the purchase of greenhouse gas emitting refrigerants.

Consequently, the food industry is aware of consumers' sustainability concerns and are willing to address them. By adopting life cycle assessment, and modelling and applying cleaner production strategies to their processes, food businesses are able to be environmentally sensitive, innovative and more appealing to customers.

***Felicity Denham** has a PhD in Food Science from Curtin University, and studied the carbon footprint in the seafood supply chain. She is now working for the ARC Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products at the University of Tasmania in supply chain and post-harvest research.*

# Do Alternative Food Networks Increase Accessibility of Healthy Food in Australian Cities? A Case Study of the City of Sydney

*Jenni Downes, University of Technology Sydney*

A key aspect of food security is affordability and accessibility of healthy food. Alternative food systems, such as farmers markets, community supported agriculture, community gardens, food coops, food hubs and box schemes (Sydney Food Fairness Alliance, 2006) are purported to increase food security, including access to fresh, healthy food ([Eaterprises, 2012](#)).

However a substantial body of policy research questions the evidence base for the claim that alternative food networks actually increase food accessibility (eg. Broad, 2016; USDA, 2010; Foodlinks, 2013; CMAP, 2014). For example, some alternative food systems have been shown to increase aspects of access to healthy fresh food, such as farmers markets (Freedman et al, 2011; Ruelas et al, 2012) and community gardens (Corrigan, 2011; Kortwright & Wakefield, 2011; Wakefield et al., 2007). Farmers markets increase access to local food, but there is no evidence that this is more nutritious than other food systems (Foodlinks, 2013), and in America, farmers markets provide relatively cheap produce often in combination with low income support schemes (eg. Ruelas, 2012; Freedman 2011). Community gardens increase access to healthy fresh food for their members (Wakefield et al, 2007), but memberships are small and limited to those in areas with gardens, with time and knowledge to make proper use of the opportunity.

In order to investigate this in the Australian context, this research builds off previous research in 2014/2015 on food affordability and accessibility in the City of Sydney that explored the cost and spread of healthy food across the inner-city local government area. This research explores what impact the presence of alternative food systems, such as farmers markets, food coops and food box hubs, has on the affordability and accessibility of fresh produce in the City of Sydney. The location of farmers markets, food coops and food box hubs are geospatially mapped against the location of supermarkets and groceries. Analysis of the price of the fresh produce component of a Healthy Food Basket of the alternative food networks and select supermarket/grocery stores adds the issue of affordability to the consideration. The purpose of this research is to feed into the City of Sydney's food security policy, as well as identifying areas for focus by alternative food network proponents.

***Jenni Downes** is a Research Consultant at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, with a keen interest in individual, organisational and societal change to address environmental issues such as climate change. Jenni works primarily in the area of Social Change focusing on research, design and evaluation of behaviour change policies and programs, particularly around issues of food, consumption and waste.*

## **Collecting the Dots Through Jamie: How Jamie Oliver, as Meta-frame or Cultural Intermediary, Acts to Both Connect Social Media Audiences and Help Build a Broader Collective Interested in Meat Reduction**

*Judy Friedlander, University of Technology Sydney*

With traditional news media's diminishing role in setting the agenda, academics are increasingly focusing on the growing impact of social media in facilitating discourses and engagement with topics and issues. Of particular interest is how social media not only connects but also contributes to a collective identity, as well as its potential to meld or enable larger groups and incorporate disengaged individuals, groups and outliers.

Action research conducted on the 2015 Meat Free Week media campaign's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms indicates that food celebrities such as Jamie Oliver and Raymond Blanc play a special role in helping to engage audiences with messages of meat reduction and can build a broader collective of the non-traditionally aligned. A content analysis of comments from the campaign's social media audiences suggests that these celebrities' meta-frames or cultural intermediary status (as explored by Dr Tania Lewis) enable different groups to engage with the meat reduction message and act to inspire new followers to the meat reduction cause through these posts and previous advocacy work. Jamie Oliver's organization, brand or name achieved the greatest success of all "posters" in the 2015 campaign in terms of social media likes and total engagement on the Facebook and Instagram platforms with most popular posts incorporating multiple messages on good or "aesthetic" food, health, animal welfare and the environment. The melding of different frames or messages conveyed through social media posts from an umbrella organization or food celebrity with an extensive reach can provide a strong foundation for a media campaign and be leveraged to, in turn, meld audiences.

The Meat Free Week campaign has achieved considerable success in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia and ongoing research which employs data visualization, data scraping and trace interviews (Dubois & Ford, 2015) is generating further insights into key primary and secondary connectors, international and national trends, the role of different social media platforms and effective frames and values for sustained, broader and longer-term engagement. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods elicits both large-scale representations and rich perspectives of users' experiences.

**Judith Friedlander** is a Postgraduate Researcher and PhD candidate with the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney. Her areas of interest focus on effective media strategies to engage communities with food sustainability. Her research on "What Makes Meat News" published in *Food Studies*, an Interdisciplinary Journal, has provided a solid foundation for further research and articles into the motivations behind sustainable food choices, the role of food celebrities in advocacy and media campaigning and the potential applications of social media for agenda melding and to broaden connections and build larger collectives. Friedlander draws upon her background as a newspaper and television journalist and editor and is the founder of the not-for-profit organization, FoodFaith, which works to encourage social cohesion and engage people with food sustainability.

## Science, Politics and Meaning: The Australian Debate over 'Free Range' Egg Production

*Fred Gale, University of Tasmania*

In the debate over 'free range' egg production in Australia, a policy network closely linked to intensive egg production has clashed with an alternative network promoting an extensive approach. Both networks have enlisted 'science' to support their positions, the former to endorse a 20,000 hen per hectare maximum outdoor stocking density; the latter, 1,500 hens per hectare. In this paper I review the history of the debate over the meaning of free range egg production in Australia, outline the structure and operation of the two competing policy networks, and examine how each network has sought to enlist science in support of its position. I argue that while the recent decision by the Coalition of Australian Governments to settle on a stocking density of 10,000 hens per hectare endorses the intensive network's interpretation of the science, the obligation to report stocking densities on egg cartons creates an opportunity for the alternative network to persuade consumers to draw a different conclusion.

***Associate Professor Fred Gale** conducts interdisciplinary research into the political economy of sustainability. He has published extensively on national and international environmental issues including comparative forest and fisheries governance (Global Commodity Governance 2011), Tasmania's Tamar Valley pulp mill (Pulp Friction 2011) and forest and egg certification and labeling (Setting the Standard 2008; Certification and Labelling in the Australian Egg Industry, 2013). He is currently developing a pluralist conception of sustainability value with the aim of rewriting political economic theory from a sustainability perspective.*

## Culture Clash: The Complexities of High and Low Food Culture in *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef*

Katherine Kirkwood, Queensland University of Technology

Food television is a powerful medium through which social divides in terms of money and class can be presented. Heston Blumenthal's four-part series *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef* exposes a number of contradictions around what constitutes 'good' and 'British' food, based on differing class positions and types of culinary capital. The focus on what is 'good' food and what makes a particular dish 'British' mark a deviation from similar documentary-style reality programs where celebrity chefs like Jamie Oliver expose similar class-based tensions in relation to healthy food and home cooking.

In *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef*, Heston Blumenthal takes up the challenge of reinvigorating ailing roadside restaurant chain Little Chef. Blumenthal recalls that growing up in the 1970s Little Chef was "the place to go" and claimed that the brand's excitement needed to be restored. The narrator foregrounds the primary tension in the show's opening minutes, stating that Blumenthal's partnership with Little Chef marks "a huge clash of cultures." She questions, "How on Earth will a chef famous for culinary perfection turn out meals for under a tenner in a roadside restaurant?" The documentary-style reality show follows Blumenthal as he works with Little Chef Chief Executive Ian Pegler, as well as staff of the Popham Little Chef restaurant, to bring Blumenthal's vision to life.

Analyses of similar programs reveal an 'us versus them' dichotomy where there is resistance to the 'makeover' that the lifestyle expert is instigating. Rousseau (2012) and Lewis (2008) for instance noted that participants on *Jamie's School Dinners* did not necessarily appreciate the intervention of celebrity chef Jamie Oliver. School lunch ladies were "horrified" at the prospect of "preparing Oliver's rocket- and basil-laden creations" (Lewis 2008, p.62). Meanwhile parents enabled their children to continue purchasing unhealthy food by giving them money to buy lunch off-campus, rather than pack healthy lunches (Rousseau 2012).

Such conflicts in *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef* over what constitutes 'good' and 'British' food are revealed through applying Strange's (1998) four-element framework for analysing cooking shows. Strange (1998) posits the four "main ingredients" of cooking shows are the cookery-educative, the personalities, the tour-educative, and raw-educative elements. Through examining each of these aspects of *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef*, the tensions and conflicts between Blumenthal's team and Little Chef representatives illustrates that there is not one clear answer to what is good, British food that is fit for Little Chef. Tension arises where Blumenthal's ideals of quality are not aligned with the Little Chef management team's profit priorities, and Little Chef's staff's knowledge of what their customers want.

Investigations of this kind are important even though this paper focuses only on one program. Through this documentary-style reality show, the ways in which wealth, class, and business alter priorities in relation to food are evident in a way that transcends a British roadside restaurant chain. And just as Jamie Oliver's attempts to reform British eating habits in terms of health showed, the gap between high and low food culture in terms of what is considered 'good' and 'British' are just as disparate in *Big Chef Takes on Little Chef*.

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**Katherine Kirkwood** is a PhD Candidate from the Creative Industries Faculty at the Queensland University of Technology. Her research focuses on Australian everyday food culture.

## **Media Representations of Restaurant Experiences: Has the Rise of Social and Digital Media Made Everyone a Food Critic?**

*Morag Kobez, Queensland University of Technology*

Western societies' fascination with food has never before been so pervasive. Food and dining out have long held cultural and symbolic significance far removed from sustenance, but in recent decades dining out has also become a popular form of entertainment. Once the sole domain of elite or high-status social groups, restaurant dining has become commonplace among people from a broader cross-section of society. This expansion of dining out as a mainstream cultural activity has in turn led to a greater diversity of voices in the discussion surrounding food and dining experiences. Technological innovations have allowed a greater diversity of voices in the commentary on dining out, whereas as little as a decade ago media representations of restaurant experiences were the purview of a virtual handful of elite professional food journalists. This widespread participation by amateurs in the culinary discourse via social and digital media represents a blurring of the formerly distinct relationship between media producers and consumers, and threatens to disrupt traditional cultural hierarchies. These confluent technological and cultural developments have thus far attracted little academic attention, despite assertions by some within the academy of the dawning of a new digital age of democracy. This research investigates the well-documented phenomena of cultural omnivorousness and the ways in which restaurant reviews confer legitimacy upon dining experiences. It replicates Johnston and Baumann's (2007) US study, which employs a sociology lens to analyse contemporary US gourmet food writing, contrasting the co-existence of an inclusionary ideology of democratic cultural consumption and an exclusionary ideology of taste and distinction. Their investigation into the rationale behind omnivorousness reveals two frames – authenticity and exoticism – used in food writing to valorise and legitimate certain foods as high-status cultural signals. My project applies their frames to the Australian context to compare and contrast the content of traditional mainstream media restaurant reviews with the growing number of amateur reviews in the digital realm, including blogs and online consumer reviews. This project employs a multi-method approach, undertaking qualitative and quantitative data collection, textual and content analysis of professional and amateur restaurant reviews, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with their authors. This research enables comparisons to be drawn between the content of professional and amateur Australian restaurant reviews, offering insights into the contribution of social and digital media in the contemporary Australian foodscape. It facilitates a discussion of media representations of food and dining out, and the rise of mainstream participation in the discourse surrounding restaurant experiences.

***Morag Kobez** is a food journalist and restaurant critic for Qantas Magazine, Gourmet Traveller Restaurant Guide and delicious, among others. She is currently expanding and intellectualising her professional practice via PhD research focusing on the democratisation of Australian restaurant criticism, and the frames used in professional and amateur reviews.*

# From the Margins, to the Mainstream, to the Margins: Explaining Social Change Through the Lens of Gabriel Tarde's Social Theory

*Claudia Laviolette, Laval University*

In order to understand the implication of an apparent 'mainstreaming of food politics', the social scientist will often go back to basics and ponder over the fundamental notion of social change. In essence, the exercise is to gain a better understanding of "how things—ideas and practices—get from here to there" (Katz 1999). In social practices, in particular, there is a clearly identifiable focus on the diffusion of social innovations (Rüede & Lurtz 2012), as well as an identified need to make social interactions more conceptually operative within practice theory (Halkier 2013; Hargreaves 2011).

In this communication I propose to answer Katz's call for volunteers to stand on the shoulders of Gabriel Tarde and his theories of social reproduction and social change (Katz 1999) to tackle this challenge. Gabriel Tarde was a French sociologist (1843–1904) who is "remembered in history as having 'lost' his debates with Emile Durkheim by insisting that sociology should occupy itself with observable interpersonal processes" (Katz 2006). Ultimately, the theories constructed by Tarde have had little influence on the next several generations of social scientists. In recent years, however, there has been a renewal of interest in Tarde's social theory, and it is argued that the analysis of social change through the lens of his main conceptual framework (especially his notions of imitation, opposition and invention) is a promising theoretical avenue. For many, Tarde's achievement consists primarily in explaining social change "from the bottom up", and not like Durkheim, "from the top down" in terms of social facts and structures (Howaldt *et al.* 2015)

For Gabriel Tarde, the social field is described as "made up of multiple propagations of desires and beliefs that spread from one individual to other, taking countless directions, interfering with each other, forming networks, and escaping them in search of new connections" (Tonkonoff 2013). For Tarde, social change can be best explained in the following manner: all social phenomena were once born of a marginal example, and spread themselves as fashions, then became established institutions, repeated as custom, and eventually (and inevitably) are challenged by new social innovations emerging out of the margins. In my opinion, the mainstreaming of food politics that is the focus of this conference is a social phenomenon that has only reached the state of fashion, which means that the grassroots alternative food movements still have a lot of work to do if they wish to see a healthy, sustainable and delicious food system become (re)established in institutions and, eventually, in customs. But this is obviously open to debate.

This fundamentally theoretical communication will be illustrated with the preliminary results from my own research on the diffusion of sustainable food practices – research that I have conducted in Western Australia in the past year. It appears clear from the preliminary analysis of the results that the sociology of individuals and the methodology of contingency (Little 2006), which Tarde had constructed well over 100 years ago, is more than worthy of rediscovery.

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**Claudia Laviolette** is a social scientist with a strong interest in food and sustainability. She is interested in the processes of social change from the perspective of individuals who are living their daily life. She is currently conducting her PhD research on the topic of sustainable food practices in Western Australia.

## Raw Milk(s) and Regulation in Australia

*Alanna Linn, Monash University*

Raw cow milk cannot be sold for human consumption in Australia, primarily due to the 'inherent dangers' that consumption of this product is considered to pose by the Australian food regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand. However, although consumption of raw milk can pose health risks, there is considerable debate as to whether this assessment of 'inherent' danger by regulators is accurate and appropriate, and whether it should override the ability of individuals to determine what they will consume. At the same, individuals and communities have established a range of informal and alternative systems that facilitate access to raw milk despite regulatory restrictions.

Within debates over this access, raw milk is often assumed to be a singular, consistent substance, around which there are different perspectives on risk, production and consumption, but such stability and singularity is not necessarily the case. For example, raw milk can be simultaneously: a carrier of dangerous pathogens; a natural healthful drink that is alive with microbacteria; a substance that must be processed in line with strict provisions; and the milk that comes from a particular cow and is stored in the fridge for collection by one of its owners. My research attempts to move beyond considering such diversity as a function of different perspectives or constructions, to examining them as distinct realities or versions of raw milk.

Drawing on the work of John Law and Annemarie Mol on complexities, multiplicity and collateral realities, my presentation sets out to uncover and explore the multiple versions of raw milk that can co-exist – as a physical substance and as a substance which is made through practices such as milk production, consumption and regulation. My presentation then seeks to discuss the implications of such raw milk multiplicity (in comparison to a singular, stable raw milk object) for the way in which food regulation is developed, implemented and debated.

***Alanna Linn** is a doctoral student at the Monash University Faculty of Law and her thesis is exploring the contested regulatory landscape for raw milk in Australia. Alanna also has over 10 years' experience in public policy in Australia and the United Kingdom. Her key areas of expertise and experience include regulatory reform in the energy, water and legal services markets, consumer policy and environmental resource management policy. Alanna's current areas of research interest include food and consumption politics, food safety regulation, and the multiplicity of risk perceptions and realities. Alanna is also an amateur cheesemaker.*

## On the Limits of Political Consumption: Why Resisting 'Big Food' with Labels is a Trap

*Christopher Mayes, University of Sydney*

In the Introduction to her landmark book, *No Logo*, Naomi Klein states that her argument is hinged on the hypothesis: "that as more people discover the brand-name secrets of the global logo web, their outrage will fuel the next big political movement". This expectation that the power of truth will awaken the slumbering consumer giant in revolt against corporations is echoed in much of the rhetoric around political consumption and food labeling. In recent years, it has been argued that nutrition labels, GMO labels, Fair Trade labels and a host of others are necessary for consumer autonomy, which provides the capacity for consumers to choose not only based on taste or price, but in line with ethico-political concerns.

While the knowledge revealed on food packaging labels has a place in monitoring and regulating the activities of food corporations, this paper argues that an overemphasis on labels and political consumption traps political activity within the aisles of the supermarket. Despite the intentions of those behind the push for ethico-political labels, this strategy risks inflating the interests of the consumer to exclusion of producers, especially farm workers. This paper uses a biopolitical lens to critique consumer-oriented practices of political consumption and to highlight the need for broader political engagement in relation to land-use, agriculture and food manufacturing.

**Christopher Mayes** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Centre for Values, Ethics and the Law in Medicine, University of Sydney. Christopher's research interests are in continental philosophy, bioethics, public health and food studies. His latest book *The Biopolitics of Lifestyle: Foucault, Ethics and Health Choices* (Routledge, 2015) investigates the use of 'lifestyle' as a device through which choices and behaviours are governed in response to the purported obesity epidemic.

# Meat of the Matter: How Values and Motivations Toward Meat Reduction Affect the Adoption of Dietary Changes

*Xavier Mayes and Judy Friedlander, University of Technology Sydney*

Animal agriculture has been identified by key governmental and scientific institutions worldwide as a significant driver of climate change and other major environmental problems (Gerber et al., 2013; Goodland and Anhang, 2009). With global meat and dairy consumption growing rapidly, livestock production will also continue to directly impact human health and equity, food security, and animal welfare (Steinfeld et al., 2006).

While plant-based diets are emerging out of the margins as a food practice, the distinctly disproportionate lack of attention by traditional media to livestock and climate change (Friedlander et al., 2014; Mayes, 2015) is a clear indication of gaps in public awareness and policy (Bailey et al., 2014). It is therefore vitally important to identify effective strategies that encourage large-scale change towards mainstreaming plant-based diets.

Background research into changing dietary patterns indicates those who embrace meat reduction or abstinence are driven by various and multifaceted frames, values and motivations (Asher et al., 2014). These include animal welfare, environmental, health, food equity and "food as aesthetic" concerns. The Common Cause framework argues that those who are motivated by extrinsic values, such as concern about image, social status, health and social power, are centred on external approval or rewards and less likely to engage on a long-term basis with a cause than those motivated by intrinsic values, such as concern for the environment and the welfare of animals which are more inherently rewarding pursuits (Crompton et al., 2014).

Our research is focused on participants of high-profile meat reduction campaigns in Australia such as Meat Free Mondays, Meat Free Week and Meat Free May. We examine whether larger-than-self intrinsic values are more likely to contribute to longer-term and deeper engagements with the cause. Focus group research and interviews with the different campaign participants also allow a deeper understanding of how changes in knowledge and attitudes towards meat production and consumption and the implementation of regular daily, weekly or monthly meat avoidance affects the adoption of different dietary practices.

This research fills a gap in the Australian context of meat consumption and insights will offer meat reduction campaigns and other advocacy groups a better understanding of how the interaction of motivating factors surrounding frames or values can contribute to longer associations with the campaigns and a greater adoption of meat reduction practices.

**Xavier Mayes** is the Marketing and Communications Manager at the Institute for Sustainable Futures, a flagship research centre of the University of Technology Sydney. Xavier is a recent graduate of the Masters in Sustainability and Climate Policy program at Curtin University. His research interests are focused on media and community perceptions of plant-based diets and the role of animal agriculture in climate change. Xavier's research "Livestock and Climate Change: An analysis of media coverage in the Sydney Morning Herald" was recently published in the book *Impact of Meat Consumption on Health and Environmental Sustainability*.

**Judith Friedlander** is a Postgraduate Researcher and PhD candidate with the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney. Her areas of interest focus on

*effective media strategies to engage communities with food sustainability. Her research on "What Makes Meat News" published in Food Studies, an Interdisciplinary Journal, has provided a solid foundation for further research and articles into the motivations behind sustainable food choices, the role of food celebrities in advocacy and media campaigning and the potential applications of social media for agenda melding and to broaden connections and build larger collectives. Friedlander draws upon her background as a newspaper and television journalist and editor and is the founder of the not-for-profit organization, FoodFaith, which works to encourage social cohesion and engage people with food sustainability.*

# Equipping the Future Food and Nutrition Workforce with the Tools to Mend a Broken Food System

*Julia McCartan and Liza Barbour, Monash University*

Internationally the food system is broken, creating environmental damage and increasing diet-related disease due to an intermittent supply of nutritious food. The causes of this are complex and require multi-sectorial, innovative and evidence-based solutions. Dietitians and nutritionists are vital to improving the food system, but need additional skills to support their practice. Limited tertiary-based learning opportunities specific to this complex issue exist for dietitians in Australia.

This case study describes an innovative approach to build the capacity of Australia's future nutrition workforce to improve the food system. A single semester, compulsory, undergraduate unit – 'Food and the Environment' – was introduced at the study university. This unit explores the sustainability of the global and national food supply and its impact on public health, with learning outcomes ensuring that students understand the economic, social, political and environmental factors that influence the food system.

The unit is divided into two components. Firstly students are exposed to the Australian food supply system from paddock to plate, focusing on agricultural production, food processing, distribution, retail, consumption and waste. The environmental impacts of industrialised and localised practices are compared at each stage. The second half of the unit explores the opportunities, drivers and challenges to improving the food system.

Students are exposed to the views of food industry, public health experts, food producers, distributors and retailers. Initiatives to mitigate environmental challenges, such as climate change, drought and salinity are explored together with the impact of national policy decisions on the food system. Assessment against these learning outcomes is authentic and facilitates the opportunity for students to develop skills applicable for the workplace.

Evaluation of the unit focuses on student satisfaction, attitudes towards pursuing work in the field and students' self-perceived ability to translate theory into practice. This unit has the capacity to positively influence Australia's future nutrition workforce by equipping them with essential knowledge and skills to improve our food system.

***Julia McCartan*** is an Accredited Practising Dietitian with over 10 years of experience working in roles that focus on public health nutrition, health promotion, food systems research, community development and project management. She has worked in the Community Health, Local Government, Non-Government and Higher Education sectors.

# Pop ups as Spatially Mobile Practices and their Energy Implications

*Bhavna Middha, RMIT University*

Pop-up food vending is a distinctive retail practice, which can be defined in terms of its temporal and spatially mobile nature, a unique business model, and special skills and competencies that make it a transient activity. As the public domain is now seen as a food space, eating on the street or buying from hawkers and especially pop up cafes and food trucks are no longer seen as inappropriate in Western cities. The paper below takes into account the different elements of pop-up practice and frames the discussion around how the temporal and spatial mobility of practices can achieve different results for sustainability and energy demand in different spaces. This paper draws from a qualitative study that has yielded information about students' practices in and around RMIT University's city campus, their relationship with the food provisioning and consumption spaces at the campus and other practices that intersect with them.

Using Schatzki's (2002) site ontology, this paper conceptualises spaces as sites of social action and therefore made up of practices. Therefore, this study of pop up practices and the 'third place' that they open up also includes other practices and arrangements that intersect with them temporally and spatially like students' eating practices, University policies and urban sustainability in order to understand energy demand. This paper argues that the pop-up practice negotiates and helps open up spaces through its spatial and temporal flexibility and through innovating and bending the social norms that govern mainstream food provisioning and consumption. Moreover, the pop-up practice interacts with other practices and arrangements in these spaces and the spaces that the practice becomes a part of and potentially shapes energy demand. This gives a point of intervention for affecting and reducing energy demand.

***Bhavna Middha*** is currently pursuing doctoral research exploring the entanglement of everyday food practices of students and spaces of food provisioning and consumption at inner urban Universities, looking at RMIT University's city campus as a case study and with a focus on sustainability and sustainable food consumption. Her undergraduate degree was in Architecture and she has recently completed her Masters in Urban Planning and Environment. Her Masters thesis examined pressure cooking in urban Indian households as a sustainable practice and analysed it in terms of lessons learned for low carbon development.

## **Building Resilience into Tasmania's Emerging Local Food Economy to Improve Community Access to Healthy Food**

*Sandra Murray, Stuart Auckland, Leah Galvin, Alexandra C King, Caitlin Saunders – University of Tasmania/Heart Foundation*

Tasmania has a reputation for growing the best quality food in Australia, but paradoxically has some of the worst health outcomes in the country. A recent study suggests that the existing food system isn't delivering what communities want, because ready and liable physical access to affordable locally-grown healthy food is difficult depending on where you live. This project is part of a broader initiative, Healthy Food Access Tasmania, led by the Heart Foundation.

Researchers have taken a snapshot of Tasmania's current food system by interviewing 64 key stakeholders, from 5 stakeholder groups, across 3 regions of Tasmania, from producers through to consumers. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis approach and key themes were identified. The research explores opportunities and challenges for strengthening new and existing local food systems with a specific focus on fruit and vegetables.

Findings suggest that a successful local food system needs to: Strengthen the existing system/s; Get local governments involved; Address the broader social determinants of health; Not take a one-size-fits-all approach; Engage consumers to support the needs of the market; Make incremental changes; and Involve smaller to medium size growers and community groups.

While local food systems could play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy in Tasmania there is misconception amongst stakeholder groups about the concept of food access and its challenges that needs to be improved. The findings from this research raise questions of how we build resilience into Tasmania's emerging local food economy.

**Sandy Murray** has over 25 years' experience as dietitian and has been an academic for the past 11 of these years within the School of Health Science teaching Food and Public Health Nutrition. She has a specific interest in food security, public health nutrition, and alternative food systems, and is committed to promoting the benefits of eating local food and supporting our local farmers. She is a current member of the University of Tasmania (UTas) Sustainability Committee, and was integral in helping to establish the UTas Education for Sustainability Community of Practice (EFSCOP). Further to this Sandy is committed to establishing the whole of Tasmania as a United Nations (UN) Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in Education for Sustainability (ESD) and for Tasmania to become a 'living laboratory' in sustainability.

# Deception or Inception? Does Higher Animal Welfare Labeling Create a Pathway for Greater Recognition of Animal Rights in Food Production in Australia or Just Mislead Ethical Consumers

*Christine Parker, Rachel Carey, and Gyorgy Scrinis, University of Melbourne*

With the marketing of the two major supermarkets (Coles and Woolworths) and the interventions of mainstream consumer agencies (Choice and the ACCC), the alternative food politics of animal rights/animal welfare has become increasingly mainstreamed. This paper focuses on the growth of higher animal welfare labeled foods in major supermarkets. Does labeling and ethical consumerism shift the baseline for animal rights in mainstream animal food production? This paper reports results of research “backwards mapping” the politics and practices behind higher animal welfare labeling for egg, broiler and pig meat products in Australia. “Free range”, “free to roam”, “sow stall free” and “RSPCA approved” have all become common, well known and contested labeling terms in Australian animal food production. Our research maps the availability of foods bearing these labels through a survey of supermarket shelves, and uncovers the politics and official and non-official standards behind each label term and how different stakeholders seek to contest and stabilize their meaning through media analysis, stakeholder interviews and regulatory network analysis. We investigate the range of meanings for each term in terms of production practice and how it differs from conventional production, and investigate what impact current regulatory attempts to address misleading labeling as a matter of consumer protection regulation are likely to have on label terms and practice. We draw some preliminary conclusions about whether the growth of higher animal welfare labeling can shift the baseline overall for animal welfare in food production, and if so through what pathway, or whether consumers are simply being deceived and placated.

**Professor Christine Parker** joined Melbourne Law School again in February 2015 after several years away. She has previously held positions at Griffith University, University of New South Wales, the Australian National University and Monash University. She holds a BA (Hons) and LLB (Hons) from the University of Queensland and a PhD from the Australian National University.

Professor Parker has written, researched and consulted widely on how and why businesses comply with legal, social and environmental responsibilities, what difference regulatory enforcement makes and how businesses can work with lawyers and compliance professionals to build internal corporate social responsibility systems that work. Her work has been published in academic journals and used in policy making and enforcement strategy. Her books include *The Open Corporation* (2002) on corporate social responsibility, business compliance systems and democratic accountability of companies; and *Explaining Compliance* (2011, with Vibeke Nielsen), an edited collection of the leading practice and policy oriented empirical research on how and why businesses do and do not comply with the law.

Professor Parker's current research focuses on the politics, ethics and regulation of food. She is working on an ARC Discovery Project grant with *Dr Gyorgy Scrinis* and *Dr Rachel Carey* (in the Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Science) to examine the possibilities for food labeling to increase democratic engagement with and governance of the food system using free range and higher animal welfare labeling of eggs, chicken meat and pork products as a case study. She is also researching and writing on misleading health claims on superfood labeling as part of

*another ARC Discovery Project on the regulation of anti-ageing treatments. Prof Parker has also been writing on pesticide regulatory policy and enforcement and sustainability issues.*

*Christine has a deep interest in both conceptualizing and communicating how law and regulation can help individuals and especially businesses live more sustainably well in our ecological systems. She is developing an academic research project in this area and has helped develop and show a live multi-media eco-music performance, Music for a Warming World, on our individual, social and political responses to climate change.*

*Christine teaches legal ethics and is the co-author of the influential legal ethics text, Inside Lawyers Ethics (with Prof Adrian Evans). She also teaches units on business regulation and is currently developing a fair food law and policy unit.*

## Supporting “Our Aussie Farmers”: Supermarkets, Media, and the Strategic Manufacture of Consumer Trust

*Michelle Phillipov, University of Tasmania*

From farmers’ markets to primetime television cooking shows, notions of ‘knowing where our food comes from’ and ‘reconnecting’ with the sources of our food are now central to a range of contemporary cultural movements and popular media texts. While these ideas have primarily been mobilized by those with activist commitments to ethical and sustainable food production, they are also increasingly appearing in the media and marketing strategies of large agribusiness and retailing corporations, including those of the major Australian supermarkets. This paper explores some of the techniques currently used by major supermarkets to respond to criticisms about their food ethics, market control and relationship with farmers and suppliers. Using a case study of Australian supermarket Coles and its ‘Helping Australia Grow’ advertising campaign, it will consider the textual practices of, and social media response to, Coles’ marketing strategies of celebrity endorsement, television cooking show sponsorship, and advertising images that put a ‘face’ to the farmers who supply to the supermarket chain. It argues that these strategies invite Coles customers to imagine that they, too, can ‘know where their food comes from’, and that their purchasing decisions support individual farmers and family farms rather than large conglomerates. This assists in locating Coles within a network of meanings that seek to both shift and contest negative perceptions of the supermarket chain’s corporate practices and food politics in ways that potentially complicate the activist discourses from which they draw.

**Michelle Phillipov** is an ARC DECRA Research Fellow and Senior Lecturer in Journalism, Media and Communication at the University of Tasmania. Her work examines the new relationships between the media industry and the food industry that are emerging as a result of an intensified media focus on food.

# From “Bush Tucker” to Indigenous Cuisine: Australian Indigenous Alternative Food Networks

*Cressida Rigney, University of Sydney*

The role of alternative food networks in Australian culture is slowly gaining coverage in the media. However, this coverage has been primarily on charitable work in low socio-economic areas, and a gap can be identified regarding Indigenous food networks which, while they attract government policy and initiatives, are rarely reported on by mainstream media powerhouses. This paper addresses three key areas: the place of Indigenous food in the non-Indigenous media; various grassroots movements involved in native foods and Indigenous communities; and the role of native foods in non-Indigenous food culture.

The concentration is on alternative food networks, but is inclusive of related issues of food security. The culture of the different Indigenous groups has been under siege from white colonisers since the First Fleet landed on Australian shores in 1788. Indigenous foods in particular have been rejected by white Australia, whose imported food culture has enacted a form of food violence against Indigenous people. This paper addresses the struggle for improved food culture amongst Australian Indigenous communities, focusing on a recent revival of interest in Australian native ingredients.

Specifically, I will examine the presence of Indigenous food in the media, as well as within non-Indigenous food culture, and recent movements amongst Indigenous communities. Three short case studies will be considered: these are, the community at Elcho Island; the ‘Orana Foundation’; and ‘Outback Pride’ at Reed Creek Farm. Elcho Island is a geographic area with a strong local Indigenous movement advocating a return to native foods for health and cultural reasons. The Orana foundation is a ‘one chef’ mission to support and preserve Indigenous culture through community research and integration with his own fine dining restaurant, and Outback Pride is an organisation which has commercialised native foods in a manner that keeps production and profits within the Indigenous community. These three case studies complement the paper’s observations of native foods in non-Indigenous media coverage. Questions posed include whether a recent embrace of bush foods is a trend, a response to environmental awareness of food insecurity, or a sincere appreciation of flavour and cuisine potential. In my research I intend to use a variety of source documents, primarily media documents and television shows, restaurant menus and government policy documents to illustrate my argument.

In conclusion, this project, by closely examining various alternative food networks and food access strategies (which have so far received little attention) amongst Indigenous communities will turn a much needed spotlight to the slow successes of these rarely acknowledged programs in the preservation and exploration of culture, environment and the progressive future of Australia.

**Cressida Rigney** is a PhD candidate within the Studies of Religion department at the University of Sydney. Cressida completed her BA Hons in 2015 looking at *Food and Culture in Contemporary Religious, Spiritual and Secular Contexts* and her fellowship with the Sydney Environment Institute facilitated the development of an academic interest in the wider environmental impact of food in society. Her PhD thesis will look at the role of food and food cultures in Australia’s social and environmental future from an ethical and eco-theological viewpoint.

## The Real 'Clean & Green' Farming and Demand for Healthy Foods

*Maarten Stapper, BioLogic AgFood*

World-wide soils are degrading to lower fertility under high-input farming, thus requiring more and more synthetic fertilizers and chemicals which do exacerbate the problem. The outcomes on foods produced are reduced nutrient density and increased presence of chemical residues. Recurring use of more synthetics affects the health of soils, landscapes and people. Food processing and preparation is further reducing the nutrition of food. All these factors increase malnutrition and contribute to obesity and chronic diseases.

Australian farmers have become highly dependent on outside suppliers and advice. To secure income they have to apply synthetic inputs of herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and fertilizers to maintain yields under high risks of weather and markets. Such farming tends to compromise the environment and farmers now also face pressures to reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions.

Australian agriculture is still being promoted as 'Clean and Green'. However, Australia does not have a pesticide monitoring system. The difficulty in assessing the use of agricultural chemicals led to a 2002 report recommending the establishment of a comprehensive and integrated pesticide use reporting system to assure the integrity of the quality of agricultural produce. However, little has changed as a 2013 report finds very little data on pesticide use and environmental impact. It questions implications for human health and the environment under continued exposure to these toxins.

Possible impacts of diet on human health were assessed in Australian studies by measuring presence in urine of, for example, organophosphates (OP; active ingredient in many insecticides). One study showed that for adults one week on an organic diet reduced OP by 90%. Another study with children showed the OP exposure to be higher than in US studies with no differences between rural and urban kids; thus OP through the food chain.

Producers' awareness of negative impacts of synthetics may come from direct contact during work, seeing environment degrading or lower returns on inputs. Some producers then become certified Organic, which doesn't allow the use of synthetic fertilizers and chemicals.

A more recent practice has been reducing the use of synthetics by improving soil carbon through re-activation of soil biology and biodiversity in landscape. Such Biological Farming regenerates soil and soils become healthy. Thresholds are raised in critical soil and plant processes, and plants become resistant to diseases and insects, not needing fungicides and insecticides. Nutrient density of produce is high, and product quality is generally not affected by small amounts of synthetics of choice. Farming beyond thresholds, within resilient local ecosystems, is called agroecological farming, which includes Organics.

Agroecological farming is still being treated as 'alternative' by government institutions and academia. It receives little R&D as it works against vested interests. It has received, however, in several UN reports science-based endorsement to enable feeding the world – this without a need for Genetically Modified (GM) foods, whose long-term safety hasn't been proven.

Consumers, supported by nutritionists, are slowly driving this process of change and create a demand for the real 'Clean and Green' agroecological foods: healthier with better taste and shelf life.

**Maarten Stapper** began a career in agricultural science forty years ago, has international experiences on four continents and is a former senior scientist with CSIRO. Employing a holistic

*approach, he is an expert across a wide spectrum of agricultural areas in research, development and extension.*

*He has found low external input agriculture to be most sustainable for producers, consumers and landscapes. Maarten's focus is on farming systems that help farmers improve the profitability of their operations by harnessing the power of natural processes with practices creating healthy soils and improving quality of produce.*

*Maarten featured in ABC TV's Australian Story "Back to Earth" in 2009 about this new road in food production research away from synthetics and GMO ([www.drmaartenstapper.com.au](http://www.drmaartenstapper.com.au)).*

## **Dairy Fears: Moral Panic Around Food Contamination in Contemporary Sri Lanka**

*James Stewart, University of Tasmania*

Dairy, and in particular milk, has been an important cultural force in Sri Lanka for many centuries. In the last few years, there has been social and political turmoil surrounding allegations that a foreign owned company (Fonterra, New Zealand) was producing contaminated milk products and poisoning dairy consumers in Sri Lanka. It subsequently turned out that many of the allegations were incorrect, but what this story shows is that there is considerable sensitivity around the consumption of dairy products in Sri Lanka. In this paper I will be attempting to explain this sensitivity in reference to three factors.

First, there are religious considerations – both Sinhala Buddhists and Hindu Tamils recognise the cow as a sacred animal that is of social and religious value. Therefore, the notion that its products may be tainted is an offense to these underlying religious principles. Second, there is a nationalist element present: a non-Sri Lankan company is under special scrutiny for occupying sovereign soil and muscling in on local industry. I will provide other examples where indigenously produced food is considered to have a magical-like property to improve health and well-being. Foreign foods, on the other hand, are seen as potentially deleterious to health. Fonterra, a foreign company, therefore activates this narrative that local food is healthful and beneficial, while foreign food is to be distrusted. Third, there are general cultural-specific concerns over poisoning, in particular food poisoning, orchestrated by sinister outgroup agents. A good example of this was a moral panic that erupted in Sri Lanka around Muslim hawkers poisoning pastries as part of a conspiracy to destroy Sinhala culture. These fears surely feed into the above panic around Fonterra and dairy products.

***James Stewart** is an Associate Researcher at the University of Tasmania. His work concerns food and animal ethics in South Asia, especially India and Sri Lanka. Last year he published a book titled *Vegetarianism and Animal Ethics in Contemporary Sri Lanka* through Routledge. Dr Stewart continues to explore these issues and is also working on a project concerning child monasticism in South Asia.*

# Sushi Reconstructed: Gender, Representation, and Global Consumption

*Katsuhiko Sukanuma, University of Tasmania*

Once occupying a niche, sushi has evolved into one of the most globally consumed food items of all time. Recent commercialisation of the idea of eating healthy food only assists in consolidating the popularity of sushi. Despite the ever-growing popularity of Japanese signature food, little research has been conducted into understanding how the global consumption of sushi has shaped and reshaped the cultural representation of Japan.

Through aggressive campaigning by the Japanese government, 'washoku' – Japanese cuisine – has recently been successfully registered as UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage. In the midst of aggressive promotion of Japanese culture through food, along with 'wagyu' (Japanese beef) and 'ramen' (noodle soup), sushi continues to be Japan's flagship food item. Where is this (re)-branding of Japanese food culture heading? What type of Japanese national identity does it aspire to (re)-construct?

Unlike a reliance on tangible products such as cars and electronic appliances in the 70s and 80s, there has been a shift towards intangible material in terms of Japan's economic strategy and investment. Popular culture has been one of the key players in this transition. The global popularity of Hello Kitty over the past two decades exemplifies this trend. What separates the commercial success of Hello Kitty from the recent global marketing of sushi, however, is a difference in gender representation. While Hello Kitty exhibits feminine or 'kawaii' (cute) qualities in its consumer culture, the discourse of sushi (sushi making in particular) is extremely skewed towards the counterpart – masculinity. David Gelb's 2011 documentary *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* is a prime example of where this concept is portrayed.

This paper examines the cultural representations of the recent mainstreaming of sushi through the lens of gender. It critically investigates the ways in which recent rebranding of sushi as a global Japanese food product is complicit in reclaiming nationalist and masculinist discourses of Japan's identity. The paper contributes to the ongoing discussion of an intersection of food politics and gender, and problematises the optimistic view on the incorporation of marginal food cultures into the mainstream.

**Katsuhiko Sukanuma** is Lecturer in the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania. His area of studies includes queer studies, gender studies, cultural studies, and Japanese studies. He is an author of *Contact Moments: The Politics of Intercultural Desire in Japanese Male-Queer Cultures* (Hong Kong University Press: 2012), and co-editor of *Queer Voices from Japan: First Person Narrative from Japan's Sexual Minorities* (Lexington Books: 2007) and *Boys Love Manga and Beyond: History, Culture, and Community in Japan* (University Press of Mississippi: 2015). He has published numerous critical essays in journals, the most recent of which investigates the incorporation of queer identity into the mainstream through food culture in Japan ('Queer Cooking and Dining: Expanding Queerness in Fumi Yoshinaga's *What Did You Eat Yesterday?*', *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 7 (2): 87–101, 2015).

## Singaporean Food Politics: From the Mainstream to the Mainstream

*Nicole Tarulevicz, University of Tasmania*

Singapore – Southeast Asian island nation, city-state, former British colony and major port – has a long engagement with global and industrialised food systems. It is, by most conventional definitions, food insecure – it depends almost exclusively on imported food and does not have a source of its own drinking water. Despite tropical equatorial conditions, many colonial agricultural ventures failed and Singapore quickly became reliant on its port for comestibles. And this, remarkably, has been Singapore's reality for over a century. This early and sustained reliance on the global pantry is reflected in the media. That is, critiques of global and local industrialised foods and food systems have been a regular feature of Singaporean newspapers since their establishment in 1824 (just five years after British settlement). International scandals – from swill milk in New York, to food-borne cholera outbreaks in Calcutta – filled newspaper columns, sometimes reproduced verbatim from international newspapers, sometimes given a local interpretation. Local scandals, from adulteration, substitution and fraud to poisonings, were the focus of articles, editorials and letters to the editor. In Singapore we can thus understand food politics as a mainstream concern as a historically consistent phenomenon.

Reacting to this steady media coverage, many food manufacturers responded with labeling and advertising strategies that stressed the safety and purity of their products. Milk, for example, was advertised as “Untouched by human hands,” beer as made with “pure water.” Consumers were guided to identify safe brands and “accept no substitutes.” Production, however, took place far away, across national boundaries and down distant supply chains. Local merchants thus became responsible for the quality of the goods they sold; newspapers, advertisers and regulators worked in tandem to emphasise merchant responsibility for food safety. Consumers were also implicated, advertisers and newspapers educated them but they also had to be savvy in their purchases – avoiding fraud, profiteering and reporting problems. In this sense, Singapore provides a pertinent historical example of the mainstreaming of food politics which speaks directly to contemporary global anxieties and discourse.

*Nicki Tarulevicz is a historian and tenured Senior Lecturer in Asian Studies in the School of Humanities at the University of Tasmania, Australia. She is the author of Eating Her Curries and Kway: A Cultural History of Food in Singapore (Illinois, 2013) and an elected member of the Board of the Association for the Study of Food Culture and Society (2014-17). She was the recipient of the ASFS Award for Food Studies Pedagogy (2013). Her current research focuses on the History of Food Safety in Singapore.*

# Food Imaging: Visual Consumption Trends in Popular Food Media

*Nathan Taylor, University of Tasmania*

Contemporary food experiences are increasingly mediated through the photograph. Aesthetically tuned through processes of design and styling, food imaging has become an influential and accessible platform to effectively push an agenda. Key visual devices are purposefully integrated into contemporary food images to build convincing fictitious narratives that simultaneously represent, question and dictate cultural identity. Reflected in a majority of popular food images, as seen for example within the pages of Donna Hay magazine or a Jamie Oliver cookbook, is an insatiable appetite for exotic luxury-based consumption. Colloquially dubbed as 'food porn', food imaging is increasingly exploiting the thin line between fantasy and reality.

This visual trajectory has its roots historically embedded in the Dutch still-life paintings of the Seventeenth-Century, with the ritualistic use of food metaphorically to help visually navigate the tumultuous moral terrain between prosperity and culture. Contemporary food images appear to be increasingly prioritising with a similar symbolic social function, using key visual tropes to sway consumption behaviour and represent luxury aspiration. Now a commodity in its own right, food styling and food photography is quickly becoming as important as food itself.

Despite its powerful commercial persuasion amongst popular culture, food imaging remains an under-critiqued discipline. This research paper will reflect on key visual tropes used by professional food styling within the photographic representation of food and its application through various facets of digital and printed media. This includes questioning the trajectory of food representation against historical painting through to the visually seductive illusion of contemporary food styling.

This research is from the perspective of a visual artist, using realist painting to appropriate visual strategies used in food styling and food photography in order to critique them. My analysis aims to evaluate the contemporary representation of food to expand the discourse on how food imaging is a dominant catalyst within popular food politics, and to examine whether the social influence of these images is shifting food expectations and encouraging voyeuristic behaviour.

**Nathan Taylor** is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania's College of the Arts. Taylor completed his Bachelor degree in Fine Arts in 2006, returning in 2013 to complete an Honours degree in Studio Research, first class. As a practicing artist, Taylor has exhibited both nationally and internationally, participating in multiple facets of the visual arts scene including curated group exhibitions, art prizes, and artist talks as well as being awarded notable grants, private commissions and scholarships. Nathan's current research focuses on analysing food imaging through contemporary painting to critique the impact of visual food culture on society.

## **“Fish Isn’t a White Thing in Shrink-wrap from Coles”: Food Sustainability in the Production of *MasterChef Australia***

*Luke van Ryn, University of Melbourne*

This project sought to understand the ways that issues of food sustainability – in particular locality, acceleration of production, and ethics – are enacted in media production contexts. The specific case of *MasterChef Australia* was chosen for its prominence in the media landscape and the importance of sustainability to food production, distribution and consumption.

Informants worked on *MasterChef Australia* in a variety of roles, from a runner tasked with completing odd jobs, to producers in charge of designing challenges and presenting story lines. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow the respondents to highlight the areas of investigation that were the most valid to their own working situation. Interviews were interpreted through a lens of *justification*, drawing on the work of Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). This conceptual frame sought to understand the specific “economies of worth” at work in the context of media production, and the ways that media workers justify their actions in critical moments.

Three findings are especially relevant. Firstly, media production workers often saw the demands of their chosen medium as contrary to emphasising the representation of issues of sustainability. Secondly, while discussions of sustainability are largely absent from the broadcast episodes of *MasterChef Australia*, sustainability is an important motivation for media production workers, particularly those who work with food. Finally, and contrary to accounts based upon textual representations alone, media workers are engaged in practices of sustainability, and are seeking to produce media in an ethical fashion. That these practices are not often represented is one of the main difficulties for dialogue between media researchers and media workers.

Through a close analysis of the design, justification and representation of food challenges, this paper demonstrates that, although production staff missed many chances for expanding the discourse around food sustainability, there remain many opportunities for incorporating questions of ‘green’ ethics into the production of food television. Equally, while mainstream media programs could do more to represent sustainability onscreen, it is important to note the many ways in which sustainability is enacted in the production context. The task of critical media research is, therefore, to be attuned to how representations come to be, so as to highlight the ways they might be different.

**Luke van Ryn** is a PhD candidate in the School of Culture and Communications at the University of Melbourne. His research explores the intersection of food, technology and communication. His thesis addresses the impact of professional networking and justification in the production ecology of *MasterChef Australia*. He is currently working as a research assistant on an ARC-funded project on practices of digital commemoration.

## **Rethinking Difference via the Non-human Animal: Consuming the Kangaroo**

*Yvette Wijnandts, University of Adelaide*

Eating is a complex matter and this is especially true when it comes to eating animals. The practice of eating animals does not only affect the animals involved; different cultural groups also have their own ideas on this topic, and there are considerable differences between people of the same cultural background. This paper argues that it is impossible to give a thorough analysis of the use of animals as food sources without being aware of one's position within global power structures. The aim of my research is to outline these structures within debates on the consumption of animal products and determine how they contribute to the formation of discourses in a globalizing world in which cultural difference is becoming an increasingly urgent issue.

Using a posthumanist framework, my research explores how species and cultural/religious differences intersect in current political and societal debates on the practice of eating animals. I argue that discourses surrounding animals in the food industry do not only influence the attitude human animals hold towards non-human animals in different societies but also continue other (arguably oppressive) discourses. I will illustrate this in my paper by offering a critical discourse analysis of the current debates on commercial kangaroo hunting in Australia to show how class, culture, race, and species are all intra-related in discussions about the wellbeing of the animals we eat. Not only are people from different backgrounds perceived differently in the debate—think for example of the differences between middle-class Anglo-Australians, lower-class Anglo-Australians, Asian Australians, and Aboriginal Australians—but animals are as well, depending on whether they are native Australian or feral introduced animals. By offering a critical discourse analysis of the debates about whether certain animals should be food or not, this paper shows how racial and species difference not only intersect on a conceptual level but also how these differences materialize on a social and political level. Thus posthumanist theory will not only be used as a theory but its potential as a political strategy will also be explored.

When we discuss the practice of eating animals in different cultural contexts, we must keep in mind the many cultural values that surround this custom. Eating meat and animal products is not an isolated act, and neither is talking about it. I do not contend that eating animals is necessarily wrong in principle, but rather that eating animals is embedded in complex cultural systems that are the product of complex historical and societal discourses. Being aware of the power structures involved can help us to develop different ways of practicing animal studies in a way that does not repeat and strengthen the imperialist and specieist narratives.

***Yvette Wijnandts** holds a Masters degree in gender and ethnicity studies from the University of Utrecht. For her PhD research at the University of Adelaide, she uses postcolonial theory and critical feminist theory on ethics to gain a deeper understanding of the discourses surrounding animals in the food industry. She aims to show how different structures of power intersect, specifically that of culture and religion, with the issue of animal rights in a globalizing world.*

# Let Them Pay for Cake: Considering Social Enterprise Business Models for Emergency Food Relief in Australia

*Benjamin Wills, University of Tasmania – Research funded by the Lord Mayor’s Charitable Foundation*

This study explores whether social enterprise business models, which charge food insecure individuals for donated food, offer a sustainable and dignified means of promoting food security, or simply perpetuate a neoliberal abdication of government responsibility. Demand for food via emergency food relief initiatives is growing strongly in Australia, with significant new demand from the individuals who might be regarded as the working poor. Frontline charitable organisations who obtain donated food and make it available for free via initiatives such as food pantries and soup kitchens, are struggling to meet surging demand at a time of retreating government support. The idea that these benevolent organisations might charge food insecure individuals for donated food is counter intuitive, to the point of being prohibited within relevant state based legislation. However, user pays models are gaining traction in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom and France, both because they offer a funding stream to charitable agencies and because it is claimed they respect the dignity of food insecure individuals. Using a whole of supply chain perspective, this study has gathered in-depth interview data from a range of ‘industry’ participants as well as survey data from end clients, to examine what role, if any, user pays social enterprise models might play in the Australian emergency food relief landscape.

***Ben Wills** is a Research Fellow in Innovative Business Models at the Australian Innovation Research Centre at the University of Tasmania. Ben is exploring how the use of novel information collection and sharing technologies can lead to more financially sustainable business models within high value agri-food chains. Ben also has a research interest in how social enterprise business models drive sustainable food system innovations.*

*Ben holds a PhD in Management (2014), Bachelor of Arts Honours in Human Geography (2007) and Bachelor of Economics (2006) from the University of Tasmania. In addition to academic research, Ben co-founded Tasmania's largest retail food co-operative, Source Community Wholefoods, and has worked as a consultant on a number of local food system development projects in Australia and the United Kingdom.*

# Consumer Driven Changes in Modern Food Packaging

*Matthew Wilson, University of Tasmania*

Food packaging is a fundamental, yet undervalued, component of the food production system. Food packaged correctly creates longer shelf-life and greater confidence in food safety while reducing food waste and increasing consumer choice. New packaging changes are driven by consumers wanting to know more about the product, or wanting an extended shelf-life, and many recent advancements have been made in fresh produce packaging. These changes will help producers in finding new solutions to long existing problems in handling and transporting fresh fruits and vegetables, extending when and where they are available. This will allow for the distribution of healthier food, providing better quality fruits and vegetables and greater value for consumers.

Modern food packaging systems are also important in communicating the nature and features of a product to consumers, and are adapting to greater needs from consumers for more detailed information. Accordingly, food producers are increasingly seeing packaging as a key advertising strategy in building their brands. For fresh produce, packaging emphasising the attractiveness and freshness of the product is important, as visual symptoms of product freshness can be important motivators for consumer purchases. In contrast, food that is seen as over-packaged can detract from consumer appeal for a product, but modern packaging techniques allow for a large reduction of food waste. Intelligent packaging, featuring sensors or indicators that are readable for consumers, can aid in communicating product freshness, and thereby enhance consumer confidence. Intelligent packaging can communicate both food safety and quality, and could be a point of difference utilised in innovative packaging designs. Packaging technologies that can communicate with other technology, such as cooking appliances, could also interact with smartphones or other devices to add further value to consumers.

Packaging emphasising the organic or eco-sensitive nature of foods is a particularly successful form of brand management, however concerns exist over the significance and monitoring of the use of organic terminology, and further standardisation is needed to clarify this concept for consumers. Bio-degradable and bio-derived plastics are also increasingly preferred by consumers. Packaging highlighting the provenance of foods can also be effective, with locally grown produce commanding a higher premium than organic or GMO-free products in some areas, and consumers of organic foods twice as likely to place a premium on locally grown produce. Nutritional information on packaging can also influence and is influenced by consumer behaviour and knowledge – albeit how widely this information is used is contested – and can increase profitability, including through product differentiation and building of trust, and through alleviating consumer concerns. Strong branding of packages for fresh produce, and the consumer franchise this develops, can also be important for increasing profitability. Packaging also has an important role in alerting food sensitive individuals to additives or substances to which they may react adversely.

Consumer demands are driving a change to food packaging that is more informative and responsible, and provides safer and healthier food options.

*Matthew Wilson has a PhD in Agricultural Science from UTAS where he studied the commercialisation of Tasmanian native pepper as a commercial crop species. He is now working for the ARC Training Centre for Innovative Horticultural Products, also at UTAS, investigating the effects of packaging on improving product freshness, shelf-life and food integrity.*

# **Foodscape Mediation in Australian Supermarkets: The Cultural Uses of Private-label Products**

*Elaine Xu and Terence Lee, Murdoch University*

Australian supermarkets have capitalised on the growth of the burgeoning \$118.8 billion food, beverage and grocery sector by using “authorities of legitimation” to qualify and quantify the purchase decisions consumers make about what they eat (Maguire 2014, p.21). Large supermarkets use celebrities as cultural intermediaries and need merchants to legitimise and ascribe cultural value to food products. Besides using celebrities as market actors, supermarkets employ “foodscape mediation” by using their in-house food magazines as a space to negotiate the brand perceptions and purchase decisions of consumers (Johnston and Goodman 2015, p.209). The supermarkets have proven successful with high levels of sales engagement. In July 2015, IGA imitated the bigger players by launching its *Easy Living* magazine in collaboration with News Corporation (Mediaweek 2015).

Although national supermarket chains such as Coles and Woolworths have a combined market share of 80 per cent in the dry and packaged goods market (Mortimer 2013), the duopoly have been threatened by the expansion of German supermarket chain Aldi, which tripled its market share in the last decade (Nagaratnam 2015). Aldi stocks its supermarkets with private-label products and its increasing market share has forced Coles and Woolworths to compete on price by introducing their own private-label products. Woolworths’ ‘Created with Jamie’ (i.e. Jamie Oliver) range is just one example of how the Australian supermarket chain have combined the influence of celebrity endorsement. There are several others that will be looked at in this paper.

This paper makes the case that the supermarkets’ foray into agricultural investments and private-label products (including in-house media) can be understood as forms of vertical expansion to exercise control over the key links in the foodscape chain. Not only is this a profit-increasing strategy, but foodscape mediation has the effect of altering the cultural attitudes of consumers in Australia – as well as in the export markets of Asia.

***Elaine Xu** is a Communication postgraduate student at Murdoch University. Before pursuing postgraduate studies, she managed a media firm and worked as a media professional for ten years, overseeing the development of commercial and broadcast content for the public and private sector in Asia. Her research interests lie in the cultural representation and interpretation of communication messages and her Masters dissertation is focused on the cultural politics of donors in Singapore.*

***Terence Lee** is an Associate Professor in Communication and Media Studies at Murdoch University and chairs its Communication Management postgraduate program. He is a former president of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association (ANZCA) and is one of the founding editors of its journal, Communication and Research Practice. He is also Book Series Editor (with Susan Leong, Curtin University) of the Media, Culture and Communication in Asia-Pacific Societies with Rowman and Littlefield International, UK.*

# Ethical and Sustainable Food Production Practices in Victoria: the Emergence of a 'New Agriculturist' Movement in Victoria in Response to the Dominant Industrial Agricultural Practices

*Zainil Zainuddin, RMIT University*

This paper constitutes an ongoing research project on the emergence of a breed of new farmers who are embracing the 'beyond-farm-to-table' agrarian concept. It will investigate the development of the movement whilst documenting the transformational narrative of some of these new farmers in Victoria. These are farmers by choice, often professionals with no background in farming who have decided to engage in sustainable and ethical farming as a full-time occupation. It will interrogate the socio-demographic characteristics of these new farmers and more importantly their motivations and intentions for taking up ethical and sustainable farming, their choice of farming practices and the values and ethos for these choices.

The research focuses on one small aspect of the food system — farming and food production. Supplementary to production is the farmers' networking facilitated by technology. It is about the who, why and what of this "new" approach to farming and food production in Victoria. These are novice farmers and food producers by choice, often with no prior background in farming or food production. They tend to be small-scale, family oriented, exclusively organic with diverse income streams from the one farm. They are ethically minded in the farming practices with an emphasis on sustainability.

The research interrogates how and why this approach is often framed as sustainable and ethical farming practices. In doing so it will investigate the following characteristics:

- socio-demographic profile
- individual motivations and intentions
- values and ethos

It will also look into the socio-technical aspect of the modern farmer communities' use of digital platforms to enhance their community of practice. It will explore the relational dynamic between these farmers of ethical and sustainable produce with their consumers by exploring their usage of digital media in their business engagement, social activism and online networking.

***Zainil Zainuddin** is currently pursuing a PhD at RMIT University. His research investigates sustainable and ethical food production and farming practices in Victoria. He has worked on various food and sustainable related projects at both RMIT University and Victoria University ranging from waste-water remediation for food productions to community gardens, and has also conducted research into Sustainable Urban Development Framework best practice and their adaptability to local projects.*

# Glasshouse Vegetable and Fruit Production: A Consumer's Perspective

*Dianfan Zhou, University of Tasmania*

Consumer demand is the primary driving force in the food production industry. As dietary preferences change and environmental concerns increase, consumers are demanding a larger variety of horticultural products of consistent quality year-around, produced sustainably and locally. Glasshouse production harbours opportunities to meet these demands. Protected cultivation provides a more controlled environment for plants, which results in an increase in crop productivity and production, as well as better quality and consistency of products. In addition, it enables producers to grow crops near urban areas, which reduces the transport distance from producing area to retailer, guaranteeing the maximum freshness of products and diminishing greenhouse gas emissions. This increasingly concerns consumers as well as policy-makers, particularly in a highly urbanized country such as Australia. In addition to these obvious benefits, greenhouse production also provides consumers with an alternative that could be more affordable and productive compared with organic products. This might lead to increasing consumption of food produced in a more sustainable manner. Nevertheless, consumer acceptance of glasshouse produced vegetables and fruits varies in different countries. Australian consumers are less familiar with glasshouse production, and may have lower acceptance of glasshouse produce than consumers in Northern Europe or North America. There is a wide range of consumer concerns about glasshouse production that needs to be documented and addressed.

As the glasshouse horticultural industry is relatively young and small-scale in Australia, most relevant knowledge and adopted technologies are based on experiences from Northern Europe and North America. There is a huge knowledge gap regarding greenhouse cultivation opportunities and practices in Australia. Little is known about the environmental impacts of horticultural glasshouse production. This knowledge gap needs to be addressed before large-scale investment in greenhouses becomes feasible. This paper aims to evaluate the feasibility of glasshouse production of vegetables and fruit in Australia, starting from a consumer demand perspective.

***Dianfan Zhou*** is a cotutelle PhD candidate between the University of Tasmania and Wageningen University (in the Netherlands). She is currently working at the ARC Training Centre for innovative horticulture products at the Tasmanian Institute of Agriculture. She has been studying horticulture for around seven years. After completing her undergraduate study in China, she moved to Europe and accomplished a Masters degree in Greenhouse Horticulture from Wageningen University. During the Masters study, she completed an internship looking at how plants interact with their environmental conditions in Forschungszentrum Jülich in Germany.