Inclusive inquiries of production and consumption conundrums, for emerging policies, to improve food systems in Ontario

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Slow KTT

• Key objective - identify new solutions to pressing food system problems.

• Circle process (person w talking piece talks and others listen) allows time for thinking and improves listening, understanding and the potential to move toward agreement (Ball et al. 2010).

• In Sept and Nov 2017, “What are the policy options for the agri-food sector to meet public social license expectations and to produce adequate, healthy food to address food security needs, while adapting to climate change?”

• March, 2018 - “if we achieved soil health in 40 years, what would it look like?”. 

Photo by A. Hammermeister
What do we (the audience) need to know now about what you found out about KTT?

- How effective was the Circle process to communicate your perspectives and feel heard? Sept = 4.3, Nov = 4.6, Mar = 4.6

- How effective was the Circle process in enabling the group to work collaboratively; different than a typical facilitated meeting? Sept = 3.5, Nov = 3.8, Mar = 4.2

- Based on your experience during these workshops, how useful would the Circle process be for addressing contentious issues in the ag-food sector? Sept = 4.0, Nov = 4.4, Mar = 4.3

  - Answers from very effective (5) to strongly not effective (1).
What insights did your project results provide about KTT?

• "If agri-food sector meetings with contentious issues were conducted using the circle process rather than other processes, my willing participation would be;" – 4.3 to 4.6 to 4.8 from Sept to Nov to March.

• Circle process is useful when confronting **urgent** and/or **important** issues within organizations or across the agri-food sector.
Who was your target user of the project?

- We reached most of our intended audience across the ag value chain, in Sept., but missed retailers, large processors and input suppliers in Nov. and Mar.
- Reps from farms, farm orgs, research, government, conservation authorities and public health were at all meetings.

What do you know about users now in terms of sharing research that you did not know before?

• “It is challenging to get to the heart of contentious issues. The circle process allows the deep conversations to occur.”

• “The process allows for dominant voices to be subdued and quieter ones a chance to flourish.”

• In response to ‘use the circle process in your organization in the future?’ 71% said ‘yes.’
How could others use this information in their KTT/KMb work?

• Circle process can integrate broad understandings with specific issues in a way that will clarify specific agreements and what remains to be resolved

• It’s not fast, but over time, may save time and prevent misunderstandings, false starts and stress

Photo of Southbrook Vineyards
Tweet worthy insights

- Circle slowly to understanding. Make decisions to include all stakeholders.
- Spiral to the potential of Circle for Agriculture at http://foodpolicyforcanada.info.yorku.ca/research-projects/