



Thoughts for Food

Exploring the Connections from Farm to Fork

First Year Seminar



What We Did

Demand for food is changing. Increasingly consumers are placing value on attributes that include where they buy it, how it is produced and who it is produced by. This seminar explored the value chain that connects the farm gate to the consumer's plate and why it matters. We developed a better understanding of where food comes from and that we should care about it.



Discussions

- What creates value?
- Sustainable seafood
- Food prices – is higher always bad?
- Food waste.
- Food security.
- Nutrition labeling.
- Life cycle of food – where it comes from and how it gets here.

Debates

- Should we be labeling foods with GMO's?
- Should we use "food" for bio-fuels?
- Should we implement a fat tax in Canada?
- Should sellers at farmer's markets only be allowed to sell their own produce?

Trips

- University of Guelph Honey Bee Research Station
- Loblaws Cambridge Distribution Centre



Reflections on the Course

"I am so inspired by the discussions that we were having about value chain of different products. It has never come across my mind that selecting products at the grocery store needs a diverse perspective of so many aspects in food. I used to ignore the nutrition facts and ingredients label . . . But now I pay more attention to those little things that can lead to a great impact."

"I'm thinking more about what I eat and drink. Sodium and caffeine are big ones." We need to pay attention!"

Fat tax

"Taxes on tobacco and alcohol have not significantly reduced smoking and drinking so will a fat tax really make a difference?"

"Fatty foods aren't necessarily always unhealthy. What about sugar, salt and other factors?"

"The difference between alcohol and cigarettes and food is that we can't choose not to eat. A fat tax punishes the poor the most."

"Why shouldn't we tax unhealthy foods? But how do we define unhealthy?"

Distribution Centre

"I learned a lot about the intermediate steps of how my food gets to the grocery store."

"I wouldn't want to work in a freezer that is minus 30."

"Does the low cost of food really make it worthwhile to treat workers that way? Pushing to make quotas and punishing them if they fall short?"

Honey Bee Lab

"Seeing the bees and honey production was so cool. We should go see more production to understand it better."

"I told my family that we saw the honey production and my grandmother told me that my grandfather used to be a honey producer. This started a conversation on some family history"

Reflections on the Course

Food Waste

"I had never thought about how much food we waste."

"I think differently about what I buy and what I take – it is staggering that we waste 40% of the food we produce with half of it being at home."

"Packaging is a huge issue contributing to waste from food. Its not just food waste."

"We waste so much when others have so little"

Sustainable Seafood

"I discovered that farmed salmon can be certified organic but that wild salmon can not! Its because they don't know what the wild salmon ate but they feed farmed salmon wild fish. It simply doesn't make sense."

"I had no idea that our fish stocks were so endangered. I will pay more attention to what kind of fish I buy. Everyone should have to watch "End of the Line."

GMO Labeling

"We have a responsibility to become more informed about the food we eat."

"Eating healthy is a choice. We need to educate ourselves. We are accountable. The information is available."

"We do have a responsibility to know or learn about what we're eating but there has to be some rules so that we can get accurate information."

"Labeling is not necessarily the answer as we can't get everything you need to know on the label and too many people don't read what we get now."

