



STALL TALK

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A Glimmer of Hope Under Every Potato

COVID-19 has turned the world upside down for about a year now. It has made many of us change our ways of life and adapt to trials we have never faced before. As states started to enact lockdown policies, closing schools, restaurants, and other public institutions, our global food system could not respond to the abrupt shift in markets. As a result, stores all over the country were running out of food and other supplies. This caused many supermarkets, even large retail chains like Target and Walmart, to ration their food and supplies until they got a handle on their stores and how much they could provide to consumers. This hectic moment in time highlighted the issues of the current American food system.

Our food networks are wide in variety and plentiful within this country, however, when the pandemic started, produce in the fields was rotting and milk was dumped, while children were left without food due to the shutting down of schools and meal programs, and many stores were wiped clean. With the upheaval of our daily lives, the need for a comprehensive approach to **Food Justice** came to the surface. Food justice envisions a food system that is community-led, participatory, and inclusive, without the exploitation of people, land, or the environment. It aims to reconstruct older, local food systems and allow for better wages for agriculture workers. COVID gave the food justice movement additional traction by exposing many of the problems within the current American food system.

With renewed pushes for food justice in underserved communities, some scholars are starting to outline the positives that may emerge after the pandemic subsides. According to *The Atlantic*, some believe that the supermarket industry will have to adapt to the crazing for smaller grocery stores that focus on fresh produce, meats, and other goods that consumers want to choose themselves. This also is a reflection of the increase in online grocery shopping for nonperishable items. The trend of shifting away from traditional grocery stores has also caused an uptick in community-based farms, according to CivilEats, who are stepping up in their communities to provide a place of peace and a source of food during the pandemic. Even here in Easton, many of the community gardens have more people volunteering and eating the food they have planted and connected with. Though COVID has presented many hardships, there is a silver lining amongst the clouds.

What does the food I eat say about my story?

Do I know where my food comes from?

Questions to Ponder

Is there a grocery store in the place where I live?

Who farms the food I eat?

What does this have to do with me?

- 1. Understand the privilege** you may have by living in the communities that you do. If you live in a community that has a grocery store in it or you have access to fresh produce and food, it can be surprising to learn that these are not universal to all communities. Understanding this and making a conscious effort to help those in need by donating your time or resources to food pantries, food banks, and local community-based farms is always beneficial.
- 2. Learn about the food systems in America or your part of the world** to see how the food you receive travels from farms to your grocery stores and restaurants.
- 3. Be a conscious buyer** when you grocery shop. Aim to shop at farmer's markets and other small stores if you can afford to. If not, another way to stay conscious is by buying only what you need and not cleaning off shelves of food.
- 4. Utilize your resources** here on campus. The Office of Sustainability is a great resource for understanding what food justice is and how you can help dismantle the oppressive system that mistreats migrant workers and avoids serving BIPOC and low-income communities.

Take Away Tips of the Week

- Eat Local wherever you are! Try small business restaurants or visit local farms.
- Volunteer on LaFarm or at any of the small community farms in Easton. They are always looking for volunteers, and volunteering is a great excuse to spend time in the sun. Follow LaFarm on Instagram at @lafayettecollegefarm or email Lisa Miskelly (miskelll@lafayette.edu) to get involved.
- Volunteer at a food bank or food pantry that helps distribute food. If you can't volunteer, donate to these organizations, like PardPantry, to help feed others.
- Don't waste food! Whether this is at home or here on campus, try to eat what you take and avoid plate waste.



Stall Talk is a regular initiative brought to you by the Office of Residence Life. This issue edited by T. Bakare, B. Moger, & T. Uhrich. This issue was created in collaboration with L.Miskelly, Prof. B. Cohen, and members of the Food and Farm Salon.

