

Institute for Sustainable Food Systems

Strategic Plan 2021 - 2025



Our Mission

We engage in multidisciplinary applied research and extension to cultivate sustainable regional food systems that advance the food sovereignty goals of diverse communities.



Our Vision

We imagine a future where empowered communities shape the food systems that nurture their health and well-being, and sustain thriving ecosystems.

Our Focus



Building knowledge and capacity through applied research and extension



Cultivating a shared vision and inspiring action



Advancing KPU's Vision



Growing an effective applied research and extension Institute

Our Approach

Deepen an understanding of sustainable food systems and expand the application of knowledge

Create connections, share knowledge, and provide leadership and support

Ensure ISFS is an integral element of KPU, providing leadership for the achievement of the University's mission and goals

Deliver exemplary work, and provide a positive, nurturing workplace

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Definitions



Building knowledge and capacity through applied research and extension

Goal: Deepen and expand an understanding of sustainable food systems and the application of knowledge

- Support the advancement of food systems policy and planning
- Assess the social, economic, and environmental impacts of regional food systems
- Support the development and expansion of organic and regenerative agriculture
- Support Indigenous communities' food sovereignty
- Strengthen programming for new entrant farmers



Cultivating a shared vision and inspiring action

Goal: Create connections, share knowledge, and provide leadership and support

- Develop and implement an outreach strategy to ensure broad and effective knowledge sharing
- Connect communities, host discussions, and support dialogue
- Develop new platforms, tools, and resources for capacity building and education
- Build research capacity within the emerging food systems field

Regional Food Systems

In a regional food system, food is produced locally and is physically and financially accessible to local residents. Food production and other food system activities respect the ecological boundaries and constraints of the region. Locally-embedded food supply chains connect regional food producers and providers to local consumers and increase resilience to global food system shocks. Local food supply chains are dominated by locally-owned and operated businesses that increase the local economic benefits to the region. Food system activities and outcomes are guided, developed, and impacted by local policy and engaged, citizen-driven decision-making. Indigenous peoples freely practice and govern their traditional foodways according to the needs of their communities.

Regenerative Agriculture

Regenerative agriculture prioritizes soil health while simultaneously encompassing high standards for animal welfare and worker fairness. The idea is to create farm systems that work in harmony with nature to improve quality of life for every creature involved.¹ Regenerative agriculture includes practices such as reduced tillage, biologically-based pest management, reduced synthetic inputs, and appropriate/accessible technologies. Organic agriculture is a regenerative agriculture method codified into standard practices.


Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty empowers communities to define their own food and farming systems to best meet their needs and those of future generations. Food sovereignty describes the right of peoples to access healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods.

¹ Rodale Institute. <https://rodaleinstitute.org/>

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Advancing KPU's mission

Goal: Ensure ISFS is an integral element of KPU, providing leadership for the achievement of the University's mission and goals

- Develop and implement a communication strategy to strengthen our relationship with KPU faculty, students, staff, and senior administration
- Increase our contribution to KPU's education programs
- Increase participation of faculty and students in our applied research and extension
- Expand our support for Indigenous partnerships and programs, sustainability, and other KPU goals



Growing an effective applied research and extension Institute

Goal: Deliver exemplary work and provide a positive, nurturing workplace

- Ensure the effectiveness and continuity of our operations and programs
- Improve the stability of our funding
- Increase staff stability and well-being
- Strengthen our shared learning on key topics and emerging issues
- Ensure the quality of our external communications



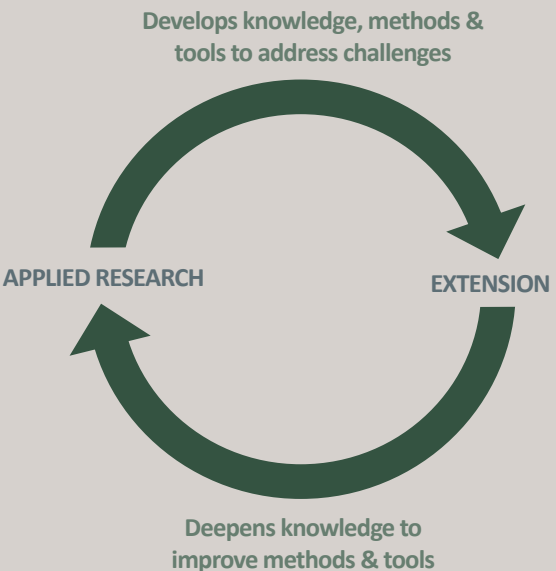
Definitions

Applied Research

Applied research seeks to address real world problems. It is developed and conducted in collaboration with community partners. This approach is place-based and context specific, identifying ways forward and sharing these through extension.

Extension

Extension takes the insights generated from applied research and connects them to real world challenges to support community capacity building and networking. Extension programming provides non-formal education, learning opportunities, and tools to communities, farmers, businesses, policy makers, and individuals.



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Guiding Principles

Sustainability as a responsibility: Sustainability is a responsibility to present and future generations. The well-being of future generations depends on our ability to respect the ecological boundaries of the Earth and the dignity, health and rights of all people. Sustainability is a commitment to work toward social, economic and ecological justice and well-being now, so that future generations can thrive.

Reconciliation and the rights of Indigenous peoples: We recognize that racism and colonialism continue to structure the food system, infringing on the rights of Indigenous peoples to self-determination, culture and land. We will challenge ourselves and each other to understand the impact of our actions and the conditions we create and sustain. This comes with a commitment to listen, learn, unlearn, re-imagine and co-create food systems that redress harm and uphold the rights and dignity of Indigenous Peoples.

Valuing diverse knowledge systems: We value the diversity of ways that knowledge and understanding are cultivated and communicated across cultures and communities. We will work to respect and integrate diverse ways of knowing into our work, recognizing both their unique insights and their collective strength.

Place - based approaches that empower communities: Our work is locally-informed and collaboratively pursued. We strive to support communities as they build regional food systems reflective of their unique context.

Connecting out to move forward: We know that strong relationships are the foundation of collective change. We will work to connect people - across disciplines and geographies - to collectively dream, share, learn and move toward our goals.

Core Values

Vision and Creativity: We strive to inspire a shared vision of a brighter, healthier future for all living things, and to find innovative ways to work toward that vision.

Respect: Respecting one another, ourselves, and our diverse perspectives and experiences strengthens our relationships

Collective Strength: We work to create a space where everyone is empowered to share their unique talents and gifts because we know that our success is the result of our collective strength.

Equity and Justice: We challenge ourselves to listen, (un)learn, and act to build a food system that respects the rights and dignity of all living things. We work to understand how power and privilege determine whose voices are heard, and strive toward all forms of justice in the food system - racial, social, environmental and economic. We are all responsible for this work.

Courage: Courage is about challenging ourselves, challenging systems and challenging ways of thinking. We challenge ourselves, systems, and ways of thinking to inspire change.