



EATING RIGHT(S):

Silence about Food Sovereignty in Picture Books
CHLA, June 2023

Dig for Your Rights! Pilot program



FOOD SOVEREIGNTY



PICTURE BOOKS



HUMAN RIGHTS

What do you think of when you hear “farm picture books”?

- Red barn
- Kids playing
- A cow, a horse, a dog, some sheep and some chickens
- Wooden milking stool
- Cute talking animals
- General merriment



- 1) What do kids do on the farm in picture books?
- 2) Who's a farmer in picture books?

- 1)
- Frolic
- Eat
- Cuddle animals

- 2)
- Old
- White
- Guy
- Overalls, straw hat, pitchfork
- Red tractor

Prevalent portrayals of farming in the majority of farm picture books

- Comic
- Fantastic
- Bowdlerized
- Nostalgic
- Instructional/didactic (non-fiction)

Problematic, stereotyped, outdated portrayals in farm picture books...

- **The child's playground—a safe haven?**
- **You wish!**
- In reality farms have historically been— and in many places still are—sites of childhood labour, exploitation, rights violations, injury, and death.
- Approximately one hundred million children worldwide are engaged in harmful child labour in the agricultural sector, largely in developing areas (as distinct from developmentally appropriate farm chores on a family smallhold) (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018).

Why this is problematic...

- A New Zealand study (McCormack, 2002) conducted with actual children explored the origins of children's knowledge about rural areas by consulting and communicating with children themselves.
- The empirical data corroborates Bell's and Jones's ideas about the powerful role popular culture plays in perpetuating the rural idyll.
- By collecting data from real children, McCormack's work strongly supports the hypothesis that children's books and television programs about the countryside (including farms and farm animals) actually do inform their understandings—and stereotypes—of rurality and agriculture.

Problematic, stereotyped, outdated portrayals in farm picture books...

- **The rural idyll**

- The idealized, romanticized “image that the public has of farm life” (Newman et al, 2017)
- The rural idyll can be identified in literature from ancient Greece (Short, 2006)
- A construction—an “imagined” concept—that Bell argues “has a very powerful and enduring ideological pull...and constantly morphs to fit with new times”, perpetuated through popular culture (150).

- “Although rural and remote communities are primary areas for food production, hunting, gathering and fishing, food insecurity is a daily reality for many rural Canadians.”

- <https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-EN.pdf>

Problematic, stereotyped, outdated portrayals in farm picture books...

- **Pastoral nostalgia**
- Jones notes that both in popular consciousness and in film, “The rural, against all the odds and all evidence, remains ...a refuge not only for the romantic child, but romantic society” (2007; 191).
- In opposition to real-life factors that affect actual rural children, such as the poverty and isolation often rife in rural areas (2007).
- A literature review of published scholarship on children’s experiences of living in rural areas by Powell et al (2013) reveals that “Alternative constructions of rural childhood, characterised by dullness, horror and deprivation, are also apparent, and associated with insufficient rural activities, resources and transport, marginalisation and social exclusion” (Abstract).

The critics weigh in...

- Literary critics point out the problem that farm animal fantasy picture books “lack factual information” and therefore “do not give students an accurate portrayal of farm animals or how farm animals are used on a farm” (Czarney & Terry, 1998, p. 44). They caution that since so many picture books about agriculture are fantasy-based and therefore inaccurate, “teachers cannot depend on picture books alone to give children a realistic view of farming and the people who farm,” suggesting that other media (including videos, etc) must supplement picture books (48).

The critics weigh in...

- "...informational books, picture books and even poetry" about farming should "help children recognize the fact that farming is accomplished by people whose skillful use of technology, knowledge of the environment and science, and sense of commitment are crucial to our society" (Chu 1993, p. 14).

The literary critics weigh in...

- More recently, Dimick has noted in regards to children's picture books about agriculture that "the texts portray a dangerously idealized version of food production. The word 'farm' conjures up mental pictures of charming red barns, rolling green fields, contented cows, salt-of-the-earth farmers, and middle-America values. And indeed, that is what these texts portray" (2018, p. 80).

But there's hope!



Readers
to Eaters

The educators weigh in... American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture

- The mission of this non-profit foundation “is to build awareness, understanding, and a positive public perception of agriculture through education” (“What We Do”).
- Eschewing children’s literature that is counterproductive to “agricultural literacy”, they aim “to grow awareness and understanding of agriculture through education” (Home page).
- Launched Feeding Minds Press in 2018, with the distinct goal of publishing “accurate agriculture books for children” (“Feeding Minds Press”).
- To support this endeavour, the group also organizes and administers the “Book of the Year” award.

AFBFA “Book of the Year” award criteria

- “Have 100% accurate information about agriculture with modern agricultural practices being a priority
- Have a positive portrayal of agriculture and producers
- Contain no depictions of anthropomorphic animals (animals that talk or act like humans)
- Should not convey any stereotypical depictions of rural life (ex: overalls and a pitch fork)
- Portray no unsafe situations in pictures, graphics or text
- Have topic which is of interest in agriculture and society...”

What do you think of when you think of food sovereignty?

- “Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.” <https://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>

Hannah Wittman, an internationally-recognized expert on sustainable food systems...

- Conceptualizes food sovereignty as a human rights issue, describing it “as a critical alternative to the concept of food security...broadly defined as the right of local peoples to control their own food systems, including markets, ecological resources, food cultures, and production modes” (2011, p. 87).
- Argues that food sovereignty actually “pushes an ethical frame based on control over and access to food as an element of the confluence of economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental rights (Anderson 2008; Gonzalez 2010). This frame connects food as a human right (a focus of consumer and aid policy) to the right to choose how and by whom that food is produced”.
- Describes some of the benefits of this movement, which include the ways it “defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation” and “offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users”.

Dig for Your Rights! program definition-- Superle

- Food sovereignty =
 - Food security +
 - Community +
 - Human rights
- FOOD!
 - SAVE!
 - RENT!
 - YEE!

What is food security?

- The Food and Agriculture Organization's food security definition is when "all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."
- Food security is having consistent, reliable access to safe, nutritious food. Food security is determined by four components:
 - Availability: "Does food exist near me?"
 - Access: "Can I get to food easily?"
 - Utilization: "Will this food contribute to my health and well-being?"
 - Stability: "Will food be available tomorrow, next week, next month?"
- When any one of these components are stressed or unmet, it's considered food insecurity.
- <https://www.worldvision.ca/stories/food/the-basics-of-food-security>

Food sovereignty vs food security

- “The language of food sovereignty, as distinct from food security, is explicit about food citizenship: it emphasizes that people must have a say in how their food is produced and where it comes from. The core of food sovereignty is reclaiming public decision-making power in the food system. ”
- <https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-EN.pdf>

Relationship to human rights...

- “The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations...identified the four pillars of food security as availability, access, utilization, and stability. The United Nations (UN) recognized the Right to Food in the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and has since said that it is vital for the enjoyment of all other rights” (“Food Security”).
- The UNCRC–child friendly version, <https://www.unicef.org/sop/convention-rights-child-child-friendly-version>

How does the UNCRC relate to food sovereignty?

- Article 24
- Health, water, food, environment
- “Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.”
- Article 27
- Food, clothing, a safe home
- “Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. The government should help families and children who cannot afford this.”

How does the UNCRC relate to food sovereignty?

- Article 12
- Respect for children's views
- “Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously.”

How does the UNCRC relate to food sovereignty?

- Article 32
- Protection from harmful work
- Children have the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

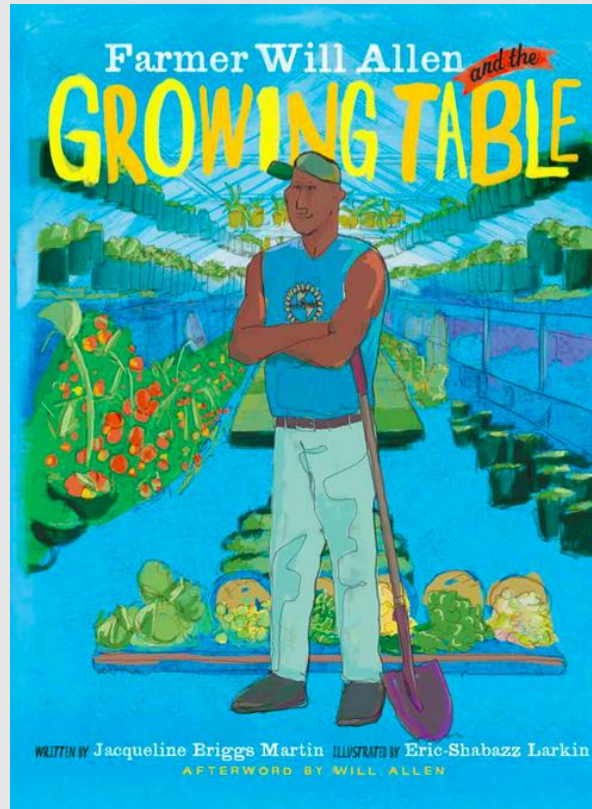
What aspects of food sovereignty are portrayed in picture books?

- Content analysis using the Seven Pillars of Food Sovereignty
- “The first six pillars were developed at the International Forum for Food Sovereignty in Nyéléni (link is external), Mali, in 2007. The seventh pillar - Food is Sacred - was added by members of the Indigenous Circle during the People’s Food Policy process.”
- <https://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>

1. Focuses on Food for People

- “Puts people’s need for food at the centre of policies
- Insists that food is more than just a commodity”

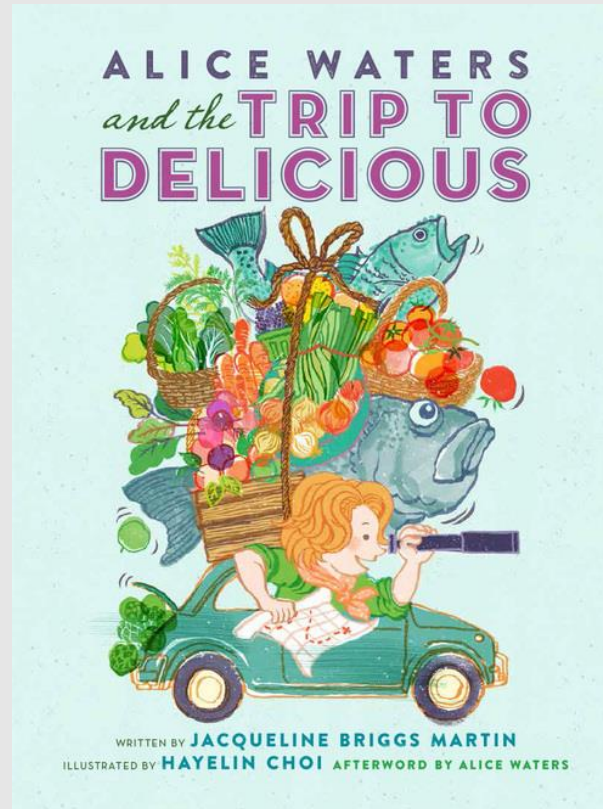
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 1



2. Builds Knowledge and Skills

- “Builds on traditional knowledge
- Uses research to support and pass this knowledge to future generations
- Rejects technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems”

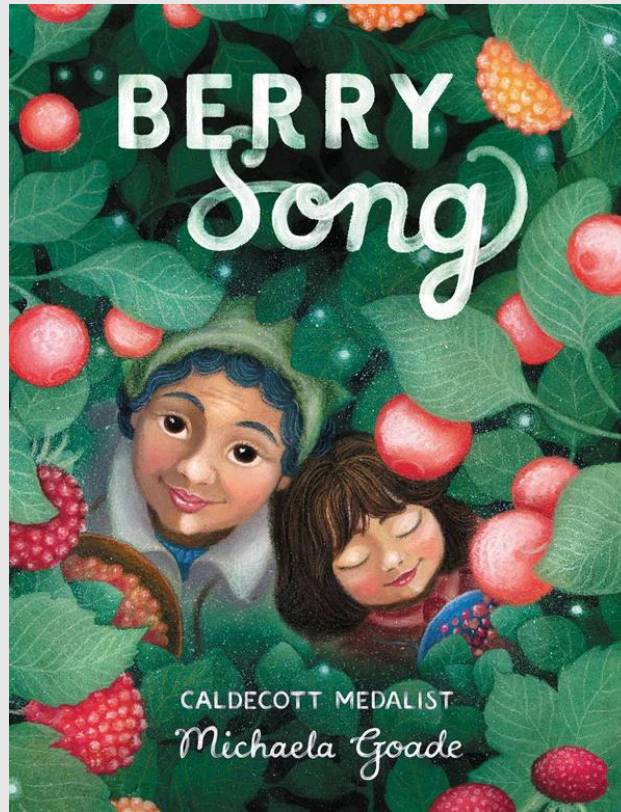
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 2



3. Works with Nature

- “Optimizes the contributions of ecosystems
- Improves resilience”

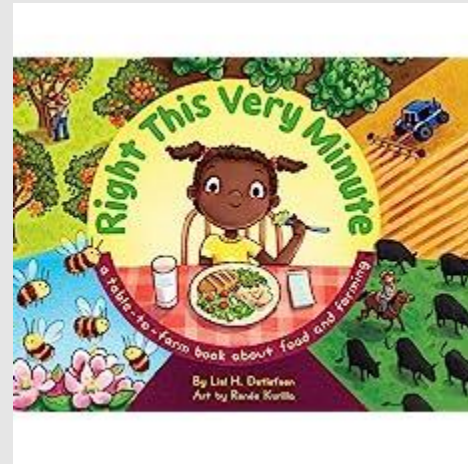
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 3



4. Values Food Providers

- “Supports sustainable livelihoods
- Respects the work of all food providers”

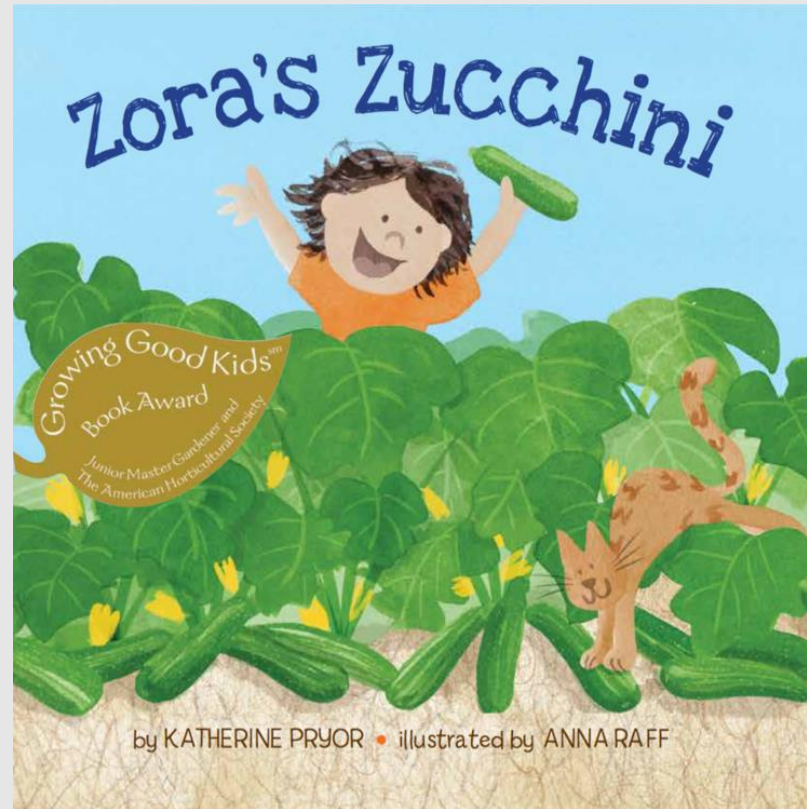
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 4



5. Localizes Food Systems

- “Reduces distance between food providers and consumers
- Rejects dumping and inappropriate food aid
- Resists dependency on remote and unaccountable corporations”

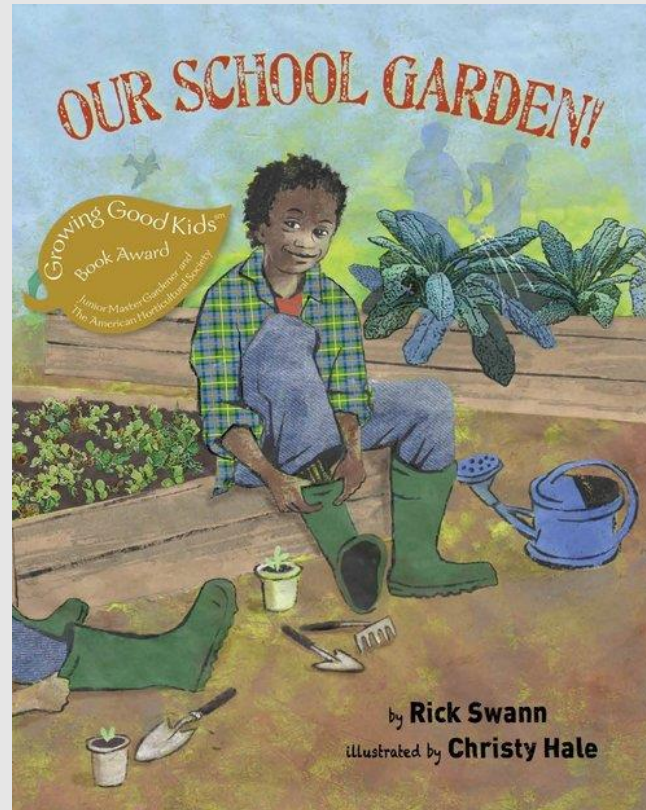
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 5



6. Puts Control Locally

- “Places control in the hands of local food providers
- Recognizes the need to inhabit and to share territories
- Rejects the privatization of natural resources”

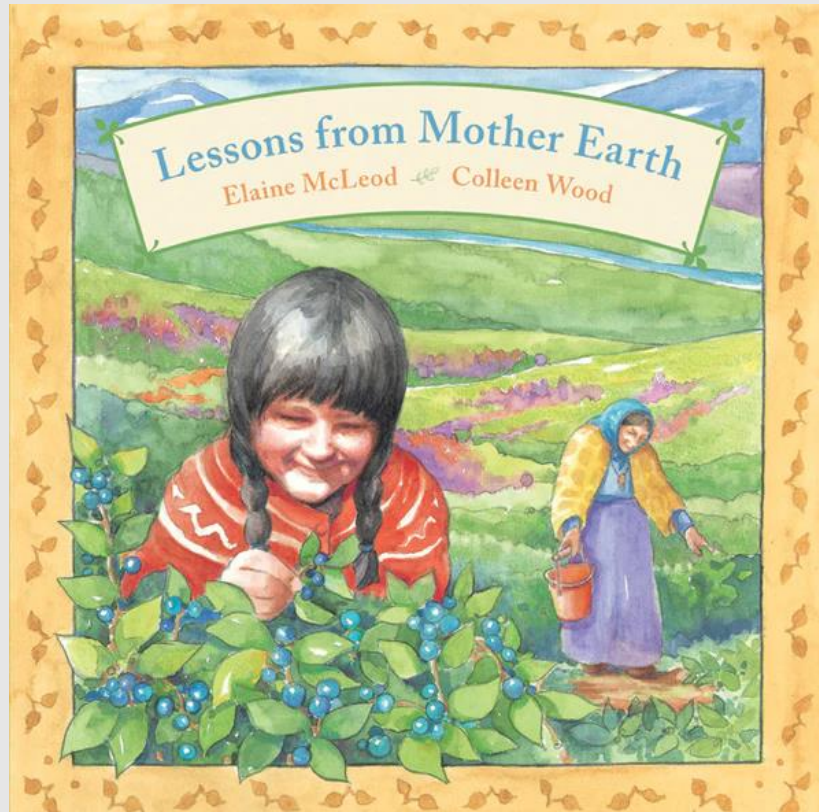
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 6



7. Food is Sacred

- “Recognizes that food is a gift of life, and not to be squandered
- Asserts that food cannot be commodified”

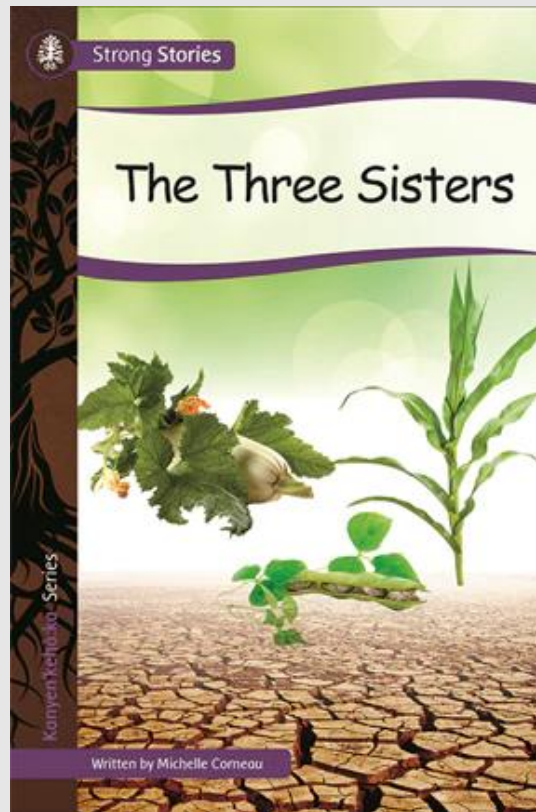
Farm PBs with representations of Pillar 7



Indigenous food sovereignty

- “Food sovereignty includes the fundamental recognition of Indigenous Peoples as nurturers of food systems that have been sustainable for thousands of years. Indigenous food sovereignty understands food as sacred and part of a web of relationships with the natural world that sustains culture and community. Food, water, soil, and air are not viewed as “resources” but as sources of life itself.”
- <https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/FSC-resetting2012-8half11-lowres-EN.pdf>
- UNCRC, article #30, Minority culture, language and religion
- “Children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion - even if these are not shared by most people in the country where they live.”

Indigenous Foodways in Picture Books



How might children participate in efforts towards securing food sovereignty?

- Growing their own food using organic methods
- Urging caregivers to purchase locally grown food
- Urging caregivers to purchase organic food
- Composting
- Eliminating food waste
- Helping to glean food
- Volunteering at a food bank or other food justice organization
- Volunteering on a farm to help with chores, weeding, etc
- Activism and agitation for policy reform

How to involve children in their local food system using picture books and human rights

- The **Dig for Your Rights!** Program 😊
- Email me for full program description, resources, and support for piloting...
- michelle.superle@ufv.ca

HEALTHY FOOD =
FOR EVERYBODY!



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

Scientists + elders =

Teach us HOW to

Grow healthy food!



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

GROWING HEALTHY FOOD
= HEALTHY EARTH!



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

Healthy farmers + farm workers

= Healthy food

Pay farmers + farm workers
healthy wages!



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

HEALTHY FOOD = LOCAL!

+ NO FOOD WASTE!



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

We ALL share the earth

We ALL need to keep the earth
healthy



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

HEALTHY FOOD =
A PRECIOUS GIFT FROM
THE EARTH



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

**Food Sovereignty =
Food security + community +
human rights**



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

FOOD



<https://20harvestchallenge.wixsite.com/20-harvest-challenge>

SAVE



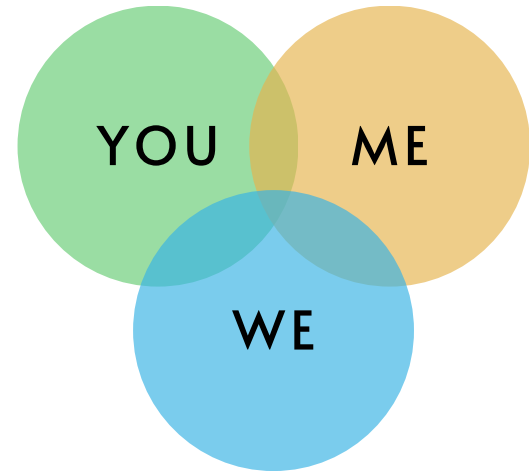
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RENT



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Eating Right(s): Silence about Food Sovereignty in Picture Books, by Michelle Superle***Abstract written for Assembling Common Worlds submission in Spring 2020**

As a powerful means of decolonizing the land, food sovereignty is one of today's key environmental, cultural, social, and political issues, yet it is an area of silence in children's literature generally and picture books specifically—despite the astounding prevalence of picture books portraying agriculture.

Although very few children in developed areas today participate directly in agriculture, a surprising number of contemporary children's picture books feature farms, farming, and/or farm animals, thus suggesting an important link between children and agriculture. Perhaps this link stems from nostalgia for the past: virtually all children participated in agriculture historically, a norm that changed in developed areas less than a hundred years ago. Today, most of these children are likely to experience agriculture solely through their reading material; this vicarious experience begins immediately, with books for the youngest children. Unfortunately, this reading experience is stiflingly narrow, since most of the hundreds of English-language picture books published within the last few decades fall into just two categories: romanticized, pastoral celebrations of the farm, or information-based texts designed to educate apparently ignorant children about food production.

This dominant focus omits several important realities about current agricultural practices. The first is that approximately one hundred million children worldwide are engaged labour in the agricultural sector, much of it rights violating. The second is that generations of Indigenous children worldwide have been forcibly denied opportunities to learn which local foods to source and how to obtain them. The last is that children everywhere are capable of participating in—even spearheading—activities to establish their own and others' food sovereignty.

Knowledge of these realities has the potential to empower and involve children—but only a small handful of recent picture books exist to inspire young readers. This presentation will examine why escapist and pedantic portrayals of agriculture in picture books effectively “silence” issues of rights and food sovereignty in this body of children's literature before exploring the potential of a few recently published outliers (see bibliography) to empower and involve readers in food sovereignty/security on their own terms.

Bibliography

- Doyle, Eugenie. *Sleep Tight Farm: A Farm Prepares for Winter*. Illustrated by Becca Stadlander. Chronicle, 2016.
- Briggs Martin, Jacqueline. *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*. Illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin. Readers to Eaters, 2013.
- Campbell, Nicola. *A Day with Yayah*. Illustrated by Julie Flett. Tradewind, 2017.
- Milway, Katie Smith. *The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough*. Illustrated by Sylvie Daigneault. Kids Can, 2010.
- Pryor, Katherine. *Zora's Zucchini*. Illustrated by Anna Raff. Readers to Eaters, 2015.
- Root, Phyllis. *Anywhere Farm*. Illustrated by G. Brian Karas. Candlewick, 2017.

Bio

Michelle Superle is an Associate Professor in the English department at the University of the Fraser Valley, where she teaches children's literature and creative writing courses. She has served twice as a judge for the TD Award for Canadian Children's Literature and is the author of *Black Dog, Dream Dog* (Tradewind, 2010) and *Contemporary, English-language Indian Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2011). Her articles have appeared in *The Lion & the Unicorn, Papers, The Conversation*, and *IRCL*.

Superle is also a Research Associate at UFV's Food and Agriculture Institute, where she researches the intersections between stories, farming, food, and people. Her current projects include The Flood Stories, a pilot assessing the viability of implementing widespread vertical agriculture in the Fraser Valley, co-ordinating the Chilliwack Schools Gardens program, and the Dig for Your Rights! program. Her articles have appeared in *Modern Agriculture* and *Edible Vancouver & Wine Country*.

The Farmer, by W.D. Ehrhart

Each day I go into the fields to see what is growing
and what remains to be done.

It is always the same thing: nothing
is growing, everything needs to be done.

Plow, harrow, disc, water, pray
till my bones ache and hands rub
blood-raw with honest labor—
all that grows is the slow
intransigent intensity of need.

I have sown my seed on soil
guaranteed by poverty to fail.

But I don't complain—except
to passersby who ask me why
I work such barren earth.

They would not understand me
if I stooped to lift a rock
and hold it like a child, or laughed,
or told them it is their poverty
I labor to relieve. For them,
I complain. A farmer of dreams
knows how to pretend. A farmer of dreams
knows what it means to be patient.

Each day I go into the fields.

Apple Season, by Joyce Sutphen

The kitchen is sweet with the smell of apples,
big yellow pie apples, light in the hand,
their skins freckled, the stems knobby
and thick with bark, as if the tree
could not bear to let the apple go.
Baskets of apples circle the back door,
fill the porch, cover the kitchen table.
My mother and my grandmother are
running the apple brigade. My mother,
always better with machines, is standing
at the apple peeler; my grandmother,
more at home with a paring knife,
faces her across the breadboard.
My mother takes an apple in her hand,
She pushes it neatly onto the sharp
prong and turns the handle that turns
the apple that swivels the blade pressed
tight against the apple's side and peels
the skin away in long curling strips that
twist and fall to a bucket on the floor.
The apples, coming off the peeler,
Are winding staircases, little accordions,
slinky toys, jack-in-the-box fruit, until
my grandmother's paring knife goes slicing
through the rings and they become apple
pies, apple cakes, apple crisp. Soon
they will be married to butter and live with
cinnamon and sugar, happily ever after.

Dig for Your Rights! A Rights-based Literary Program to Support Food Literacy, Security, and Sovereignty

**Developed by Michelle Superle: Associate Professor, University of the Fraser Valley;
Research Associate, Food and Agriculture Institute, UFV**

In collaboration with Dr. Lenore Newman and Dr. Lesley Jessiman

Contact Dr. Superle: 604-997-3887; michelle.superle@ufv.ca

PURPOSE:

The Dig for Your Rights! program uses the educational potential of picture books in a rights-based literary program to engage children in problem-based learning around food justice—including food literacy, security, and sovereignty¹.

An extensive body of research confirms that picture books are highly effective tools for influencing children's attitudes and behaviour. The Dig for Your Rights! program builds on these findings by employing visual and textual representations of agriculture in picture books to help students understand, participate in, and improve their local food systems. Since food sovereignty is a rights-based movement that depends upon its proponents to practice and promote its values actively, the program incorporates the context and practice of human rights.

Accordingly, and in the best interests of students, the program is anchored by the United Nations Convention on the Rights for the Child and can be customized to age/grade level (including senior secondary), socioeconomic groups, or/or demographic profiles—including specialized resource material to support Indigenizing initiatives.

RELEVANCE:

This project meets all the needs outlined by the BCTF in the November 2020 report, *Planting the Seeds: The Role of Teachers and the Union in Food Security in BC*². Students in the BC school system need to understand and appreciate the importance of land use, agricultural practices, and

¹ "Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems."
<https://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>

² <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED610491.pdf>

consumer behaviour in local food systems—and how these affect household and regional food security. Ultimately, this understanding should propel students to action by encouraging them to engage with food justice initiatives that support food security and sovereignty in their community.

Dr. Superle and the Dig for Your Rights! program can support the goals outlined in the report’s “Extend” section by helping to

- “Create a ‘making the case’ toolkit for teachers to advocate for rights-based, universal, place-based, and culturally relevant school food programs in their communities.
- Develop a ‘food justice lens’ to guide teaching and learning.
- Develop professional development workshops and other union-created resources on food security issues.
- Include food security in existing structures within school districts (e.g. a helping teacher on food security, link food security to mentorship, connect with community experts to bring food literacy into classrooms).” (p 7)

VALUE:

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic, along with the demands of mitigating and surviving climate instability, make transforming agricultural practices and food systems increasingly urgent. Students’ education and early enculturation in food justice via food literacy, security, and sovereignty through school programs is vital, as children and youth will mature into the very consumers and policy makers who perpetuate these movements.

Currently, resources and programs to support such initiatives are scattered, lacking a unified focus and approach. This makes them cumbersome to navigate and implement for teachers who are already time poor and/or resistant to this content area. Further, many existing resources simply incorporate this “new” content into “traditional” pedagogy (such as worksheets and teacher-led discussions), which not only fails to differentiate food justice from other content areas but also fails to create the sense of wonder, urgency, purpose, and potential necessary to engage learners.

In contrast, the Dig for Your Rights! program incorporates creative materials and activities to invite individual and collective engagement with food security topics using experiential, rights-based, student-centered, and participatory methodology.

Methodology:

Using carefully selected picture books that support food security and sovereignty principles, the Dig for Your Rights! program first immerses students in literacy circle style activities that connect ideas and images in the books with principles from the UNCRC. Next, students develop their own creative responses to and/or artistic interpretations of the book and human rights principles—either individually or in their literature circle group. Once these projects are complete, they share their creations and findings with the entire class. Finally, students create research questions about a food justice topic of interest to them, which could lead to them developing action plans and/or projects to implement—either individually, in small groups, or as a class. With support and funding, these plans/projects could actually be implemented. In these ways, the Dig for Your Rights! program bridges from food literacy to food sovereignty using picture books about agriculture alongside the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In the pilot stage, the Dig for Your Rights! program can be delivered and supervised by Dr. Michelle Superle and her research team or independently by classroom teachers whom Dr. Superle will train and support remotely. Once the pilot data has been collected and analyzed and the program fully developed, any teacher will be able to incorporate the program into their regular teaching by using whichever of the fully prepared Dig for Your Rights! Food Sovereignty Kits is most suitable for their class (i.e., depending on age/grade, demographic, etc).

The pilot for the Dig for Your Rights! program launched in February 2022 in two Chilliwack elementary schools. To measure the impact of children’s engagement with the picture books during the pilot, Dr. Superle and her research team will administer pre- and post-program questionnaires to assess children’s knowledge of, attitudes towards, and interest in participating in food systems issues. We will also collect field observations of the children’s discussions in the literature circles, as well as the research questions, creative projects, and local food system improvements they generate in the program.

Outcomes:

The results from this program will enable Dr. Superle and her research team to develop the Food Sovereignty Tool Kits and Reading Lists that we will share as open source material via the UFV Food and Agriculture Institute website and other government and non-profit platforms. We will also develop Dig for Your Rights! program resources for distribution in the Chilliwack School Districts. If the pilot Dig for Your Rights! program proves effective, then it will be implemented more widely across the Fraser Valley, in collaboration with BC Agriculture in the Classroom.

Ultimately, the program should encourage widespread development in the form of children’s increased social engagement through food justice initiatives, cultural development through

engagement with and artistic response to high quality children's literature, and environmental development through a strengthened commitment to long-term food systems improvements that support the local food system in a sustainable manner.

The core goal of this program is for the children who participate to become involved in and advocate for improving household and regional food security by implementing food sovereignty practices.

Dig for Your Rights! pilot program details:

Program Anchor Book:

Right this Very Minute by Lisl H. Detlefsen

<https://www.amazon.ca/Right-This-Minute-table-farm/dp/1948898004>

Kindergarten:

Book List:

*Connect books with Article 24 of the UNCRC:

“Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.”

Apple Cake: A Gratitude by Dawn Casey

<https://www.amazon.ca/Apple-Cake-Dawn-Casey/dp/1786032155>

Apple Farmer Annie by Monica Wellington

<https://www.amazon.ca/Apple-Farmer-Annie-Board-Book/dp/0803738889>

Before We Eat by Pat Brisson

<https://www.amazon.ca/Before-We-Eat-Farm-Table/dp/0884483525>

Grow! Raise! Catch! by Shelley Rotner

<https://www.amazon.ca/Grow-Raise-Catch-How-Food/dp/0823438848>

What to Do with What You Grew by Roland Gahler

<https://seewhatgrows.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/What-To-Do-With-What-You-Grew.pdf>

Wild Berries by Julie Flett

<https://www.amazon.ca/Wild-Berries-Julie-Flett/dp/1897476892>

Grade 5:

Book List:

*Connect books with articles from the UNCRC:

“3. Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents, or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

4. Making rights real

Governments must do all they can to make sure that every child in their countries can enjoy all the rights in this Convention.

24. Health, water, food, environment

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy.”

Anywhere Farm by Phyllis Root

<https://www.amazon.ca/Anywhere-Farm-Phyllis-Root/dp/0763674990>

Down to Earth: How Kids Help Feed the World by Nikki Tate

<https://www.orcabook.com/Down-To-Earth-P892.aspx>

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

<https://www.amazon.ca/Farmer-Will-Allen-Growing-Table/dp/0983661537>

Great Grandma's Lake by Chris Silver, Carrielynn Victor, Kris Foulds, and Laura Schneider

<https://www.thereach.ca/exhibition/semath-xotsa-great-grammas-lake/>

Our School Garden by Rick Swann

<https://www.amazon.ca/Our-School-Garden-Rick-Swann/dp/0983661502>

Wild Eggs: A Tale of Arctic Egg Collecting by Suzie Napayok-short

<https://www.amazon.ca/Wild-Eggs-English-Arctic-Collecting/dp/1772271497>

Zora's Zucchini by Katherine Pryor

<https://www.amazon.ca/Zoras-Zucchini-Katherine-Pryor/dp/098366157X>

Mother's Biscuits, by Freda Quenneville

In a big bowl she'd fluff in flour,
Make a fist-dent
For buttermilk and lard which she squeezed
Between her fingers
The way a child goes at a mud puddle,
Raking dry flour
From the sides until it mixed right.
She'd give the dough a pat for luck,
Nip a springy bud,
Roll it round and flat-it-down
With a motion
Continued to a grease-shined pan.
Mother's biscuits
Cooked high, crusty, with succulent middles
That took attention
At company dinners; but on kitchen-nights
They were finest
Soaked with pot liquor or gravy.
And those rich biscuits could put a shine
On Sunday patent
That let the Lord know who was there.
A panful stood
Ready as magic at dawn's light:
I'd take some
When leaving late to the schoolbus
And up the road
I'd run, puffing through biscuit crumbs
My haloed breath
Into the skin-sharp morning air.

Peach Trees, by Peggy Pond Church

Do not hurry past this orchard too quickly
Saying: Yes, surely that is a beautiful thing.
As though the moment of flaming were the
purpose of this orchard
Accomplished now that your all-claiming eyes
have seen it.
Remember that before these trees were ever planted,
A thin, small, unprotesting beast of burden
Dragged a curved plough through the reluctant earth,
With a man stooping behind in the hot sun to
guide it.
Remember a wide ditch had to be dug here
to coax the river
Up the dry, stubborn flanks of these hills, a
long time barren,
And that a woman, ageless as the brown hills are ageless,
Hoed the difficult earth about the young roots planted,
And dreamed, before ever the slender branches had budded,
Of yellow fruit spread to the sun in her dooryard
in autumn.

Dig for Your Rights! Food Museum + Inquiry Project

Step 1:

Explore the food museum. You are welcome—and encouraged!—to touch any/everything you want.

Do a Google search to find out more about the artifacts and items you find especially intriguing. If you don't know what the item is or is called, then use a mobile device loaded with an image recognition app (i.e., Google Lens) to identify it. Find out all about the artifact—its history (i.e., timeline), its use(s), its impact on human behaviour and/or culture, as well as on the environment, etc.

Next, identify the contemporary equivalent of the item (if relevant). List the advantages and disadvantages of the historical and the contemporary versions of this item.

Step 2:

Choose ONE of the artifacts/items you have researched for deep learning through an inquiry project.

Connections:

- First, make ONE connection between the item and yourself—your experiences, personality, family, culture, etc.
- Next, make ONE connection between item and farming and/or food.

Questions:

- Has this item affected/changed human history?
 - If so, then how?
 - If the answer initially seems to be “no”, then how many “steps” back does it take to find a connection between this item and something related to it that DID affect/change human history?
- Develop TWO inquiry questions of your own about the artifact. Conduct further online research to begin exploring answers to these questions.

Step 3:

Read the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/60981/file/convention-rights-child-text-child-friendly-version.pdf>

Connect the item with at least ONE article in the UNCRC.

Step 4:

Brainstorm a project that provides answers to your questions while also exploring and/or demonstrating a connection between the item and the human right. The project could be...

- Creative
 - For example, a poem, dance, skit, painting, piece of fibre art, song, etc
- Research focused
 - For example, writing a report or essay; creating a conference style poster, etc
- Immersive
 - For example, changing, tracking, and sharing documentation of their own behavior

Sand Plum Jelly, by Del Cain

In cabinet rows
like jars of sunrise
that trap the taste
of sand hill summer,
the plain's gift
to the patient
waits for the invitation
of breakfast biscuits.

On winter mornings
its glow and tang
sing of July,
of the sun,
of a land
that gives but
few luxuries
and those are never free.

Thanksgiving Magic, by Rowena Bastin Bennett

Thanksgiving Day I like to see
Our cook perform her witchery.
She turns a pumpkin into pie
As easily as you or I
Can wave a hand or wink an eye.
She takes leftover bread and muffin
And changes them to turkey stuffin'.
She changes cranberries to sauce
And meats to stews and stews to broths;
And when she mixes gingerbread
It turns into a man instead
With frosting collar 'round his throat
And raisin buttons down his coat.
Oh, some like magic made by wands,
And some read magic out of books,
And some like fairy spells and charms
But I like magic made by cooks

Michelle's Wacky Top 25* Farm Picture Books Award
***Picturing Agriculture* project, Spring 2020**

#1 All-round Winner:

Detlefsen, Lisl H. *Right this Very Minute: A Table-to-Farm Book about Food and Farming*. Illustrated by Renee Kurilla. Feeding Minds, 2019.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Right-This-Minute-table-farm/dp/1948898004>

Most child-centered:

Gaines, Joanna, "And Kids." *We Are the Gardeners*. Illustrated by Julianna Swaney. Tommy Nelson, 2019.
https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B07MGDYSR2/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Most inspiring:

Briggs Martin, Jacqueline. *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*. Illustrated by Eric-Shabazz Larkin. Readers to Eaters, 2013.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Farmer-Will-Allen-Growing-Table/dp/0983661588>

Most deliciously nostalgic:

Bunting, Eve. *Market Day*. Illustrated by Holly Berry. Joanna Cotler, 1996.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Market-Day-Eve-Bunting/dp/0606142630>

Most adorably ridiculous:

Ruurs, Margriet. *Emma and the Coyote*. Illustrated by Barbara Spurll. Stoddart, 1999.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Emma-Coyote-Margriet-Ruurs/dp/0773762051>

*In no particular order!

Most gratuitously American:

Goetz, Steve. *Old MacDonald Had a Truck*. Illustrated by Eda Kaban. Chronicle Books, 2016.
https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B017LE9RR4/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Most depressingly accurate about Hispanic migrant labour in the USA:

Altman, Linda Jacobs. *Amelia's Road*. Illustrated by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee & Low, 1993.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Amelias-Road-Linda-Jacobs-Altman/dp/188000027X>

Most culturally specific:

Monjo, F. N. *Rudi and the Distelfink*. Illustrated by George Kraus. Windmill, 1972.
<https://www.amazon.com/Rudi-distelfink-F-N-Monjo/dp/B0006C4S82>

Most manipulatively didactic:

Friedrich, Elizabeth. *Leah's Pony*. Illustrated by Michael Garland. Boyd Mills, 1996.
<https://www.amazon.ca/Leahs-Pony-Elizabeth-Friedrich/dp/1563978288>

Most bewilderingly propagandistic:

Dufec, Holly. *A Year on the Farm with Casey and Friends*. Illustrated by Paul E. Nunn. Octane, 2015.

https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B00TECQRAC/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Most depressingly realistic gender roles:

Esbaum, Jill. *Stink Soup*. Illustrated by Roger Roth. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2004.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Stink-Soup-Jill-Esbaum/dp/0374372527>

Most charmingly whimsical:

Näslund, Görel Kristina. *Our Apple Tree*. Illustrated by Kristina Digman. Roaring Brook Press, 2005.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Apple-Tree-Gorel-Kristina-Naslund/dp/1596431911>

Most wholesomely idealized:

Noble, Trinka Hakes. *Apple Tree Christmas*. Dial, 1984.

https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B00P1IYUWK/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Most creatively child-centered adaptation of “Old Macdonald”:

Ormerod, Jan. *Ms MacDonald Has a Class*. Bodley Head, 1996.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Ms-MacDonald-Has-Class-Ormerod/dp/061813056X>

Most celebratory of condescending American global domination:

Rand, Gloria. *A Pen Pal for Max*. Illustrated by Ted Rand. Henry Holt, 2005.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Pen-Pal-Max-Gloria-Rand/dp/B005Q796GQ>

Most reverent portrayal of grandparents on the farm (a tie!):

Yolen, Jane. *Honkers*. Illustrated by Leslie Baker. Little, Brown, 1993.

<https://www.amazon.com/Honkers-Jane-Yolen/dp/0316968935>

Wyeth, Sharon Dennis. *Always My Dad*. Illustrated by Raul Colon. Apple Soup (Knopf), 1995.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Always-My-Dad-Reading-Rainbow/dp/0679889345>

Most horrifyingly surreal:

Kettelman, Helen. *Heat Wave*. Illustrated by Scott Goto. Walker and Company, 1998.

<https://www.amazon.com/Heat-Wave-Helen-Kettelman/dp/0802786448>

Most heartbreakingly tender/likely to turn readers vegetarian:

Chase, Edith Newlin. *The New Baby Calf*. Illustrated by Barbara Reid. Scholastic, 1984.

<https://www.amazon.com/Baby-Calf-Edith-Newlin-Chase/dp/0590447769>

Most explicitly racist:

Ludy, Mark. *The Farmer*. Green Pastures, 1999.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Farmer-Mark-Ludy/dp/0966427602>

Most mystical:

Bushnell, Jack. *Sky Dancer*. Illustrated by Jan Ormerod. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1996.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Sky-Dancer-Jack-Bushnell/dp/0688052886>

Most haunting:

Spier, Peter. *The Fox Went Out on a Chilly Night: An Old Song*. Doubleday, 1961.

https://www.amazon.ca/dp/B00N93FB4A/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1

Made me the hungriest:

Briggs Martin, Jacqueline. *Alice Waters and the Trip to Delicious*. Illustrated by Hayelin Choi. Readers to Eaters, 2014.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Waters-Delicious-Jacqueline-Briggs-Martin/dp/0983661561>

Made me the angriest:

Abadia, Ximo. *The Farmer*. Holiday House, 2019.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Farmer-Ximo-Abadia/dp/082344158X>

Made me laugh the hardest:

Provinsen, Alice. *Our Animal Friends at Maple Hill Farm*. Illustrated by Martin Provensen. Aladdin, 2001.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Animal-Friends-Maple-Hill-Farm/dp/0689844999>

Made me the happiest:

Skofield, James. *Snow Country*. Illustrated by Laura Jean Allen. Harper & Row, 1983.

<https://www.amazon.ca/Snow-Country-James-Skofield/dp/0060257873>

The Farmer, by Amelia Barr

The king may rule o'er land and sea,
The lord may live right royally,
The soldier ride in pomp and pride,
The sailor roam o'er ocean wide;
But this or that, whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

The writer thinks, the poet sings,
The craftsmen fashion wondrous things,
The doctor heals, the lawyer pleads,
The miner follows the precious leads;
But this or that, whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

The merchant he may buy and sell,
The teacher do his duty well;
But men may toil through busy days,
Or men may stroll through pleasant ways;
From king to beggar, whate'er befall,
The farmer he must feed them all.

The farmer's trade is one of worth;
He's partner with the sky and earth,
He's partner with the sun and rain,
And no man loses for his gain;
And men may rise, or men may fall,
But the farmer he must feed them all.

God bless the man who sows the wheat,
Who finds us milk and fruit and meat;
May his purse be heavy, his heart be light,
His cattle and corn and all go right;
God bless the seeds his hands let fall,
For the farmer he must feed us all.

The Farmer's Creed, by Frank Mann

I believe a man's greatest possession is his dignity and that no calling bestows this more abundantly than farming.

I believe hard work and honest sweat are the building blocks of a person's character.

I believe that farmers, despite its hardships and disappointments is the most honest and honorable way a man can spend his days on earth.

I believe my children are learning values that will last a lifetime and can be earned no other way.

I believe farming provides education for life and that no other occupation teaches so much about birth, growth and maturity in such a variety of ways.

I believe many of the best things in life are indeed free: the splendor of a sunrise, the rapture of wide open spaces, and the exhilarating sight of your land greening each spring.

I believe true happiness comes in watching your crops ripen in the field, your children grow tall in the sun, and your whole family feel the pride that springs from their shared experience.

I believe that by my toil I am giving more to the world than I am taking from it, an honor that does not come to all men.

I believe my life will be measured ultimately by what I have done for my fellow man, and by this standard I fear no judgment.

I believe when a man grows old and sums up his days, he should be able to stand tall and feel pride in the life he's lived.

I believe in farming because it makes all this possible.

Blackberry Eating, by Galway Kinnell

I love to go out in late September
among the fat, overripe, icy, black blackberries
to eat blackberries for breakfast,
the stalks very prickly, a penalty
they earn for knowing the black art
of blackberry-making; and as I stand among them
lifting the stalks to my mouth, the ripest berries
fall almost unbidden to my tongue,
as words sometimes do, certain peculiar words
like strengths and squinched,
many-lettered, one-syllabled lumps,
which I squeeze, squinch open, and splurge well
in the silent, startled, icy, black language
of blackberry-eating in late September.

From Blossoms, by Li-Young Lee

From blossoms comes
this brown paper bag of peaches
we bought from the boy
at the bend in the road where we turned toward
signs painted Peaches.

From laden boughs, from hands,
from sweet fellowship in the bins,
comes nectar at the roadside, succulent
peaches we devour, dusty skin and all,
comes the familiar dust of summer, dust we eat.

O, to take what we love inside,
to carry within us an orchard, to eat
not only the skin, but the shade,
not only the sugar, but the days, to hold
the fruit in our hands, adore it, then bite into
the round jubilation of peach.

There are days we live
as if death were nowhere
in the background; from joy
to joy to joy, from wing to wing,
from blossom to blossom to
impossible blossom, to sweet impossible blossom.

Seven Pillars of Food Sovereignty

From <https://foodsecurecanada.org/who-we-are/what-food-sovereignty>

“The first six pillars were developed at the [International Forum for Food Sovereignty in Nyéléni \(link is external\)](#), Mali, in 2007. The seventh pillar – Food is Sacred - was added by members of the Indigenous Circle during the People’s Food Policy process.”

*Child friendly translation by Michelle Superle

1. Focuses on Food for People

- Puts people’s need for food at the centre of policies
- Insists that food is more than just a commodity

*Child friendly translation:

Everyone needs to be able to get healthy food. This is the most important thing to remember when laws are made.

Food is more than just something to buy and sell in stores. It is a human right that keeps our bodies alive and connects us with our community.

2. Builds Knowledge and Skills

- Builds on traditional knowledge
- Uses research to support and pass this knowledge to future generations
- Rejects technologies that undermine or contaminate local food systems

*Child friendly translation:

The old ways our ancestors grew food were good ways.

Scientists can help us combine old and new ways of growing food into the best ways of growing good food.

If new ways of growing food cause problems for people or the environment, then they are not good ways.

3. Works with Nature

- Optimizes the contributions of ecosystems
- Improves resilience

*Child friendly translation:

Good ways of growing food make the earth healthy.

4. Values Food Providers

- Supports sustainable livelihoods
- Respects the work of all food providers

*Child friendly translation:

Farmers and farm workers must earn enough money to take good care of themselves and their families.

Good ways of growing food include ways to make sure that everybody who helps get food into our bellies is treated well.

5. Localizes Food Systems

- Reduces distance between food providers and consumers
- Rejects dumping and inappropriate food aid
- Resists dependency on remote and unaccountable corporations

*Child friendly translation:

The best places to get our food are places close to where we live.

No food should be wasted.

Big companies and far away companies should not be in charge of our food.

6. Puts Control Locally

- Places control in the hands of local food providers
- Recognizes the need to inhabit and to share territories
- Rejects the privatization of natural resources

*Child friendly translation:

The people who grow our food near where we live should make the rules about that food.

We all need to share where we live—including people of all cultures, plants, animals, water, and soil.

Nobody should own water or wind or sun.

7. Food is Sacred

- Recognizes that food is a gift of life, and not to be squandered
- Asserts that food cannot be commodified

*Child friendly translation:

Food is a precious gift from the earth. We must not waste it.
Food should not be a product that is bought and sold.

Key words for flashcards, bingo, scavenger hunt activities

Pillar 1

Healthy food =
for EVERYBODY!

Pillar 2

Scientists + elders =
Teach us HOW to
Grow healthy food!

Pillar 3

Growing healthy food
= healthy EARTH!

Pillar 4

Healthy farmers + farm workers =
Healthy food
Pay farmers + farm workers healthy wages!

Pillar 5

Healthy food = LOCAL!
+ NO food waste!

Pillar 6

We ALL share the earth
We ALL need to keep the earth healthy

Pillar 7

Healthy food =
a precious GIFT from the earth