CUISR:

Community – University Institute for Social Research

Remaking the Links: Fair Trade for Local and Global Community Development

by Nancy Allan and Michael Gertler

Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

Community-University Institute for Social Research

CUISR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluates applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUISR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUISR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the roles of fair trade, organic, and local production in Saskatchewan's present and future development. It is based on a literature review and on interviews with fifteen Saskatchewan-based producers, marketers, and members of relevant non-governmental organizations. It discusses some shared principles and characteristics of international fair trade and local food production, and addresses the potential of these approaches for strengthening rural and regional economies.

Fair and local trading schemes link producers to markets in new ways and tend to have overlapping interests with respect to sustainable practices and concern for the well-being of producers and consumers. Many of the people whom we interviewed suggested that both approaches can reduce the social and/or geographic distance between producers and consumers, and be used to promote better consumption and production practices. Regional alternatives to globally sourced production may support smaller producers, strengthen producer-consumer links, and stimulate local economic development. Buying locally can be a useful way to address global problems, especially when informed by a global awareness and analysis.

The development of fair and local trading networks calls for new kinds of production and new roles for intermediaries, and for communicating the economic, social, and environmental components of a multi-dimensional definition of regional sustainability. While fair trade approaches incorporate useful social and environmental criteria, they may exclude some producers, and higher prices may limit the participation of some consumers. Local and fair trade marketing schemes benefit participating producers, but such measures must be coupled with other policies and citizen initiatives that address the problems of depressed commodity prices, high input costs, and disadvantageous conditions of market access.

Consumer interest alone is likely not adequate to promote rapid development of a market for fairly exchanged and local production. As part of a broader conception of sustainable development, concerned organizations can play useful roles identifying and evaluating activities that promote fair and local trading relations, as well as cleaner and healthier approaches to provisioning.

Fair and local trade initiatives emphasize multiple dimensions of quality and link the interests of commerce and community. Such networking creates opportunities to develop innovative research agendas, policies, and programs, and supports educational initiatives that serve both local and international development interests. Appropriate

government interventions can stimulate local initiatives that may lead to new commercial opportunities.

Respondents argued that building sustainable provisioning systems implies fair exchange, ecologically sound production, and greater emphasis on local sourcing. Successful provincial examples include community shared agriculture (CSA) partnerships, farmers' markets, and Good Food Box programs.

Fair, organic, and local trade regimes contribute to new forms of knowledge creation and exchange, and promote positive changes in attitudes and practices. When carefully designed to benefit both producers and consumers, such a combination of approaches can promote sustainable livelihoods and lifestyles. The report concludes with recommendations for promoting the development of fair trade, local, and environmentally friendly provisioning systems in Saskatchewan.

INTRODUCTION

This report on the status of fair trade in Saskatchewan and its future prospects is the outcome of research carried out in the summer of 2005 for the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation (SCIC) and supported by the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) at the University of Saskatchewan. It focuses on three broad topics: the role of fair trade and local production in Saskatchewan's economy and social identity; the common principles linking international fair trade and food production in Saskatchewan; and the potential and limitations of fair trade programs for strengthening rural communities and local economies in developing regions.

The Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation represents thirty-two international development organizations active in the province. According to its mission statement, SCIC is

> a coalition of organizations involved in international development and committed to the recognition of the dignity of all people and their right to self-determination, to the protection of the world's fragile environment, and to the promotion of global understanding, cooperation, peace and justice (Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, n.d.).

One of SCIC's major tasks has been to explore opportunities for Saskatchewan people to be involved in international cooperation and development, and it was in the spirit of such collaboration that this research has been undertaken. SCIC's commitment to international development combined with its local experience and international connections makes the organization well situated to contribute to the mapping of a provincial agenda for fair trade.

According to the European Fair Trade Association (EFTA), fair trade is

> a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers—especially in the South.[1]
>
> Fair Trade organizations are backed by consumers, [and] are actively engaged in supporting producers, awareness raising and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade (European Fair Trade Association, n.d.).

It is important to note that there are many players in the movement for fairer trade for producers. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements argues that organic agriculture involves holistic management systems that promote and enhance agro-ecosystem health, replaces off-farm inputs with careful management practices, and, wherever possible, uses agronomic, biological, and mechanical methods instead of synthetic materials (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements, n.d.). Localization may be a more imprecise concept than fair trade or organic production, but can be understood as a process "which reverses the trend of globalization by discriminating in favour of the local" (Hines, 2000, quoted in Hinrichs, 2003: 34). Hinrichs (2003) distinguishes between defensive and diverse localization, with the former tending to narrowness and isolation while the latter is found within a larger community—either national or global (or perhaps both).

While fair trade's challenging agenda is well beyond the scope of any one organization, Raynolds (2002) suggests that the fair trade movement "critiques conventional production, trade and consumption relations and seeks to create new more egalitarian commodity networks linking consumers in the global North with marginalized producers in the global South" (404). Like other certification schemes that regulate conditions of production, fair trade can transform trading relations, but, according to Raynolds, its "true significance lies in … its ability to create new links between producers and consumers" (404). According to the European-based fair trade consortium FINE, the strategic intent behind fair trade is to help marginalized producers and workers achieve security and self-sufficiency, and to empower them as stakeholders in local organizations. In the broadest sense, fair trade seeks greater equity in trade (EFTA, n.d.).

For its part, SCIC is committed to promoting fair trade and supporting sustainable rural economies and communities, locally and internationally. Fair trade can contribute to the establishment and development of sustainable communities that provide viable

[1] A collective name for the industrially and economically less advanced countries of the world, typically situated to the south of the industrialized nations (OED Online. Retrieved 29 November 2005).

alternatives to corporate-dominated markets for producers and consumers alike. Fair trade principles can support the development of production and consumption that are rooted in local environments and cultures. Fair trade goods and services are produced under conditions that are fair for producers and their communities, and encourage consumers to take a greater role in the development of food systems that serve both their needs and those of producers. Although fair trade alone cannot guarantee prosperity, it provides opportunities for better economic returns and working conditions for producers, thereby contributing to the development of sustainable livelihoods. By increasing producer returns, it can also help reduce the pressure for farms to become larger (SCIC, n.d.).

Some SCIC member organizations pursue fair trade as a development strategy for the Third World locations in which they are active. Analyzing development problems that arise from unfair trading processes and identifying opportunities to promote sustainable development through fair trade relationships can help break down artificial distinctions between the need for fair trade at home and abroad. Fair trade has a demonstrated capacity to increase the sustainability of small- and medium-scale farming operations, and to promote the health of rural communities in which they are located. It can be an effective development tool in both Saskatchewan and the global marketplace.

At the SCIC Annual General Meeting in 2004, member agencies passed a resolution that SCIC use fair trade coffee and tea at its public events, and encourage member agencies and all levels of government to use, and local merchants to sell, them. Later that year, an article in the newsletter urged readers to "Have a fair trade holiday season," pointing out that fair and local trade benefit producers and consumers, support workers and the environment, and encourage production that is linked to more responsible consumption. Several fair trade retailers were mentioned in the article and others were invited to register with SCIC's Fair Trade Directory (SCIC, 2004).

SCIC combined forces with the Saskatchewan-based producer co-operative Farmer Direct and with other producers and retailers to create an electronic Saskatchewan Fair Trade Directory to help establish links between the province's consumers and fair trade, local, and organic producers. The directory lists sources of local, organic, and fair trade products, and includes some forty-nine producers and retailers grouped under four headings (with some multiple listings): restaurants and coffee shops (20); groceries (18); clothing (7, none Saskatchewan-based); and crafts and giftware (4). According to the website, Canadian consumers are becoming more aware of their purchasing power and the possibilities for using it to promote fair trade and local production.

This report examines some de facto, or non-certified, fair trade practices carried out in Saskatchewan by public and quasi-public agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and describes what a cross-section of Saskatchewan-based producers and retailers are doing. It looks at common principles linking international and local fair trade activity, and offers some recommendations for future action to promote sustainable communities.

Thirteen semi-structured interviews were carried out by the lead author between May and November, 2005 with fifteen individuals who have formal or informal links to fair trade. Four were Saskatchewan-based producers chosen from the SCIC Fair Trade Directory, six were involved in various aspects of local or international trade, and five were affiliated with local or international NGOs whose primary or secondary focus includes fair trade relationships. Unless otherwise indicated, statements regarding specific details related to local production and marketing come from these interviews.

Fair Trade and Local Production in Saskatchewan's Economy and Social Identity

Writing about the interdependence of Canada's rural and urban communities, Olfert and Partridge (2005) explain that the rural population provides both a labour supply and a market for products made in urban centres, while employment in urban communities is a source of livelihood for many rural people. Most rural communities lack what Olfert and Partridge call the "critical mass" necessary to attract and sustain economic development without help from the surrounding region and nearby urban centres. Development on the urban fringe frequently provides important employment opportunities for rural households and may allow people to stay in their communities, where they help to generate economic activity that supports local businesses (Olfert and Partridge, 2005).

While Olfert and Partridge's description may reflect today's reality, it is mixed news for individuals from rural households who are destined to spend a large portion of their lives commuting to jobs in urban centres. Moreover, the inequality of the relationship has serious implications for rural and urban communities alike. Many observers point to the skewed nature of local and international trade as one reason for this rural-urban imbalance, and call for renegotiated trading relations to counter the trend that would mine the wealth of rural communities and developing regions rather than promote genuine interdependence.

Fair trade connections, on the other hand, can secure markets for artisans and commodity growers, provide thoughtful consumers with good quality products, and promote our understanding of connections between global and local issues. While interviewees for this project came from varied backgrounds and had different points of view, all agreed that fair trade benefits producers, whether they are artisans or peasants in the global South, or small or medium farmers in the North. Their descriptions of fair terms of trade ranged from simple statements such as "a fair return to the grower," to "producers being paid properly and immediately," to "a return that covers what it costs farmers to produce and what it costs them to live." These ideas coincide with Madeley's (2003) summary of standards that are fair for smallholders and agricultural workers, where traders pay a price that covers the cost of living and of sustainable development, along with a premium to be invested in development, and enter into contracts that allow for long-term planning and sustainable production.

Individuals interviewed for this research approached the idea of fair trade from several points of view, but shared the perspective that it addresses how we negotiate with farmers to ensure that they receive "a fair and equitable return that supports the real value and work behind producing the products." In the view of most interviewees, local trade is similar to fair trade. "It is the same as with the Mexicans who grow my coffee," one interviewee explained. "I have a connection with them, even if it's only through the dollars I pay." Although that connection may be somewhat superficial and focused on limited forms of communication and understanding, it can serve as a channel through which a more substantial relationship can be developed.

The ability of producers to negotiate is an important aspect of fair trade. As one interviewee argued, fair trade can help ensure that producers receive an adequate financial return while also fulfilling consumers' needs for healthy and affordable food. Fair trade can be an antidote, he explained, to the reigning unfair system that, in 2004, allowed corporations to make huge profits while Canadian farmers experienced their worst financial returns ever.

While acknowledging the dominance of a trading system that is beyond any one nation's control, several interviewees questioned the fairness of a cheap food regime that allows most Canadians to spend a relatively small percentage of their income on food and effectively denies many producers a reasonable return for their effort. One interviewee explained that, while the selling price of a loaf of bread is almost 300% higher today than it was in the mid-1970s, farmers receive the same five cents for the grain it contains. If they were to receive twice that amount, billions of dollars would roll into the prairie economy and bakeries would still be able to make a profit without raising the price of a loaf. This example presents a case for fair trade within Canada that would benefit farmers without hurting consumers.

In a brief presented to his fellow premiers about the situation of Canadian farmers who must compete on the uneven playing fields of the international commodity trade, Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert (2001) stated that "Canadians value their farmers, and their contribution to a vibrant Canadian economy. Canadians also have a strong attachment to the land and, above all, value fairness." The premier's call to protect farmers from unfair trading rules may not have translated into any significant change in policy or negotiation positions, but his assertion that most Canadians believe in fairness is not likely to be disputed. Most citizens, however, seem unable to translate this philosophy into concrete action where the agri-food system is concerned.

The desire for fairness to which Premier Calvert referred is reflected in the steps taken by some Saskatchewan crown corporations to move beyond simple service provision and to play a greater role in community economic development. SaskEnergy, for example, acknowledges that socially responsible companies must do more than simply provide good products and services. It attempts to promote more positive social and economic outcome by purchasing most products and services it needs in the province.

This promotes and strengthens local businesses and ensures employment for many Saskatchewan residents (SaskEnergy, 2005).

Another important provincial crown corporation, SaskTel, attempts to maximize economic activity in the province through its goods and services purchases. It considers the "Saskatchewan value-added" component of goods, materials, labour, or other services when evaluating proposals from potential suppliers. It also works with suppliers to identify opportunities to increase this provincial added value and explores business arrangements that would benefit both the crown corporation and the local supplier. SaskTel's purchasing policy takes into account Saskatchewan ownership, employment, manufacturing, distribution, or technical support; First Nation or Aboriginal ownership, partnership, employment, or training initiatives; other initiatives that support diversity; and links to SaskTel customers (Mike Calimente, personal communication). Running a successful company requires a combination of pragmatism and idealism, and with competition rampant in the telecommunications industry, it is easy to imagine that SaskTel's commitment to local purchasing may also help secure customer loyalty that good service alone cannot guarantee.

Low farm commodity prices often reflect international trade regimes in which the voices of provincial governments cannot be heard directly. Nevertheless, provincial government support for regional economic development through the promotion of mutually beneficial regional trading relationships demonstrates the potential and the impact of locally focused trading networks. If SaskTel's Saskatchewan value-added approach were applied to the agricultural industry, more producers would receive adequate returns for their products and Saskatchewan consumers would have a more secure and consistent supply of high quality, locally-produced food. This kind of locally driven strategy would necessarily result in higher food costs for consumers.

Social Labelling Strategies

Social labels seek to influence stakeholders' decisions about economic transactions "by providing an assurance about the social and ethical impact of a business process on another group of stakeholders" (Zadek, Lingayah, and Forstater, 1998: i). Perhaps the best known labels are found on organic products. Canadians can buy organic goods certified by several agencies that offer roughly similar guarantees. Local- or provincial-origin labels are also common.

In this province, the Saskatchewan Food Processors Association (SFPA) promotes its members' products with the "Saskatchewan Made" logo. The SFPA also owns and operates Saskatchewan Made in Saskatoon, which promotes and sells the food products of SFPA members. This retail outlet also stocks selected high quality non-food products made in Saskatchewan by other firms. The Saskatchewan Made Marketplace program

also serves SFPA members as a distribution and wholesale agent, something that is especially important for small and medium-sized enterprises that would otherwise face more serious barriers accessing shelf space in retail outlets in Saskatchewan and elsewhere. The SFPA has discovered that the Saskatchewan Made logo sells well in other provinces owing to the positive image that the province enjoys and to the large number of people with Saskatchewan roots who now live elsewhere in Canada.

TransFair Canada, the national non-profit organization that certifies imported fair trade commodities, such as coffee, tea, and chocolate, guarantees that the products that bear its label have been bought at fair prices from democratically-run producer co-operatives and associations. TransFair is the Canadian affiliate of Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO), the umbrella organization that represents some twenty national-level certifying bodies.

No matter under which national program they are labelled, fair trade relationships attempt to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the value of any product remains with producers. Any system that strips producers of a disproportionate amount of the surplus they create, whether in relations of production or of circulation, is unfair to them and their communities, and is, ultimately, incompatible with just forms of sustainable development..

A drive through rural Saskatchewan reminds observers of the exodus that has occurred from the province's countryside and small towns over the last several decades. Out-migration is due in part to low net income from farming and a lack of alternatives in rural areas. With producers squeezed between rising production costs and low commodity prices even as they are obliged to assume a greater share of any risks involved, the case for fair trade becomes more obvious and urgent. Farmers, the only actors in the agricultural supply chain who do not have significant market power, face tremendous pressure to become ever-more efficient. According to the National Farmers' Union (2005), unfair terms of trade drive families from their farms and lead to "an emptier, lonelier, uglier rural Canada" (20). A depopulated countryside means increasing economic and social costs for those who remain. It also reduces opportunities for other kinds of livelihoods in rural areas and prospects for the diversified food sector that is required to provide both urban and rural populations with food security.

Recognizing that the market does not necessarily guarantee a fair return to producers even in developed countries, a local group of organic farmers has developed a proposal for a fair trade program. The fairDeal, an initiative promoted by Saskatchewan's Farmer Direct co-operative, combines certified organic production, more transparent exchange relationships, and environmental stewardship to promote a fair trade regime for some sixty agricultural producers in Canada and the U.S. Offering consumers "ethically grown and traded foods" (www.farmerdirect.ca), the fairDeal ensures better returns to small farmers for their organically grown oilseeds, pulses, cereals, specialty crops, beef, and bison, available in bulk or pre-packaged. An important part of the program is consumer

education with regard to farm practices, food quality, and the fairDeal concept. Farming skills and knowledge are also promoted, and farmers are encouraged to add value to their products by moving into the ethical marketplace. Inasmuch as fair exchange networks also result in greater technical and economic self-sufficiency for producers, there is less need for government subsidies.

With its combined focus on organic production, environmental stewardship, and a fair return for farmers, the fairDeal is a kind of self-organized fair trade network, albeit lacking in formal certification. Under the fairDeal, more value remains in the hands of local processors who, in addition, adhere to high environmental standards and patronize local suppliers and processors. The fairDeal also connects local family farmers with food handlers and manufacturers in other parts of the world. As a small, producer-driven organization, the fairDeal is administered by its members through its locally based Farmer Direct co-operative. The organization claims that its local character differentiates it from fair trade networks involving organizations headquartered in the global North that manage trading relations for farmers in the South, a situation that may unintentionally remove control from those the system is meant to help. Of course, it should be acknowledged that while the "North helping South" orientation of international fair trade networks may be cause for concern, it is not completely avoidable where tropical commodities such as coffee, tea, and chocolate are concerned. These agricultural commodities cannot be produced in the global North, where there are important markets for them.

In this respect at least, local trade networks may offer greater potential for transparency, with producers and consumers relatively close to each other in both social and geographic terms. Certainly such localized trading has greater potential for direct communication, sharing of information, and mutual influence. But geographic proximity is not a panacea, and even local retail co-ops that enjoy some independence from the centralized management practices of large grocery chains can be reluctant to handle locally produced, seasonal products. At the same time, few rural residents are immune to the allure of urban centres with their one-stop, big-box shopping and wider selection and competitive prices. In the context of a revolution in retailing, a food-marketing consultant described the aggressive corporate practices of some multinationals that pressure Canadian producers and suppliers to lower their prices to compete with offshore suppliers that are not subject to equivalent environmental or labour standards.

While grocery co-operatives, like other wholesalers and retailers, are often reluctant to devote highly sought-after and expensive shelf space to products without a proven track record, co-ops could be important intermediaries in any campaign for local fair trade. One producer noted the value of marketing co-ops for small producers given that potential buyers prefer one knock on the door rather than a dozen. Collaboration, whether through formal co-operative structures or by means of producer associations or other kinds of organizations, can also help small farmers in developing countries who may have little access to market information and could otherwise be taken advantage of by

unscrupulous traders. There is also need for collaboration and cooperation in the form of links between producer co-ops in the South and retail co-ops in the North.

Farmers' Markets: A Local Solution

Andreatta and Wickliffe (2002) argue that cultural and economic factors affect our choice of food, and that consumers who shop at farmers' markets do so because they want to buy fresh, good quality products from several vendors and to "support a local farm economy, rather than … save money" (174). One interviewee explained that vendors receive "a good dollar" for their produce because consumers, like their counterparts in the fair trade marketplace, are willing to pay more for better quality goods. Many farmers' markets also attract tourists whose purchases often include other kinds of products.

To limit our understanding of farmers' markets to the buying and selling of produce and crafts, however, is to underestimate what is going on. Farmers' markets are also effective actors in the movement to civilize globalization, providing employment and income while promoting agricultural diversity, local control of food production, stronger rural-urban links, and mutual education by patrons and producers (Gertler, 2004b). In many places farmers' markets have also proven to be attractive as partners and venues for other cultural activities and community events. It is unlikely, however, that many Saturday-morning shoppers have all these principles in mind or consider how many people are employed in market gardening when they set out for the market. Their immediate concerns include quality, freshness, and the ability to deal directly with local producers, as well as to socialize with other patrons.

One interviewee referred anecdotally to a study that found that for every dollar spent at farmers' markets, another $1.50 is spent in surrounding businesses. She noted that Saskatoon's downtown Saturday market increases business at a nearby restaurant, as well as at the main public library, to the point where they must call in additional staff. The market also provides considerable parking revenue to City Hall's coffers (a source of annoyance to market organizers who argue that free parking would benefit consumers, the market, and the city). Downtown merchants in many cities have recognized the contributions that a farmers' market can make to the vitality of business districts that might otherwise lose out to suburban malls (Sanderson, Gertler, Martz, and Mahabir, 2005). The attraction of a farmers' market and its potential benefit to nearby businesses is recognized implicitly by a Saskatoon retailer that makes its parking lot available, without charge, as a site for a weekday farmers' market.

Concern for community is reflected in many ways at farmers' markets and promotes greater "loyalty, trust, and reliability" in relations between producers and consumers (Andreatta and Wickliffe, 2002: 167). While the multiplication of activities and connections to patrons is important, the Saskatoon Farmers' Market Co-operative has also been involved in policy-making through its participation in the creation of Saskatoon's

Food Charter, an example of what Gertler (2004b) describes as "projects of emancipatory politics" (30). The Charter commits the City to "strategies that increase food security for all its residents" (33). Some market representatives also participated in the campaign for a mixed-use, public space in Saskatoon's South Downtown that would include, for the first time in its history, a permanent year-round venue for the market.

The vision and processes that create and are created by community initiatives such as farmers' markets can be seen as an advanced form of community economic development. The benefits are economic, social, and environmental. Like their counterparts the world over, many producers who are members of the Saskatoon Farmers' Market Co-operative practice either organic or low chemical input horticulture. The combination of technical and social innovation is a hallmark of enterprises that have learned to think holistically about their contributions to, and the advantages of, alternative and more sustainable forms of development (Gertler, 2004).

Supporting Sustainability

Unlike most products sold at farmers' markets or in other venues of local trading and direct marketing, popular fair trade commodities, such as coffee, tea, and chocolate, cannot be produced locally. While greater reliance on local production is one of the central planks of development strategies that are designed to boost regional economies, reduce the environmental impact of long-distance transport, and build local networks (along with a local culinary culture), there may be grounds for making exceptions to this principle. Fair trade consumers seem to appreciate that small producers in the global South, who have banded together in co-operatives or democratic producer associations, offer sustainable production and processing methods and can be supported through a kind of virtual farmers' market facilitated by small number of ethical business intermediaries.

If people are perceived only as consumers, however, there can be little room for building links with neighbours or attending to the needs of the natural world (Gertler, 2004). When the consequences of unsustainability are not paid in the immediately surrounding area, there are greater risks that they will be ignored altogether. Several interviewees pointed to the important roles of enlightened and educated consumers in fair trading relations. When consumers understand that the cheapest product is not necessarily the best choice for them, their neighbours, or the planet, and then seek to act on that knowledge, there is more scope for fair trade, both local and international. As one respondent succinctly explained, vendors and consumers interested in supporting alternative channels of production and consumption rely on each other and on the intermediaries who create the connections between them—"Without one, you wouldn't have the other."

At the individual level, fair trade can encourage local and international activists to keep up their struggle against what may seem like overwhelming odds. Regarding

fair trade's benefits to her as an individual, one interviewee explained, "I like to get around Coca Cola!" While her personal choice regarding what to drink may not affect the company's sales, her participation in a successful campaign to remove soft drinks from some school vending machines does have implications on many levels, and may even open avenues for the marketing of better quality local products.

With fuller accounting and appreciation of the financial, environmental, human, and animal welfare costs of transporting animals across provincial and national borders to be killed, cut, packaged, and eventually shipped long distances to markets (including the places from which they originated), the cost of local value-added initiatives can seem less onerous. Several interviewees referred to the complex provincial and federal regulations regarding slaughter and inspection. Many of these rules and standards safeguard public health, but others, such as separate offices and washrooms for inspectors, place an impossible burden on small producers who might consider establishing a livestock product processing plant. Some informants questioned the levelness of the playing field. One suggested that while large ventures such as the proposed chicken slaughtering facility in Saskatoon produces jobs, those jobs may be more expensive to taxpayers than jobs in the relatively unsubsidized small-business sector. If economic development projects were measured against the principles of community economic development, she suggested that proponents of particular projects have to demonstrate how their proposal would keep money in the community.

Intermediaries Add Value

While many interviewees associated fair trade with fewer middlemen, they also recognized the importance of the mediating role played by ethical intermediaries representing both not-for-profit and for-profit enterprises. The motivation for fair trade can vary, and not-for-profit organizations may desire to benefit producers and campaign for better terms of trade (e.g. http://www.tenthousandvillages.ca/). More commercially motivated intermediaries seek, first and foremost, to provide themselves with a comfortable lifestyle in return for their efforts and trading expertise.

Reflecting on his career in the organic industry, one intermediary explained that farmers appreciate the services provided by traders who are able to secure a premium above the going price. The same respondent referred to the specialized knowledge that buyers must have and the attention to detail required before a sale goes through. Some people "who talk fair trade," he suggested, "don't have a clue about trade in general" or the roles played by different people, including intermediaries, who provide important services to producers. Moreover, many independent producers are unwilling or unable to devote the same level of effort to customer service that successful intermediaries do. Regarding the complexity of moving healthy food from producers to consumers, the same intermediary commented, "I understand what healthy food is as I never did before."

Referring to the multi-dimensional relationship between producers and intermediaries, one interviewee said, "we stimulate them; they stimulate us." Such close working partnership may lead to significant positive developments of many kinds, including the successful introduction of new products and the sharing of product knowledge.

Linking Food Production in Saskatchewan With International Fair Trade: Commodities, Ideas, and Organizations

While localization may provide a solution to some problems caused by globalization, Hinrichs, Kloppenburg, Stevenson, Lezberg, Hendrickson, and DeMaster (1998) suggest that local trade may have its own limitations, including the seasonality of agricultural production and the fact that local production may not be unproblematic; it may, for example, depend on expensive chemicals that harm the environment. Nor will locally-produced goods completely satisfy the desires of consumers who have learned to like the variety and apparent cheapness of products sourced internationally. Local trade has several potential benefits, the most obvious of which being increased freshness and reduced transportation costs.

Although localization may be presented by its proponents as an antidote to globalization, Hinrichs (2003) claims that it has multiple implications and meanings, including some that may, in fact, be contradictory. Although the movement to promote local food production can be an attempt "to counteract trends of economic concentration, social disempowerment, and environmental degradation" (Hinrichs, 2003: 33), it is not necessarily synonymous with either the organic or sustainable food movements. It may simply be a defensive movement, focused only on differentiating in consumers' minds what is produced locally from goods produced elsewhere.

On the other hand, by promoting more direct engagement with others in the network, local trade can be used to challenge dominant and often unsustainable agronomic and marketing practices (Hinrichs, 2003). Though it is mostly based on long-distance trade, the fair trade movement is an example of constructive engagement with others for mutual benefit—an example of what Wolfgang Sachs has called "cosmopolitan localism" (quoted in Hinrichs, 2003: 37). In spite of benefits to producers, however, international fair trade may not always be as attractive to consumers as local trade. The opportunity to support people living and working in one's own community may be more readily appreciated than supporting unseen producers far from home via a fair trade network.

On the other hand, it is quite possible that patrons of one system will more readily take to extending their proactive consumer stand to include a related set of benefits and beneficiaries. Local and fair trade may both be considered to be a kind of niche market, but their level of organization and commitment to sustainability, including growing and

trading conditions that promote pro-human and pro-environment values, are important. At their best, their features overlap, in terms of good quality, environmental stewardship, reliance on as few intermediaries as possible, and concern for the communities in which the products are produced and consumed.

The reorganization of food systems to facilitate local provisioning and stronger economic ties between adjacent rural and urban areas requires some innovation with respect to business structures. Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is one such innovation. The CSA model, which originated in the U.S. and has spread throughout North America, typically involves a contractual arrangement between a horticultural producer/enterprise and a number of individual consumer households. The latter purchase shares in an annual harvest in advance. The farmer agrees to deliver a box of produce on a weekly basis once the crops are ready for consumption. In some instances there are additional arrangements for participation in growing and harvesting activities on the part of the share-purchasing households. Other methods used to promote coordination, understanding, information exchange, and food skills include farm visits and newsletters that contain relevant recipes and information about current developments that are affecting the farm.

While this study has not focused on CSA, there is a growing literature that refers to the challenges faced by those who attempt to "resist the established agri-food system" and forge new links between producers and consumers (DeLind, 2003: 193). Such resistance, according to DeLind, must "feed and be fed by the exercise of citizenship" (193). CSA can contribute to debates about resource use, market decisions, and the conditions that "undermine small farmers, farm labour, and rural landscapes locally and non-locally" (DeLind, 2003: 206). This work, she suggests, "supports an alternative commerce, informed decision making, and regional integrity. CSA closes the distance between people and their food supply and establishes many centres of active problem solving" (206). Like farmers' markets and fair trade arrangements, CSA draws attention to problems in food delivery systems, provides opportunities for discussion, and engages participants in reconstituting (part of) the food system. DeLind (2002) also reminds us that alternative provisioning systems need to enlarge their sphere of concern and/or action. It is not enough to recast relations of food production and consumption. This must be part of a movement to engage with a wide range of fundamental community issues.

Although Saskatchewan producers grow enough cereal crops and raise enough domestic animals to supply the province's needs, there are barriers that prevent those commodities from reaching local consumers. The lack of processing facilities controlled by producers stands in the way of relatively direct, producer-to-consumer links. Most Saskatchewan-produced grain and cattle leaves the province, and sometimes the country, before reaching consumers' plates. As well as missed economic opportunity for provincial producers, when foodstuffs accumulate unnecessary "food miles" there are environmental costs in terms of fossil energy consumption and pollution. The long dis-

tance transport of foodstuffs has increased thanks in part to increased competition from other regions with similar growing conditions. As documented by FoodShare Toronto, shipping apples to Toronto from the state of Washington can produce up to forty times more carbon dioxide than trucking in apples grown in Collingwood, Ontario (Bentley and Barker, 2005). Of course, the issue of long distance transport is also a concern with respect to fair trade products imported from the tropics. This is an issue that will no doubt complicate the future of such long distance trading arrangements.

Given a suitable public education and advertising campaign aimed at consumers and institutions, there is considerable scope for expanded food import substitution. Several interviewees argued for legislation to encourage or require provincial government institutions—and those operated by cities, universities, and health regions—to purchase locally produced goods where possible. Local buying initiatives are already happening in Saskatchewan in some instances. The Saskatoon Health Region, for example, buys local produce for care homes located in rural areas, a practice that could fairly easily be adopted by other government-funded bodies.

Canadian retail and food services sales have topped $82 billion in recent years. While there are already almost three hundred commercial food processors of various sizes in the province (Saskatchewan Food Processors Association, n.d.), there is room for further expansion and new kinds of food processing initiatives that serve quality-conscious consumers here and beyond the provincial borders.

Some Saskatchewan producers have invested in storage and processing facilities so they can more adequately supply the local market for horticultural and related products year round. With attention to the further development of appropriate storage facilities, more people could be consuming local produce for many months of the year. While the cost of heat and light for greenhouses may keep us from enjoying locally grown salad greens throughout the entire year, the development of adapted growing systems and energy-efficient storage facilities would be an appropriate use of research funds. In Manitoba, the vegetable marketing board, "Peak of the Market," has aggressively marketed locally grown produce and promoted the development of storage facilities that permit producers to service regional markets throughout the year.

The presence of more slaughtering plants that meet provincial standards, backed up by training courses for butchers, would help more local producers to sell their animals within the province. Establishing additional federally certified slaughtering plants would facilitate the marketing of locally produced meat (both fresh and processed) outside the province. While selling outside provincial boundaries is not necessarily compatible with strict definitions of local production and consumption, designations such as "Prairie made" or "Made in Western Canada" might appeal to some consumers and would be consistent with principles of regional economic development, especially where it involved replacing imports from further afield.

While there are many practical and cost-effective options for diversifying and adding value to local production, one interviewee regretted the closure of the province's Rural Service Centres that had helped producers and communities organize and plan for community economic development. He worried that the closure of such publicly funded facilities reduced access to a broader range of information, as well as impartial and disinterested technical advice. Furthermore, imported solutions (especially those promoted by commercial sources) are not always the most appropriate, adapted, or cost-effective for dealing with local conditions.

Unpacking Local Production

Local production is often proposed as an alternative to large-scale industrial production dominated by corporate interests. Qualities associated with and ascribed to "local" frequently include small-scale production, the participation of independent producers, relatively direct producer-consumer links, greater contributions to local economic development, and support for regional diets/cuisines (as opposed to homogenized mass market food products). Local production and consumption is also seen as promoting democratic participation in decision-making and local control. Rarely, however, are consumers presented with such convenient and clear-cut choices. Local production is not automatically a guarantor of cleaner or more socially sustainable production (Hinrichs, 2003; Hinrichs et al, 1998). Not all small entrepreneurs, for example, have close positive connections with their communities, nor do they necessarily provide good wages and working conditions. Some large corporations may offer well-paid jobs and additional benefits for their employees. They may also operate state-of-the-art facilities that incorporate various forms of environmental protection, using technologies that are too expensive for smaller concerns. There is, it would seem, need for further inquiry.

Some food activists emphasize buying locally because doing so appears to address at least some of the social and environmental problems that are associated with globalization. If globalization is understood to be a problem, then localization might be a solution. Buying locally and more directly can certainly promote person-to-person connections that facilitate discussion and innovation. Focusing on local issues allows people to respond concretely to their concerns about global development rather than feel completely powerless. Practical, local actions such as community kitchens and community shared agriculture have positive consequences for people directly involved, but they also link them to other people working on similar initiatives in other locations.

Many obvious and less obvious benefits arise from growing one's own food and from purchasing foodstuffs as directly as possible from local producers. Much of what has occurred in the name of modernization and economic progress, however, has lessened the likelihood that this will occur. Many interviewees described ventures that reduced the social and economic distance between producers and consumers by limiting the number

of intermediaries involved. This also helps to ensure that producers receive a greater percentage of the sometimes higher price. In addition, consumers may be more willing to pay a small premium if they have more direct contact with a supplier/producer who can provide trustworthy information and assurances of wholesomeness and "integrity." Examples include direct sales at the farm gate or at farmers' markets, and selling through local stores that identify sources and promote Saskatchewan-made goods.

While physical proximity of production and consumption is an important attribute that should be considered by those who would promote a sustainable food system, it is not the only one. Hinrichs and others also point to the need for economic viability, eco-social justice, community participation, wholesome and health-supporting foodstuffs, and the promotion of diversity in diets and food cultures. While all these dimensions may be compatible with local production, it is unrealistic to argue for a "local only" diet (Hinrichs, 2003).

Because processes (participation, decision-making, and control) and outcomes (equity, sustainability, and community) are both important elements of food systems, examining social as well as spatial relations can help us move beyond the global-local debate by focusing attention on relations of production and exchange (Hinrichs et al, 1998; Hinrichs, 2003). This perspective points to a broader understanding of the social regulation of trade that goes beyond earlier regulatory interventions such as the standardization of weights and measures, a necessary but not sufficient precondition for fair trading relationships. In fact, many people interviewed for this project are attempting to combine a global perspective with local action, from shopping at local farmers' markets and buying fair-trade products when possible, to joining international solidarity movements and action-oriented coalitions such as the *Via Campesina* and the "Make Poverty History" campaign.

It should be noted that some of the examples mentioned above involve the intervention of new kinds of intermediaries, such as entrepreneurs who identify market opportunities and link potential consumers with producers. Their role may include educating both producers and consumers in the process and facilitating communication up and down a supply chain. The intermediary organization can be, for example, a farmers' market co-operative, a non-profit organization that addresses food security issues, or a public agency that contracts with local suppliers.

Spatial relations are rarely simple or straightforward, and food activists are challenged to develop a deeper analysis that focuses on the multiple dimensions of food production and trade relations. One interviewee proposed using a three-part food labelling system that would show the presence or absence of genetically-modified elements, food miles, and the farmers' share of the selling price. It would be informative, not to mention subversive, if consumers could read that farmers receive only five cents for each loaf of bread sold.

While the local basis of many alternative food-related initiatives is important, the nature of the connections among social actors is critical. Although this observation applies to the food system in general, it is particularly relevant to the movement for fair trade. Describing food-related production and trade as local or global may provide a useful starting point but does not complete the task of analyzing the economics and ethics of multifaceted exchange relationships.

Fair Trade: Moving Beyond the Global-Local Dichotomy

The creation of more discerning tools for evaluating consumption choices also calls for new ways to communicate important differences and dimensions of quality (see Jaffe and Gertler, 2006). In the absence of face-to-face communication between supplier and buyer, this would argue for new approaches to labelling that go beyond some of the simpler schemes to identify local products (see Burros, 2006). A rigorous and transparent certification process may also be necessary to support claims regarding product qualities that can and should be rewarded in the marketplace. The fair trade movement is one relatively robust and comprehensive method for coordinating alternative value chains, and for addressing and communicating the array of issues and choices that are involved in "eating well." Fair trade, organic, and local production, alone or in combination, may offer a vehicle for development of agricultural and food sectors in which environmentally conscious small- and medium-sized producers can survive.

Although there can be no simple rules to guide those wishing to promote sustainable development when purchasing goods and services, some analysts have offered alternatives to the "single bottom line." Gertler (2003) suggests a composite of economic, social, and environmental measures to evaluate the implications of personal and corporate practices including decisions about what and where to buy, as well as decisions not to purchase goods and services that are ethically or environmentally compromised. (See Hassanien, 2003, on the elements of food democracy.) Community economic multipliers evaluate the way dollars invested or spent locally are recycled through a region. Similarly, "social multipliers" could be used to measure positive (and negative) impacts of organizations and their activities, such as training and capacity building among employees other stakeholders. In the same vein, "environmental multipliers" could be used to assess the environmental benefits and ecological costs of production activities in a manner similar to full-cost accounting.

The production and marketing of fair trade coffee, tea, and chocolate may satisfy several of the criteria mentioned above, but they are not likely to become local commodities in a strictly geographic sense. Spatial relationships are themselves multi-dimensional and subsume, or overlap with, many other issues that should be considered in the development of an equitable and attractive food system that meets the needs of all participants. It is important, therefore, to consider the character of the localities and

social locations that are being linked in long-distance trading relationships. Furthermore, while fair trade addresses both the quality of the products and the conditions under which they are traded, conventional producers—the majority—also need a fair return for their investment of knowledge and effort. Indeed, it is difficult to argue that a few producers should benefit from fair trading relations while most do not, especially given today's limited market for certified fair trade and organic products and the overwhelming corporate and government support for commercial input-intensive agriculture.

Given the need to promote and support many kinds of sustainable practices, it would be useful to develop the institutional/organizational capacity to measure and improve the broadly conceived performance of provisioning activities in the areas of concern discussed above. This would include organizational capacity to analyze procurement and production decisions in the light of the triple bottom line, but might also require the development of a specialized centre where methodologies could be elaborated, training conducted, and studies undertaken on particular sub-sectors and locales. Such research and evaluative capacity would be important, for example, in helping to assure that the most relevant positive elements of local, fair, and organic trade could be incorporated into regional initiatives for sustainable development. It could begin by studying local and international examples of fair trade practices, and identifying ways in which they could be usefully applied and extended.

Strengthening Regional Economies: Local and International Initiatives

Given the magnitude of the economic problems facing agricultural producers in many parts of the world, it is clear that ad hoc, piecemeal initiatives are likely to be inadequate (Robbins, 2003). While fair trade projects help some farmers to survive by accessing specialized niche markets for at least some of their production, such projects do not directly address the problem of low prices for most farm commodities, the high cost of inputs, and the conditions of market access confronting a majority of agricultural producers (National Farmers Union, 2005). Nevertheless, Robbins (2003) acknowledges that fair trade may be a useful initiative given its contribution to increasing consumer awareness about the economic conditions facing small farmers around the world, and that fair-trade exchange relationships can and do result in extra income for some smallholders. Fairer prices can also help to support producers while they work on diversification or on developing other value-adding projects. Fair trade initiatives can have positive impacts even for those who do not directly participate. Fair trade has a demonstration effect and provides a yardstick against which conventional trading arrangements will be judged.

At the other end of the exchange relationship, increased information and new analytical capacity may lead to more sophisticated choices by consumers and to greater demand for fair trade products. However, in the absence of organizational champions,

public debate, and government programs that mandate new forms of labelling and disclosure (see Doorey, 2005), consumer demand alone may be rather slow in creating a more significant market for fair trade products and services. A successful producer and marketer cautioned that specialized producers must be careful that their industries are not taken over by conventional traders who are able to influence prices and pressure producers to sell for less. Establishing and publicizing specific trading principles and criteria is one way to reduce the negative influence and impact of trading schemes with watered-down standards. Such schemes trade on the aura and reputation of fair trade but fail to deliver the "goods." Moreover, they divert consumer dollars and attention, and cause confusion and scepticism. NGOs and governments that wish to promote fair trade should have a clear understanding of the goals and objectives of alternative trading regimes, and exercise due caution when contracting with suppliers and endorsing programs.

Fair trade that involves new associative forms of producer and consumer organization is consistent with initiatives to integrate full-cost accounting frameworks into the design and evaluation of food systems. Working in co-ops and other forms of social enterprise, producers may be better able to act on their collective interest in protecting agricultural resources and rural environments (Gertler, 2001; 2004). Fair trade networks involve new forms of knowledge—and knowledge exchange—about food production, transportation, and marketing. The "re-skilling" of both producers and consumers can support substantive changes in food systems and diets, and in attitudes towards health and other environmental agendas (Jaffe and Gertler, 2006). In addition to providing an alternative to the dominant (unfair) trading system in which small and medium producers are subordinated and exploited, fair trade's support for organic farming, direct marketing, and co-operative approaches can promote attractive forms of sustainability and hope for a future that offers real choices and options.

The attachment that farmers feel for their land is often acknowledged, though not fully understood, by both consumers and policy makers. While the financial pressures inherent in the conventional system may lead farmers to cut corners on many fronts, more adequate support from neighbours, business partners, consumers, and various interested communities can help them to resist such pressure and to adopt practices that are more sustainable in many ways (Gertler, 2003). Movements for safe food and food security, humane treatment of animals, and social justice for farmers and farm workers all support the call for fair trade. Sustainable development initiatives can be the result of strategic alliances between urban and rural residents with broad, far-sighted agendas. Fair trade, with its focus on conditions of production as well as the terms of exchange, and its emphasis on the multiple dimensions of quality, provides a strategic, integrating link between the concerns of commerce and community.

Good Food Box (GFB) projects offer people an opportunity to eat well, and to do so economically. This innovative arrangement for linking producers and consumers also

allows people to participate in the movement for food justice and to support local production. It is an example of local action that tackles a broader global problem. Saskatoon's GFB program is the second largest in Canada, providing food boxes to some two thousand participating households each month. It provides high quality, locally produced food to consumers from various socio-economic levels and supports the development of stronger (regional) rural-urban linkages while also addressing the issue of resource use in food transport. GFB subscribers are able to connect their consumption practices and principles: while accessing fresh, high quality, local produce, they are influencing the configuration of the food system in their region and participating in a worldwide movement for equitable trade.

Supporting Local Action

While revenues from the sale of fair trade, organic, or locally produced goods are important to participating producers, the ideas and sentiments motivating and flowing from such transactions are likewise significant and socially useful. Exchange relationships facilitated by the stores in the Ten Thousand Villages network augment the livelihoods of artisans in the global South while promoting greater awareness of development issues among Northern consumers. This network also mobilizes the energies of many volunteers who help run the stores and learn about the communities that furnish the crafts. The volunteer labour that is essential to the success of the Ten Thousand Village model is part of what distinguishes this kind of social enterprise as a community-supported, mutual learning endeavour. For better or worse, this reality may also prevent the easy reproduction of this model in stores relying on wage labour.

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2003) suggests that incomplete, but not impartial, information about products and their implications renders consumers less able to act in ways that fully reflect their social and environmental values. A discourse dominated by such skewed and misleading information also helps to shape worldviews and consumer philosophies that may ignore important issues of eco-social justice that are subsumed in exchange relationships. Inadequately informed consumers do not question the limited "choices" presented to them. One result is that producers and intermediaries are forced to compete in a marketplace predicated on "externalized social and environmental costs" (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2003: 11). Although consumers' knowledge can never be complete, information gaps can be reduced and informed choices supported if physical and/or social distance between producers and buyers are diminished.

Networking between local producers and consumers (who may also be researchers, teachers, or workers in public or private sector organizations) increases opportunities for an exchange of views and information, and can lead to development of locally relevant research agendas, policies, and programs. Stronger linkages between local producers

and scientists are important if educational and research institutions are going to support sustainable forms of development that serve the interests of local people. Solutions developed with local situations in mind may also lead to commercially interesting innovations and capacities that can be applied internationally. This is an example of the links between sustainable local development and more positive and effective actions on the global stage.

A local organic specialist argued that an inexpensive but effective project would be to have a garden in every schoolyard where children could learn about biology, zoology, and healthy eating. Such activities can promote critical thinking skills that are applicable in many areas of life. Young people involved in such holistic and integrated exercises can also become educators of their peers and adults in their lives, with beneficial effects for all concerned. (See Hassanien's (2003) discussion of edible schoolyards.)

It was likewise suggested that the province could provide an incubator for research on locally appropriate enterprise. Instead of investing heavily in the research priorities of agribusiness companies, the province could promote research into locally relevant alternatives. This could include the facilitation of peer-to-peer relationships among practitioners working on community gardens, community shared agriculture, farmers' markets, and other local and practical alternatives to conventional agricultural practices. With appropriate support, local participants could more effectively and systematically share information and ideas, augmenting the capacity and insights of producers and technical experts.

Moving Forward: Making Trade Fair in Saskatchewan

The assumptions behind more just and sustainable production and trading schemes—emphasizing fair exchange, greener production, and local provisioning—are that they provide good value for consumers, return a fair share of the selling price to producers, and impose minimal harm on (or even improve) the environment. The goal is to create production-consumption systems that meet our needs and desires in ways that also yield significant positive economic, social, and ecological advantages of various kinds. The goal is nothing less than sustainable regional development. Improved systems of production and trade potentially benefit all producers, not just those who are pioneers in such initiatives. Unlike narrowly conceived commercial projects, they also meet the needs of the broader community, including those not well served by existing arrangements.

In Saskatoon, fair and local trade are combined in the Good Food Box program, where creating mutually beneficial relationships between consumers and regional producers is considered more important than obtaining the lowest possible price. Throughout Saskatchewan, some two dozen farmers' markets serve consumers who want to eat fresh

and locally grown food, interact with those who grow it, and reap the supplementary economic and social benefits that accrue to their communities (See Sanderson et al, 2005). The Saskatoon Food and Prince Albert Food Charters (http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/SaskatoonFoodCharter.pdf; http://www.fooddemocracy.org/docs/PrinceAlbertcharter.pdf) have involved citizens from many sectors in describing principles and practices that can lead to better trading relationships and better-fed people.

The recently released Manitoba Food Charter, the first province-wide charter in Canada, likewise brought together a wide range of rural and urban organizations and involved extensive consultations with citizen groups. It seeks to promote healthy relationships between producers and consumers in urban, rural, and northern communities; fair trade and diverse local production; sustainable livelihoods for farmers, fishers, harvesters, processors, and distributors; and respect for the traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering practices of First Nations and Metis peoples (Stevenson, 2006; see also http://food.cimnet.ca).

Interviewees from various sectors agreed that fair trade can be a win-win scenario when the terms of trade are shaped by producers and consumers to their mutual benefit, an idea that is also implicit in many examples of local and organic trade. Provincial and local governments can be useful and effective brokers of such relations, helping to promote new links between and among producers and consumers. Following the example of Saskatchewan's crown corporations, the province could review its purchasing arrangements and incorporate policies supporting and reporting on the use of certified fair trade goods in addition to those provided by local enterprises. This would enhance the province's ethical purchasing record and could encourage individuals and enterprises to follow suit. Support for farmers' markets, such as the City of Saskatoon's plans for a permanent year-round home, could help to promote ventures supplying good quality, locally-produced food, while also fostering new producer-consumer connections. Long-term storage facilities could ensure that locally-grown produce is available for most months of the year, and development of local butchering and processing facilities could supply local and regional markets in a manner consistent with animal welfare and human health.

Lobbying for fair trade on the international level would demonstrate that the province stands behind its own producers and add another voice to the call for fairness for all producers. Although the provincial government is not in a position to intervene directly in international trade organizations and negotiations, it could work to strengthen the case for fair trade by supporting the practice in its own purchases and speaking out about the reasons for doing so. It could urge the Government of Canada to follow the lead of the European Union by reducing or removing tariffs and quotas on some goods produced in poorer countries, and by not requiring that sensitive sectors in developing countries be open to unregulated international trade. On a practical note, the province could follow the European Parliament's example and purchase certified fair trade products such as

tea and coffee for its own use. The Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority could promote fair trade wine, available from both Chile and South Africa and sold in several European jurisdictions, in addition to the organic wine it currently offers. An important component of this activity would be to establish and publicize criteria for evaluating and assessing goods and market exchange practices that meet the standard in terms of fair trade.

When advertised as such, fair exchange calls attention to skewed trading relationships and what can be done to correct them. This itself is an important contribution to international debate. Fair trade intermediaries and promoters must also work to increase fair trade's market share. There are successful examples of international fair trade in the province, including the Ten Thousand Villages stores in Saskatoon and Regina. The Saskatchewan Food Processors Association's Saskatchewan-Made Marketplace in Saskatoon is an example of an initiative to support value-adding activities and more local and regional trade. SCIC has conducted pioneering work to identify and promote fair, organic, and locally produced goods through its website and has decided to promote further development of the sector by, among other steps, brokering research such as the present study. Such initiatives are part of a worldwide movement that enjoys widespread and growing public support. The provincial government could augment its support for fair trade, organic and Saskatchewan-made initiatives by publicizing and supporting existing activities, providing short- and long-term financing to projects and groups that further these agendas in advanced and innovative ways, and by commissioning further research on options and alternatives in this arena.

The practitioners interviewed cited examples of successful small- and medium-sized, certified or de facto, fair trade enterprises, and recognized the significance and influence of such partnerships. They generally saw fair trade as an important development tool that promotes the interests of both sellers and buyers, as well as those of the broader communities in which they live and work. They also generally subscribed to the view that the advantages of fair trade arrangements, even where these are combined with organic production and/or local trading, cannot be fully realized absent a political climate in which the need for fair and sustainable trade is recognized, and actions taken to promote it.

Fair trade can strengthen the economies of communities and regions but must be backed by effective social marketing if it is to provide "more jobs, more population, and more wealth." There are many challenges facing those working to promote better trading and provisioning relationships. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence worldwide that appropriate actions taken by governments, non-governmental organizations, co-operatives, corporations, and individuals both stimulate critical reflection and demonstrate that sustainable dividends flow from commitments made to equity and fairness in trade, durable local development, and ecologically sound production practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

SCIC

1. Maintain the credibility of the terms "fair trade," "organic," and "local" by endorsing and publicizing commonly-accepted definitions for each term, and publishing them as part of the SCIC Fair Trade Directory. (For a definition of fair trade, see http://www.eftafairtrade.org/pdf/Fair-TDAP.pdf).
2. Ensure the effectiveness of the SCIC Fair Trade Project by informing current registrants of the endorsed definitions and inviting them to describe how their operations conform to the principles governing fair trade, organic, or local production, and, if appropriate, to re-categorise their listings.
3. Continue to invite producers, traders, and retailers to register with the Directory in accordance with the recommendations listed above.
4. Promote fuller implementation of sustainable production, trading, and consumption principles by facilitating dialogue and education, and by supporting and partnering with appropriate facilitating organizations.
5. Explore and promote the links between fair trade and the movement to develop local and regional Food Charters.

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

1. Support international and local movements for fair trade and encourage the wider adoption of fair trade guidelines and principals within the province; endorse a commonly-accepted definition of fair trade, such as that drafted by FINE (http://www.eftafairtrade.org/pdf/Fair-TDAP.pdf), and encourage other levels of government and organizations to do the same.
2. Declare the legislature a fair trade zone, promote the use of certified fair trade coffee and tea in offices and at events held within the legislature, and encourage members of the Legislative Assembly to use fair trade products in their constituency offices.
3. Encourage the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority to investigate the feasibility of adding fair trade wine to its listings and commit to using fair trade and Canadian wines at government-sponsored events.
4. Endorse and publicize national Fair Trade Weeks (the first two weeks in May) and work with SCIC and other interested groups to promote fair trade. Activities could include poster and essay contests for elementary and high school students, and an annual Fair Trade Fair at the legislature.

5. Create links from Government of Saskatchewan websites to the SCIC Fair Trade Directory, the Saskatchewan Food Processors Association, and provincial farmers' markets websites.
6. Support local farmers' markets by providing financing for publicity, research, education, and technical advice; and investigate the feasibility of supporting the further development of marketing and storage facilities.
7. Continue to develop criteria and programs to define and identify Saskatchewan-made products.
8. Encourage hospitals, schools, and other public agencies to buy local and fair trade products.
9. Encourage all Saskatchewan Crown corporations to continue the development of local sources and to incorporate fair trade criteria in their procurement policies and programs.
10. Develop ways to support local initiatives for sustainable development, including the provision of relevant services and activities previously delivered by Rural Service Centres.
11. Continue to promote fair employment, safe working conditions, and environmental safeguards as components of a provincial fair trade agenda.
12. Promote the value of fair trade by developing teaching resources that explain the connection between fair trade and sustainable development, and publicize tools that are available to local and international practitioners.

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