

DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO REGAINING CONTROL OVER OUR FOOD

TRANSCRIPTION AND NOTES

0:00 Welcome to Module 5: Different Approaches to Regaining Control Over Our Food. In this module, we outline why there is a need to build sovereignty into our food systems, and the ways in which any of us can start this journey.



0:22 100 years ago, it was fairly normal to grow your own backyard garden and source your food from relatively local markets. If something was out of season in your area, you usually had to wait for the growing season to return or make use of preserves. Thanks to globalisation and new growing technologies, this is no longer the case. We now have access to bananas, tomatoes, and bell peppers year-round, as well as produce many of us in Canada may not have heard of such as okra, daikon, bitter melon, and chayote squash.

0:57 Access to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, as well as affordable meat, eggs, and dairy products, is not a bad thing, but relying on international exports comes with risks. In Module 1, we explored how our food system is vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters. Flood, drought, and other disasters globally can impact whether or not food is even available for international trade. Additionally, war and disease can significantly disrupt trade networks. Further, in Modules 2 and 3, we explored how rural and Indigenous food systems are even more vulnerable due to their distances from urban centres, smaller populations, and lack of services. Localised disruptions, such as washed out roads or multi-day blizzards can dramatically impact the availability and quality of food in these communities.

1:56 Luckily, many individuals and communities are making strides in regaining ownership over their food systems.



2:05 For example, Rural Routes to Climate Solutions is an agriculturally based non-profit that connects farmers to regenerative agriculture solutions (1). Regenerative agriculture is an approach to farming that aims to improve the land you are working (1). Strategies, such as using cover crops, intercropping, and rotational grazing, seek to protect the land from erosion, balance nutrient absorption with nutrient building, and reduce overuse (1). Intercropping, for example, is a strategy whereby several different crops are planted together, which diversifies the nutrients pulled from the soil and contributes to biodiversity (1). This strategy supports carbon sequestration, which results in healthier soil, plants, and pollinators (1). Not only does a farmer’s yield increase, but they contribute to land stewardship and climate mitigation (1).

3:02 Permaculture is similar, although often operates on a smaller scale than regenerative agriculture. It too seeks to work with the natural environment to improve soil health and biodiversity (2). Further, permaculture is a holistic approach to community building that protects against erosion, supports natural water purification, grows food for oneself and community, and limits waste materials (2). It thrives on diversity and a circular economy, whereby materials are used until they can be returned to the earth.

3:39 There are times, however, where the soil we live and work on is not suitable for growing food due to previous land uses or pollution. Urban gardens and container gardening offer a solution to these limitations and can allow for gardening even in small spaces. In Red Deer, the Common Ground Garden Project is an initiative which is repurposing a former Electric, Light & Power site for a community garden (3). This space is interactive, moveable, and educational, and operates as a space of learning, growing, and relationship-building (3). In their recent harvest supper, the Common Ground Garden Project team fed over 160 community members in order to raise awareness of their efforts (3).

4:29 Even small steps can pave the way for food sovereignty. Whether you have a front lawn or a balcony that can be converted for food growing, or

you move to support local producers, we can all play a role in strengthening our local food system.

4:44 To learn more about the different ways we can pursue food sovereignty, check out our list of videos:

- [Rural Routes to Climate Solutions - Podcast](#)
- [Verge Permaculture - Mini-Documentary About the Avis Urban Permaculture Homestead](#)
- [Common Ground Garden Project](#)
- [Alberta Urban Garden](#)
- [The Self-Sufficiency Garden](#)
- [GROW: An Indigenous Food Sovereignty Story](#)
- [World Famous Permaculture Property Tour](#)
- [Regenerative Agriculture on a Small Scale](#)
- [Tea Creek Farm - Indigenous Owned and Operated](#)

4:51 You can also check out our references to learn more about food sovereignty and climate adaptation strategies in the food system. Thank you for joining us for Module 5.

REFERENCES

1. Resilient Rurals. (2022). Rural Routes To Climate Solutions: Why More Farmers Are Taking The Road Less Travelled.
<https://www.resilientrurals.com/rural-showcase/rural-routes-to-climate-solutions%3A-why-more-farmers-are-taking-the-road-less-travelled>.
2. Verge Permaculture. (2023). What is Permaculture?
<https://vergepermaculture.ca/what-is-permaculture/>.
3. Rethink Red Deer. (2024). Common Ground Garden Project.
<https://rethinkreddeer.ca/commonground>.