Call for Abstracts
Workshop on Feeding Cities: Ethical and Policy Issues in Urban Food Systems
Northeastern University, Boston, MA
March 27-28, 2015

Food defines cultures, is at the heart of religious and ethnic traditions, is central to familial and social gatherings, gives us joy (and sometimes pain), and shapes the rhythms of daily life. Of course, food is also about survival. Societies thrive – or collapse – based on ready, reliable, and equitable access to food. There is currently rising demand for food due to population growth and spreading affluence, as well as increasing production and distribution challenges, such as water and land scarcity, climate change, depletion in seafood stocks, and dependency on global food chains. All of this takes place amidst accelerating urbanization; over half the world’s population now lives in cities. Together these trends make studying urban food systems - and developing practices and policies for improving them - crucial to building socially just and ecologically sustainable societies.

This workshop aims to foster cross-disciplinary inquiry on topics relevant to urban food system sustainability, health, and equity. We invite abstracts of no more than 750 words from researchers working on social, ecological, political and ethical issues associated with urban food systems. Topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Whether local or global food systems are better positioned to promote food availability, food security, resilience and food justice in cities
- Opportunities and limits of urban agriculture and community-based food systems
- Relationship between urban food systems and other urban issues, such as affordable housing, land use and environmental justice
- Evaluation of particular technological and system innovations within urban food systems, with respect to such things as increasing food production, improving tracking/monitoring, promoting food access, and reducing wastage and improving waste management
- Historical perspectives on food systems and cities
- Strategies for developing climate change resilience within urban food systems
- Studies of the structure and efficacy of alternative food advocacy groups or movements, as well as assessment of concerns raised regarding them
- Whether the concept of ‘food miles’ is useful and, if so, for what end or in what contexts
- Studies of the economics of urban food systems
- The role of cultural identity in urban food practices and the construction of urban food systems
- Issues related to food system workers, particularly in urban contexts
- Evaluation of food security programs in cities – federal, state, local and non-governmental
- The extent to which cities ought to be able to regulate foods to promote public health
- Challenges of democratic governance related to urban food system

The abstract submission deadline is December 15th, 2014. Please email submissions (and questions) to Christopher Bosso (c.bosso@neu.edu) or Ron Sandler (r.sandler@neu.edu). Those accepted will be asked to submit papers one month prior to the workshop, and papers will be made available to other workshop participants. Papers can be of any length and may be stand alone articles or chapters/sections of larger projects, but speakers will be limited to twenty-five minutes to present their ideas, followed by thirty minutes of discussion. For more information go to http://www.northeastern.edu/foodsystems/.

This workshop is sponsored by the Consortium on Food Systems Sustainability, Health, and Equity and the Ethics Institute at Northeastern University, with financial and logistic support by the NU Humanities Center, College of Social Sciences and Humanities.