



# Awakening to the need for community resilience: experiences within a rural food distribution cooperative

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## Abstract

*The disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has posed challenges to food sector organizations, while also providing an opportunity for growth and change. As a staff member and an eater-volunteer of Eat Local Grey Bruce (ELGB), we reflect on our experience in this paper. We share the anticipatory planning and “white knuckling” through massive increases in demand and the host of subsequent changes in health and safety protocols, warehouse organization, product aggregation and employee retention and recruitment. We also discern growing organizational resilience and linkages with other food security and sustainability-oriented organizations, in keeping with ELGB’s values. Continued exploration of the ways in which multi-stakeholder, socially and environmentally principled food organizations in rural areas navigate disruptions is warranted.*

## Keywords

Food workers, health & safety, resilience, political ecology, sustainability, local food movement

## Introduction

Disruptions pose substantial challenges for food security (Béné, 2020), as well as for production and distribution organizations, their staff and the stakeholders which make them up (Arrell Food Institute undated). As recently articulated by the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (iPES-Food, 2020), the multiple challenges which have rapidly arisen with the COVID-19 pandemic share commonalities with other disruptions. COVID-19 is a significant disruption globally, with diverse impacts in rural Canada, as exemplified by the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF)’s ongoing research and reports (see <http://crrf.ca/covid19/>). In Ontario, the Local Food and Farm Co-ops network (LFFC), put together a special series on responses of their members during the COVID 19 pandemic (<https://www.localfoodandfarm.coop/coopcovidwebinars>).

As a staff person (Jeannine) and an eater-volunteer (Donald) of one rural food distribution cooperative spanning two Ontario counties (Eat Local Grey Bruce (ELGB), <http://eatlocalgreybruce.ca/>), we started collaborating during the early days of the pandemic on health and safety protocols. In response to the Critical Dietetics call, we initiated a process of reflection on our experiences. With the approval of the ELGB’s board, we drew upon existing reports, newsletters, policies, quantitative indicators, and conversations with other stakeholders. In this paper, we provide a brief organizational history and then move quickly to interwoven stories of our experiences, along with key indicators which Jeannine has tracked for ELGB. We conclude with thoughts for moving forward.

## Origin and nature of ELGB

Eat Local Grey Bruce (ELGB) is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder local food cooperative (Gray 2014). It was

initially envisioned and instigated by food system analyst and design consultant Thorsten Arnold, and organic food chain manager Kristine Hammel, both of the Grey Bruce Centre for Agroecology, as a design for food system resilience based on extensive review of existing coop systems in the US and Germany. ELGB was established in 2015-2016, with the guidance of similarly minded organizations (e.g. Fresh City in Toronto and Eat Local Sudbury), the partnership of several dedicated local producers and the support of generous investment, both financial and in volunteer hours. It was founded with several purposes in-mind: to provide a climate-effective distribution mechanism; to promote ecological farmers in Grey-Bruce; and to build a local food community by connecting eaters with producers. Eater members order online and receive delivery to their home or to pick-up locations, e.g., cafes, workplaces, or specialized retail stores. ELGB allows local producers a market without having to spend so much time marketing, selling, and distributing.



*Figure 1. Eat Local Grey Bruce delivery truck at warehouse with logo*

ELGB is seen by those involved as an innovative model, combining both pick-up from farms and delivery to customers along the same routes. It is particularly important for small, local producers and processors, for whom distribution can be a key challenge in such a large geographic area. The cooperative serves most of Grey and Bruce counties as well as the town of Collingwood, approximately 150km north to south and 150km east to west. The goal of the cooperative model is to create

an environment where, ideally, risks and benefits of building the food system are shared between producers and eaters, encouraging collaboration and shared ownership. Members, together, have an emotional and fiduciary stake, and all who participate have a say. Many involved are passionate about local and organic food, supporting local processors and farmers, and caring about the health and wellbeing of themselves and their communities.

Eat Local Grey Bruce saw notable growth through 2019, most notably by word-of-mouth, growing from a staff team of three to four to nine by early 2020, and seeing a sales increase of 35% year-over-year. Focus continued on identifying and supporting the membership; on seeing members as individuals and providing a good customer service experience, an approach which helps members to be more understanding when things go bump. Efforts are made to make things right as able, assisting in member retention. By early 2020, ELGB was aggregating products from about 50 producers, both members and wholesale suppliers, complementing local products with wholesale goods that are not available locally, like pulses, flours and nuts. The cooperative has had financial struggles, with marked net losses in preceding years. Important boosts came from donations, e.g. the Grey Bruce Agriculture and Culinary Association, having a similar mandate for supporting local food, donated over \$10,000 as it was winding down. ELGB has also relied heavily on federal, provincial, and regional programs to fund infrastructure investments and cover labour costs. Emphasis remains on improving cashflow and reducing reliance on external funding from a strategic planning perspective, as well as via incorporating practical means such as adjustment of producer margins (recently raised to be 25%), a slight increase in delivery fees, expansion of wholesale offerings, and an operations-specific focus on improving efficiency and eliminating waste.

### **A Staff Member Reflection on ELGB: Jeannine's Perspective**

As with many jobs within the local food economy, working at Eat Local takes a degree of grit. It is a reputation I heard before working there, and one I've experienced and observed first-hand since. Staff have historically worked longer hours than contracted, with low wages acting as a barrier to retention, requiring exceptional commitment to the vision of ELGB. It is a dynamic environment, where folks are expected to hit the ground running, pay great attention to detail, and

be both self-motivated and a team player. Problem-solving is key. Substantial effort is put into the hiring process, in part to try to be transparent about what folks are getting themselves into as well as assessing fit both ways. I'm very proud of the team that has come together, both from a staff and a board perspective. It's a skilled crew, with lots of collective professional and life experience. One of our board members often says it's hard to believe that the cooperative has managed to both attract and retain such great contributors. Even so, there are sometimes still times where it feels like we are holding the ship together with duct tape and bubble gum.

I feel one of the strengths of a cooperative approach is the emphasis on community and values-based approach. ELGB brings together a diverse group of people, perspectives, and skillsets with the goal of doing things differently, as outlined in our vision and mission:

*"Eat Local Grey Bruce is a vibrant community of eaters, growers and makers of food, supporting each other in their commitment to local food production, ecological practices, healthy eating and meaningful employment"*

*"Eat Local Grey Bruce is committed to connecting eaters with local growers and makers of food. It is a cooperative non-profit that empowers all its members to participate in an equitable and vibrant food culture..." (<http://eatlocalgreybruce.ca/about-us>)*

ELGB is a cooperative in the true sense of the word. There are divergent opinions and competing motivations when pulling together any large and diverse group of people, though a strength of this model is the common goal that drives outcome. To best succeed, it requires dedication and give-and-take from all members as the organization continues to mature. Producers gain a wider market without the need to focus as greatly on marketing or distribution. Historically, producers have paid many of the upfront cooperative expenses, keeping cash flowing, with delays in payment as a result (recently 90-120 days, previously as long as 180+ days). "Eaters" pay what are perceived as higher prices to have access to a one-stop-shop for local and responsible grocery offerings. Staff wages are low, without benefits, as are the wages of many in food work. This latter fact is perhaps best demonstrated by how my partner and I have occasionally been introduced within our community – "This is Jeannine, she manages Eat Local. And this is Mike, who enables Jeannine to work for Eat

Local". I fully recognize the role that having a spouse with stable employment plays in my ability to work for the cooperative. I also recognize that sometimes our own staff, many of whom are part time, cannot afford to regularly buy the bulk of their groceries from ELGB, even with the employee discount. We do our best to make up for the low compensation by being a pleasant and supportive place to work, with occasional in-kind perks. We continue to focus work on improving conditions for all involved, as to be more inclusive and accessible, providing better payment terms for producers, more accessible costing for eaters, and true living wages for employees.

## **An Eater's Reflection on ELGB Donald's Perspective**

I joined ELGB as an eater in late 2018, at the suggestion of a farmer friend down the concession from the farm of our son and his family in West Grey. The farmer is a producer, providing asparagus and shiitake mushrooms to the cooperative, and is also on the ELGB board. We share values in relation to ecological production and cooperatives as an alternative to the corporate dominated food system. We both support local producers, to keep caring eyes on the land, and processors, as a way of rewarding ingenuity and good jobs in the food sector.

Initially, I ordered infrequently, for several reasons: we produced a range of vegetables in our son's community supported agriculture (CSA) operation; my wife worked with her bees to produce our own honey; we had laying hens and raised broiler chicks to birds over the summer; we already sourced produce, other meats and breads from producer friends; and having recently retired, we were not regularly at the farm. We focused on things we could not already access, like sausages, sprouts, and neat products like sea buckthorn berries (which I have subsequently planted on the farm). We would pick up our order from a shed, including cooler and freezer, at another producer friend's place. Sometimes we forgot about our delivery and had to be held for us for a day or so until we came by.

## **Arrival of COVID-19 Pandemic**

Even with some inkling of what was coming down the pipeline, the impacts of the pandemic came on fast and furious. COVID-19 arrived at a time of year where many in the local food community are usually experiencing a lull, and able to have some much-needed rest before

slowly ramping towards another busy agricultural season. The endeavor of operating an essential business (which notably supports portions of the local food economy) during a pandemic at times felt daunting, but this is where our resilient cooperative structure shone through (Birchall et al., 2009), with the help of some fortunate circumstances.

A lean audit was performed by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) in early March. Lean is a methodology that seeks to maximize value from the perspective of the customer (any stakeholder) while minimizing waste (<https://www.lean.org/>). Given Jeannine’s background in Engineering and experience with Continuous Improvement, many ideas regarding operational improvement had already been coalescing. She had pandemic planning experience in a previous role (with a multinational healthcare company) that kick-started early assessment of risks and allowed for early following of trends globally and relevant literature so that we could be as prepared as possible. Calls were made to Grey Bruce Public Health with questions in February, and basic risk assessments were completed by early March and revisited frequently. These served us well, as almost every situation we envisioned, save experiencing less demand, became a reality. We were fortunate to have two of our eater members, both MDs, one practicing as a public health consultant (Donald), who formed an ad hoc volunteer COVID advisory committee. Their guidance has proven invaluable in navigating the public health labyrinth this pandemic has presented. Many of our producer members generously gave of their time, even with suddenly increasing demands in their own operations, e.g. the board president’s operation saw a three fold increase in door traffic to their on-farm store. Producers attended weekly (or more frequent) board meetings and did shifts in the warehouse or driving deliveries as needed. Friends-of-friends and relatives also willingly pitched in.

Our store, pre-pandemic, was open five days per week, with many orders trickling in late in the order period, and capacity limits were not given much thought. That changed with intensity in mid-March after the announcement of the state of emergency in Ontario (2020 March 17th), when we saw sales of 2.5 times our standard sales, partway through our order period. As much as we had engaged in a degree of pandemic planning, we were dizzied waking up to these orders and sales literally overnight. Table 1 and figure 2 share

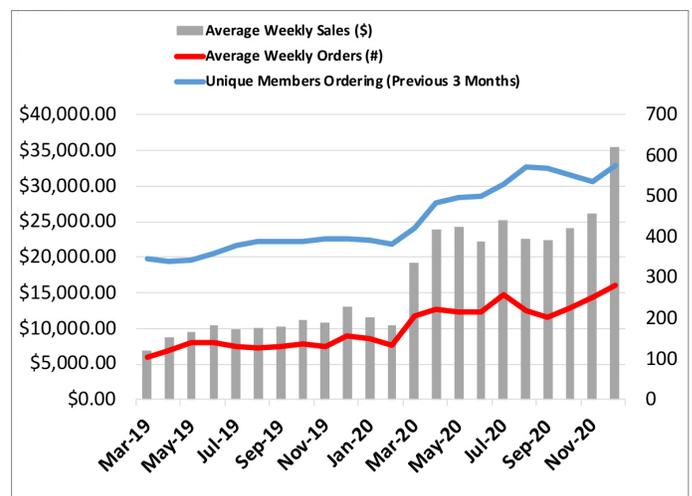
these metrics.

**Table 1: ELGB Weekly Statistics (2020)**

Weekly Stats (2020)	Before COVID-19	COVID-19 Wave 1	As of Dec 2020
Typical Sales	\$10,000	\$24,000	\$35,400
Max Sales	\$15,000	\$27,000	\$39,250
Typical # of Orders	140	225	280
# Households Ordering*	382	485	574
Store Opening	5.5 days	<1 hour (limits)	2 days
Operational Days	4 days	5 days	6 days
% Home Deliveries	40%	95%	64%
# Staff (mix of FT & PT)	9	16	25

\*Based on the previous 3 months, of separate households ordering

Registrations for membership and orders started pouring in. Average on-line orders jumped from 133 per week in February to 205 in March, with eater membership rising from 382 households having ordered in the previous three months on March 13 to 453 as of March 23. Average weekly sales increased from \$10,393 in February to \$19,249 in March. As the goal had always been to grow, no method of stopping orders had been built into the on-line system, which overwhelmed it, requiring quick-thinking and notable efforts on the part of both staff and on-line platform consultants (Local Food Marketplace) to address.



**Figure 2. Eat Local Grey Bruce Indicators Mar 2019- Dec 2020**

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## Responding to Disruption

We convened an impromptu board meeting to digest what was happening. Would we be able to handle it? What do we need to communicate to our membership? As a local food hub that was already set up to deliver, in a time where conventional grocery options seemed more precarious, it really was our time to shine. As much as we were daunted by the challenge, it was also somewhat energizing, as we recognized a possible silver-lining of this pandemic as being an increased interest in local food and the desire of many to become reacquainted with where their food comes from. One of our producer-board members said it well, "...the pandemic is another test of local agriculture, and its ability to respond. It brought to life a desire to support local agriculture and food businesses among community members. Many awakened to the need for community resilience."

Despite all the things we had going for us, we still faced several major challenges. With the closure of many of our drop spots, we quickly adapted to 95% home delivery from 40% home delivery, quite a logistical feat, not without continued pains. We had a delivery van that was central to our business that increasingly appeared to be nearing the end of its useful life. It had a reputation of breaking down during our notable sales weeks, and no sooner had the paperwork been signed for a new delivery van (funded by the Canada Emergency Business Account), than our existing van finally opted to give up the ghost. We went from expecting to soon have 2 vans in rotation to having none, as the new vehicle was not yet ready due to COVID-related delays to install its refrigeration unit. This is a great example of how the cooperative advantage came to play, with one of our producers kindly loaning us a vehicle (albeit unrefrigerated) at a modest rate to help us get by.

We fell back on single-use packaging at a time when we were hoping to move to minimize reliance on single-use plastics and reduce waste within our operations overall. Consideration of our environmental footprint is key within our mission, and it felt strange to have so quickly switched gears from reducing waste to having to make it on a regular basis. We gave up our recognizable green delivery totebags for brown paper bags for the time being. We look forward to again properly calling these bags home. We recognize that many of these "zero waste" initiatives have been shelved temporarily and look forward to continuing to revisit them as we are able. We did manage to decrease some aspects of

our waste stream by strengthening our connection with the Owen Sound Hunger and Relief Effort (OSHaRE), providing additional support at a time when they were also facing an extraordinary increase in demand. Through this connection, we donate goods that are still of good quality, but no longer saleable by the following delivery period, for immediate use.

During the initial wave of the pandemic, we were reaching newly imposed store sales limits within hours, requiring the online store to close early to respect capacity constraints. One week we hit \$27,000 in less than an hour, having overshot our \$25,000 limit in the two minutes it took for the store to close. This presented a challenge that was less straightforward to address: the departure of a number of long-standing eater members during the first wave of the pandemic. Sometimes they left vocally, sometimes we read of their frustrations in community groups on social media, and sometimes they dropped off silently. Many regular members were unable to place their orders, expressing deep frustration, and despite our having closed off the cooperative to new memberships (a source of a different kind of frustration), there was a perception that we were letting down our existing members for the sake of new ones. These experiences also drove home for us the need for timely communication, both within our membership and to the wider community. The situation felt painful to many of us on staff - our members matter. We get to know names as we pack. We get to know preferences. We notice when folks drop off. The reality was that the brunt of the increase in volume was due to existing members ordering more items more frequently. Sporadic orders became weekly orders, and order sizes increased. Folks were clearly stocking up and buying more from us more often. We established standing orders for many of our longstanding members as a means of trying to accommodate them.

## Eater's transition with the Pandemic – Donald's Response

When the COVID-19 pandemic started in early spring 2020, we started to order more regularly from ELGB, and larger amounts, given the home-farm delivery fee. That is, when we could get our order in. We rapidly found out that we were not alone in turning more to ELGB! I remember having to be alert to when the store opened and start ordering right away. There were several times that we could not get into the on-line store in April, or that it closed before we could order. Reading

the weekly ELGB newsletters helped me understand what was going on. I was struck by the agility of the organization to respond to huge increases in demand, turning a threat into an opportunity (Kolodinsky et al. 2020).

Once we could get back on to the on-line store later in May, we started ordering almost weekly from ELGB to feed ourselves and our extended family. Our orders now included meats we could not access, treats like bakery products, macarons and frozen pies, as well as regular orders of yoghurt and milk.

The good part about home-farm delivery was that we no longer had to worry about the logistics of pick up, but we did have to remember when the ELGB truck arrived and get our delivery into coolers in the basement. We also found that the paper bags with cooler packs didn't work very well, so we stopped ordering items which had to stay frozen, such as ice cream and dumplings.

## Organizational and Relational Changes

With demands on producers increasing as the year progressed, the board increasingly moved from a working / actively volunteering board to more of an advisory and decision-making one. The initial layout changes in April allowed for more efficient operations, though warehouse capacity remained a bottleneck in terms of warehouse capacity, stymieing ability to keep up with continuous growth in demand. As a result, new members were waitlisted, with the list soon growing to several hundred people.

We frequently reminded ourselves that at a time when even large chains, with all their resources, had difficulty finding sufficient staff, keeping shelves stocked, and filling complete orders, we were holding our own. A major question remained how to increase capacity without overextending. Fortunately, we were already recipients of both an Agriculture Canada Local Food Infrastructure Fund grant and Carrot Cache funding. The latter is a grant affiliated with The Big Carrot, a Toronto-based food worker cooperative, that allowed us to shift funding to more timely needs, such as the purchase of refurbished display freezers. The freezers were a big help, saving employee backs and making more efficient use of warehouse space. Even so, physical distancing remained less than ideal in our improved but limited warehouse space, prompting mask wearing as a practice before it became mandatory. Further, a prolonged heat wave, with lack of adequate ventilation, meant that heat

reduced staff efficiency by upwards of 25-50%. The heat was oppressive and required more frequent breaks and a slower pace for staff to cope, and a less efficient workflow to maintain product quality, particularly for greens and chocolate. A small cooling unit was sourced, providing just enough relief to take the edge off.

The pandemic has provided opportunity for creative solutions and organizational development. Out of respect for use of existing resources and to not over-leverage, staff proposed that the warehouse could modify delivery routes and move to two separate aggregation periods in a week, with producer members providing goods to the warehouse biweekly rather than weekly. This move was adopted by mid-summer, effectively increasing capacity by upwards of two thirds. Given board support, this decision marked staff taking a larger role in operational direction, with redefinition of roles that followed, including the establishment of the Executive Director role and supporting Staff Management Team. Sales held steady through most of 2020, including during stages of reopening in the summer, with a climb seen to the end of the year (refer to table 1 and figure 2). The winter holiday season often marks the peak of the demand at ELGB, and we were able to adequately handle the bump due to the hard work that went into continued adaptation through the fall.

The other interesting thing that became apparent early on is that people have different stress responses, and a global pandemic is most certainly a major source of stress. For every individual who was wishing us well and getting in touch to see how they could help, we encountered another who was angry that they couldn't sign up as members, squeeze in an order after limits had been reached, or that items were missing from their orders due to supply chain issues. Some members seemed to not understand the cooperative model, or the limitations that exist in supply chains during a pandemic, creating what seemed like a sense of entitlement to access the local food system. We often reminded ourselves that stressed out people react in funny ways, that the rare but notable encounters that struck most were likely folks that were worried, scared, and anxious.

We also think of the good things like the calls and notes of support, concern and gratitude that we received from members and the eater members who made us masks or dropped off hand sanitizer when it was hard to find. Working through challenges with Local Food

Marketplace (LFM), our chosen online platform and a key part of our business, allowed us to grow together. We were able to source packaging supplies when few were available due to connections with other local businesses who went to bat for us. Our longstanding wholesale suppliers often honoured previous pricing, even though they were well within their rights to increase costs given demand. Likewise, we set out, at least initially, not to increase costs to our members during what was a difficult time for many. The numerous adaptations, pivots and collective contributions, made our cooperative truly resilient (Ducheck, 2020).

Staffing during a pandemic is also not without its challenges. Jeannine hired a Warehouse Co-manager in January of 2020 with the goal of working fewer hours, and ended up having regular weeks of 60-70 hours in those first few months of the pandemic. Focus remained on trying to have a limited and consistent core staff at the warehouse, with enough back-up as to not leave people feeling spread too thin. Wages are an issue in local food work at the best of times, particularly given a reported living wage of above \$18/hr in our region (<https://unitedwayofbrucegrey.com/2019-living-wage/>) and a shortage of good, affordable housing to boot, worsened by the pandemic as many people from urban climbs sought haven in more rural communities. Staff turnover has been a reality we have worked hard to address. We are lucky to have a dedicated core staff team, as well as a supportive board who focuses efforts on improving staff compensation as a form of retention. Even so, rules change during a pandemic. Everyone has different life demands and threshold of risks.

One night in April, revisiting risk assessments with our Board of Directors, the very real risk of having insufficient staff available to remain open at some point was mentioned. We had just received word of a staff member having to isolate due to their spouse having had contact with a possible case of COVID-19 earlier in the day. While extending no practical risk to staff at Eat Local, it left us short a key team member. At that time, we thought of a possible future but not immediate concern – what happens when possible exposure means several people are out? Instead, as it was the first instance of the pandemic feeling “too close to home” for many, we suddenly lost several staff members and volunteers at once. Calls were made later that following morning and we cobbled together a core staff, enabling us to get through the week. We made the tough call to close for the following week rather than to push

through. In the end it was a good call, as it allowed us to gain our bearings, reorganize the warehouse to better accommodate more capacity, and focus on hiring.

Due to that experience in April, we have moved to as best we could incorporate cohorted staffing during elevated waves of the pandemic, with the hope that if one shift must isolate, it hopefully would not remove everyone, leaving sufficient staff to continue to operate in some capacity. It also means less flexible, and in some cases, fewer opportunities for hours for some of our part time staff, which is not ideal. We were fortunate to have several team members join for a time while their other jobs got put on pause, only to have them leave again as usual positions ramped back up. We also needed to have a trained pool of occasional employees and volunteers in place just in case folks got pulled elsewhere, whether due to illness, family needs, or vacation. Local employment services (e.g., YMCA) helped us to find new employees and fund training for some of them, which was a great boost. The reopening of the Canada Summer Jobs program and related, generous support of our Member of Parliament, also assisted us in staffing, essentially kick-starting our offering of permanent part time jobs to local youth. Prior to the pandemic, new staff onboarding was staggered one at a time, not wanting to overextend. By early May, we had 6 folks starting in a single week, and have frequently onboarded in batches since.

## Reflecting back on 2020

We have yet to see the usual quiet or shoulder seasons that we are used to. Many of us are still in awe of how we managed to pull together these past many months. Much of it is admittedly a bit of a blur. It truly speaks to the strengths and resilience of the organization, and the dedication of many of those involved. While many have commented that our response was well-executed, it was still not perfect. We think of a dedicated volunteer who found other areas of our community to assist in as we adjusted to our new normal, and who graciously returned in the fall. We are thankful for the kind words and patience of many of our eater members as we adjusted. We are grateful to the board for their dedication and trust to hire and pivot operations as needed, and to our producers for pivoting with us and for their essential contributions to keeping the cooperative going. Jeannine is beyond thankful to her spouse, who kept the homefires burning, most notably navigating the move to fully remote work while managing home-bound, virtually-schooled children.

As we write this paper, we are wrapping up another year. We are finally getting time to reflect on and digest how far we've come. We recently surpassed sales of \$1 million, a milestone for many small businesses, and growth of almost 120% year-over-year. We made the choice to have our regular two-week shutdown over the holidays in spite of record sales, in the name of sustainability. Closing gives staff a much-needed rest and provides ample time to catch up on organization and fine-tune layout at the warehouse. We wonder how we'll hold the ground we've gained once a degree of normalcy has returned to our communities, and where we'll go from here. Donald points out that, although we are a mighty mouse, we are yet a mouse. (about 1% of farm producers serving 1% of the households in Grey-Bruce). We often say that Eat Local is as much about building relationships as it is about moving food, something that has certainly held true throughout the past year. There is plenty of room remaining at the table in terms of being part of a local food system, and we remain open to helping others contribute to the building of a sustainable food system in addition to continuing to grow into our hopes as an organization (Anderson et al. 2014).

### Author Bios:

Jeannine Kralt has a degree in Biological Engineering from the University of Guelph, and is Green Belt certified in Lean and Six Sigma. Her experience includes several years working for large multinationals within the food and over-the-counter pharmaceutical industries. She loves to write, including many reports for organizations of which she has been a part. She is passionate about building sustainable local food systems and food security within communities, and is glad to have found a place where her skillsets support her values.

Donald C. Cole is a public, occupational, and environmental health physician, with a masters' in health research methods, and post-doctoral studies in ecosystem approaches to health. During over forty years of practice, research and policy work, he has emphasized multi-stakeholder action processes to change eco-social conditions to improve health. He serves as a consultant, clinician (including South East Grey Community Health Centre), emeritus professor (University of Toronto), and member of a family farm.

Both live in Grey County, Ontario, with our (extended) families.

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