



LAURA LENGNICK

EXPANDED
& UPDATED
SECOND
EDITION

Resilient Agriculture



Cultivating
Food Systems
for a
Changing
Climate



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GENERAL READERS GUIDE

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General Questions

- What is one lesson that you think the dandelion can teach us about navigating change?
- Think back to how it felt the first time you noticed a change in the weather or in plant or animal behavior that made you wonder if you were seeing a sign of climate change. When and where was this? What did you notice? How did this experience make you feel?
- What does the fable about the blind men and the elephant teach us about solving complex problems like climate change?
- What resources do you count on to cultivate resilience at home, at work and in your community?
- Can you share an example of how you have used place-based knowledge to enrich your life?
- Can you share an example of a spiritual or cultural ethic that guides your decisions about how to treat others?
- Can you think of any changes that you can make to live a more regionally self-reliant lifestyle?
- What does “wealth” mean to you?
- Have you ever experienced a disruption in your food supply? How did you recover from the disruption, for example, did you substitute a different food, find a different place to buy the food, substitute a different food or just go without?

General Questions

- What are some common ways that you measure success at home, at work, and in your community?
- What is stopping U.S. farmers and ranchers from adopting sustainable agriculture practices that cultivate the climate resilience of our food system?
- What do you know about the land, people and communities that feed you? Who grows, harvests, processes and delivers the food that you eat? How do your choices in the supermarket shape their world and yours?
- Can you share an example, from your own life, of a solution that failed because it did not “connect the dots” between symptom and cause?
- Do you eat any foods that are produced locally or in your region? When and why do you eat these foods?
- Are you ready to take action to promote the well-being of land, people and community in the place you call home? What will you do to cultivate a resilient agriculture (see p. 206)?
- What is one important lesson that you have learned from the stories shared in this book?
- How has reading this book changed the way you think about resilience?

PART 1

WHY THINK RESILIENCE?

I want to have hope, but I don't know.

There's also the reality of how we're treating the planet right now. I think we are all going to be a little lost in the dark as the weather keeps getting more and more chaotic.

— Mary Berry, Southern Exposure Seed Exchange, Mineral, Virginia

How do you think we are treating the planet?

Chapter 1: Waking Up to Climate Change

- Have you had a “wake up call” on climate change? What came calling?
- What are some ways you have taken action on climate change in your life?
- What does resilience mean to you?
- What kind of hope do you practice?

Chapter 2: Climate Change is Changing the Weather

- What kinds of weather that make headlines in your area?
- Have you ever experienced a loss from a weather-related disaster?
- Do you think humanity can meet the climate change challenge?
- Can the language of vulnerability help you think more clearly about climate risks at home or in your community?

Chapter 3 to 5: Understanding Exposure, Sensitivity and Adaptive Capacity

- How have weather patterns changed in the place you call home?
- Have you noticed any changes in the plants, animals or landscapes as weather patterns have changed over the last decade?
- What do farmers and ranchers say about how weeds, insects and disease challenges are changing as weather patterns change?
- What is one thing that you can do - as an individual or as a citizen - to make it easier for the farm and food businesses that serve you to adapt to changing weather patterns?

Chapter 6: Managing Climate Risk: Adaptation Stories

- What are your questions for the farmers or ranchers introduced in this chapter?
- What kinds of foods do the farmers and ranchers in your region produce?
- Do you live near any of the farmers or ranchers featured in this book?
- What is the “new ground” emerging as agriculturalists grapple the climate change challenge?



PART 2

THE RULES OF RESILIENCE?

When I started farming there was a pattern to the weather,
one year was kind of like the one before.
I think it's more challenging to be a farmer now.
No two years are alike. You have to be so nimble these days.

— Elizabeth Henderson, Peacework Farm, Newark, New York

Have changing weather patterns required you to be “more nimble” these days?

Chapter 7: A New Way to Think About Solutions

- What are some examples of climate change solutions that you favor?
- What does the fable about the blind men and the elephant teach us about solving complex problems like climate change?
- How do you typically respond to weather-related damages? Do you tend to bounce forward or bounce back? How about your community?
- What resources do you count on to cultivate resilience at home, at work and in your community?
- How has reading this part of the book changed the way you think about resilience?

Chapter 8: Qualities and Behaviors of Resilient Systems

- Make a list of the diversity of services (e.g. power, food, water, waste removal, transportation, medical, recreation) that you depend on daily to support your well-being at home or at work and refer to your list to answer these questions:
- Can you enjoy all of these services no matter the weather?
- Have you ever experienced a disruption in any of these services?
- What is your backup plan when one or more of these services is disrupted?
- Can you share an example of the benefits of self-organization - natural, social-ecological, or social - in your life?
- Can you share an example of a service disruption that you experienced because the provider emphasized efficiency at the expense of balancing forces?
- Can you share an example of how you have used place-based knowledge to enrich your life?

Chapter 9: The Rules of Resilience

- Can you share an example of a spiritual or cultural ethic that guides your decisions about how to relate to others?
- What are some examples of relationships with land, people and community that are especially beneficial to you?
- How big is your appetite for resources and where do those resources come from?
- How much waste do you create each year and where does it go?
- Can you think of any changes that you can make to live a more regionally self-reliant lifestyle?
- How do you cultivate the “commonweal” in the place you call home?
- Where do you stand in the Rules of Resilience cartoon (Fig 9.1, p.130)? Why did you place yourself there?
- Which major shift from industrial to resilience thinking do you think is most needed to reduce the fragility of the global food system?

Chapter 10: Is Sustainable Agriculture a Resilient Agriculture?

- If you were leading a resilient agriculture tour in your local super market, how would you describe where the fruits, vegetables, grain-based products (e.g. bread, cereal, pasta) meat and dairy, and seafood were likely grown?
- How well does sustainable agriculture follow the three rules of resilience? How about industrial agriculture?
- Have you ever experienced a disruption in your food supply? How did you recover from the disruption, for example, did you substitute a different food, find a different place to buy the food, substitute a different food or just go without?
- Do you have a favorite brand of sustainable agriculture? What is it about this brand that appeals to you?
- What are some of the myths of industrialism that limit the ability of sustainable agriculture to promote a just transformation of the global food system?

Chapter 11: Resilient Agriculture

- What are some common ways to measure success at home, at work, and in community?
- Can you share an example of a time that you used adaptive management to make a change in your life?
- Have you ever used a nature-based solution on your land? How well did it work for you?
- Thinking back on the kinds of changes that you've made at home or at work in response to climate risk, how would you describe your adaptive strategy? Do you tend to favor one strategy or use a mix of all three strategies?
- What is stopping U.S. farmers and ranchers from adopting sustainable agriculture practices that cultivate the climate resilience of our food system?



PART 3

WHAT PATH TO RESILIENCE?

The new dawn blooms as we free it.
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.

— Amanda Gorman, U.S. Youth Poet Laureate,
Presidential Inaugural Poem, 2021

What do you think do you think it means to be brave in these times?

Chapter 12: The Light and Dark of These Times

- How do you describe the light and dark sides of human nature? Does you have a cultural or spiritual tradition that helps to guide you towards the light?
- How did the indigenous people in your region feed their communities?
- Can you share some examples of how both the light and the dark sides of human nature show up in the Good Food Movement?
- How has sustainability thinking influenced the way that the health and planning professions think about food?
- What do you know about the land, people and communities that feed you? Who grows, harvests, processes and delivers the food that you eat?

Chapter 13: Adding Resilience to the Menu

- Can you share an example from your own life of a solution that failed because it did not “connect the dots” between symptom and cause?
- How would you describe your own foodshed? Where are the meats, dairy, grains, and staples that you eat grown? How about the fruits and vegetables? You can get started answering this question by revisiting Regional Changes and Expected Changes in Weather (p. 34 - 45) and Figure 10.1 (p. 140).
- Do you eat any foods that are produced locally or in your region? When and why do you eat these foods?
- How can you support food resilience projects underway in your region?
- What mega-metropolitan region do you call home? How have community planners in this region added food and farming to the other critical services (e.g. power, water, housing and transportation and waste management) that they traditionally include in planning?

Chapter 14: The Way Forward

- What is one example of how you could use the three rules of resilience to cultivate resilience in your own life?
- Is there a petal on the resilience flower (see Figure 14.1, p. 202) that especially captures your attention? What are your thoughts about this petal?
- How do your current food choices cultivate resilient foodways (see Table 14.1, p. 204)?
- Are you ready to take action to promote the well-being of land, people and community in your foodshed? What will you do to cultivate a resilient agriculture (see p. 206)?



PART 4

REAL WORLD RESILIENCE: STORIES OF LAND, PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY

You just don't know what's around the next corner,
so you have to prepare for the worst.
Hope for the best of course, but you know,
hope is not a plan.

— Gary Price, The 77 Ranch,
Blooming Grove, Texas

Given what you learned about hope in the first chapter,
do you agree with Gary that “hope is not a plan?”

Chapter 15 to 18:

Vegetables, Fruits and Nuts, Grains, Livestock

- What is your story about weather that falls outside of personal and historical experiences of regional weather norms?
- What kinds of new challenges have you experienced as a result of the growing disturbances and shocks in your community that are unrelated to changing weather patterns?
- What is one difference among the farmers that you think may influence their ability to adapt to changing weather patterns?
- What is one resilience quality or behavior common to all of the stories?
- Is there a farmer who offers an example of a unique resilience quality or behavior that is not mentioned by the other farmers?
- Based on what you have learned by reading this collection of stories, what is one question that you could ask a farmer, food company, or food retailer to determine if their products contribute to the resilience of your foodshed?