**Food Safety Systems Map**

**Class activity for Chapter 12**

***Food, Farms and Community***

**Material Requirements: None**

**Time Requirement: 20-30 minutes**

Break students into small groups of three to five, and invite them to explore the many factors that affect the safety of the food we eat using systems mapping. As always, the process of systems mapping will start by identifying one or more key stock-flow systems around which the larger systems map will be constructed. These stock-flow systems often represent key resources in a system, such as the flow of financial resources, labor or capital, but they can also represent other variables that can increase or decrease and key factors that may cause them to increase or decrease. An example of a stocks that falls into this latter category is the number of food-borne illness in a region, with inflows that articulate factors that increase illnesses while outflows articulate factors that decrease illness.

Once students choose their primary stock(s) and flows, they can begin brainstorming the many other factors that exert influence on those stocks and flows, place those factors on their systems map and draw arrows connecting them to one another and to the stocks and flows they influence. Some of these factors may fall in the physical realm, such as disease vectors like *E. coli*, while others may be more social, economic or political in their framing. Still other factors may revolve around the scale of different food production operations, or the ethics of those who run them. As you walk around the classroom and watch students’ systems maps take shape, invite them to consider factors that are absent from their maps. If a group is looking primarily at political and economic factors, invite them to consider more physical or biological ones to broaden their perspectives, for instance.

Once students have worked on their systems maps for 20-30 minutes, bring the class back together to discuss the exercise and its impact on their understanding of food safety issues. You can enquire about some of the different stocks and flows students used, and the different factors they chose to include in their systems map. There is no one right way to draw a systems map that relates to food safety, so all students’ expressions of this system can be ‘right’.