

**Circular Food
Innovation Lab**

CABBAGE +
BAKING SODA

TURMERIC +
ONION SKIN

CABBAGE

CABBAGE +
VINEGAR

RED
BEET

ONION
SKIN



Glossary

The terms in this deck represent vocabulary shared with us during CFIL site visits and codesign sessions. The glossary was compiled and designed by Yuki Xiang with contributions from Morgan Martino, Haein Kim, Lily Raphael and Laura Kozak.

Images were produced using inks made from wasted food including beet peels, cabbage leaves, coffee, baking soda and onion skin. Thank you to Cecile Novel Tovar, Malika Chopra, Kinasih Utoro, Amanda White and the CFIL Design Team.



Circular Economy

A circular economy is based on three principles: eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials (at their highest value) and regenerate nature. A circular economy for food mimics natural systems of regeneration so that waste does not exist, but instead serves as feedstock for another cycle.

'Food and the Circular Economy'. 16 September 2019, Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS

Food Policy



Food policy informs the decision-making process for public, private and non-profit sectors as they relate to food and guide food-related decisions and actions.

'Food Policy.' Food Policy Canada.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS

The background of the slide is a white surface decorated with several watercolor-style globes. Each globe is a semi-circle, with the left half colored in shades of blue and the right half in shades of green and yellow. The colors are soft and blended, giving a hand-painted appearance. The globes are scattered across the page, some partially cut off by the edges.

Foodshed

The geographical area delimiting local and/or regional production, transport, marketing, delivery and supply of food to a population, analogous to a watershed in its description of a geographical food system.

'Foodshed'. National Agricultural Library Thesaurus and Glossary, USDA.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS



Food Systems

Food systems encompass the entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products that originate from agriculture, forestry or fisheries, and parts of the broader economic, societal and natural environments in which they are embedded.

Nguyen, Hanh. 'Sustainable Food Systems Concept and Framework'. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2018.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS

Greenhouse Gases

The natural and human-caused release of gases into the atmosphere that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation. The primary GHGs are water vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and ozone.

'Greenhouse Gas Emissions.' Canadian Centre for Energy Information. 18 January 2024.

SYSTEM CONDITIONS

Linear System

A "take-make-use-waste" system where we take materials from the Earth, make products from them and discard them as waste.

'What is the meaning of a circular economy and what are the main principles?'
Ellen MacArthur Foundation.



SYSTEM CONDITIONS

Waste Recovery

Any operation the principal result of which is waste serving a useful purpose by replacing other materials which would otherwise have been used to fulfil a particular function, or waste being prepared to fulfil that function, in the plant or in the wider economy.

'Recovery of Waste'. Eurostat.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Composting

Composting is the controlled decomposition of organic materials. In optimal conditions, organic materials break down completely into non-toxic components that support plant growth.

'Sustainability Simplified – Our Glossary of Terms'. SGSCorp.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Best Before Date

Describes how long a properly stored unopened food product will keep its: freshness, taste, nutritional value, any other qualities claimed by the manufacturer. A best before date is not the same as an expiration date, and passing a best before date does not mean food is unsafe to consume.

'Understanding the Date Labels on Your Food'. 28 January 2026, Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS



Food Rescue

The practice of diverting edible food at risk of being wasted from businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores, and produce markets to organizations that can use it (also called food recovery).

'Food rescue and redistribution.' City of Vancouver.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Upcycling

An intentional effort to increase the value of residual material.

'Upcycling.' European Commission.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS





Food Loss

The decrease in the quantity or quality of food resulting from decisions and actions by food suppliers in the chain, excluding retailers, food service providers and consumers.

'Technical Platform on the Measurement and Reduction of Food Loss and Waste.' Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Wasted Food

'Wasted food' describes food not used for its intended purpose.
Can refer to both excess food and food waste.

'Global Initiative on Food Loss and Waste Reduction'. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2015.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Expiration Date

A date added to food products to advise consumers when a product should not be sold or consumed for safety reasons. In Canada, only baby formula and medications should be labeled with an expiration date.

'Understanding the Date Labels on Your Food.' Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Shrink

The loss of inventory due to spoilage, misshapen products, and overstocking. Shrink often refers to an anticipated percentage of a product that will not be sold.

Buzby, Jean C., and Jeanine Bentley. 'Shrink.' USDA Economic Research Service.

FOOD (DE)VALUING TERMS

Supply Chain

The background of the slide features abstract watercolor washes in shades of light green, pale yellow, and light blue. Several large, hand-drawn green arrows are scattered across the page, pointing in various directions, which visually represents the flow of a supply chain.

The system of people and things that are involved in getting a product from the place where it is made to the person who buys it.

'Supply Chain'. Cambridge Dictionary.

FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

The background of the slide is a watercolor-style pattern consisting of numerous overlapping, irregular circular shapes. The colors are primarily soft pinks, blush, and pale yellows, with some areas showing more saturated tones. The overall effect is a textured, artistic, and warm-toned background.

Vendor

An individual or business entity that sells goods or services to customers, often on a smaller scale and directly to individual consumers.

Davito, Steve. 'Vendor vs Supplier: What's the Difference?' Enable, 17 June 2020.

FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

Food Services



The practice or business of making, transporting, and serving or dispensing prepared foods.

'Food Service.' National Agricultural Library Thesaurus and Glossary, USDA.



FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS



Service Haulers

The transportation of waste to disposal, recycling, or transfer facilities. Service haulers ensure waste is removed promptly, legally, and in accordance with local disposal standards.

'Hauling Service, Dumpster Rental Glossary'. Space Coast Dumpster Rental.



FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

Distributor

Purchases and distributes products to retailers or service operators.

'What is a Distributor?' BC Ministry of Agriculture.



FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

Food Producer

The manufacturer of a food product.

'Food Producers Declaration'. UN Food Systems.

FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

A large, abstract watercolor splash graphic on the right side of the page. It features various shades of brown, tan, and beige, with some darker, almost black, areas. The shape is irregular and organic, resembling a splash or a cluster of overlapping shapes. There are also a few small, isolated purple and blue dots scattered around the main splash.

The background of the slide is a white surface decorated with several watercolor-style floral patterns. These patterns are rendered in soft shades of pink, light red, and pale yellow, with some darker pink accents. The flowers are scattered across the page, creating a delicate and artistic backdrop for the text.

Retailer

A business that sells products directly to consumers as its primary function.

'Retailer.' Code of Federal Regulations.

FOOD SYSTEM ACTORS

Food Preservation

A variety of methods used to maintain foods in an edible state.

'Food Preservation'. National Agricultural Library Thesaurus, USDA.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

Community Kitchen

A gathering for a group of people to cook and eat a meal together. Community kitchens are used to promote food skills, provide meals, support food rescue and for community celebrations and gatherings.

'Community Kitchens'. City of Vancouver.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS



Food Dignity

Having the ability to choose what ingredients to cook with, to pass down family stories and history through traditional recipes, and to foster new relationships through shared foodways.

'Mental Health & Dignified Food Access.' Food Stash Foundation.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

Food Sovereignty



The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.

'Food Sovereignty'. Nyéléni Declaration of 2007.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints.

'Household Food Insecurity in Canada'. PROOF, University of Toronto.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS



Food Security

Population level food access.

'Sustainable Food Systems: Dietitians' Roles'. Dietitians of Canada. 2020.

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL TERMS

The background of the slide is white with several watercolor-style circular shapes scattered across it. These shapes are primarily light blue and light green, with some overlapping and varying in opacity. They resemble soft, painterly brushstrokes.

Edible Portion Cost

The amount of usable food/ingredients that can be used in food preparation after removing trimmings or waste from the original as-purchased form of a food.

'Edible Portion.' Food Costing Calculation: Know the Most Important Terms. Unilever Food Solutions.

BUSINESS TERMS

Inventory

Inventory is the raw materials and finished goods a company holds for production and sale.

Kenton, Will. 'What Is Inventory? Definition, Types, and Examples.' Investopedia, October 11, 2025.


BUSINESS TERMS

A watercolor-style triangle with a yellow top, green middle, and blue bottom section.

Yield

The percentage of a raw product that can be translated into a useable or saleable product.

'Controlling Food Costs.' The BC Cook Articulation Committee.

A watercolor-style inverted triangle with a blue top, green middle, and yellow bottom section.

BUSINESS TERMS



Value Pricing

Value-based pricing sets product prices based on perceived value that customers have for that product. The price is based on what they are willing to pay rather than the actual cost.

Bloomenthal, Andrew. 'Understanding Value-Based Pricing: Key Strategies and Benefits'. Investopedia. August 8, 2025.

BUSINESS TERMS

Purchasing

Sourcing and buying food or other products for use by an individual or organization as part of their business operations. It considers the amount and quality needed in a given time window at a given price point.

'Purchasing'. The BC Cook Articulation Committee.

BUSINESS TERMS

Surplus

A surplus is the amount of an asset or resource that exceeds what is needed or used. It can refer to income, profits, capital, and goods, and it's often the result of a disconnect between supply and demand.

'What Is Surplus Edible Food (and Why Should You Care)?' Second Harvest.

BUSINESS TERMS

Portion Cost

The total cost of ingredients used to prepare a single portion or dish.

'Controlling Food Costs.' The BC Cook Articulation Committee.

BUSINESS TERMS

Holding Cost

Holding cost refers to the expenses a business incurs for storing unsold goods in inventory, including warehousing fees, insurance, taxes, and depreciation.

'Holding Cost Definition & Meaning'. Buske Logistics.

BUSINESS TERMS

The top of the slide features a decorative border consisting of a repeating pattern of small, stylized globe icons. Each globe is split vertically, with the left half in blue and the right half in green, and a white vertical line through the center. The word "Traceability" is centered in a large, bold, black sans-serif font over this pattern.

Traceability

The process of monitoring the movement of food or products from origin or initial production to consumption (or waste) and vice versa.

'Traceability'. National Agricultural Library Thesaurus, USDA.

BUSINESS TERMS

Margin

The percentage by which a company's revenue exceeds its costs of operation.

Segal, Troy. 'Profit Margin: Definition, Types, Uses in Business and Investing'. Investopedia, 19 June 2025.

BUSINESS TERMS