

OVERVIEW PATHWAY

WHAT IS A "FOOD SYSTEM"?



**Four Stories About
Food Sovereignty**

DEFINITION

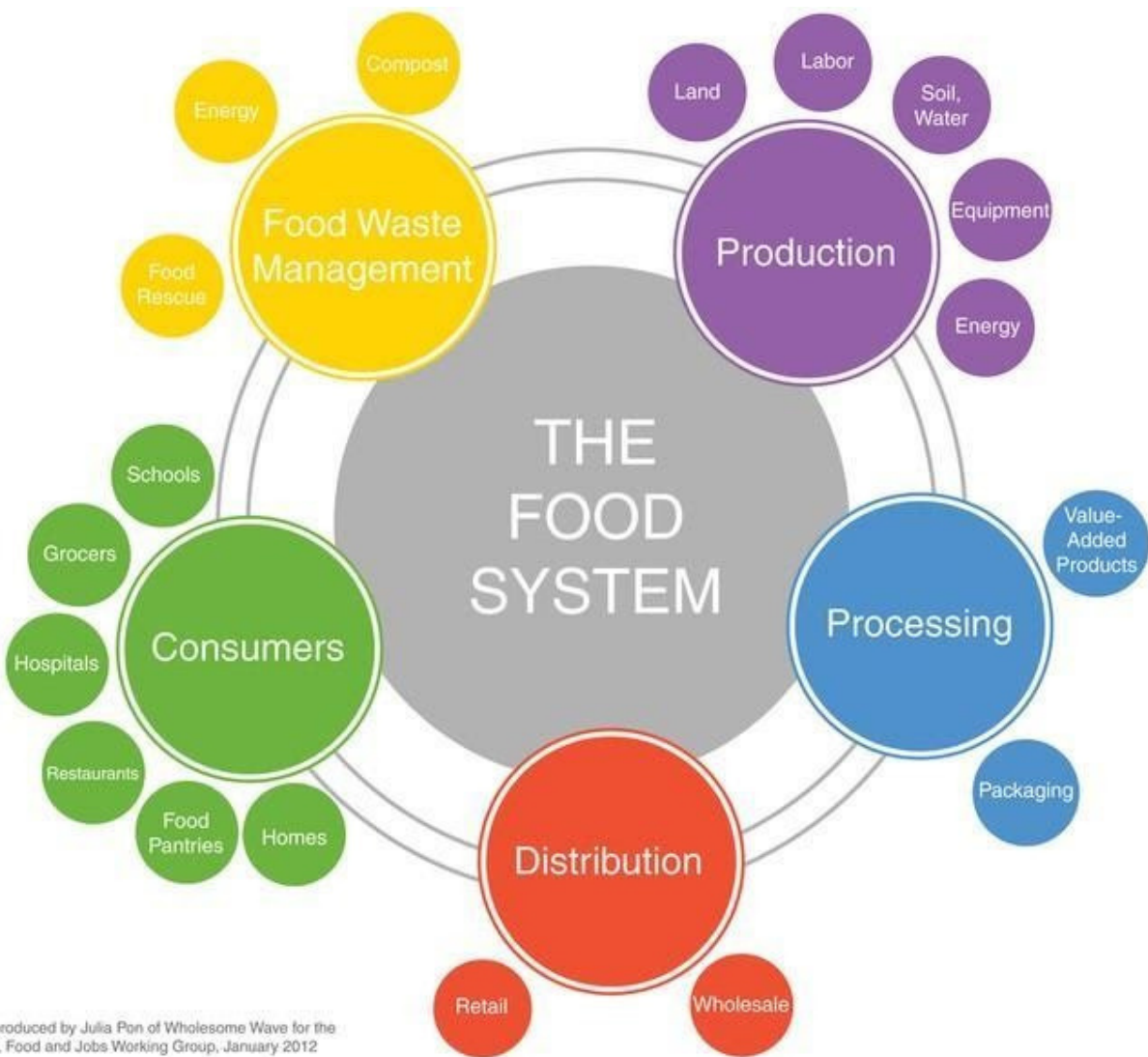
According to international social justice organization Oxfam, “The food system is a complex web of activities involving the production, processing, transport, and consumption” of food.* The Oxford Martin Program on the Future of Food says,

*[The food system] includes not only the basic elements of how we get our food from farm to fork, but also all of the processes and infrastructure involved in feeding a population. Systems can also exist within systems, for example, farming systems, agricultural ecosystems, economic systems, and social systems and within those are further subsets of water systems, energy systems, financing systems, marketing systems, policy systems, culinary systems, and so on.***

*Oxfam global food challenge teacher overview, pg. 1.

**Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food.

Consider these definitions in relation to this graphic of The Food System, which highlights the five key elements: production, processing, distribution, consumers and food waste management:



In the Four Stories resources found on the website, and in our project, we look at related system challenges in the Climate, Water and Power pathways and ask questions such as: who controls food systems? Who should control food systems? The Oxford Martin Program elaborates on some additional food system challenges, which include:

*the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degree to which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment and the impact of food on individual and population health.**

Student Activity: Thoughts on Food Systems

Included on our website is an infographic showing what project participants said about their local situation and personal experience. Using this infographic as inspiration, break into small groups and distribute the quotes (either one or both for each group). Have students identify connections to food systems and elements of the systems using the graphic on page 2, above. What challenges and connections can they identify? Are these challenges unique to these particular regions?

For more resources on Food Systems, visit our website.

*Oxford Martin Programme on the Future of Food.