

# Building resilient local and regional food systems: the case of Wales

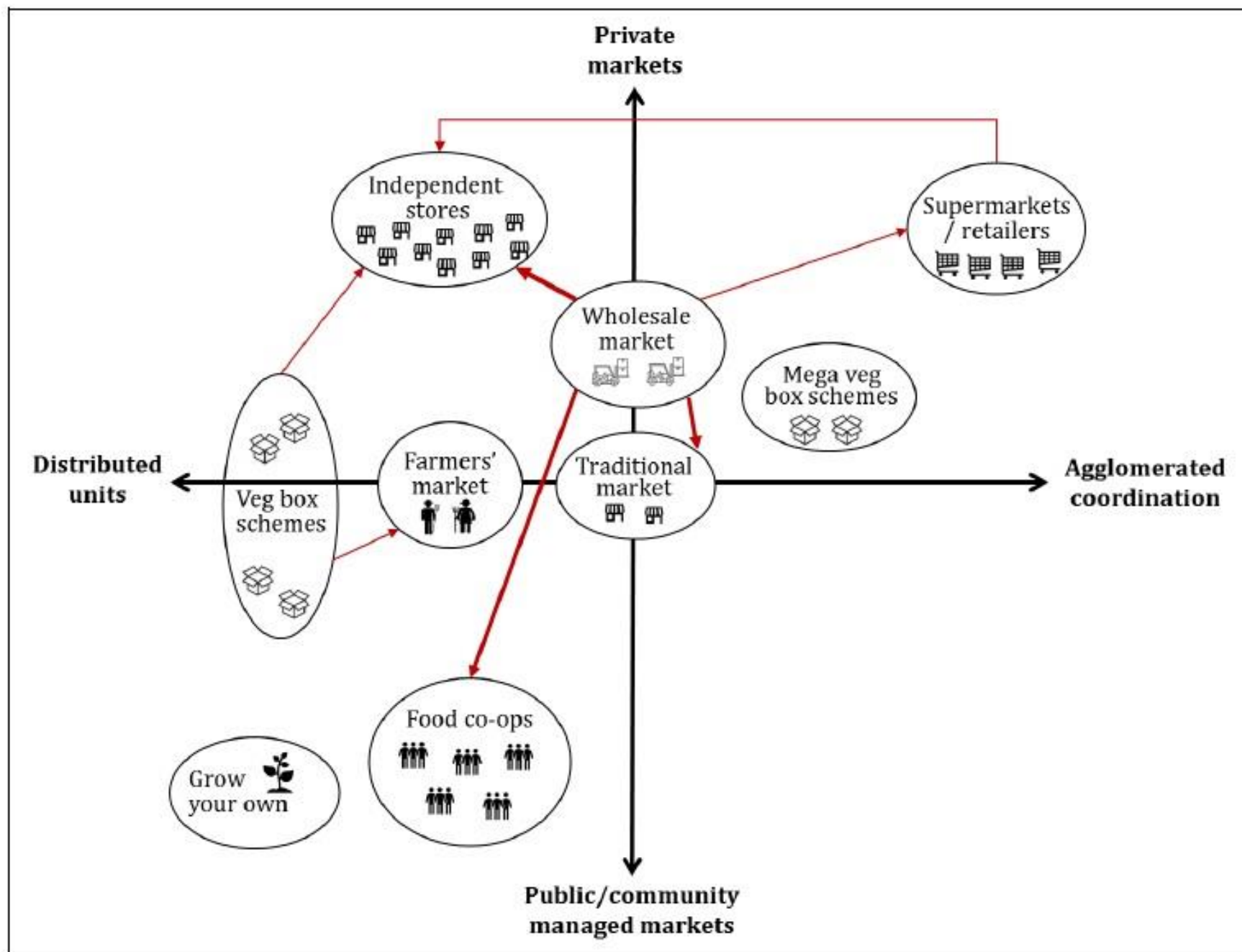
Terry Marsden

# Building diverse, distributive and territorialized agri-food economies to deliver sustainability and food security

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(Economic Geography, June, 2020, 219-243)*

# Some key questions

- 1. A renewed need to focus on market configuration in the evolution of heterodox/distributed/nested markets (as renewed 'commons').
- 2. How far will existing oligopolistic commodity markets dissolve? (e.g red meat, milk and rice).
- 3. Continued reterritorialization and sustainable place-shaping as part of a more heterodox set of regional economies?
- 4. How far can policy design foster these developments?
- 5. The transitions to combinations of relative- decoupled; absolute decoupled; and **re-coupled** systems of economy.
- 6. Re-coupled production and exchange systems: distributed, diverse and devolved. e.g agro-ecology in Brazil and UK.






| Dimensions<br>Initiatives            | Diverse economies   |                                |  |                   | Distributed Economies   |   |   | Place-based-approach                             |   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|--|-------------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|                                      | <i>Labour arrangements</i>  | <i>Enterprise</i>              | <i>Market transaction</i>  | <i>Property</i>   | <i>Decision-making</i>  | <i>Size and interconnectedness/ concentration</i>   | <i>Intersectoral linkages</i>   | <i>Re-localisation</i>                           | <i>Trans-localisation</i>   | <i>Re-assembling, fluidity</i>  |
| <b>Blaencamel</b>                    | Family farming<br>Paid labour   | Family-run                     | Direct-local trading system<br>Give free produce to some collaborators | Private           | Family farm plus close relation to consumers  | Small unit<br>Connected to Farmers' market  | Farming Skills  | Local food production and consumption            | Part of alliances: Sustainable food trust, Soil Association   | Low level of diversification as a business model  |
| <b>Penylan Pantry</b>                | Self-employed and paid labour   | Capitalist                     | Mostly a local trading system  | Private           | Two owners that also work in the pantry   | Small unit<br>Connected to different types of food producers and the catering and event industry      | Trade Catering Farming Food transformation Skills Leisure economy       | Local food production, business and consumption  | Part of Slow Food Movement  | Diversified and flexible business model that brings together local and non-local products       |
| <b>Riverside Market Garden (RMG)</b> | Main grower is paid a wage<br>Temporary workers<br>Shareholders volunteer | Social enterprise              | Community supported agriculture and local trading system.              | Community managed | Association with board of directors and annual general meeting where shareholders participate (1 shareholder, 1 vote) | Small unit<br>Connected to farmers' market and some local business such as the Penylan Pantry         | Farming Skills Trade Catering   | Local food production and consumption            | Embedded mostly in local activities: part of an association with different ventures and Cardiff Food Policy Council | Attempts of diversifying (soups, high-end restaurants, etc.) by reassembling assets and skills. |
| <b>Welsh Food Box (WFB) Company</b>  | Paid labour   | Capitalist                     | Mostly a local trading system  | Private           | Owners  | Small unit that offers produce from 30 suppliers, from farmers to organic wholesalers (including RMG) | Farming Trade Transformation Distribution                               | Local production, transformation and consumption | Connects with other businesses and expanding operations across South Wales  | Developed an online farmers' market linked to the veg box scheme.                               |
| <b>Food Co-ops</b>                   | Voluntary labour<br>State support   | Community-run<br>State support | Mostly a local trading system  | Community managed | Distributed across participants, important role of wholesaler   | Connections between consumers, suppliers, RRU and volunteers<br>Co-op network                         | Distribution and trade, Production Health services Community activities | Local trade and local communities                | International and culturally appropriate food Co-op Network through RRU   | Use of local community assets in creative ways  |



Table 8.1 : Summary of the niches researched in the SW Wales agri-food system

|              |  | Processing   | Market Location          | Science/Know-Tech-Bio matrix  | Market / Industry Orientation                                       | Ability to be assimilated by the regime |
|--------------|--|--|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| Meat         | Producer Groups Innovation                     | Established Regional Processor                                 | UK (principally England) | Similar to Regime   | Similar to Regime but with increased producer negotiation           | High                                    |
|              | Small Scale 'Alternative' Producer Innovation  | On and off farm  | Local region             | Small scale logic with producer integrated processing knowledge                                     | Local centric gap in market providing outlet for producer to supply | Low                                     |
|              | Conventional Wholesaler Innovation             | Established Regional/Welsh Processors                          | Wales                    | Science based feed innovation to derive enhanced product qualities                                  | Locality based (Wales) hospitality focused market                   | Moderate                                |
| Dairy        | Ethical producer co-operative Innovation       | Established processor but moving towards own regional capacity | Wales                    | Radically dissimilar to regime with divergent aspirations to overall regime logic                   | Locality based (Wales) multiple and non-multiple based retailing    | Moderate                                |
|              | Organic Farmhouse cheese maker Innovation      | On farm  | Global (principally UK)  | Differentiated breed to derive higher milk quality  | Locality based (Wales) multiple and non-multiple based retailing    | Moderate                                |
|              | Non-Bovine dairy producer/processor Innovation | On farm  | UK (principally Wales)   | Non-bovine dairy employing on farm based processing   | Locality based (Wales) multiple and non-multiple based retailing    | Low                                     |
| Horticulture | Regional Producer-Processor Group              | Off Farm   | Wales                    | Similar to regime - although consideration of regional biophysical constraints in variety selection | Locality based (Wales) multiple and non-multiple based retailing    | High                                    |
|              | Medium sized, multi-product producer           | On and off farm  | UK/Wales                 | Plant specific knowledge but similar production techniques to regime                                | Multi-level UK, Wales, South Wales and some locality based          | Moderate                                |
|              | Farm Shop                                      | On and off farm  | SW Wales                 | Micro-enterprise sourcing networking  | Local based retailing, wholesaling                                  | Low                                     |

 Largely similar to the regime  
 Partially dissimilar to the regime  
 Largely dissimilar to the regime

# A Welsh Food System Fit For Future Generations

A report by the Sustainable Places Research Institute at  
Cardiff University, commissioned by WWF Cymru

By Dr Angelina Sanderson Bellamy and Prof Terry Marsden



How to deliver healthy, nutritious food for all in the face of shrinking resources and a growing population, while addressing climate change and biodiversity loss, is a major challenge both globally and for Wales



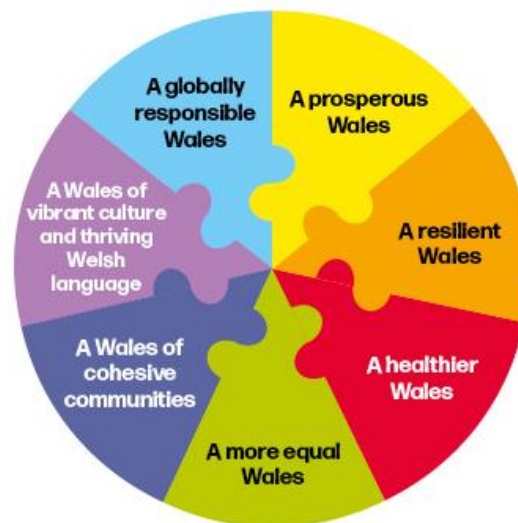
**Figure A: Outcomes of a Food System Fit for Future Generations**

- Wales celebrates and builds upon our Fairtrade Nation Status
- Food supply chains in Wales are deforestation-free

- Food is used to celebrate our heritage and Welsh language
- People come to Wales to experience our food, drink and hospitality
- Food is a fundamental part of the 'Foundational Economy'

- Food and farming supports rural communities to thrive
- Food is used as a 'convener' to bring people together
- Civil society organisations, food hubs and cooperative bodies promote local food initiatives

- Everyone has access to healthy, affordable food
- Co-productive approaches shape food provision in Wales

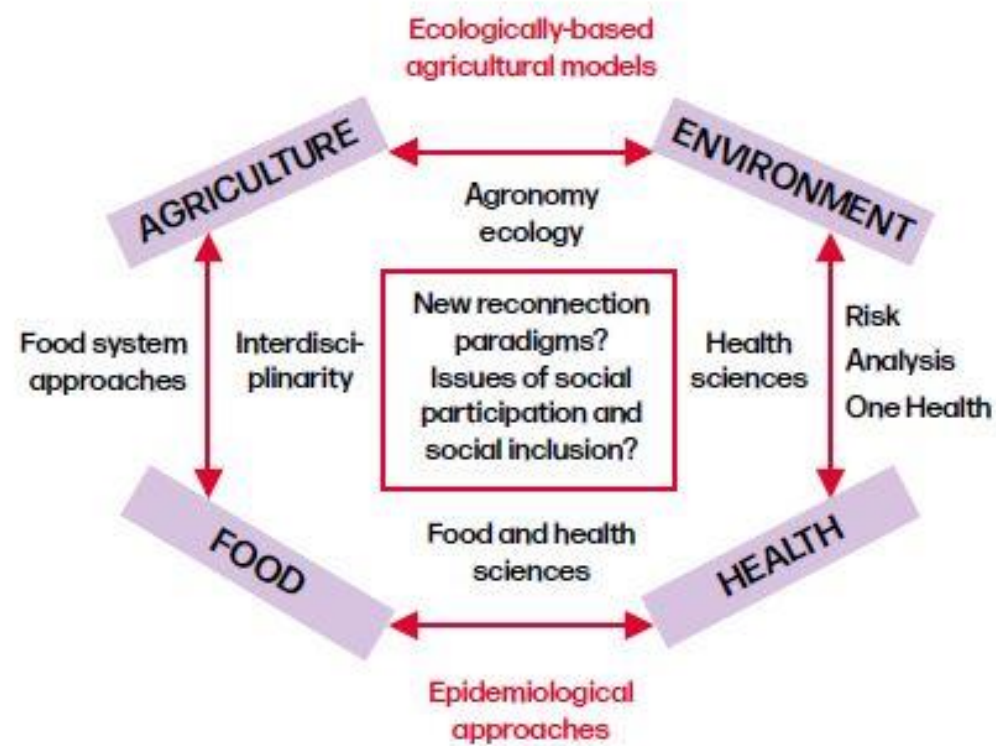


- Wales' natural resources are managed sustainably with healthy ecosystems underpinning food production
- More healthy and sustainable Welsh food is supplied directly to our Welsh public sector and Welsh households
- The real living wage underpins the Welsh supply chain
- Wales' food sector is a significant contributor to Wales' net zero climate change target, with significant carbon stored on Welsh land

- Wales' nature based/agroecological farming systems help restore biodiversity, soil health, help prevent flooding and keep Wales' air and water clean

- Everyone eats more fruit and veg and eats less processed food
- Everyone learns about food and how to grow and prepare nutritious meals

*Note: This infographic was originally developed by Food Policy and Practice Wales. It has been slightly adapted for the purposes of this report.*



# Wales Food System Strategy

The process of developing a food system strategy for Wales needs to focus on 3 clearly identified policy spheres:

1. Co-creating a new collective and transformative vision for Welsh food that has the capacity to meet today's urgent needs
2. Concerted actions in building infrastructure that supports integrated policy approaches
3. Enacting a range of interrelated delivery mechanisms at multiple spatial and organizational



**Thinking for  
the long-term**



**Prevention**



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**

# 1. Co-creating a new collective and transformative vision for Welsh food that has the capacity to meet today's urgent needs

Building a vision based on lived experiences and that reflects identified priorities

- Citizen assemblies
- Food citizenship



**Collaboration**



**Integration**



**Involvement**

## 2. Concerted actions in building infrastructure that supports integrated policy approaches

### National Universal Food Framework:

A national framework for ensuring integration across sectors and achieving food security across Welsh society

The Human Right to adequate food for everyone:

“The right to have regular, permanent and free access, either directly or by means of financial purchases, to quantitatively and qualitatively adequate and sufficient food corresponding to the cultural traditions of the people to which the consumer belongs, and which ensures a physical and mental, individual and collective, fulfilling and dignified life free of fear.”

- Building relationships back into the food system
- Empower individuals and communities to engage with their food system →
  - Community-based universal food programmes



**Thinking for  
the long-term**



**Prevention**



**Collaboration**



**Involvement**



### 3. Enacting a range of interrelated delivery mechanisms at multiple spatial and organizational scales

#### The 10 key interlinked themes

1. Agroecological farming
2. Agroecological farming skills
3. Horticulture promotion
4. Local food procurement
5. Sustainable food hubs
6. Food cooperatives
7. Digital markets
8. Sustainable dietary guidelines
9. Quality food standards
10. Promote Welsh food in a British Isles Context

