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Life Sciences : Applied Ecology

Fraňková, E., Haas, W., Singh, S.J. (Eds.)

Socio-Metabolic Perspectives on the Sustainability of Local Food Systems

Insights for Science, Policy and Practice

- Eight in-depth case studies provide diverse examples of application of social metabolism on local level
- Features a concluding overview of viable agro-food systems for designing a more sustainable future
- Provides analytical approaches and models useful both for academics, activists and policy-makers
- Offers a unique combination of social metabolism and the nexus approach applied to study local food systems
- Summarizes the current debate on sustainability of agro-food systems in four conceptual chapters

This book delves into diverse local food systems and critically assesses their ecological and societal benefits and trade-offs, their limits and opportunities for improving sustainability of food production, and framework conditions which either hinder or promote their development. More and more people with gradually meat heavier diets will demand growth in food production, whilst our increasingly industrialized and globalized agri-food system has already caused serious sustainability problems in the past. This calls for a change in the way we produce, distribute and consume food. A re-emerging debate on food security and food sovereignty seems to support this quest. But what are the promising alternatives to mainstream developments? Such a discussion regarding sustainability of local food systems requires a sound systemic understanding and thus invites a socio-metabolic reading of local cases by analyzing the nexus between material and energy flows as well as land and time use. This approach is needed to complement the so far mostly qualitatively-based local food studies.

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