

## ECOPOLITICS PODCAST: Additional Pedagogical Resources (Episode 13)

### [Episode 13: Corporate Sustainability in Canada](#)

*Overview: In this episode we get real about Corporate Social Responsibility, or what Rory MacAlpine of Maple Leaf Foods calls his company's "shared value" for all its stakeholders.*

#### Key Takeaways

- Some corporations have moved beyond the idea of social responsibility towards shared value, established through a relationship built between the business, stakeholders, clients, and citizens.
- Many corporations are actively working to contribute to substantive climate action. This work is being shaped by individual and collective action calling for access to sustainable, diverse, and safe food sources.
- In the present business environment, corporations that fail to respond to climate change (or at least fail to *appear* to be responding) face various social legitimacy and financial risks.
- COVID-19 has challenged the food system in various ways. For instance, food processing plants had to pivot operations to protect labour, and global supply chains were significantly disrupted. At the same time, the food system has been extraordinarily resilient in other ways.
- Food insecurity has increased across Canada, requiring interventions and collective action in the food system at multiple levels to increase access to adequate, nutritious and sustainably-produced food.

#### Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the role of corporations in identifying and working to further “shared values”, as articulated by Mr. MacAlpine, in confronting the climate crisis?
2. What do you think is the value of measuring outcomes and actions of various corporate actions, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) discussed by Mr. MacAlpine, for citizens and consumers?
3. What do you think about Mr. MacAlpine’s idea of moderation in meat consumption and the proposed role of individual consumer responsibility in reducing the environmental footprint of the agri-food sector?
4. In your view, did the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate the inherent *vulnerability* of the global agri-food system, or its inherent *resiliency*?

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### Learn more about our Guest

#### Rory McAlpine

- <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/rory-mcalpine-25576686>

#### Select articles, books and videos

- Farm Foundation. “Managing Ag Trade In an Increasingly Chaotic World: Dialogue 2 - Sustainability and Efficient Trade” Youtube. July 22 2020.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4mvLnwyCvQ>
- LanduseKN. “Maple Leaf Foods and Social License (Rory McAlpine, Maple Leaf Foods).” Youtube. July 10 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xioBc3thelc>

### Learn more about Maple Leaf Foods’ sustainability efforts

- Maple Leaf Centre for Action on Food Security: <https://www.feedopportunity.com>
- Maple Leaf Foods Sustainability: <https://www.mapleleaffoods.com/sustainability/>

### Learn more about Maple Leaf Foods, Global Agrifood, and Agriculture

- Clapp, Jennifer. “Mega-Mergers on the Menu: Corporate Concentration and the Politics of Sustainability in the Global Food System.” *Global Environmental Politics* 18, no. 2 (2018): 12–33.
- Clapp, Jennifer, and Doris A. Fuchs. *Corporate Power in Global Agrifood Governance*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009.
- Fraser, Evan D.G. and Andrew Rimas. *Empires of Food: Feast, Famine, and the Rise and Fall of Civilizations*. New York, New York: Simon & Schuster. 2010.
- Jespersen, Lone, and Randy Huffman. “Building Food Safety into the Company Culture: A Look at Maple Leaf Foods.” *Perspectives in Public Health* 134, no. 4 (2014): 200–205.