

McGill

McGill

feeding

*Where food production and consumption meet*

*M. Bleho, O. De Volpi and D. Wees  
Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences,  
McGill University  
Montreal, CANADA*



# Sustainability: can a University feed itself?



**McGill**

- Founded in 1821
- downtown Montreal
- 34,000 students
- 6,000 staff

Education

Food

Economics

Environment





Residence  
dining services  
feed over 2700  
students daily

# McGill Food and Dining Services' commitment to sustainability

Purchase local (500 km radius)

- At least 75% in Summer
- At least 50% in Fall
- At least 25% in Spring

# Montreal: an island surrounded by farm land

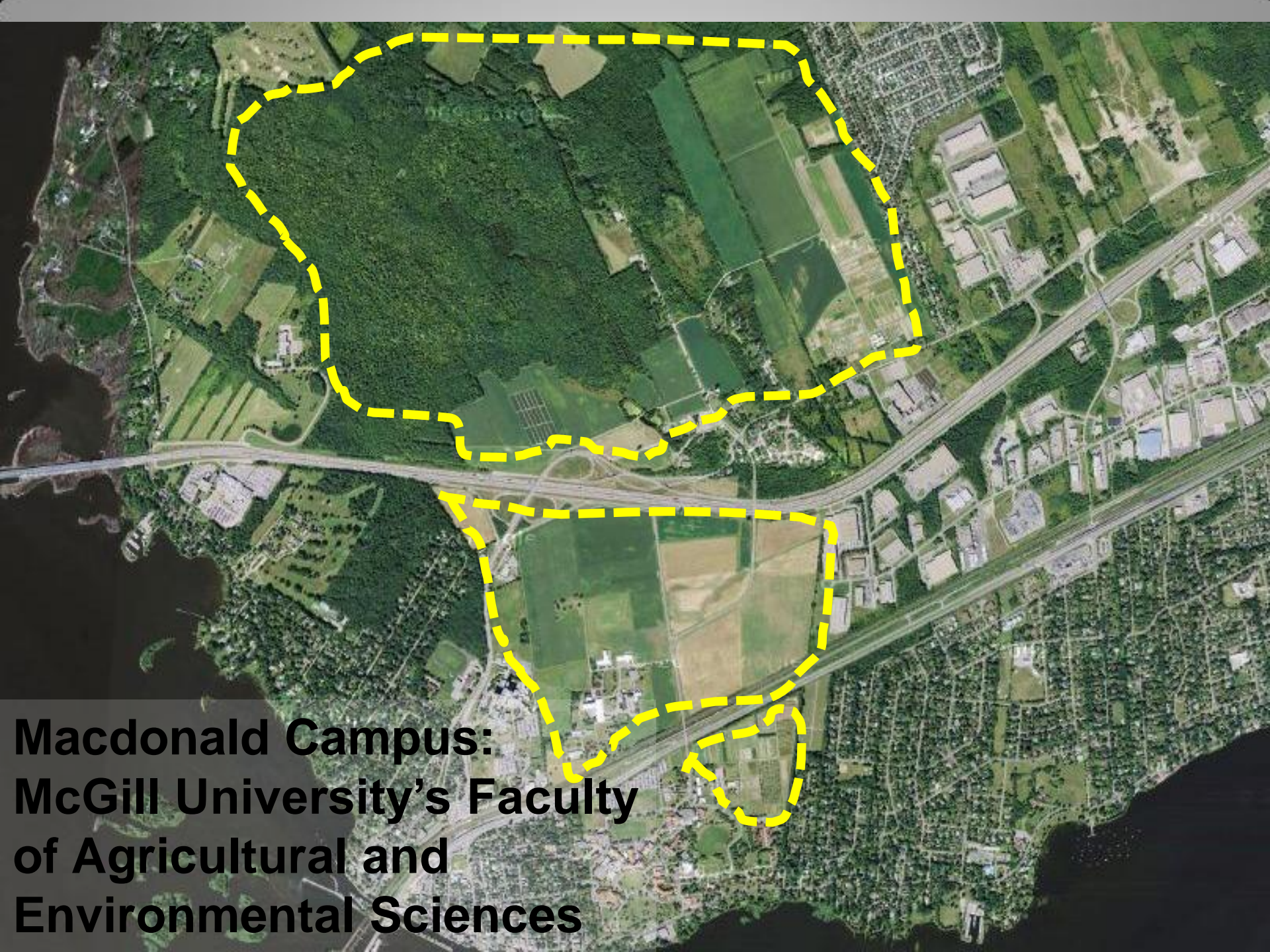
*Montreal*





Last remaining farm land  
on the Island of Montreal

McGill  
University



**Macdonald Campus:  
McGill University's Faculty  
of Agricultural and  
Environmental Sciences**

# Horticultural Research Centre



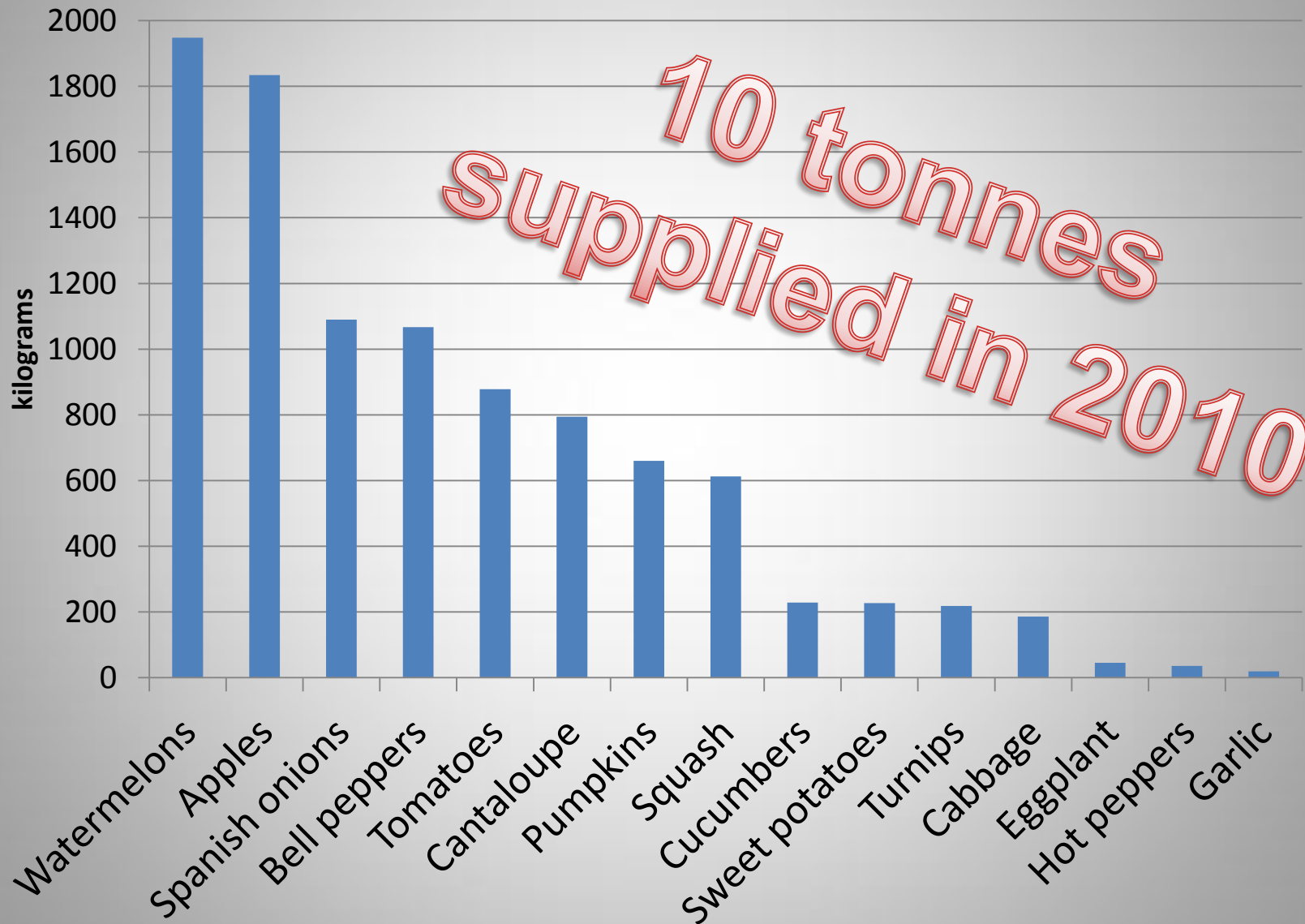
- Part of McGill University since 1905

-15 ha of orchards and vegetable fields

-Teaching & research



# Vegetables and fruits supplied to University residence cafeterias by Horticulture Center in 2010



# Student involvement: education about food production



Most Canadians are at least 3 generations removed from the farm!

# Links with courses

Course	Semester	# of students	Links with “McGill feeding McGill” projects
Economic Botany PLNT 203	Fall	15-20	Use of high tunnels for introducing students to economically-important plants
Plant Pathology PLNT 305	Fall	12-15	Use of high tunnels for teaching plant pathology
Cropping Systems PLNT 300	Fall	25-30	Use of high tunnels as an example of a cropping system
Fruit & Vegetable Crops FMTP 032	Fall	8-10	High tunnels for fall vegetable production: several “hands-on” labs
Freshman Seminar AGRI 196	Fall	100	High tunnels: introduction to commercial horticulture for Freshmen students
Design 1 BREE 490 / Design 2 BREE 491	Fall / Winter	35	Students will design and build hydroponic growing systems
Agri-Food Industry Project AGRI 490	Fall / Winter	variable	Undergraduate student research projects on high tunnels and hydroponics
Greenhouse Management PLNT 322	Winter	20-25	Hydroponics in greenhouse: several “hands-on” labs
Greenhouse Crops FMTP 033	Winter	5-10	Hydroponics in greenhouse: several “hands-on” labs
Food, Fibre and Fuel Elements BREE 520	Winter	35	Study of hydroponic plant growing systems

# Composting leaves from Campus: replaces most fertilizers



# Funding?

- McGill Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF)
  - All McGill students contribute \$0.50/credit to SPF
  - \$800,000 fund
- Sales to McGill Food and Dining Services



# Challenges: Moving food from Point A to Point B



# Other challenges?

- Farming practices must meet a new seasonal demand:
  - Must match the university semesters:
    - September-December
    - January-April
  - Therefore: no point in harvesting fruits and vegetables in July!
- Projects must meet educational requirements

# Initiatives for 2011-2012: season extension



High tunnels to extend production season in Fall



Renovate old greenhouse: hydroponics for winter greens



# Initiatives for 2011-2012: new crops



Sweet potatoes:  
good storage  
vegetable +  
favourite with  
students!



Puréed garlic flower  
scapes: a high value  
seasoning

# New initiatives for 2011-2012

- Certification by LocalFoodPlus
- Eggs

## Michael Bleho receives Mac Campus Award of Excellence

March 2011



Mike Bleho (right) examines farm produce with McGill's executive chef Oliver De Volpi.

Michael Bleho is this year's recipient of the Macdonald Campus Award of Excellence for Administrative and Support Staff. Mike has worked as a Technician at the Department of Plant Science's Horticultural Research Centre since the early 1980s. The Centre is used for research and teaching but also caters to the outside community through its farmers market.

Mike was chosen by his colleagues for his dedication and work ethic, always giving more than 100 percent to his work and providing outstanding support to the faculty, staff and students of Plant Science and across the Macdonald Campus.

What stood out in honouring Mike with this year's award was his ability to obtain funding for his proposal labeled McGill Feeding McGill, presented to the McGill Sustainability Projects Fund. The project's goal is to produce food at the Horticultural Research Centre for McGill's entire network of cafeterias and residences. The money is also used to organize community-building activities around

A meeting of 2 minds

## 2011 Catalyst Awards

The Office of Sustainability is proud to recognize the significant efforts that take place at McGill to grow toward campus sustainability. The Catalyst Awards and the Emerald Key acknowledge the students and staff who have gone above and beyond in their work to integrate sustainability into McGill's knowledgebase, operations, and culture.



2011 Catalyst Award recipients (L-R): Sarah Archibald, Emmanuelle Lapointe, David Morris, Oliver De Volpi, Dana Lahey, Jonathan Glencross (Photo: Owen Egan)

# To learn more...

- Horticultural Research Centre  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/plant/regional/horticulture/>
- LocalFoodPlus <http://localfoodplus.ca/>
- McGill Food and Dining Services, Social Responsibility  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/foodservices/socialresponsibility/>
- McGill Food Systems Project <http://mfsp.wordpress.com/>

**Thank you!**