ABSTRACT

TITLE:	The Commodification of Food & Its Impacts on Food Security and Strategies for Change
AUTHOR(S):	Bowser, Angie
PRESENTED AT:	2014 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Symposium, Fort Lewis College

ABSTRACT: Food insecurity is a problem that affects nearly a billion people around the world. This problem takes different form depending on economic, regional, and political factors. In developing regions of the world, it can take on the form of mass famine, undernourishment, and chronic hunger resulting death. In developed regions of the world, food insecurity appears as a lack of access to nutritious foods for certain populations, which often results in obesity, diabetes, and many other health problems. Although the problem of food insecurity is complex, this problem can ultimately be traced back to the commodification of food. The commodification of food has created an industry of selling food for profit, rather than viewing food as a human right which all populations should be granted equal access. This food system and worldview has not only affected food security for many people, but also the organizations, governments, and strategies which work toward eliminating food insecurity. The strategies for eliminating food insecurity are often limited to direct and emergency intervention for communities, rather than working toward systematic changes that would promote community food security. In La Plata County there are numerous organizations who provide food assistance to food insecure families and individuals. These organizations employ a variety of services and strategies to provide emergency food assistance and to improve food security in La Plata County. Despite their efforts, in La Plata County and elsewhere, food insecurity is still a chronic problem and the strategies for reforming our current food system are limited. For sustainable change to take place, it is imperative that we begin to treat food as a human right, rather than a commodity for profit.