# Scale, Sustainability, and Democracy

# *Comparing agricultural transformations in the US and Europe in the 20th and 21st centuries*

December 10–11, 2020

The twentieth century was a transformative period for agriculture in advanced economies. New technologies, an emphasis on scale and specialization, and a distinctive regulatory presence of the state in agrarian life characterized the transition. Principles of production, organization and regulation, even conceptions of the farm as a form of property, were all modelled after practices diffusing in the industrial and service economy more broadly at roughly the same time. The consequences of this transformation were radical. The limits of “industrial agriculture” and its consequences are now under intense scrutiny in academic, policy and media circles. This workshop, sponsored by the Sustainable Agriculture as Relational Learning Process project at the Neubauer Collegium, convenes a conversation about the shared and divergent historical evolution of agriculture in developed economies since the middle of the twentieth century. How have different historical experiences informed contemporary approaches to agricultural adjustment and sustainability in different polities and economies?

**PARTICIPANTS**

**Venus Bivar**, Lecturer in Modern History, University of York  
**Amy Cohen**, Professor of Law, Ohio State University  
**Deborah Fitzgerald**, Professor of the History of Technology, MIT  
**Jess Gilbert**, Emeritus Professor of Community and Environmental Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
**Julie Guthman**, Professor of Social Sciences, University of California, Santa Cruz  
**Shane Hamilton**, Senior Lecturer in International Business and Strategy, University of York  
**Gary Herrigel**, Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

**Terry Marsden**, Professor of Environmental Policy and Planning, University of Cardiff  
**Jodey Nurse**, Assistant Professor, Wilson Institute for Canadian History, McMaster University  
**Bilyana Petrova**, Postdoctoral Scholar, City University of New York & European University Institute  
**Juliana Walkiewicz**, Doctoral Candidate, University of Kassel, Germany  
**Susanne Wengle**, Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Notre Dame

**SCHEDULE**

*Note: all times are noted as CST/Chicago*

# DAY 1 Industrialization of Agriculture in the 20th Century: Business, Technology, and the State

## 10:30 – 11:00 am

## Introduction: Industrialization, Specialization and Consequences for Contemporary Sustainability

Gary Herrigel

Susanne Wengle

## 11:00 am – 12:45 pm

## Roundtable 1: 20th-Century Industrialization in the US

Jess Gilbert Deborah Fitzgerald Shane Hamilton

*Moderator: Susanne Wengle*

## 12:45 – 1:15 pm Break

**1:15 – 3:00 pm  
Roundtable 2: 20th-Century Industrialization in Europe**

Venus Bivar Gary Herrigel Susanne Wengle

*Moderator: Gary Herrigel*

**DAY 2**

**Contemporary Agriculture and Unsustainable Abundance? Technology, Scale and Sustainability**

## 10:30 am – 12:15 pm

## Roundtable 3: Europe

Terry Marsden Juliana Walkiewicz Bilyana Petrova

*Moderator: Susanne Wengle*

## 12:15 – 12:30 pm

## Break

**12:30 – 2:15  
Roundtable 4: US and Canada**

Julie Guthman Jodey Nurse Amy Cohen

*Moderator: Gary Herrigel*

**2:15 – 3:00 pm**

**Concluding Discussion**