Abstract

Located in Grafton, New York, Soul Fire Farm is a Black, Indigenous and People of Colour-led farm. The farm has an ambitious objective of building alternative institutions rooted in the principles of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty aims to strengthen local rural communities and reclaim political sovereignty by localising food system and regaining control from the neoliberal corporate food regime. Yet, this invites questions of whether and how we can replicate the successes of these localised projects in other communities with vastly different socio-ecological conditions.

In this paper, I show the ways in which the work of SFF draws upon the wisdom of ancestral knowledge and historical case studies, and keeps itself connected to other food sovereignty projects. I argue that it should be viewed as a vessel and a site of experimentation for practical ancestral wisdoms that can serve as groundwork for future food sovereignty projects. Beyond the practical benefits of employing ancestral knowledge, SFF also draws upon these sources of knowledges to shape its community narrative which has been crucial to its success. Through this analysis, I suggest that SFF should not be viewed as an isolated project, but rather a node within a wider network of what James Mittelman calls “micro-resistance” through which practical knowledge is shared, experimented with in the local context, and passed on to other communities.