

Anthropology & Agriculture

Anthropology that matters: Preserving (agri-) cultural diversity, advancing sustainable practices

Why I pursued an M.S. in Applied Anthropology

- To understand how social, economic and political systems influence modern agricultural practices and lead to environmental health issues.
- To work with farmers to identify and implement culturally appropriate solutions that allow them to be more environmentally and economically sustainable.



How I use Anthropology in my work



Over the past century, it's estimated the world has lost 75% of its edible plant varieties, including culturally-significant foods and food traditions.

Activities

- Collect, preserve, and distribute heirloom seeds and their stories
- Educate on seed saving practices
- Facilitate seed swaps
- Organize community seed groups

Some key anthropological skills used

- Semi-structured interviews and memory banking
- Qualitative and quantitative data management, analysis
- Cross-cultural and interdisciplinary communication



Industrial agriculture is input-intensive, polluting, market-dependent, and prohibitive to small-scale and beginning farmers.

Activities

- Design replicated, on-farm research trials
- Farmer-to-farmer education
 - On-farm field days
 - Farminars (farmer-led webinars)
- Beginning farmer programs (mentor, land matching)

Some key anthropological skills used

- Qualitative and quantitative data management, analysis
- Needs assessment, program design and evaluation
- Holistic perspective

