



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

For immediate release

December 10, 2018

***Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene* launches new bilingual collection of research on sustainable agriculture and food systems in Cuba**

Cuba is recognized globally as a leader in sustainability initiatives, particularly in the agriculture sector where Cuban scientists and farmers have advanced agroecological approaches in response to the food and economic crisis spurred by the fall of the Socialist Bloc in the early 1990s.

Oakland, CA—The editors of *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*—a trans-disciplinary, open-access journal committed to accelerating scientific solutions to the challenges presented by this era of human impact—are honored to announce Cuba's Agrifood System in Transition, an important new collection of research aimed at amplifying the voices of Cuban experts and fostering exchange and dialogue on sustainable agrifood practices, in the island nation and beyond.

According to Fernando Funes-Aguilar, one of the guest editors of this special feature, “This special feature provides a unique and necessary space for us as Cuban leaders in the agroecology movement to have our voice heard, in Spanish and English, in the US and beyond. It has been an honor to work on this bilateral collaboration to showcase the successes and challenges of our decades-long process of transitioning towards agroecology in Cuba. We hope it may help inspire other initiatives to build resilient, healthy food systems around the world.”

Cuba's experiences with sustainable agriculture and agroecology have been the subject of much international attention, with advocates for sustainability, food security and food sovereignty having looked to Cuba in order to model alternatives to industrial agriculture globally, and to demonstrate the feasibility of sustainable agrifood practices at scale. This collection launches with eight articles, published in both Spanish and English, and from both Cuban and non-Cuban researchers, practitioners and policy makers, examining the social, economic and ecological strategies necessary for a sustainable agrifood system, and detailing the opportunities and barriers to scaling up agroecology in Cuba and beyond.

The Cuban case is “perhaps as widely known as it is misunderstood,” notes Margarita Fernandez, guest editor for this special feature and coordinator of the Cuba-US Agroecology Network. Its agrifood system tends to be understood either as an organic, food sovereign utopia, or as a backwards, underdeveloped sector desperately requiring modernization and revitalization through foreign investment. Cuba's Agrifood System in Transition presents a more balanced perspective, analyzing the nuances of agroecological development in Cuba, highlighting important innovations that have been implemented, and examining some of the significant challenges that continue to be faced.

Margarita Fernandez adds that, “At a time when bilateral relations between the US and Cuba are again strained under renewed hardline policies from the Trump administration, it is especially important to find ways to maintain open channels of successful collaborations through

Peter Perez | (510) 883-8318 | Fax: (510) 836-8910 | Email: pperez@ucpress.edu

155 Grand Avenue, Suite 400 | Oakland, California 94612-3758

citizen and science diplomacy, as demonstrated in this special feature. The articles showcased here offer us lessons for developing diverse, integrated, and resilient agriculture and food systems, but also demonstrate the ingenuity, perseverance and resilience of the Cuban people.”

Among the first articles to publish in this collection are “New opportunities, new challenges: Harnessing Cuba’s advances in agroecology and sustainable agriculture in the context of changing relations with the United States,” which synthesizes and updates the contemporary literature on the Cuban agricultural and food system and analyzes the potential futures of agroecology in relation to geopolitical changes; “How to make prosperous and sustainable family farming in Cuba a reality,” a practice bridge article written by two Cuban farmers documenting their transition towards agroecology and the development of a resilience indicator; “The role of biological control in the sustainability of the Cuban agri-food system,” which documents the evolution of different types of biological control of pests as an alternative to pesticides; and “Recent transformations in Cuban agricultural policy and impacts on markets and production,” an analysis of a series of policy transformations implemented by the Cuban government since 2007 to increase the country’s agricultural self-sufficiency and reduce its dependence on food imports. Over time, this dialogue will continue apace with additional articles, both invited and submitted, and from global stakeholders in the Cuban agrifood system.

Media inquiries

To inquire about author interviews, or for additional information about Cuba's Agrifood System in Transition, please contact:

Margarita Fernandez
Email: margarita@vtcaribbean.org
Cell USA: (802) 734-4171
Cell CUBA: +(53) 5 516-4622

Kim Locke
Email: klocke@elementascience.org
Cell: (802) 310-2153

About *Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene*

Elementa: Science of the Anthropocene is a trans-disciplinary, open-access journal committed to the facilitation of collaborative, peer-reviewed research. With the ultimate objective of accelerating scientific solutions to the challenges presented by this era of human impact, it is uniquely structured into distinct knowledge domains, and gives authors the opportunity to publish in one or multiple domains, helping them to present their research and commentary to interested readers from disciplines related to their own.

Impact Factor: 2.838
www.elementascience.org

About UC Press

University of California Press is one of the most forward-thinking scholarly publishers in the nation. For more than 125 years, it has championed work that influences public discourse and challenges the status quo in multiple fields of study. At a time of dramatic change for publishing and scholarship, UC Press collaborates with scholars, librarians, authors, and students to stay ahead of today’s knowledge demands and shape the future of publishing.
www.ucpress.edu