



FREE AUTUMN 2026 SEMINAR SERIES

Food and Society

Palmerston North Central Library
4 The Square, Palmerston North



Wednesdays 1:30pm – 2.45pm

This seminar series is organised by U3A Manawatū. It is open to the public. After the presentations, audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations will be made available on the Manawatū U3A website. See: <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

The availability and allocation of food has always been a central concern of societies. Its quality and ability to meet our needs in a healthy way is receiving increased attention. We now have access to a broad range of foods from diverse cultures. The role of food in social occasions cannot be ignored. Terms such as “food insecurity” and “food sovereignty” indicate policy objectives, while other terms such as “processed foods” and “fast foods” highlight possible areas of concern. This series will look at the broad picture, and then focus on some specific local initiatives to address these issues.

May 6th: More Than a Meal: The Social Power of Food

Franco Vaccarino, City Missioner

Food has long brought people together, shaping social relationships and everyday life. Beyond nutrition, it serves as a powerful social connector influenced by cultural practices and meanings. The sociocultural dimensions of food highlight its role in structuring communities, fostering belonging, and strengthening interpersonal bonds. This presentation explores the social dimensions of food.

May 13th: Think Globally, Act Locally: A Grassroots Approach to Food Security

Chris Love, RECAP

What can one do as an individual and what can we achieve together? Chris will discuss the kai-focused initiatives in her current work with charitable organisation RECAP based in Ashhurst/Pohangina, along with the volunteering roles which led her to this mahi. She will also touch on some of the Aotearoa-based projects that demonstrate innovative ways to harness the power of community to forge a new path to food sovereignty.

May 20th: Food Rescue

Rebecca Culver, Managing Director Just Zilch

With a third of New Zealanders experiencing food insecurity in the last year, we need to make some changes. Food rescue is one way we can help good food get to people, not landfill. Fifteen years ago Rebecca started Just Zilch and now food rescue is an industry in and of itself. Find out about the genesis, the growth, and the gathering.

May 27th: Food Sovereignty: A Community Perspective

Daniel (Morri) Morrimire, Community Food Sovereignty Lead at Environment Network Manawatū

Food sovereignty is a term often used—but what does it really mean? ENM partnered with Massey researchers to combine academic research with community voices, creating an accessible resource for our communities. This session explores that new food sovereignty resource and the key messages at its heart.