

More Than Soil, Seeds, and Water: True Cost Accounting and an Intersectional Sustainability Index for Gender Equity and Racial Justice

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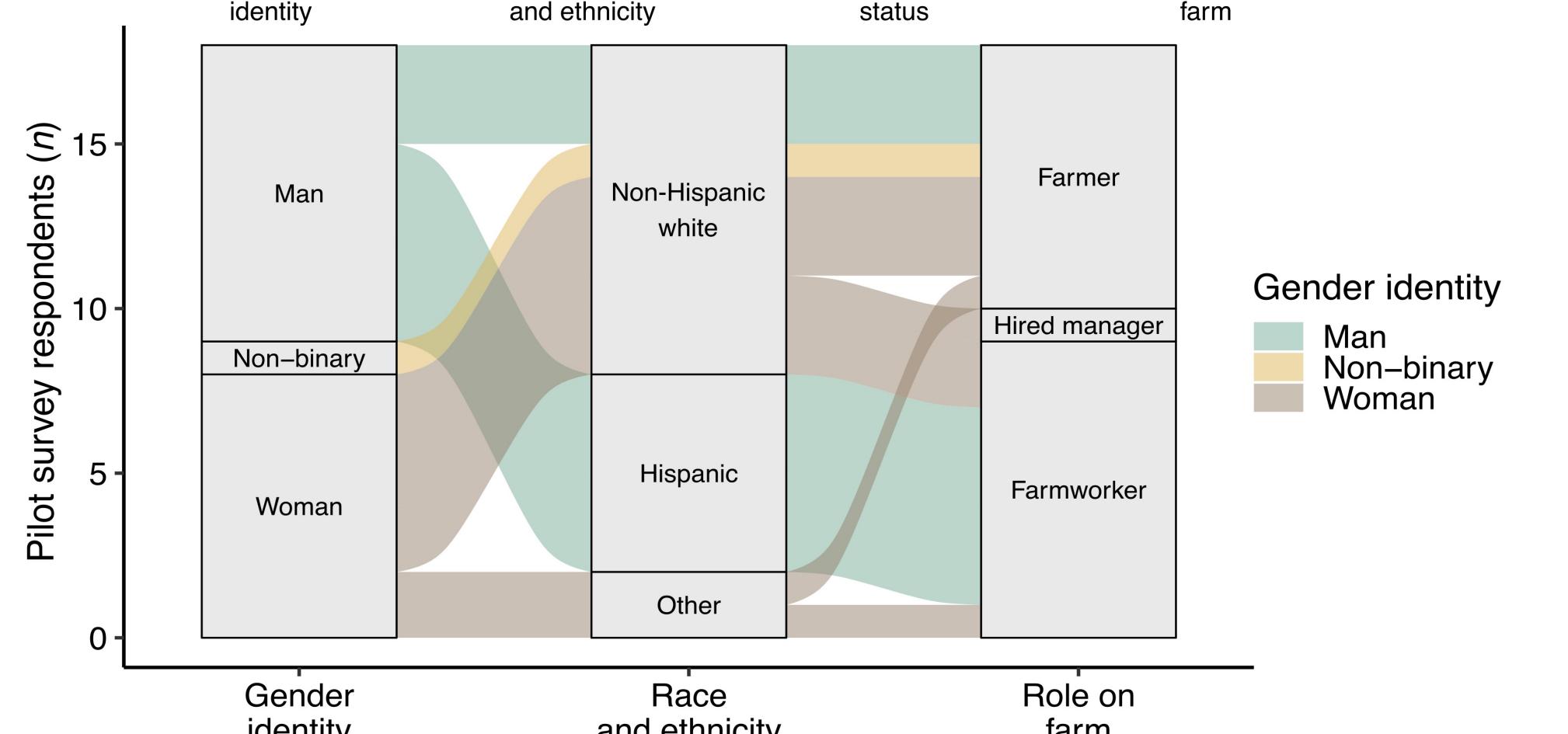
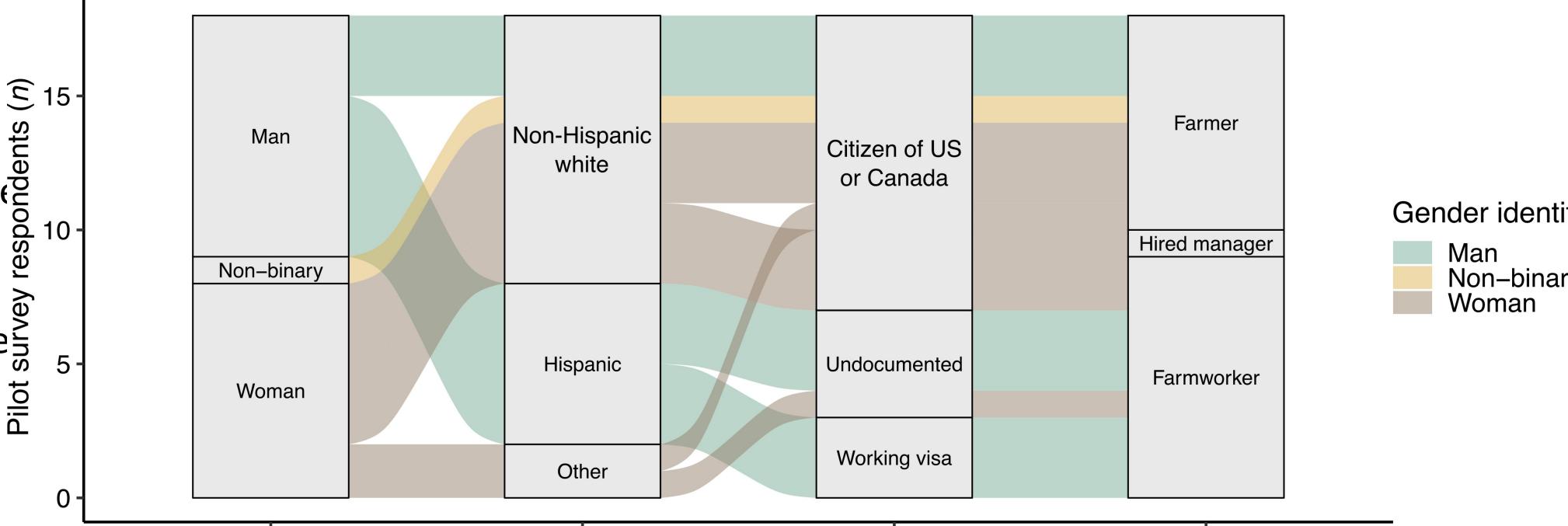
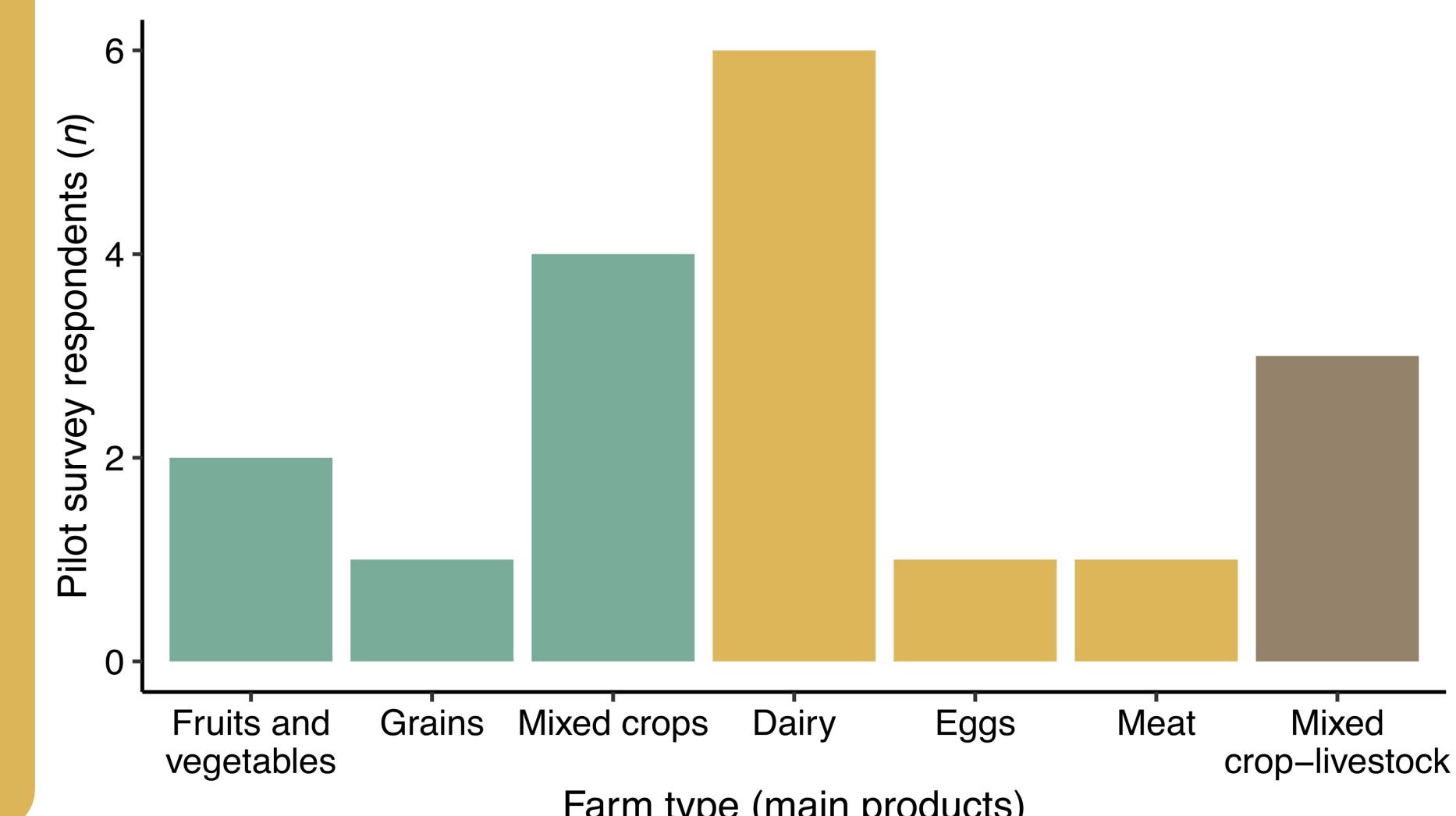
Abstract

- A new tool, True Cost Accounting (TCA) can be used to incentivize new values in our food system. The accounting tool quantifies the hidden costs and benefits created on-farm, and with aid from public policy supports good behaviours and disciplines harmful ones.
- To this day, no TCA farm tool has ever attempted to include the hidden human or social costs that are created by farms and felt by women or Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) workers.
- Food systems in Canada and the United States rely on the labour of women and BIPOC workers.
- The Sustainable Food Trust developed their Global Farm Metric using survey tools to measure 11 sustainability metrics, including soil and air quality.
- This report offers research and recommendations to better inform two of the 11 Global Farm Metric's current categories: human and social capital.
- A pilot survey (38 questions) was dispersed across North America (n=24) to capture inequities between farmers, employers, farmworkers, landlords and tenants across gender and racial lines.

Framework – Achievement Tables						
Gender Equity			Racial Justice			
Recognition	Redistribution	Representation	Openness	Opportunity	Ownership	
Agency (Process)		Resources (Preconditions)		Agency (Process)		Resources (Preconditions)
Individual	Intrahousehold / On Farm	Community and Market Structures	Non-operating landlord	Owner / Operator	Tenant	Farmworker
Recognition of oneself as a farmer	Awareness of rights and services	Equal sharing of caregiving work and leisure time	Free from violence	Equitable decision making	Group based access to networks and information	
		Time accounting and time poverty	Access to adequate healthcare	Long term lease or purchase, asset contracts	Reliance on volunteers or family members for labour	Legal supports in language of choice
						Opportunity to unionize or arbitrate with employer

Results - Survey Tool

Survey question development was an iterative process informed by the Achievement tables. The survey included multiple-choice, text entry, and matrix tables with Likert-scale response options. After writing a first draft of the survey, we piloted the questionnaire with 18 participants: 4 farmers, 9 farmworkers, 1 employer, 1 tenant, and 3 mixed-role respondents. Following the completion of the pilot questionnaire, respondents were interviewed (semi-structured) to gather information about the survey tool's usability.



Recommendations

- Embed the Gender and Racial Equity Survey into the Sustainable Food Trust Global Farm Metric
- Rename Human and Social Capital Pillars to Racial and Gender Equity
- Revise and test pilot surveys in different national contexts
- Integrate qualitative data tools into equity measurement practices

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