



## Meet Rav Singh: Your NFU-O Youth Advisor

Rav Singh is excited to join NFU-O's council as the new Youth Advisor, saying that: "youth have such a unique position in radically changing our food and climate systems." "More and more we're seeing young people enter farming who are from the city and have no prior connection to farming, and that was me." Rav remembers cornerstone moments from her farming journey thus far, like when she was a farm intern and touched soil for the first time, and the first time she saw a farmer who wasn't white. She recalls feeling really lost when she first pursued farming, unsure of where to begin accessing land and resources, and knows that this is the reality for a lot of other young, BIPOC farmers.

Presently, Rav farms on a ¼ acre section that sits at the confluence of the urban and rural divide in Southern Caledon. "It's a really interesting space, because five minutes in one direction is rural and five minutes in the other direction is middle of the suburbs." Focusing on soil health and sustainable farming practices, Rav grows a little bit of everything, but is especially excited to offer fresh, organic okra and bitter melon. "I saw a missed opportunity," says Rav "in Mississauga there is so many newcomer communities and communities of color that depend on and want these other types of foods and yet, the only option they have of accessing them is going to a grocery store and buying them frozen."

Thoughtful and creative, Rav brings a critical eye to her surrounding environment, noticing what populations are unrepresented, and how farming and food systems need to expand to let them in. "I think seeing food that people relate to and having food there that means something to them is a really key part of creating a community and helping them feel welcomed into these spaces."



Although Rav considers herself a first-generation farmer, her ancestral roots are tightly woven with farming. Miti, the Punjabi word for soil, is proudly stamped at the forefront of Rav's organization: Shade of Miti. "I wanted to remind myself every day of the connection I have to food and the work that my ancestors have done and remind myself that I have a duty to carry that on." Filled with thoughtful gratitude, Rav feels empowered as a farmer, and is glad to take ownership over what she believes in as a farmer and food advocate through her organization.

Shade of Miti is a food and climate justice organization with farming as its center piece. Rav focuses on workshops and education, saying, "community education will always be at the heart of what I do. I don't see myself as just a farmer or just running a farm, but someone who is teaching people how to grow food in the city and helping them notice intersectionality by bringing awareness to food systems and farming." Currently, she is working with the Peel Youth Food Circle to develop garden and farming resources that will be translated into other languages like Punjabi and Hindi.

Rav's idea of an authentic local food system is one that truly

represents its community, like who is in it and what their needs are, which means more spaces that are run by youth and BIPOC folks. Rav says that shifting from individualistic struggle to collective action is vital and that community collaboration should be celebrated, because "it's so nice to see how food can bring communities together." Welcome to the NFU-O council, Rav!

### Local News/Events

The NFU will "Confront Concentration" at our dynamic 53rd Annual Convention on Nov. 24-26th, 2022. This year's Convention will be hybrid: online via Zoom and in-person at Park Town Hotel, 924 Spadina Crescent E, Saskatoon, SK.

From global supply chains to input profiteering, seed patents, land concentration, and inequities, we take them all on – together! Meet old friends and new. Delve into farm policy and debate farmer-led resolutions. Come home having made new connections with equally-committed farmers.

**Register for the convention online at [nfu.ca/2022convention/register](http://nfu.ca/2022convention/register)**