Anticipating Change: How Apple Growers are Preparing for New Robotic Technologies

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Monday, November 11th, 2019
114 Gates Hall, Ithaca, NY
11:30 am – Networking & Lunch
12:00 – 12:45 pm – Presentation with Live Stream:
https://cornell.zoom.us/j/776293354
12:45 – 1:00 pm – Q&A

Abstract:

With the growth of new co-design strategies for technology development, and increasing media attention on future automation of the farm, food producers are aware of new robotics on the horizon. This talk will discuss how apple growers are anticipating new robotic technologies in their present strategies. By looking at the different ways that growers prepare for new robotics, we can see the factors that are likely to shape the adoption of these technologies and the potential environmental, social, and economic effects. Doing so contributes to a more responsible innovation process by providing insights into potential positive and negative outcomes of a current development and adoption trajectory. This will enable researchers and developers to identify sites of intervention to broaden the benefits of a new technology in an industry.

Bio:

Katharine Legun is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Otago, NZ. Her work considers how plants, measurement systems, and new artificial intelligence technology shapes ecological and economic agency (in other words, how it shapes what people have the capacity
to do) in the context of agri-food systems. Currently, she is part of a large transdisciplinary project in New Zealand developing AI robotics for apple orchards and vineyards. Katharine focuses on the social aspects of the project’s co-design process and its effects. Her research has been published in *Society and Natural Resources, Economy and Society, Geoforum, The Journal of Rural Studies, Agriculture and Human Values, and Environment and Planning A*. Additionally, she teaches Environmental Sociology and Social Theory at the undergraduate and masters level, and supervises several PhD students.

**Background on the Cornell Initiative for Digital Agriculture:**

An interdisciplinary group of Cornell University faculty began meeting in early 2017 to formulate an Initiative for Digital Agriculture (DA), believing that Cornell is uniquely equipped to lead in this emerging arena that will benefit the public for generations. We define DA to mean the application of computational and information technologies coupled with nanotechnology, biology, systems engineering and economics to both the research and operational sides of agriculture and food production. With approximately 100 faculty from 5 Cornell colleges participating, we are collaborating with external stakeholders to shape and implement a research agenda for DA that will build a pipeline of discovery and innovations for the next 10+ years. Please contact Tim Vanini at tv37@cornell.edu with any questions.