

The Food Team (LÉA)

L'Équipe Alimentation (LÉA - The Food Team), which was accredited as a research team (EA 6294) on 1 January 2012, has been an integral part of the establishment of a food hub at François Rabelais University since 2005. It brings together about forty members, who are historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and economists (lecturer-researchers, visiting researchers, post-doctoral research associates, and doctoral students). It plays a very full part in the scientific vitality of the UNESCO Chair in the Safeguarding and Enhancement of Food Cultural Heritages.

LÉA is developing multidisciplinary research on food and its scientific popularisation, as well as on partnerships with local authorities and businesses in response to food culture-related social demand. Its fields of expertise focus on the food chain from production to consumption, food identities and their representation, food quality-related innovation strategies and controversies, forms of public regulation of the markets, the heritage enhancement of production areas, social behaviour, culinary art, and table manners.

Three research themes shape scientific activity.

1-Food practices and innovations from production to consumption.

The study of the food chain throughout the world and from ancient times to the present day facilitates the identification of the way in which consumers respond to food innovations. These food innovations lie between the preservation of traditional points of reference and the acceptance of new foods which meet unsatisfied needs.

2-Food packaging, transport, and information systems

The study of food distribution systems covers the multiscale organisation of forms of supply. Methods of product-related communication and media coverage are also significant areas of research.

3-Mealtime sociability and culinary identity

The forms of conviviality and hospitality, or of exclusion, at places of consumption both inside and outside the home open up different approaches to the study of food-related behaviour. The development of personal, family, and community practices and their constituent integration of identity, from the concept of habitus to that of the intangible heritage, relates to gender practices and the modalities of material culture or social imaginary.



