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Question1:

Question2: Emphasis should be placed on making US-produced food the most appealing to local consumers. There is a growing demand for food grown locally, and USDA policies should encourage this trend. It saves transportation costs, lowering dependence on oil, and can reconnect consumers with the source of their food. It supports the US economy by preventing further trade imbalances in the agricultural sector. Support farmers' markets and family farms, and educate consumers about the advantages of choosing local food over imported food.

Question3: I agree with the preface to this comment - the current system does not encourage what we should be encouraging. We don't need bigger farms, but more farmers. I would like to see subsidies to crops like corn reduced, since many are over-produced anyway, and increased for fruit and vegetable production. This would result in greater availability of healthier food for consumers. Also, funding for conservation should be far more emphasized, both with CREP and programs that would encourage farmland in use to be maintained responsibly for its conditions, whether that means stream buffers, terracing or other methods.

Question4: Shape policies to reward organic farming practices, emphasize local production and distribution, encourage permaculture and discourage monoculture. Farming should be discouraged as well in inappropriate lands, whether wetlands or steep slopes. And far more attention should be paid to water quality by addressing stormwater runoff of fertilizers and manure.

Question5:

Question6: At the risk of repeating myself, I believe work on new agricultural opportunities should be concentrated on what we can do best, not what will face competition from abroad. So instead of trying for the cheapest, highest yield, work for more organic farming, more local food production, community-supported agriculture.