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Question1:

Question2: there needs to be more USDA programs that support and promote local food initiatives. Americans should be encouraged to buy locally produced food whenever possible and be encouraged to support US farmers even if their prices are higher than competitors on the world market.

There should also be more emphasis on buying from small farmers who use sustainable farming methods such as organic compost and conserving riparian areas.

Question3: More support should be given to smaller farms, and assistance should not be given to large industrial farming operations. Supporting local farms strengthens the local economy, creates more jobs and keeps more farmers in business. Why should the US government subsidize large farms that are contributing to some of the most potentially dangerous environmental problems such as chicken farm run-off into the Chesapeake Bay? In addition providing support to large farms makes it extremely difficult for smaller farmers to compete. Large subsidized farms can sell their produce at below cost but smaller farmers have to charge the true price of production.

Question4: Buy supporting organic agriculture, implementing more conservation programs such as tax breaks for creating livestock barriers near riparian areas, and setting up penalties for farms that externalize their environmental costs.

Question5: I think that by setting up more support for small farmers both financially and with more extension programs on sustainable practices rural economies will strengthen. The most important thing is to discourage buying imported food that can be grown here. US farmers need to be seen as preferable to foreign producers.

Question6: Expanding organic agriculture should be one of the top priorities. Renewable energy and energy crops should also be supported but not at the expense of growing food. Ultimately energy conservation at all levels should be of the highest priority. Why use a machine when man/woman power will do? We need more farmers!