

FarmBill

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Sent: Tuesday, October 18, 2005 3:27 PM
To: FarmBill
Subject: Fw: USDA FARM BILL comments

Categories: Farm Bill

----- Forwarded by Jim March/Duncan/NA/SAC on 10/18/2005 03:26 PM -----

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10/18/2005 03:25
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USDA FARM BILL comments

To

cc

Subject

Finding Health Close to Home

A Call for Localism

All across America, the small towns of yesteryear are disappearing. Those near urban areas are turning into bedroom communities served by national chain stores and malls that have replaced local businesses and Main Street, USA, while more remote communities are drying up altogether as the young people move away and the farming economy continues its nosedive. As small local businesses are replaced by national brands, communities become colonies where people hardly know each other and where neighbors are united not by social and economic ties, but by proximity only. Television and car culture contribute to the breakdown of community: no longer do we sit on the front stoop and watch people walking to the corner store, or chat at the baseball diamond and the post office. Instead we live our lives indoors, in private, except when we drive out of the neighborhood to shop, work, or socialize with carefully selected friends. Alarmed by these trends, social activists have taken up the cause of localism and the rebuilding of community. What many of us do not realize, however, is that localism is not just a worthy social cause, but an important health issue as well.

COMMODITY AGRICULTURE

The skeptic might object, "What does it matter where your food is grown? As long as it is certified organic, as long as it has ingredient X and not ingredient Y, what's the difference if it is grown locally or in California?" Such a view fails to recognize two essential truths:

1. That there is a deep-seated conflict between health and a commodity-based food system, and
2. That physical health can never last long in isolation, but reflects and is reflected by healthy communities, healthy land and healthy

relationships.

Whatever the ingredients or processing methods, and whether or not it is organic, food from distant, anonymous producers is really nothing more than a commodity, in that the only relationship between the producer and the consumer is a monetary one. Because commodity trade is governed by strict market mechanisms, cheaper producers will inevitably dominate those bearing higher costs. This fact creates an inexorable pressure on producers to drive down costs and cut corners, as long as the products meet the letter of the law. For example, regulations stipulate a minimum cage area per hen for organic eggs, so a producer motivated strictly by cost minimization will pack them in to that limit, regardless of whether that is sufficient for the hens' health and well-being.

Contrast this situation with that of a small producer selling to local customers whom he or she knows personally. Because the relationship is not based on money alone, cost is not the only factor determining the treatment of the hens. Producer and consumer might, for one, have shared understandings about how hens ought to be kept; secondly, they will typically develop a mutual trust over time. The consumer grows to trust the producer's integrity, and the producer trusts that consumer will remain loyal, even when distant, mass-produced eggs might be a few cents cheaper.

BRINGING OUT THE WORST

Anonymity tends to bring out the worst in people. It is much easier to put out inferior products, even unhealthy products, when you cannot see the people they affect. Commodities markets actually drive out people who care more than they need to—they will be undersold by another firm that cares less. That is why corporate slogans about "caring for the customer" ring so hollow. They don't even know you. You are a market statistic to them, a number. While there may be saintly people in these corporations who truly do love all humanity, even those they have never met, such sentiments quickly degenerate into slogans when it comes to making business decisions. What kind of food would you rather eat: food from someone who knows and cares about you, or food from a total stranger—a series of strangers, in fact? Essentially, the function of laws, standards, and regulations is to institutionalize and automate caring. They substitute the ethics, caring, and goodwill people naturally harbor toward others in their community with mere deterrence; that is, the fear of the consequences of breaking the rules. Now it might be true that if we had rules comprehensive enough and enforcement strict enough, a commodity food system could approximate the quality of a system based on personal relationships—but this scenario is not likely. There are always loopholes, always shortcuts, as the incessant wrangling over organic standards demonstrates.

PASTEURIZATION

Laws requiring the pasteurization of milk force a choice between relying on regulation or on trust. While the history of pasteurization laws certainly reflects a lot of ignorance and greed, it is also an inevitable consequence of the move to mass production and long-distance shipping of milk. When milk is unpasteurized, it is important to know that the cows are treated well and kept in a sanitary environment—easy to ascertain at your local dairy, but impossible when the milk is coming from thousands of dairies all over the country. Rather than attempt a meticulous inspection of each dairy, a blanket solution—pasteurization—was imposed. Even I, a believer in raw milk, will not buy it from a producer whom I don't know personally (or through a friend). I will not buy it as a commodity.

OTHER COMPROMISES

The organic brands you buy in the supermarket probably meet the letter of the law, but there is no incentive for their producers to go a step beyond, because to do so would raise their costs and put them at a disadvantage in the commodity market. That is why even the strictest laws are far less reliable than personal relationships: the trust, earned over time, in someone you know.

Mass production and long-distance shipping of food compromises its quality

in other ways as well by requiring product uniformity, standardization of materials and processes, and long shelf-life. Local plant variants, ideally suited to a given climate, may not meet the needs of factory processing. The most flavorful and nutritious varieties of fruits and vegetables may not be the least perishable, or perhaps they don't have the uniform ripening time that allows mechanical harvesting, or perhaps they don't ship well. Live fermented foods suffer from short shelf life and non-uniformity from batch to batch. Whatever the reason, local food produced by farmers and artisans who love their work somehow tastes different and better than even the best "store-bought" food.

I believe there are also energetic qualities of food, little recognized by conventional scientists, that nurture us only if we live close to where the food originated. Small amounts of foreign food are okay, but when the bulk of the diet consists of foods from thousands of miles away, disharmony eventually manifests in the body. Food is a primary means of our connection to the earth, and when our food comes from far away, we are less rooted to our local environment, less grounded, less at home where we are.

INTERDEPENDENCY

This observation leads to the interdependency of health on all levels: physical, emotional, community and ecological. It is not, for example, mere coincidence that organic food is better for the environment as well as for the body; each necessarily feeds back into the other. Similarly, when we support local farmers (and by extension, the local businesses these farmers patronize, and therefore the community as a whole), it is not mere coincidence that the food we get will contribute to our physical health as well as to the health of the community. On a very practical level, local food offers the advantages implied by the foregoing critique of mass-produced commodity food. We need not rely on impersonal regulations and the vagaries of their enforcement, but instead can find real people whose philosophy of food and farming is aligned with ours. Moreover, as we get to know them and their customers, we become connected to other producers, to practitioners of the healing arts, and to other people who reinforce our way of life. This support is essential in a society that beckons us with the delusory temptations of convenience and frightens and confuses us with undependable health information from the so-called experts.

So many people today seek "financial security," as though, with sufficient money, we could be independent of all other people. Indeed it is true that with enough money, you can be independent of any specific human being after all, you can always "pay someone else to do it." This is a false security though, because it merely substitutes dependence on people you know with dependence on anonymous strangers. True and lasting health cannot come from such "independence," which is really the attempted separation of oneself from the world. Health, which means wholeness, comes instead from stronger connections with others, not weaker ones, from interdependence, not independence. Like an ecosystem where each species relies on many others, security comes from strong mutual ties to other people.

Certainly it is better to buy organic rather than conventional produce in the supermarket, or to ship in pastured beef from out of state if none is locally available, but this is only a small first step toward real food. Real food cannot be separated from real people, real land and real life. What is real is what can be seen and heard and felt with our own senses. It is time to begin stepping away from the world of anonymous, distant institutions that inevitably reduce food to money. Or you could say, it is time to get real.

About the Author

Charles Eisenstein is the author of *The Yoga of Eating*. He will lead a panel discussion on the Emotional and Psychological Dimensions of Nutrition at Wise Traditions 2005, our 6th annual conference, November 11-13.

LOCAL VERSUS NON-LOCAL BUYING

Buy Local (according to availability): Dairy products (milk, butter, cream, cheese, yoghurt, etc); eggs; chicken and turkey; beef, pork and veal;

seafood; seasonal vegetables (use your Brix meter!); sweeteners such as honey and maple syrup; lacto-fermented condiments and beverages.
Buy at Stores: Some fruits and vegetables; grains, legumes and nuts (unless available locally); seafood; dried herbs and spices; healthy fats and oils (olive, flax, coconut and palm); sweeteners such as sucanat, rapadura, maple sugar and molasses; some canned products.
Mail Order: Unrefined seasalt; supplements and superfoods; any product that cannot be obtained locally or at stores.

OVER-REGULATION AND SMALL FARMS

By Joel Salatin

Comments before the Virginia Senate Subcommittee Hearings

July 29 , 1997

I turned 40 this spring and in my lifetime I have gone from selling uninspected fresh beef, pork, rabbit, chicken, yogurt, butter and cottage cheese at the local curb market to being unable to sell any milk products, and pork and beef only after they are exported from our county and reimported.

I've watched as dozens of small neighborhood meat and poultry processing facilities have closed down. At the same time, I've watched thousands of farmers go out of business as the farmer's share of the food dollar has dropped from 35 cents per retail dollar just a couple of decades ago to less than nine cents today.

I've seen centralization in the poultry, beef and pork industries increase environmental problems and shove the issue of food-borne illnesses and death to the front pages of magazines and news programs. A strong consumer backlash is creating a huge opportunity for creative alternatives that produce stronger rural economies, more nutritious food and more environmentally friendly modeling.

Our farm, Polyface, Inc., is a multigenerational farm, producing salad bar beef, pastured poultry and eggs, range rabbits, pigerator pork, vegetables and forestry products, marketing everything to about 400 patrons we like to call "cheerleaders." We use no chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and do not administer vaccines, medications or growth stimulants to our livestock. Our patrons enjoy purchasing meat and poultry from a nonindustrial, humane production model while we enjoy producing food that is superior to supermarket fare.

But even now, as we speak, government agents are trying to find out the names and addresses of our patrons. Why? Our patrons have sought us out, exercising informed freedom of choice and they are happy. We have seen the conventional approach and followed an exhilaratingly different path. Why can't farmers and their friends who choose to build a relationship over their food purchases do so without government agents denying these freedoms?

What we want is legislation that will allow all agricultural products processed and marketed on the producing farm to be exempt from government inspection.

The current prohibition against being able to sell a pound of sausage to a neighbor or fellow church member after a Thanksgiving hog killing has nothing to do with food safety, but with denial of market access. If food safety is the real issue, why is it perfectly fine to give this harmful food away?

We can give away anything, including milk, butter and cheese. If these things are so harmful, shouldn't it be illegal to even give them away? After all, would we allow someone to give away drugs? On other harmful substance prohibitions exist equally for both buyer and seller. In this case, it's perfectly fine to buy it and feed it to your children and their friends? it's just illegal to sell it. Isn't that ridiculous?

In fact, we can even go shoot a deer on a 70-degree November day, drag it through the dirt and leaves for two hours, throw it on the hood of a pickup and drive, in the blazing sun, to a neighborhood abattoir, then give the meat to all the neighborhood children, but we can't take a prime, coddled beef to the same abattoir and sell it to our mother-in-law. Folks, we are insane if we think this issue is a matter of food safety.

The entire food safety issue is a smokescreen invented by bureaucrats and academic eggheads, not to mention corporate executives, who fear a little competition or a little loss of power.

A friend of mine near Richmond, tired of stockyard prices for his calves, tried to put in a little facility to sell to his neighbors and friends. He finally gave up after two years. It would have cost nearly \$300,000 in order to sell one pound of hamburger to his pastor. Folks, that is ridiculous.

Many of you senators have told me, with a twinkling wink of the eye, that you purchase some sausage from fellow Ruritan or church membership, or you buy butter from a neighbor who milks a family Jersey cow. That's nice for you, but try being the farmer who answers the door to a badge-waving, accusing government agent and see how funny it is.

As our food production system moves farther and farther away from natural, size-appropriate models and embraces the mega-factory industrial concept, problems of humane animal treatment, smells, environmental degradation, petroleum use and packaging become greater. As strange as it may sound, some folks want something else besides irradiated, genetically-engineered, amalgamated, extruded pseudo-food from Archer Daniels Midland and they should be able to access that type of product.

The current food giants started a couple of decades ago from the tailgate of a pickup in the backyard of the farm, offering a creative alternative. As they grew and shipped all across the country, we made regulations to keep them in line. Today, many new creative alternative producers stand poised and ready to meet the new demand for something better than factory food, but the new products must go through a regulatory gauntlet that precludes 99 percent of them from ever reaching consumers. We have not had a free market now for a very long time and it's time to unleash the entrepreneurial creativity of the countryside on our neighborhoods.

Eliminating the risk of a wrong choice inherently eliminates the ability to make a creatively positive choice, but if we attempt to protect everyone from ever making an incorrect decision, we must eliminate decision-making ability from everyone. Hand-in-hand with liberty is the ability to make decisions, and if all our decisions are proscribed by the government, what

kind of choices will we have?

I for one do not believe that government officials, wined and dined by lobbyists and corporate giants, will attempt to preserve diversity in the market place. Diversity is hard to regulate. It drives bureaucrats nuts. And yet that is the very essence of freedom.

We have the freedom to smoke, to drink, to kill unborn babies, but not the freedom to buy a glass of raw milk from a neighbor whose Jersey cow just freshened and is giving extra milk. In more than 30 states you can do this but not in Virginia. Are people keeling over dead from milk-borne diseases in these states? I think not.

If trends continue, your children and mine will eventually be doomed to buying only packaged, irradiated, chlorinated, extruded materials from multinational conglomerates. Is that the legacy you want to leave them?

Consider regulations regarding day care and elderly care that are waived for just two to five clients in a home. Shouldn't this privilege be extended to small farms? Currently, we enjoy, as do about 32 other states, an extension of the federal PI 90-492 Producer-Grower exemption for poultry farmers, allowing us to produce, process and sell up to 20,000 birds annually. The cap keeps the operation small and the producer-grower dimension keeps it close.

My question is this: Why is one pound of sausage or a T-bone steak, or one glass of milk, more dangerous than 20,000 chickens? Ponder that awhile. You see, no one is being harmed by backyard poultry producers. The 1000 people killed annually by salmonella from poultry are buying their chickens from inspected mega-plants, not home-sized operators. It is much easier to keep things sanitary when the processing is small, local and infrequent as opposed to around-the-clock and a thousand miles away.

What do we really want? We want clean, affordable food. We want creativity coming to the marketplace, with a means of expression that is not eliminated by government policy. We want freedom to make decisions. Small farmers should be exempt from all food safety laws.

HOW TO KEEP THE VALUE ADDED DOWN ON THE FARM...WHERE IT BELONGS

By Sally Fallon

Presented to the Atlantic Region Biodynamic Conference, October 1998

and Acres USA Convention, December, 1998

Today I stand before you, a distinguished audience that includes a number of farmers, uniquely qualified to talk to you about farming. I have never been a farmer, never lived on a working farm and never participated in a farm community. In fact, I grew up just about as far from a farm as possible, in a bedroom community of Los Angeles. So I come before you without any practical knowledge of farming but rather as an autodidact--someone who has learned about a subject on his own, by reading books. Now someone trained in a subject, either at school or through practical experience, tends to be reticent about his knowledge, but the autodidact is characterized by brash self-assurance, shoving what he thinks he knows down your throat.

I do, however, know something about food, and about food preparation and food processing and hope that some of the knowledge I can impart will be of benefit to the conscientious farmer, struggling to make a decent living in today's America.

Two Agricultural Systems

Just what is the situation in America today? I'd like to begin with a quote from Rodney Leonard, writing for Community Nutrition Institute: He notes that two agricultural systems are emerging:

"One is a system of small independent farms relying on the management skills of farm owners who produce natural, organic foods that provide a rising portion of the American diet."

"The other is an industrial agriculture system managed by executives of corporations that genetically convert plants and animals into miniature factories producing chemicals, drugs and body parts through biotechnology; farmers will grow and harvest these factories on command of corporate managers."

"In a global economy, biotechnology is transforming U.S. democracy into its commercial agent. The national interest is defined as compelling the world to accept products of biotechnology corporations, even jeopardizing the rights of citizens to decide how much risk to health and environment they will accept."

"In fact, this strange new world is already here with the rules of governance quietly being changed to restrain popular reaction. In the last several months, a radical transformation of agricultural biotechnology has largely been completed, with a small number of corporations in the chemical and drug sectors emerging to dominate an industry of which few Americans are aware."

"Control of seed production, with the monopoly pricing power from control of patents on genetic changes, allows the biotechnology corporation to control farmers and industrial farming production. Enhanced by such gifts as the terminator gene from Department of Agriculture (USDA) research, which causes seeds to become sterile after one season, AHP-Monsanto and DuPont will be able to dictate seed prices, growing practices, marketing and other terms of management. Growers cannot object. Seeds for next year's crops must be purchased, and alternative uses for croplands are few."

The Marxism of Corporate Farms

We are all aware of the trend to corporate farming in America, with its reliance on chemicals and genetically manipulated seed. But let me make a few observations of how this fits into the scheme of things. It has become unfashionable these days to talk about communism-this is a thing of the past, the Berlin wall is down. But let's talk about Marxism a minute. One of the central planks of Marx's communist manifesto was the corporate farm. The true enemy of Marxism-or communism, or world socialism or whatever you want to call it-is the yeoman farmer, the independent agriculturalist, the rancher-because he can survive without the state. Thomas Jefferson recognized that the basis of true representative government was the small, independent farmer, the Joel Salatin's of this world, and the farm-based community.

Now the products of today's corporate farm are traded on world markets. The corporate farmer-the farmer who is now planting GMO's in the American Midwest, America's corn and soy wasteland-has to have these world markets; he and his corporate overlords are dependent on the principles of free trade to survive. You might be interested to know what Marx had to say about free trade: In 1848 he wrote: "The Free Trade system works destructively. It breaks up old nationalities and carries antagonism of proletariat and bourgeoisie to the uttermost point. In a word, the Free Trade system hastens the Social Revolution. In this revolutionary sense alone, gentlemen, I am in favor of Free Trade."

What we have today is a system in which the farmer finds himself a cog in the corporate structure, supplying raw materials that are then processed in

big factories, and shipped to far away places, thereby disrupting traditional economies; American economic and political policy is geared to creating markets for the products of the corporate farm. IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank loans are geared to creating export crops in foreign countries so that these countries will have the capital to import the products of America's corporate farms. Thus, for example, in Thailand, farmers are no longer allowed to plant the native indigenous rice. IMF policy forces the government to mandate use of high yield hybrid rice, which the farmer must purchase every year, in order to create a cash crop for export, in order to pay off the IMF loans, and in order to be able to import the products of America's corporate farms.

The Evil Net of Free Trade

So you see we have something like an evil net spread out over the whole world, the net called Free Trade. And the strands of this net are the products of the corporate farm. Average citizens have no power under this system; and neither do their governments. There may be the trappings, but the true power of the governments has faded away. This, my friends, is Marxism, and it has been thrust upon us surreptitiously, and lauded and promoted by prestigious, respectable organizations and influential people who profess to love patriotism and to support "family values," organizations like the Heritage Foundation, the Washington Times and the Republican Party. And it has been implemented, not by Lenin's thugs and Stalin's strongmen, but by bankers in pinstripe suits. Thugs in suits. Most Americans would be shocked to learn that the system we have in place today all over the globe is Marxism-slipped in under their noses. Most people would call it Capitalism. I suppose you could debate the point for a long time, but the truth is, there are just two economic systems. One is the system where millions and millions of people can make a decent living; and the other is the system where a few people make millions and millions of dollars and the rest of us are paupers. And for some time now, America has been moving slowly but surely toward an economy in which the population is divided between the superrich and those who are just surviving—a kind of neo-feudalism on the global plantation. So the old dichotomy between left and right really has no meaning any more. Instead we have this capitalistic-Marxist system more like a high brick wall in the form of a circle, where Left runs imperceptibly into Right, with the rest of us trapped in the middle. The solution is not to choose between radical left and radical right, but to become part of the radical middle. And by that I mean the collection of little guys who knows where the weaknesses are in the wall, and has the determination to poke holes into it until it falls down.

Fast Food—Weapon of the Global Overlords

One of the main weapons of the global overlords is fast food. Quoting from an excellent article called "Fast Food Nation" by Eric Schlosser appearing in Rolling Stone Magazine Nov 26, 1998: "In much the same way that the fast-food industry changed the nation's retail economy, eliminating small businesses, encouraging the spread of chains and uniformity, fast food has transformed American agriculture. The centralized purchasing decisions of large restaurant chains and their demand for standardized products have given a handful of multinational corporations an unprecedented degree of power over the nation's food supply. During the 1980's, when the virtues of the free market [and free trade] were being proclaimed, giant agribusiness companies—such as Cargill, ConAgra and IBP—gained control of one agricultural market after another. The concentration of power in the food-processing industry has driven down the prices offered to American farmers. In 1980, about thirty-seven cents of every consumer dollar spent on food went to the farmer. Today, only twenty-three cents goes to the farmer—a decline of forty percent. Family farms are now being replaced by gigantic corporate farms with absentee owners. Rural communities are losing their middle class and becoming socially stratified, divided among a small wealthy elite and large numbers of the working poor. The hardy, independent farmers whom Thomas Jefferson considered the bedrock of democracy are truly a vanishing breed. The United States now has more prison inmates than

full-time farmers."

So the first defense against this diabolical system is-not to eat the witch's food. Remember the story of The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe by C. S. Lewis, when the children found the enchanted world through the wardrobe. Edward was tempted and ate some of the witch's food and then he became her slave and finally was turned into stone. None of us should be eating McDonald's hamburgers or drinking Coca-Cola, or even Budweiser for that matter, for a variety of reasons, but the farmer who eats these foods is truly pounding nails into his own coffin.

Overlords Control the Value-Added

For this global plantation to function, it is the overlords who must control the value-added, not the farmer. It is the overlords who must have a monopoly on processing of raw materials in order to make animal feed pellets, lysine supplements, high fructose corn syrup, margarine and vegetable oils, soy protein isolate, powdered milk and of course all the fabricated foods that these products are put into-commercial spreads, cookies, crackers, chips, frozen meals, diet drinks, veggieburgers, etc., etc., etc. You've heard the ads for ADM-Archer Daniels Midlands-I call it Arch Devil of the Midlands-the "Supermarket to the World. . . adding value to America's crops." Why should the corporate dinosaurs get the value added? The farmer who adds value by farming organically, by making cheese or butter, or who simply sells directly to the consumer, is the enemy of this system, and a whole battery of laws-health laws, licensing laws, even environmental laws, is used against him.

Fortunately, dinosaurs don't remain forever, they eventually die out and become extinct, and are replaced by lots of small furry mammals-"the small independent farms relying on the management skills of farm owners who produce natural, organic foods that provide a rising portion of the American diet." We want this kind of farmer to replace the giant cold-blooded reptiles, to make money and to prosper, so that the poor guy who was duped into the corporate system, and who finds himself more and more in hock and dependent on the vagaries of commodities prices and trade policy, will see that he would be better off returning to traditional methods of agriculture. It will take more than a handful of organic farmers to revitalize our soil and our economy. And of course, we want this system to survive because the products of the corporate farm are becoming more and more worthless, stripped of nutrients and loaded with toxic chemicals. (You might be interested to know that the average plant crop on the corporate farm gets 10 applications of chemicals, from preparation of the seed through the growing process to storage.)

Small Farmer Should Add Value

For the conscientious organic or biodynamic farmer to survive and prosper he needs to be able to add value to the products of his farm, and add value in such a way that does not require a large investment in equipment. And he needs access to a market for his output.

Adding value is accomplished in two ways: One is by growing techniques that make a product superior to the one from the corporate farm-in other words by growing organically or bio-dynamically-allowing the farmer to sell them for a higher price. The other is through processing methods that are traditional, low-tech and that preserve or alter the food in a way that enhances nutrient content, or that makes nutrient content easier to assimilate.

The Cow is the Key

The key to the biodynamic farm is the cow, the sacred cow providing rich manure and nitrogen-bearing urine for the replenishment of the soil. Composted manure from cows on well-mineralized soil is the ultimate fertilizer-the only real fertilizer just a generation ago. Today, it is only the biodynamic farmer who accepts this as a fundamental principle of farming. (Not even all organic farmers accept this principle.) In fact, animals should be the central feature of the farm; without them the farm is sterile. Animals not only provide manure, they also force the farmer to

rotate his crops so that his animals always have pasture. The monoculture of the corporate farm is the fast track to complete destruction of our soil. And by animals, I am talking about old fashioned animals-Jersey, Guernsey and Aryeshire cows, not the modern Holstein. But the farmer also ought to be able to make a handsome profit from his cows, first of all in the form of milk products. Just by farming in a way that puts traditional breeds of cows out on fertile pasture, the farmer is adding value to milk products-for milk from such cows is infinitely superior to the milk from today's modern freak pituitary Holstein, fed soy pellets and dry feed in barns, needing three milkings a day, and pumped full of antibiotics-not to mention hormones that drive her to the udder limits of milk production.

Raw Milk is the Answer

The main factor that prevents the farmer from getting a decent price for good quality milk is laws requiring pasteurization. Pasteurization not only destroys the value added from conscientious farming-it alters proteins, reduces vitamin content and destroys enzymes-it also puts an almost insurmountable barrier between the farmer and the consumer. It prevents the farmer from selling directly to the consumer-which is the way milk should be sold.

Getting rid of pasteurization laws is, I believe, key to opening the door to prosperity for our farms and ultimately the entire populace. As some of you may know, only in California and Arizona can raw milk be bought in stores (in Arizona it is sold as a pet food); in some other states you can buy directly from the farmer; but in many states, the farmer runs great risk for selling raw milk to those who want it. One of Ronald Reagan's last acts as president was the issuance of an executive order forbidding the transport of raw milk across state lines. So we have a situation where a truly health giving food, one that is extremely important for growing babies and children-is illegal! And the substitute, the pasteurized, homogenized, reduced fat milks from freak barn-fed cows, is causing more and more health problems-from allergies to diabetes to cancer.

Now some very brave people have tried to break this hold our governments have on the sale of raw milk. In Virginia, Christine Solem, who keeps goats, has taken her case single-handedly to the courts, representing herself in a protracted battle to be able to sell the produce of her farm, so far to no avail. In Canada, where the laws are even stricter, Michael Schmidt, a biodynamic farmer, has been selling raw milk from the back of his truck in Toronto. He was subjected to intense harassment-even his children were physically threatened. All this stopped the day he announced that he was going on a hunger strike-so this brave man continues to sell raw milk in Toronto.

I think ultimately this battle will be won in the courts. What's needed is a suit by a vegetarian group, demanding access to raw milk as a religious right. Vegetarians need raw milk products because they are their only source of vitamin B12. An anthroposophical group could very well spearhead this effort-after all didn't Rudolf Steiner advocate raw milk as the perfect food. What has happened instead is that the soy industry has co-opted vegetarianism, creating the impression that vegetarians don't need any animal products at all. So the very groups that could be in the forefront of demand have been silenced.

Cheese

It's in the processing of good quality milk that we have the real value added-making yoghurt, cheese, cultured cream and butter. The number of dairymen now making artisanal type cheeses is growing and I look forwards to the day when America, like France, will be a nation that makes 365 different kinds of cheese. And you know what Charles de Gaulle said about France: "It's impossible to govern a nation that makes 365 different kinds of cheese." He understood the principle-when food processing is widely dispersed among thousands of artisans, it is more difficult for governments to concentrate power. Imagine the political clout and prosperity you would have in agricultural states if instead of dairy farmers selling to the dairy coop, you had hundreds of independent cheese makers-and I'm talking

about real cheese, traditionally made, not processed cheese slices.

Butter

Butter, in my opinion, is in a class of its own. There is nothing more important in the American diet than good quality butter-and by that I mean butter from old fashioned cows, free roaming on fertile pasturage, unpasteurized, cultured and carefully churned. Such butter is the number one health food, full of nutrients that contribute to robust good health. The farmer making this kind of butter should get \$5 a pound for his product-that will pay for a lot of improvements on the farm.

CLA

And they can get this kind of price for good butter as soon as the consumer realizes the value of this food. Let's just zero in on one nutrient in butter-called CLA, conjugated linoleic acid. Many studies over the past 12 years have established that at least in laboratory animals, CLA offers strong protection against breast cancer and other malignancies, apparently through its role as a potent antioxidant. In addition to anticancer benefits, CLA also seems to dramatically reduce the deposition of fat. Livestock eating feed supplemented with CLA tend to lay down more lean tissue; and dairy cattle ingesting CLA-enriched diets have greater milk productivity. "Much to their big surprise," scientists found that the highest level of CLA in milk was obtained with cows just eating pasture - nothing else, according to Larry D. Satter, director of the center working on CLA research. Satter finds the notion of pasture feeding -a far-out idea- but we know that pasture feeding is the only way to provide healthful, non-allergenic, nutrient-dense dairy products to the populace. Could it be that CLA in America's pasture-fed cows at the turn of the century not only protected against cancer, but overweight as well, and allowed mothers to nurse successfully because they had plenty of milk? Meanwhile University of Wisconsin scientists are trying to figure out ways to mass produce CLA as a food additive, so the value added would go to a big corporation. But why not just get CLA in delicious butter, from organic or biodynamic farms. It could even be sold as a weight-loss product. Maybe farmers could even get \$10 a pound.

Skim Milk for Pigs, Lard for People

Now what about those other animals on the farm? After all, if you are making butter, you will have a lot of skim milk and the thing to do with skim milk, which is essentially a waste product, is to feed it to pigs. The pig, in addition to being a great soil tiller, as Joel Saladin has taught us, is a machine for making nutritious fat out of skim milk. Farmers should be able to sell organic lard at a good price-and they will get a good price just as soon as the consumer realizes the value of the product-stable, good for cooking and frying, and loaded with vitamin D. We need to developâ??or rather resurrect-the traditional ways of making sausage. In Europe, the cured sausages are a lacto-fermented product that keeps a long time and is very nutritious. Similar productsâ??blood puddings, haggis and pemmicanâ??can all be made on the farm or in farmers' cooperatives.

Door-to-door Butchers

The farmer needs outlets for his meat-very often this means a battle with overzealous health inspectors. The health laws, like the pasteurization laws, put an almost insurmountable barrier between the farmer and the consumer. I'd like to see more use of moveable abattoirs, composed of two or three big semis, that bring the butcher with all the proper sanitation and the cold storage-and the sausage making-right to the field, so that the farmer is not beholden to the middleman, the stockyards, the meat processing plant, in other words, that allow him to have a good portion of the value added-not the meat packing industry.

A "Brothel" in Every Town

One thing I would add to these moveable abattoirs is big vats for making bone broth out of the feet, knuckles and gelatinous parts of the cattle or fowl. Or this could be done in a cooperative in the local town-I look forward to the day when we have a brothel in every town, providing nourishing broth, or soups and stews made from such broth.

Local Dairy Co-ops

We need to resurrect the old fashioned dairy queen-a cooperative outlet for local dairy products, and a very healthy alternative to fast food outlets. Even the local cafe could be a cooperative designed to bring farm products directly to the consumer, so that all of the value added stays in the community. Instead we have situations, like the one I encountered in New Zealand. In the middle of dairy country, I asked for butter at a roadside takeout shop-only to be told that they only had margarine, made from imported soybeans! The fish and chip shops in New Zealand used to fry in a healthy blend of tallow and palm oil, all available locally. Now they import partially hydrogenated soy oil for frying! So butter, cheese, yoghurt, cultured cream, sausage and similar products, bone broths and of course meat from your own cattle as well as chickens and their eggs, should bring the highest possible returns to the farmer. And what about his vegetables, fruits and grains?

Lacto-Fermentation

This is where lacto-fermentation comes in. I'll be talking about this in my workshop later this afternoon. Lacto-fermentation is a simple technique that preserves fruits and vegetables and the farmer can do this with a very small investment in equipment and supplies. There is no pasteurization or steaming involved in this process. The example of a lacto-fermented food most familiar to us is old-fashioned sauerkraut which can be made with cabbage, good quality salt and whey. (You will have the whey left over after making cheese.) It can be made in quart-size glass jars, or in special large crocks that are now commercially available. Almost any vegetable can be preserved this way. In fact I had a call recently from a gal in Vermont who saved everything from her large garden by lacto-fermentation. She made pickles from cucumbers, beets, string beans, garlic and onions; ketchup from tomatoes; salsa from the peppers; and chutneys from berries, peaches, apples and other fruits. Properly prepared, these delicious condiments will last anywhere from several months to a year in a cold root cellar or cold storage, and the farmer can sell these value-added products at the local farmers' markets or roadside stands or in local stores. He doesn't need to send his product to the canning factory, or see it rot from lack of buyer-he can preserve it until the buyer comes along, and without a large investment in equipment.

Grains

Grains are a special subject. We ought to be making good sour dough bread at local cooperative bakeries, using locally grown grain. Also, cookies, crackers and so forth. But there is something else we can do with these grains-and that's make bootleg. Now I am not talking about whiskey, or even beer or wine, but beverages made by this same process of lacto-fermentation. These beverages are found-or I should say used to be found before pushed out by coca-colonization-throughout the world in traditional societies. They are non alcoholic or have very low amounts of alcohol, are usually fizzy and pleasantly sour. They are very healthful in that they contain mineral ions, enzymes and beneficial lactic acid, and most importantly, they give a lift by feeding the body rather than by stimulating the glands. They are superior to water in quenching thirst, and very helpful for those doing physical labor. A very quick shortcut lacto-fermented drink of the past was oat water, made by soaking rolled oats in water and adding some molasses and vinegar. This was used in preference to water by those working in the fields. Old fashioned ginger ale and root beer can also be made by lacto-fermentation. Kombucha is another example of a beverage of this type,

as well as kvass, a Russian drink made from stale sour dough bread. These drinks are the perfect alternative to both alcoholic drinks and soft drinks made by the big conglomerates and best of all, they give the farmer the ideal way of adding value to his produce.

I was recently in Australia and was introduced to a drink like this, that is being made commercially. It is pleasantly sour and bubbly. Kvass is being made in Canada, and could easily be produced here by any bakery making genuine sour dough bread.

So in addition to 356 different kinds of cheese, I believe that America should be producing hundreds of different kinds of lacto-fermented drinks. The day when every town and hamlet in America produces its own distinctive lacto-fermented brew, made from the local products of woods and fields, will be the day when Americans see the dawning of a new age of good health and well-being-along with a new era of economic vitality based on small-scale local production rather than on large-scale monopolistic control of the food processing industry.

Imagine how much fun it will be to travel through America by car, and discover a different interesting beverage in every town. You could have fairs on these drinks, and judging, and magazines and guide books to lacto-fermented drinks, just like we have for the wine snobs. For example, you could have a special lacto-fermented drink that is only eaten with strawberries at the full moon. And you could also eat cheese and sausage at local cafes, run by farming families. The picture I am painting is a picture of a nation with culture. I'm tempted to say that without culturing, there is no culture. Or how about a bumper sticker "Culture for culture!"

Evolution of Consumer Conscience

So I have presented some ideas of how the farmer can add value to his crop. But the farmer also needs to be able to sell these value-added products for a good price. Here two things are important. One is the evolution of consumer consciousness. This is already happening. We have a very positive trend among the consumer towards choosing healthier food-this will continue because those who do not start to eat healthier food will just die out. We have a kind of natural selection going on, to give us lots of furry little warm blooded mammals rather than a few cold blooded dinosaurs. Of course, there is plenty of misinformation in the popular books, and many people think that health foods are things like tasteless lowfat stuff and bars and powdered drinks and synthetic vitamins. But eventually the truth will out, and I have great confidence in the populace to find its way back to a healthy traditional diet.

Legal Reforms

The second thing that will be needed is vigilance and cooperation among those in the vanguard of this movement, to get rid of restrictive laws and ensure that others are not enacted. As I mentioned, we need a concerted legal effort to restore to farmers the right to sell raw milk, as well as meat and sausage, straight from the farm. We will need ever vigilant-vigilante groups if you will-to protect the conscientious farmer from overzealous administration of the various health laws. And we need to be prepared for upcoming battles. One thing I am concerned about is a push for mandatory irradiation of meat-which like pasteurization will put an insurmountable barrier between the farmer and the consumer-not to mention the damage it does to the meat. It will start out as voluntary-just like pasteurization did-but if we are not careful, it will become illegal to sell meat that has not been irradiated.

I also know that the big soft drink manufacturers are not going to watch the return of a cottage industry making local lacto-fermented beverages without a fight. These drinks will probably be condemned on the grounds that they are not sterile-not healthy-and there may even be laws passed against them, just as there were laws passed against moonshine. What prohibition did in fact was concentrate the liquor industry into the hands of the Mafia-just as our health laws concentrate the food industry in the hands of the corporate giants.

So we need to be aware of what may happen and be prepared to counter any

inroads on the trend to local processing, value adding on the farm and in the local communities. At the same time, we need to encourage an outcry of consumer demand for good, healthy food, straight from the farm. Because after all, there is no greater force on earth than the American consumer, or at least the healthy American consumer.

In my opinion, the move toward organic farming and natural food is one of the most important things happening in America today. We need to protect these young seedlings, the biodynamic and organic mixed farms, so that they can grow into mighty forests that give benefit to all. Value added is the sacred manure that can make this fledgling movement grow, make the local economy grow, make the nation grow.

This concludes the diatribe of the autodidact.