

GOOD FOOD

discussion materials

These are some ideas and additional resources to facilitate discussion and activity associated with the film. They include:

- Film summary
- Questions before screening the film
- Questions after screening the film
- Discussion topics
- Ideas for research or activities
- Action steps to promote a local food system in your area
- Vocabulary
- Other resources

Film Summary

In the fields and orchards of the Pacific Northwest, something remarkable is happening. For decades small family farmers have been disappearing, but now they are making a comeback. They are taking better care of the land, growing healthier food, and producing more food per acre, while using less energy and water than industrial agriculture.

With climate change and peak oil, each region needs to produce more of its own food and to do it more sustainably. Northwest growers are stepping up to the task. The Hatfields, who raise cattle in eastern Oregon show how proper grazing of cattle can actually improve the environment. Brooke and Sam Lucy of Bluebird Grain Farms plant, harvest and sell organic grain on land they have recovered from years of disuse. Hilario Alvarez, who came to the U.S. as a farm worker decades ago, shows off the innumerable varieties of colorful peppers that brighten his fields and farmers markets.

Producers like these, plus businesses like Burgerville and PCC Natural Markets that have found it in their interest to buy local, sustainably raised products, reveal the rapidly growing local food system. Original music from Washington musicians Jami Sieber, Mark Graham, Los Emocionantes and Jack Knauer, colorful urban and rural images, convey the exciting possibilities of a system producing healthy, local, sustainably grown food.

Questions before screening the film

1. What is a food system?
2. What type of 'food supply chain' are you part of? What's the average distance your food travels from field to plate?
3. Would you say your current food system is sustainable? Why or why not?
4. Do you know where and how your food was grown and by whom? When it was harvested?
5. Have you ever grown your own food, tasted vegetables and fruits right out of the ground, off the trees?

Questions after the film

1. Which farmer or rancher appealed most to you? Why?
2. Who, besides people who raise the food, help make a regional food system operate?
3. What do you think the greatest benefits of a local, sustainable food system are?
4. What elements of a more regional, sustainable food system do you see in your area? [local farms, farmers markets, CSA programs, stores and restaurants that prioritize buying from local producers, public policy by city, county or state to encourage sustainable regional food]
5. What actions might you take to help re-localize your food system?
6. What do you think is meant by food justice?
7. In the film Anne Schwartz talks about how hard it would be for her to give up avocados. What foods from places far away do you think it would be hard for you to give up?
8. If you were a farmer, how would it affect you if you knew the people who ate the food you produced? How would it affect you as a consumer if you knew the farmer who grew some of the food that you eat?

Topics for further discussion

1. Why might it make sense to expand your local, sustainable food system?
 - ∞ Food security – making sure that food is available to the local population
 - ∞ Food safety – knowing who grows your food leads to needs expo, e.g. spinach Mark M talks about
 - ∞ Environmental conservation of land and water free from agricultural chemicals
 - ∞ Less petroleum used for fertilizers and pesticides
 - ∞ Less energy for storage and handling
 - ∞ Better nutrition and health
 - ∞ Strengthen local economy
 - ∞ Encourage relationships and community connections
 - ∞ Appreciate and retain cultural diversity
2. What is inhibiting the expansion of the local sustainable food system in your region?
 - ∞ In some regions the high cost of agricultural land makes it difficult for some people to begin farming.
 - ∞ With the industrial food system, processing facilities for animals, and even fruits and vegetables have become very centralized, often outside the state or region, and difficult for small farmers to use.
 - ∞ Agricultural subsidies have been geared toward large producers for the past few decades.
 - ∞ The attitude that food should be cheap. In reality, U.S. consumers spend a far lower percentage of their income on food than almost anywhere on the planet.

Activities/Research projects

1. What is your favorite meal? Write down every single ingredient that is in that meal and where the ingredients come from. Calculate the average miles the ingredients travel to your table.
2. Investigate how healthy, local food is reaching low income people – or not – in your community, including gleaning projects, food banks, etc.
3. Find out about recent food poisonings from the industrial food system - spinach, livestock, tomatoes – what caused them and how many people they affected.
4. What legislation or policies of your city/town/county/state governments are helping to promote the expansion of a more local, sustainable food system? Are there other public policies that are inhibiting these changes?
5. Research the numbers of small farms in your county or state. Are there more of them than 20 years ago? Fewer? Why? The USDA website has farm statistics by state:
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/StateFacts>
5. Research the history and traditions of gleaning
6. Compare and contrast industrial versus local and sustainable food systems

Action Steps to Promote Local Food

- ∞ Get your friends and neighbors to pledge to buy 10% (or more) of their food locally for a year. Keep a diary. Discuss what was easy/hard about your food choices.
- ∞ Host a 100-mile dinner party or pot luck. Share stories.
- ∞ Subscribe to a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) Farm for a season. Document the results. Give a CSA subscription as a gift to someone you care about.
- ∞ Tear out your lawn and plant a garden. Help a neighbor plant their garden. Plant a row for the local food bank.
- ∞ Get a community garden plot. Start a community garden if one doesn't exist where you live.
- ∞ Help in a community fruit tree harvest or other gleaning project.
- ∞ Visit your local farmers market and make friends.

Vocabulary

CSA [Community Supported Agriculture] – people buy a “share” of a local farm by investing a sum of money early in the year when the farmer needs to buy seed, fertilizer, pay for labor for planting, cultivating and harvest. In return the investors receive a box of farm-fresh produce every week during the growing season.

food justice – a term used to describe the right of every individual to have access to healthy food.

food miles - the distance food is transported from the time of its production until it reaches the consumer. It is one dimension used in assessing the environmental impact of food.

food shed – borrowed from the concept of a watershed, describes the flow of food from the area where it is grown into the place where it is consumed. Recently, the term has been revived as a way of looking at and thinking about local, sustainable food systems.

food sovereignty - originally coined by members of Via Campesina to refer to the claimed "right of peoples to define their own food, agriculture, livestock and fisheries systems," in contrast to having food largely subject to international market forces.

food System - a chain of activities connecting food production, processing, distribution, consumption, and waste management, as well as the associated regulatory institutions and activities.

gleaning- gathering the food from a field after the major harvest, or from backyard gardens

industrial food system – the interconnected system, promoted for the past 50 years, which produces food on larger and larger farms, with bigger equipment, fewer people, major use of agricultural chemicals, and utilizes a few large processors and distributors.

locavore – a person committed to buying and eating locally produced food.

inputs – fertilizers, compost, other substances used by farmers to improve crop productivity

organic - Organic production is based on a system of farming that maintains and replenishes soil fertility without the use of toxic pesticides and fertilizers. Organically produced foods must be produced without the use of antibiotics, synthetic hormones, genetic engineering and other excluded practices, sewage sludge, or irradiation. Cloning animals or using their products is inconsistent with organic practices. National organic standards set out the methods, practices and substances used in producing and handling crops, livestock and processed agricultural products. Only products grown and processed in this manner, and certified by a third party organization can use the term “organic” in their labeling and marketing.

purveyor – a supplier, in this film, people who grow food products

sustainability – In an [ecological](#) context, sustainability is the ability of an [ecosystem](#) to maintain its processes, [biodiversity](#) and productivity into the future. In a [social](#) context, sustainability means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Additional Resources

Books

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, Barbara Kingsolver, with Steven L. Hopp and Camille Kingsolver

Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Social Movement in History is Restoring Grace, Justice and Beauty to the World, Paul Hawken

Bringing the Food Economy Home: Local Alternatives to Global Agribusiness, Helena Norberg-Hodge, Todd Merrifield, and Steven Gorelick

Civic Agriculture: Reconnecting Farm, Food and Community, Thomas Lyson

Closing the Food Gap, Mark Winne

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things, William McDonough and Michael Braungart

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future, Bill McKibben

Diet for a Dead Planet: How the Food Industry is Killing Us, Christopher Cook

Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations, David Montgomery

Epitaph for a Peach: Four Seasons on My Family Farm, David Masumoto

Everything I Want to do is Illegal, Joel Salatin

Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser

Food Politics, Marion Nestle
Four Seasons in Five Senses: Things Worth Savoring, David Masumoto
Four-Season Harvest: Organic Vegetables from Your Home Garden All Year Long, Eliot Coleman, Barbara Damrosch, and Kathy Bray
How to Grow Fruits and Vegetables by the Organic Method, Rodale Press
Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals, Michael Pollan
Plenty: One Man, One Woman and Raucous Year of Eating Locally, Alisa Smith and JB Mackinnon
The Botany of Desire: A Plant's – Eye View of the World, Michael Pollan
The Fatal Harvest Reader, Andrew Kimbrell
The Way We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter, Peter Singer and Jim Mason
This Common Ground: Season on an Organic Farm, Scott Chaskey
With These Hands: The Hidden World of Migrant Farmworkers Today, Daniel Rothenberg

Other resources

An example of a Local Food Action Initiative [Seattle]:

The Local Food Action Initiative is a series of actions meant to promote local and regional food sustainability and security. The intent is to improve our local food system and in doing so, advance the City of Seattle's interrelated goals of race and social justice, environmental sustainability, economic development, and emergency preparedness. Passed in April, 2008.
http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/council/attachments/2008food_facts.pdf

An example of Farm to School legislation [Washington State]:

Local Farms – Healthy Kids, HB 2798 / SB 6483 passed in 2008, eases state and school procurement restrictions to better enable school districts and state entities to choose local; establishes a Farm to School Program that will facilitate the purchasing of Washington-grown farm products by schools; creates the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program; promotes school gardens; establishes a Farmers Market Technology Program; establishes three Farm to Food Bank pilot programs; and expands and increases funding for the Farmers Market Nutrition Program. <http://www.environmentalpriorities.org/local-farms>

Organizations

Business Alliance for Local Living Economies, <http://www.livingeconomies.org>
Cascade Harvest Coalition, <http://www.cascadeharvest.org>
Center for Agriculture in the Environment, <http://www.aftresearch.org>
Center for Latino Farmers, <http://www.centerforlatinofarmers.com>
Chef's Collaborative, <http://chefscollaborative.org>
Community to Community Development, <http://www.foodjustice.org>
Community Food Security Coalition – an organization dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times. <http://www.foodsecurity.org>
Farm and Food Policy Project, <http://www.farmandfoodproject.org>
Growing Washington, <http://www.growingwashington.org>
Heifer International, <http://www.heifer.org>
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy – mission is to create environmentally and economically sustainable rural communities and regions through sound agriculture and trade policy. <http://www.iatp.org>

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu>
National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, <http://www.sustainableagriculture.net>
National Family Farm Coalition unites and strengthens the voices and actions of its diverse grassroots members to demand viable livelihoods for family farmers, safe and healthy food for everyone, and economically and environmentally sound rural communities. <http://www.nffc.net/>
Oregon Tilth is a nonprofit research and education organization of people dedicated to biologically sound and socially equitable agriculture. <http://www.tilth.org/>
Organic Consumers Association campaigns for health, justice, sustainability, peace and democracy <http://www.organicconsumers.org>
Organic Seed Alliance, <http://www.seedalliance.org>
Recipe for America, <http://www.recipeforamerica.org>
Renewing America's Food Traditions, <http://www.environment.nau.edu/raft/>
Slow Food, <http://www.slowfoodusa.org>
Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, <http://www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org>
Sustainable Communities All Over Puget Sound, <http://www.scallopswa.org>
Sustainable Connections, <http://www.sconnect.org>
Sustainable Northwest, <http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org>
Tilth Producers of Washington - promotes ecologically sound, sustainable agriculture for environmental preservation, human health and social equity. <http://www.tilthproducers.org/>
U.S. Department of Agriculture, <http://www.usda.gov>
WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing Program, <http://agr.wa.gov/Marketing/SmallFarm>
Washington State Farmers Market Association, <http://www.wafarmersmarkets.org>
WSU Small Farms Team, <http://smallfarms.wsu.edu>
Washington Sustainable Food and Farming Network, <http://www.wsffn.org>
Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, <http://www.westernsawg.org>

Other films

BEYOND ORGANIC, <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/bo.html>
KING CORN, <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/kcorn.html>
MY FATHER'S GARDEN, <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/mfg.html>
NOT FOR SALE, <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/nfs.htm>
THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN, <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/realdirt/>
RISKY BUSINESS, <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/risky.html>