

Bathroom Reader

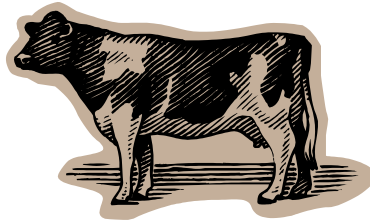
Special Edition for Earth Day

April 15-30, 2007

Most of the content produced by the students in the Learning Community, "Fooling with Nature: Agriculture and Your Food"

What are you Eating?

Cheap food is not cheap. It degrades the environment. We contribute to the increase in factory farms which cause disease and pollution. One cow creates 140 lbs. of manure a day which contaminates our groundwater if not handled properly.



It takes energy to produce our food

About 400 gallons of oil are used to create food to feed on American a year.

- 20% to machine operation
- 16% to transportation
- 13% is for irrigation
- 8% for raising livestock
- 5% goes to pesticides

Subsidies for growing crops cheaply to feed the world...

The Farm Bill of 2007 is looking at the subsidies paid to farmers to grow certain crops. The consumer, not the farmer profits from these subsidies. But the farmer uses pesticides, fertilizers and energy to produce the crops or the animals and the air, water and soil pollution is not counted in the price of the commodities. Do these subsidies help or damage the environment?

Transportation Costs

According to the Dept. of Transportation, in 1999, a truckload of lettuce going from California to New York cost \$8,000. Gas was \$.91 a gallon then. Today that cost would be \$25,000. That is why farmers' markets are a good economic decision.

Slow Food is a movement started by Carlo Petrini in Italy when McDonalds opened up in Rome in 1986. He saw the loss of local varieties of food to global industrial production that limited the choices for all. The organization is in 50 countries with 80,000 members.

What about the health concerns?

The EPA estimates that 300,000 farm workers suffer pesticide poisoning each year. The FDA states that at least 53 pesticides that are carcinogenic are applied to our food crops. The Centers for Disease Control reported cases of *Salmonella* and *E. Coli* are 10 times greater than 20 years ago, and cases of *Campylobacter* have doubled. The CDC saw none of these pathogens in meat until the advent of the "factory farms" in the 1970's.

