



Learn More About...

Tending the Land

An Annotated Bibliography

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Web Links

The Land Institute <<http://www.landinstitute.org/vnews/display.v/ART/2000/08/10/37a747b43>>

The Land Institute has developed an agricultural system (Natural Systems Agriculture) with the ecological stability of the prairie and a grain yield comparable to that from annual crops. The site carries numerous articles, some geared to the general public and others that have appeared in the highly-regarded periodicals "Nature" and "Science."

Michigan State University Cooperative Extension <<http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/>>

This site offers a wealth of resources on topics such as environmental quality, farm management, food safety, Great Lakes, insects, pest management, soil management, tourism and water quality.

National Catholic Rural Life Conference <<http://www.ncrlc.com/>>

Founded in 1923, the National Catholic Rural Life Conference has been a witness for hope in rural America for more than 80 years. Over the years, the Catholic Rural Life Conference has clearly stood in favor and support of rural people, family farms and local businesses that promote sustainable community development.

National Council of Churches of Christ Eco-Justice Programs <<http://ncecojustice.org/>>

Since 1983, with the formation of Eco-Justice Working Group, the National Council of Churches has been providing an opportunity for the national bodies of member Protestant and Orthodox denominations to work together to protect and restore God's Creation. A major task of this environmental ministry is to provide program ideas and resources to help congregations as they engage in eco-justice.

Northwest Earth Institute <<http://www.nwei.org/>>

The Northwest Earth Institute has produced five discussion courses: Choices for Sustainable Living, Voluntary Simplicity, Discovering a Sense of Place, Exploring Deep Ecology, and Globalization and Its Critics. NWEI programs encourage participants to explore their values, attitudes, and actions through discussion with other people. These programs are organized around three key principles: individual responsibility for the earth, engaged simplicity and protecting the unique bioregion in which you live.

Books

Michael Ableman, *Fields of Plenty: A Farmer's Journey in Search of Real Food and the People Who Grow It* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2005).

In the face of super-sizing and a fast-food nation, a growing community of organic farmers and food artisans are producing sustainable nourishment that is respectful to the land and rich in heritage, flavor and passion. A few summers back, Ableman and his son crammed their belongings into a 1989 VW van and set off on a three-month tour of North America's highways and back roads to meet the farmers who've charted their own unique path through our food ways. In recounting each of the chosen farmers' stories, Ableman reveals how they've redressed a particular challenge or shortcoming of the modern industrial food system.

Wendell Berry, *The Collected Poems of Wendell Berry, 1957-1982* (Canada: Harper Collins, 1987).

A longtime spokesperson for conservation, common sense and sustainable agriculture, Wendell Berry writes eloquently in several styles and methods, including poetry. His love of language and his care for its music are applied to land and nature, the family and community and tradition as the groundwork for life and culture. For this far-reaching yet portable volume, Berry has chosen nearly two hundred poems from his previous eight collections.

Lester R. Brown, *Plan B: Rescuing a Planet under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003).

According to Brown, founder of the Earth Policy Institute, the Earth's populations are currently living in a bubble economy based on reckless consumption of natural resources. Chapters 2, Eroding Soils and Shrinking Cropland, and 8, Raising Land Productivity, look at soil erosion, desertification, hunger and ways to restore the earth.

Jane Goodall and Marc Bekoff, *The Ten Trusts* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002).

This book identifies ten "trusts" for a closer connection with the natural world and a more ethical attitude toward all creatures, some of which include: rejoice that we are part of the animal kingdom; respect all life; open our minds, in humility, to animals and learn from them; teach our children to respect and love nature; be wise stewards of life on earth. The book concludes with the coda, "silence is betrayal."

Robert M. Hamma, *Landscapes of the Soul: A Spirituality of Place* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1999).

Hamma reminds readers of the spiritual significance of place. Of particular value are the exercises at the conclusion of each chapter to facilitate an encounter with – or a reminder of – the spirituality of place.

Andrew Kimbrell (Ed.), *Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*, (Sausalito, CA: The Deep Ecology Foundation, 2002).

We are faced with "two very different visions of the future of food in the 21st century. A grassroots public movement for organic, ecological, and humane food is now challenging the decades-long hegemony of the corporate, industrial model." With 58 essays and more than 250 photographs, Kimbrell, director of the Center for Food Safety, aims to provide "a timely treasure trove" of information for that movement, including a litany of environmental harms caused by industrial agriculture and a strategy for bringing about "the end of agribusiness." (*Editors of Scientific American*)

Andrew Kimbrell (Ed.) *The Fatal Harvest Reader: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture* (Sausalito, CA: The Deep Ecology Foundation, 2002.)

The Fatal Harvest Reader brings together in an affordable paperback edition the essays included in Fatal Harvest,

Barbara Kingsolver, *Animal Begetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2007).

This book chronicles the year that novelist Barbara Kingsolver, along with her husband and two daughters, made a commitment to become locavores—those who eat only locally grown foods. While the volume begins as an environmental treatise—the oil consumption related to transporting foodstuffs around the world is enormous—it ends, as the year ends, in a celebration of the food that physically nourishes even as the recipes and the memories of cooks and gardeners past nourish our hearts and souls.

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

Every day, one out of four Americans eats food from a fast food restaurant. The industry's drive for consolidation, homogenization and speed has radically transformed America's diet, landscape, economy and workforce, often in insidiously destructive ways. Eric Schlosser, an award-winning journalist, investigates the meatpacking plants as he reveals the almost complete lack of federal oversight of a seemingly lawless industry. His searing portrayal of the industry is disturbingly similar to Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, written in 1906: nightmare working conditions, union busting and unsanitary practices that introduce E. coli and other pathogens into restaurants, public schools and homes.

Articles/Papers

John Ikerd, "The New American Farmer and Communities," *Practical Farmers of Iowa*, 15 January 2000, <<http://www.pfi.iastate.edu/Newsletter/Ikerd%20text.htm>>

Ikerd examines the state of agriculture and concludes that there is “a positive alternative to short-run, self-interest - higher self-interests, which include caring, sharing, and stewardship. And there are positive alternatives to agricultural industrialization - a sustainable agriculture, which includes social responsibility and ecological integrity in addition to economic viability. There are thousands of farmers creating dozens of models for the new American farm.” He concludes this article by placing the fate of American communities on each of us.

Periodicals/Newsletters

National Catholic Rural Life Conference weekly e-bulletin <<http://www.ncrlc.com/>>

The Land Institute, e-newsletter <<http://www.landinstitute.org/>>

Audio/Visual/Interactive Resources

Michael Ableman, “Urban Farming: Reconnecting the City to the Land,” 30 minute plenary presentation at the 2001 Bioneers Conference.

Michael Ableman, founder of the Center for Urban Agriculture, shows how our society can re-establish an intimate connection with its land and food.

Will Bullock, “You Are Where You Eat: Growing Urban Food and Community” 30 minute plenary presentation at the 2005 Bioneers Conference.

Boston’s famed Food Project has become a model for integrating food and health, city and country, justice and access.

Country. Prod. Far West, 1984

This film is about a family owned farm that is in trouble because of a combination of changing economies and a pullout of government funding. During the 1970s, the government threw loans to the farmers, encouraging farmers to overextend themselves. In the 1980s, when crop prices plummeted, the government foreclosed on the farms. This made way for large corporate farmers to buy them for pennies on the dollar. Jewel and Gil Ivey have a farm and government loans. When they can't make the harvest payment, the bank forecloses on the farm. Jewel is determined not to lose the farm.

Earth Dinner <<http://www.earthdinner.org/>>

Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter all have traditions involving family, friends, and of course, food. “Why doesn’t Earth Day have a tradition?” The Earth deserves a celebration too, and it makes sense that an Earth Day tradition should revolve around local, sustainable and organic cuisine, and especially meaningful discussion about the impact farming has on the environment. *Earth Dinner* helps you plan a joyful, animated, and inspiring theme dinner party connecting people to the earth, their food, and each other. Planning materials for Earth Dinner (including meal and conversation cards) can be ordered from this site.

Earth from Above

<http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=3619&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=-459.html>

From deserts to polar lands, coastal regions to cosmopolitan cities, the Earth From Above project has displayed our home Earth in all its glory. Filmed by acclaimed aerial photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand, this project was launched in 1996 and has been under the patronage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ever since.

Food Inc. Prod. Participant Media <<http://www.foodincmovie.com/>>

In *Food, Inc.*, filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the veil on our nation's food industry, exposing the highly mechanized underbelly that has been hidden from the American consumer with the consent of our government's regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA. Our nation's food supply is now controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the American farmer, the safety of workers and

our own environment. Food, Inc. reveals surprising—and often shocking truths—about what we eat, how it's produced, who we have become as a nation and where we are going from here.

The Grapes of Wrath. Prod. 20th Century Fox, 1940

Ranking No. 21 on the American Film Institute's list of the 100 greatest American films, *The Grapes of Wrath* tells a simple story about Oklahoma farmers leaving the depression-era dustbowl for the promised land of California, but it's the story's emotional resonance and theme of human perseverance that makes the movie so richly and timelessly rewarding. It's all about the humble Joad family's cross-country trek to escape the economic devastation of their ruined farmland, beginning when Tom Joad (Henry Fonda) returns from a four-year prison term to discover that his family home is empty. He's reunited with his family just as they're setting out for the westbound journey, and thus begins an odyssey of saddening losses and strengthening hopes.

Wes Jackson, "Solving the 10,000-Year-Old Problem of Agriculture," 30 minute plenary presentation at the 2000 Bioneers Conference.

The president of the renowned Land Institute explains that agriculture time, 10,000 years, is not even a blink compared to geological time. Yet it is during that blink that humans have been creating horizontal open mine shafts called plow furrows in the most wasteful mining operation in the history of the planet.

Fred Kirschenmann, "Transforming Agriculture," 30 minute plenary presentation at the 2003 Bioneers Conference.

Can organic agriculture survive in our industrial food system, or do we need to make sweeping changes to our whole approach to food production and consumption?

Places in the Heart. Prod. Delphi II, 1984

In 1930s South, a widow and her family try to run their cotton farm with the help of a disparate group of friends. They must endure storms and harsh labor to try to make their mortgage payment on time.

Joel Salatin, "Future Farming of America," 30 minute plenary presentation at the 2000 Bioneers Conference

The "alternative farmer" has developed an extraordinary system of rotational grazing that produces healthy herds while building topsoil.

The Trip to Bountiful. VHS and DVD. MGM, 1986.

Carrie Watts is living the twilight of her life trapped in an apartment in 1940s Houston with a controlling daughter-in-law and a hen-pecked son. Her fondest wish is to revisit Bountiful, the small Texas town of her youth. Her "escape" with her monthly Social Security check, provides the plot in this Oscar-winning script by Horton Foote ("To Kill a Mockingbird"). "My hands feel the need of dirt," she says.

Vanishing of the Bees. Prod. Hive Mentality Films, 2009 <<http://www.vanishingbees.com/>>

This documentary examines the economic, political and ecological implications of the worldwide disappearance of the honeybee (the phenomenon known as "Colony Collapse Disorder.") The film examines our current agricultural landscape and celebrates the ancient and sacred connection between man and the honeybee.

Vanishing of the Bees unfolds as a dramatic tale of science and mystery, illuminating this extraordinary crisis and its greater meaning about the relationship between humankind and Mother Earth.

What Will We Eat? The Search for Healthy Local Food. Chris Bedford Films, 2005

What Will We Eat? The Search for Healthy Local Food tells the story of the growing failure of the industrial food system and how a grassroots coalition of small farmers and consumers is inventing a healthy, humane, homegrown alternative. Filmed in Michigan, Iowa, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, "What Will We Eat?" features John Ikerd, Fred Kirschenmann, Michael Hamm and John Biernbaum of Michigan State University plus the voices of local West Michigan farmers and consumers working to build a new, revolutionary food system.