

FOOD FOR LOCAL TABLES:
WILLAMETTE VALLEY FARMERS RE-EMBEDDING
AGRICULTURE IN LOCAL COMMUNITY, ENVIRONMENT, AND
ECONOMY

by

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A THESIS

Presented to the Department of International Studies
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

June 2011

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Title: Food for Local Tables: Willamette Valley Farmers Re-embedding Agriculture in Local Community, Environment, and Economy

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Degree awarded June 2011

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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June 2011

Title: Food for Local Tables: Willamette Valley Farmers Re-embedding
Agriculture in Local Community, Environment, and Economy

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This study investigates the motivations, influences, techniques, challenges, and perceived opportunities of 11 food producers who are participating in an evolving localized food system near Eugene, Oregon. These producers are resisting the distanced anonymity and negative externalities of mainstream global food production. Interviews reveal participation in a move towards production and distribution that are not only geographically traceable, economically satisfying and ecologically sustainable but that also emphasize reflexive communication between the producer and consumer.

Through initial surveying and in-depth interviews, producers identified that producing food for the local market allows them to pursue a meaningful livelihood, respond appropriately to the local environment, and engage more deeply in community. In short their practices and attitudes closely follow the “Civic Agriculture” model. Particularly their focus on local production for the local market as opposed to a more distanced quality oriented supply chain audit model.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express sincere appreciation to all the farmers who generously shared their time by participating in this study in both the survey and interview phases. I would also like to thank Professors Stephen Wooten, Galen Martin, and Harper Keeler for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript.

For Casey: none of my work would be possible without your enduring love and support. And Samuel: thank you for inspiring me to look at the world with optimism.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way" (Dickens, 1859, p. 1).

When I look out on the world today these famous opening words from a *Tale of Two Cities* ring hauntingly true. As Dickens sets the stage for the French Revolution with this description, he also aptly describes our current global period. We are surrounded by great disparity and stark dichotomies. We live in a time and on a planet where there is simultaneous over-consumption and under-nutrition; food surpluses and hunger. In an interesting parallel, even the language that we use to describe countries, first world and third world, have their roots in the French revolution (Isbister, 1995). In the shadow of such injustice there have been phenomenal efforts and resources devoted to eradicating global poverty and its symptoms, especially in the third world. And yet many challenges remain. On a global scale the privileged few are accumulating wealth and power and the multitudes continue to suffer, their cries for "bread" growing louder as time goes on.

So what can be done? What is the appropriate venue for change? What is the appropriate scale? Where should the work be focused? These are the questions that crop up in my mind. As a person of privilege, with first world citizenship and access to almost limitless resources, I feel compelled to search for answers. Note the plural, *answers*. There are so many problems that there are inherently also many solutions. And many appropriate vehicles and venues to work for

greater justice. So for this project I have chosen to examine one basic need: food, in a proximate setting: my home town.

I did not choose a first world location for this study lightly. I agree with what Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople said on environmental degradation and protection: “To put it simply someone in the so called third world is the most impacted person on the planet, yet that person's responsibility is incomparably minute. What that person does for mere survival neither parallels nor rivals our actions in the so called first world” (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, 2009). In my opinion this is a foremost concern of this study and supports my choice to investigate local food producers in a U.S. setting. The U.S. is a disproportionate consumer of global foodstuffs and promoter of the globalized, commodified, consolidated, environmentally taxing food system that I address in this paper. It is also a major "exporter" of modern, capital intensive, fossil fuel dependent, globally oriented agricultural methods. American industrial agri-business has been developed with an almost exclusive focus on profit maximization, often at the cost of community and the environment. This brings about a suite of problems that are difficult to trace and creates a system that reinforces itself. The profit driven, individualistic industrial agrifood system encourages us to become, “disconnected, disembodied, [and] dysfunctional” (Jensen, 2009, p. 85). This dynamic separates people from the consequences of their food production and consumption, both positive and negative.

While I could have focused on a distant food system that resists the mainstream U.S. model, for instance in Bulgaria where my interest in localized food systems emerged, I chose instead to look within my own culture and life. Not by suggesting the preservation or re-creation of an alternative, localized food system conveniently distant geographically and culturally from myself and my most likely readers, but instead proximate. To push the conceptualization of international development

away from the “other” and back towards the sphere I consider the most appropriate for action: the personal and by extension ordinary, everyday life. Leading an examined and purposeful life in the first world can have a profound impact at every level, from the personal to the global. We are disproportionate consumers of global resources, with many options for voluntarily decreasing unsustainable consumption patterns that create injustices and uneven development the world over.

The new frontiers of development lie within the realms of privilege; in the most destructive lifestyles in the world. One method to develop the first world is to reintegrate lives that have become dis-integrated by reconnecting life and livelihood and re-investing in nature and community. Part of the process will involve voluntary divestment of the “privilege” to exploit people and the environment. The complementary positive aspect will be an investment of energy in the creation of something beautiful, meaningful, and fruitful.

And so in this project I am asking, how people here in Eugene, Oregon are resisting ecologically and socially unsustainable agricultural practices and why? Simultaneously I am exploring how these producers fit within the larger discourse of creating and preserving alternatives in agriculture.

Through my research I have discovered people acting in resistance to the mainstream U.S. industrial agrifood system that has helped to perpetuate the dichotomous world of plenty and want. In many cases these producers are choosing to temper profit maximization with other environmental and social goals. They are demonstrating alternatives in community and often making personal sacrifices to engage in a meaningful livelihood that is compatible with their values. They are working within a framework that Jensen identifies as an appropriate and powerful counter-measure to the dominating system of estrangement:

Our efforts should be focused at this most basic level, the communities where we are rooted, which we can truly know and love. At the same time, we should understand that our communities exist in connection with all other communities around the world. When we grasp this, we worship not money nor power but instead embrace life and love (2009, p. 172).

What I propose as one entry point for future global development is a revolution that challenges the current hegemonic industrial food system and encourages all global citizens to produce and consume at environmentally and socially appropriate levels. I see the local food movement, as represented in one iteration by this study, as part of that revolution.

CHAPTER II

INDUSTRIAL AGRIFOOD, EXTERNALITIES, AND RESISTANCE

Industrial Agrifood

In order to understand alternative food movements we must first investigate the mainstream international food system and its ramifications. The current model of mainstream agriculture and food production, what I refer to as industrial agrifood, in the U.S. and the rest of the world is consolidated, vertically integrated, globally networked and highly fossil fuel dependant (Pollan, 2006; McMichael, 2009; Shiva, 2000). This system has many negative social and environmental consequences. Smaller farmers producing for local markets are being edged out by larger producers growing for commodity markets (Strange, 1988). Local channels for processing and distributing local products are disappearing and in many cases traditional food cultivars are being supplanted by new, often proprietary, varieties (Nabahn, 2002; Patel, 2008; Roberts, 2008). As local products become increasingly unavailable, reliance on the national and global food chain sets in (Kingsolver, 2007; Patel, 2008). This increases reliance on imported and transported food, often to the point of total dependence (Kneen, 1995, p. 205). There are negative consequences on the local economy as well. Money that once flowed into the hands of local growers or traditional retailers now flows into the hands of large agribusiness and remotely owned supermarkets (Hess, 2009; Reardon & Hopkins, 2006). This system also has negative environmental impacts. There are regionalized problems, as in the case of water supplies. For instance large monocrops require large inputs of fertilizers and often pesticides. This pollutes local and downstream watersheds (Economic Research Service (ERS), March

2009; ERS, 2006). There are also globalized impacts such as carbon emissions from production, processing and transport. Or in the case of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), enormous methane emissions (ERS, 2008; Fiala, 2009).

This system has created a very inexpensive supply of calories in the short run in simple economic terms. However, many costs have been externalized¹ putting the long term economic, environmental, and social sustainability of the global food system in jeopardy (Halweil, 2002, pp.7-10) .

The industrial model of food production and distribution is ubiquitous. Every sector, from seed and chemicals to processing and retail, is experiencing accelerating consolidation of corporate ownership (ERS, 2000; Halweil, 2002). By comparison, direct agricultural sales from producers to consumers amounts to a mere .7% of the U.S. agricultural market (USDA, 2007 Census of Agriculture). Looking at production style, conventionally produced (non-organic) food accounts for 97% of the U.S. market (ERS, September 2009). Of the tiny 3% remainder that is produced organically, 93% is distributed through conventional supermarket channels (ERS, September 2009). These statistics demonstrate that industrial system is hegemonic and self-reinforcing (see also Wright & Middendorf, 2007). It is useful to view the industrial agrifood system through Foucault's conceptualization of power; which emphasizes not only centralized, top-down enforcement but also bottom up acceptance and normalization (Johnston, 2007).

If power is exercised in multiple locations (and not simply from a centralized power holder), then resistance requires multiple points of contact, as well multiple projects that seek to problematize, or "de-normalize", the exploitive relationships we have grown accustomed to in consumer-capitalist societies. One example is

¹ Externality is an economic term that describes costs or effects of a product that are not internalized in the price. One common example would be the costs of water pollution that occurs due to agricultural pesticides that are not paid for by the consumers or producers of agricultural products.

the conviction, "normal" for most North Americans, that food should be available at a bargain price, a belief that relies on labor

exploitation and environmental exhaustion at multiple points along the commodity chain (Johnston, 2007, p. 95).

The unsustainable nature of the industrial agrifood system has inspired resistance amongst producers, distributors, and consumers who are now seeking to create alternatives to and also problematize the mainstream industrial agrifood system by preserving and as well as re-creating local food economies (Desmarais, 2007; Nabahn, 2002; Petrini, 2007).

Positive Alternatives

For consumers wishing to opt out of the globally networked industrial food supply the local food system provides an alternative. Local food systems can also provide an opportunity for producers to pursue a meaningful livelihood, engage more deeply in community and respond appropriately to the local environment. All of these things in turn can lead to greater long-term sustainability in food production. Another environmental benefit of engaging in more localized agriculture is the focus on local production for local markets, which shortens the distance from field to table and decreases dependence on oil for shipping while increasing relationships between producers and consumers.

This study specifically investigates producers who are participating in an evolving localized food system near Eugene, Oregon, mainly through in-depth interviews with 11 locally oriented food producers.

The following focal questions oriented my exploration: What are the motivations, influences, techniques, challenges and opportunities affecting local food producers in Eugene, Oregon? How do these factors compare with producers growing for commodity markets?

Underlying these questions is the greater question of if these producers (and the system they participate in) see themselves or can be

seen as a viable alternative or effective resistance to globally sourced industrial agrifood.

My interview results demonstrated trends which led me to compare my results with the framework of “Civic Agriculture” (Lyson, 2000, 2001, 2004) and answer these follow-up questions: Are these producers growing for the local Eugene market displaying features of Civic Agriculture? Specifically are these producers tempering their strict neoclassical economic decision making with a more complex host of benchmark, evaluation and decision making techniques?

The overall goal of this project was to explore one potential alternative to the global structure and power relations of the hegemonic "food from nowhere" regime (McMichael, 2002) by examining a more localized and personalized system. While there is some dissonance within my sample, the producers interviewed for this study are generally resisting the distanced anonymity and negative externalities of mainstream globalized food production. Interviews reveal participation in the move towards production and distribution that are not only geographically traceable and ecologically sustainable, but that also emphasize reflexive communication between the producer and consumer. I go further to argue that my interviews reveal not only participation in the move towards “food from somewhere” or geographically traceable food production, and “sustainable agriculture” in terms of production methods, but also a burgeoning movement emphasizing food *from* and *for* someone (McMichael, 2002). My interview responses indicate that the vast majority of these farmers are espousing practices and attitudes that mesh well with the concept of Civic Agriculture (Lyson, 2004).

Interviews with these 11 producers demonstrate the divergence of these local food producers from conventional agricultural practices and demonstrates their proximity to the traits of sustainable agriculture on the production side: harmony with nature, diversity, and community (*Beus & Dunlap, 1990) and also with Civic Agriculture in terms of

producer consumer relationship, especially: local craft production serving local markets, concern for social and economic equity, locally and independently controlled businesses, and maintaining a focus on civic engagement and social movements. (Lyson, 2004). To support the importance of more direct contact between producers and consumers demonstrated by this study I also include a brief contrast to quality audit supply chain management strategies, such as those employed by the Slow Food Presidia via Co-op Italia. These labeling and auditing systems attempt to preserve socially and environmentally embedded production standards but rely heavily on distant consumers (Fonte, 2006).

The responses provided by the participants in this study give evidence that they are indeed embracing qualities of both sustainable agriculture and Civic Agriculture which is especially apparent in the divergence from strict, competitive, neoclassical economic behavior which Lyson identifies as hallmark of Civic Agriculture and Hoffman has gone on to support through a similar study in Vermont (Lyson, 2002 pp. 70-81; Hoffman, 2007). Surveys also reveal a strong connection between these producers and their customer base. These relationships, with two way communication between the producers and consumers, are very difficult to preserve at a distance providing a useful contrast to the "local production for distant consumer" model (Fonte, 2006).

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Food Regimes - Historical

“Food Regime Theory” is a useful backdrop for alternative food movements such as Civic Agriculture and “Food from Somewhere” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989; McMichael, 2002). A brief description of these regimes illuminate the underpinnings of the current global food system and the power structures that have shaped it. Current analysis in Food Regime Theory, like this study, is focusing on resistance to contemporary regimes and possibilities for sustainable alternatives.

The concept of food regimes was originally outlined in the landmark paper “Agriculture and the State System” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). “The food regime concept historicized the global food system; problematising linear representations of agricultural modernization, underlining the pivotal role of food in global political economy...” (McMichael 2009). The first two food regimes and the role of food in global capital accumulation were detailed in the 1989 article while subsequent works have added detail to these and subsequent regimes and transitional periods.

In Friedman and McMichael’s analysis, the first regime covers the colonial period of food history where power was concentrated in core colonizing states and wielded over the colonized. This system of extraction from colonial territories provided raw inputs for industry such as cotton, timber, sugar, vegetable oil, coffee, cocoa, tea, and tobacco, which were used either as materials or as cheap food for industrialized wage labor. “The distinctive feature of this trade was the complementarity of colonial exports to metropolitan economies – a geographical and climatic specialization that gave life to the prevailing

liberal theory of capitalism as a system most efficiently organized through a global market based on regional specialization” (Friedmann & McMichael, 1989). In other words Ricardo’s ² theory of comparative advantage. The theory of comparative advantage has been absolutely key in the formation of the current global, industrial, agri-food network. Since the late 1800s farms around the world have moved away from diversity so that they could focus on crops for which they had a comparative advantage and good external market (Lyson 2004, p. 32; Roberts 2008). This has led to less diversity in plantings and therefore less genetic diversity overall in U.S. and global agriculture. Varieties of seed grown in sub-prime regions were specialized to the unfavorable conditions and could still produce a significant crop for regionalized consumption, though it would not be price competitive with national or global commodity prices. These specialized plant varieties go out of use as producers switch to other crops that they can grow cheaper than anyone else in the context of a national or global market.

The second food regime emerged concurrently with the “Green Revolution” ³ which, along with other U.S. agricultural policies led to huge surpluses of staple foods in the U.S (Roberts, 2008). These surpluses were then directed towards nations the U.S. wished to bolster against the threat of communism. The food aid entering these nations led to decreases in food prices which encouraged industrialization and also consolidation in the agricultural sector. National economic development, through industrialization, was promoted as the universal

² David Ricardo was an 18th century English economist, contemporary of Adam Smith, who is famous for detailing the concept of comparative advantage: when considering what to produce each locality should determine what it can produce most efficiently compared with trading partners and then exchange with other localities doing the same thing to create the most favorable outcome.

³ The “Green Revolution” began in the wake of World War II. It is a system of agricultural production that relies heavily on human intervention in the form of petrochemical fertilizers, irrigation, mechanization and hybrid seeds. It has led farming to become more capital intensive and land extensive (Lyson, 2004).

platform for international development amongst non-communist countries. “Meanwhile, agribusiness elaborated transnational linkages between national farm sectors, which were subdivided into a series of specialized agricultures linked by global supply chains” (McMichael, 2009, p. 141). This was a key transition away from local, national or even regional control over agriculture towards the current globally networked, corporately controlled industrial agrifood system of today.

Emerging Food Regimes and Resistance

Friedmann refocused her work on food regimes in 2005 to the transitions between regimes. She notes, “These are times of choice over alternative ways to organize power and property in land, labor and consumption” (Friedmann, 2005, p. 229). She argued that we are potentially exiting one of those transition periods as a new regime emerges, one that she dubbed the “corporate environmental food regime”. She argues that this regime is a product of social movements and pressure from consumers in response to environmental and health problems exacerbated by the previous regime. What was once a social movement, organic, has now become regulated and has become itself an industry with a focus on expanding market opportunities and in turn profits. She argues that, if this regime gels, the corporate-environmental food regime will be a current example of the ability of powerful corporations to co-opt a social movement to serve its own goals of profit maximization (Friedmann, 2005, p.31).

McMichael has also continued investigating resistance to food regimes, and has chosen to focus on transnational movements such as Slow Food, Food Sovereignty and Fair Trade which all operate “...in opposition to what he has termed a “food from nowhere” regime (McMichael 2002 as cited in McMichael 2009) or a “contemporary corporate food regime” (McMichael, 2005). He argues broadly that the reductionist, simplified industrial agriculture that has emerged over the

past 150 years has reached a point of crisis (McMichael, 2009). “It is expressed in the emergence of a transnational movement of smallholders intent on asserting the critical importance of biodiverse and sustainable agriculture for human survival” (Desmarais 2007, as cited in McMichael 2009).

This resistance is inherently “food from somewhere”, personal, traceable, embedded, as opposed to its counterpart which is anonymous, untraceable and disconnected (McMichael, 2009)⁴. I chose to work with a set of local farmers who seem to fit well within the framework of the “food from somewhere” movement, which I believe could be considered one aspect of the broader concept of Civic Agriculture.

Civic Agriculture

Civic Agriculture embodies an alternative to the previously described dominant food system. Civic Agriculture is a social movement, described by Thomas Lyson, that utilizes local agriculture to reduce some of the negative externalities of industrial agrifood. There are social, environmental, and economic elements to Civic Agriculture. One of the main features of Civic Agriculture is the focus on local production geared towards local consumers. “Civic Agriculture is oriented toward local market outlets that serve local consumers rather than national or international mass markets” (Lyson, 2004, p.85).

Lyson also suggests that Civic Agriculture should address environmental and social concerns. It does not dictate a particular production style, such as organic, but rather has a paradigm of production that more closely mimics natural processes and takes site specifics into account when making decisions (Lyson, 2004, pp. 78-81). In general, Civic Agriculture promotes an agriculture that is more land

⁴ For more examples of “food from somewhere” see Petrini, 2007 and Nabhan, 2002.

and labor intensive and less land extensive and capital intensive (Lyson, 2004, p.85).

“The direct contact between civic farmers and consumers nurtures bonds of community” (Lyson, 2004, p. 85). Lyson argues that Civic Agriculture promotes community engagement and the reintegration of relationships between producers and consumers. He describes consumers in Civic Agriculture as “food citizens”, acknowledging their significant power and role in determining the future of agricultural production and also highlighting the potential collaborative rather than competitive nature of this relationship (2004, p.77). If people value this proximity, these social and environmental benefits, then they may work towards producing and consuming in ways that support these outcomes even when the economic outcomes are diminished as a result. This is a key finding that is supported by my interviews.

Another Alternative? Local Production for Distant Consumers

The Slow Food Presidia and Co-op Italia agreement provides a useful example of what Fonte refers to as “local production for distant consumers” (2006, p. 203), playing on the Civic Agriculture notion of local production for local consumers. Fonte argues that it is necessary to engage farther flung consumers in order to maintain sufficiently high prices for producers. This model essentially expands the notion of community to include consumers who are geographically distant but espouse similar values.

There are several key assumptions underlying this argument that are worth noting. One is that as more producers or simply more product enters the localized markets prices will naturally drop. This drop in prices will make it economically unsustainable for producers to continue to serve the local market. This would be true in two very specific scenarios: either as saturation is reached in the marketplace or when the customer base does not grow, but the number of producers growing

similar products does. Falling prices would occur as the percentage of local food needs met by local producers neared 100%, alternatives to local food dwindled, and more producers still entered the market. This is far from being the issue in the U.S. The vast majority of food purchases are made through the conventional system. According to one farmer I interviewed the latter issue, however, is certainly of concern in this particular food economy (steady consumer base, increasing production). Therefore seeking distant consumers could be one solution. However there is the assumption that it is possible to effectively communicate everything necessary to consumers who are distant from producers. This requires intricate systems of labeling, certifications, and even customer education at the store level to achieve. Meanwhile, the producers in this system receive almost no reciprocal communication from their customer base except sales information. In addition the “local food for distant consumers” model only works well for foods that keep and transport well and that are of high enough value to absorb transportation and distribution costs. This limits the scope of most “local food for distant consumers” to high end luxury goods as opposed to ordinary staples.

Decreasing the Distance

My interviews reveal a distinctly different model from both the corporate environmental food regime and even local production for distant consumers. While both of these frameworks seek in some way to re-embed agricultural production in environment or society the consumer is still distanced from the producer both geographically and also by middlemen such as processors and brokers. The relationship between players (consumers, producers, processors) is boiled down to a legal one; is this product certified, traceable, properly labeled? Breaches of the relationship are legal rather than social, personal, or community matters. Civic Agriculture works in opposition, in effect cultivating closeness or proximity between consumers and producers. The food is

often less processed (less value added) and therefore must be sold through fewer intermediaries to provide sufficient profit to the producer. The producer, generally, works smaller pieces of ground and is therefore in more close contact with the natural system at work. The consumer that actively supports this system is more familiar with seasonality and regional capacities due to cues in availability and price and adjusts their consumption patterns accordingly.

Civic Agriculture is a system that relies more heavily on personal, rather than legal, relationships. And the scale and proximity of the players make such personal relationships possible. As Joel Salatin is quoted by Michael Pollan, "...we ask for too much salvation by legislation. All we need to do is empower individuals with the right philosophy and the right information to opt out en masse" (2006, p. 260). The Civic Agriculture model offers one path for communities comprised of consumers and producers to opt out of and resist the industrial agrifood system. Their geographic and social proximity to one another allows for this system to operate within the context of personal and community relationship as opposed to only economic, legalized, contractual relationships.

Please note, however, that this is not always a clear cut distinction. Organic certification, for instance, has caused some producers in my sample to balance their priorities for a more personalized less legalistic relationship with consumers with their desire to demonstrate adherence to a specific production standard that they feel their customers demand. As I will address below, some producers that I interviewed have chosen to be certified as organic. Others have eschewed this certification because they feel that the concept of organic has been co-opted and tainted and so choose to adhere to similar (or more stringent) standards but forgo the certification. While still others have opted for alternative certifications such as Certified Naturally Grown which basically uses the same

guidelines as USDA organic program but relies upon a cooperative inspection and certification model.

Conclusion of Literature Review

Food Regime analysis is useful in examining assumptions of development and industrialization in relation to agriculture and by extension issues of global food security and sovereignty. By teasing apart the complex relation between food and industry in the context of the recent history of global capital accumulation and also questioning assumptions about paths to development in the third world, food regime theory allows for analysis about alternatives to industrial agrifood and also insight into the future of what global social and ecological sustainable practices might look like. Harriet Friedmann was paraphrased in an article by Hugh Campbell as concluding, “The appropriate site for reshaping global food relations in more sustainable ways lay outside the global-scale relations of regimes: it is sited at the local, regional, communal and ecologically-embedded level of food relationships” (Campbell, 2009, p. 310). In other words, a move towards the Civic Agriculture model espoused by Lyson with a focus on relationships between sustainable local producers and their counterparts, the local consumer or as he puts it food citizen.

In what follows I examine one case of resistance to industrial agrifood through surveys and interviews with producers who are growing food aimed at the local market in Eugene, Oregon.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

Agricultural statistics tend to be gathered by agencies such as the USDA and present a picture that I suspected to be very different from small scale farmers in the southern Willamette Valley, especially those producing for the local market. As Lyson put it in his book *Civic Agriculture*, "...what we know about this new form of agriculture and food production comes mainly from the Civic Agriculture community itself" (pg. 1). And so I set out to learn a little more about a small group of producers both to create a more detailed picture of the producers themselves, and also the framework within which they work; where they've come from, where they think they are going, and why. The goal was to present a more balanced, human perspective in combination with arguments and approaches to more ecologically sustainable agricultural practices. To accomplish these goals I designed a multi-part, multi-method study including surveys, in-depth interviews and farm visits.

Previous Work in the Field and My Response

This series of interviews with producers in the Southern Willamette Valley is in the same vein as the work of Hoffman in South Eastern Vermont (2007). His work included in-depth interviews with 13 farmers scattered around one large town. I followed this approach using one central town, which is presumably the destination for most locally oriented agriculture, and then drawing a 50 mile radius around it.

Hoffman's premise was that many communities are beginning to demand alternatives to industrial agriculture due to the many negative social and environmental impacts. He points out that the current industrial agricultural system has been developed because of a particular

economic system. He goes on to argue that alternative agriculture will therefore require not only more environmentally sustainable farming practices but also an alternative economy.

His study was aimed specifically at investigating Lyson's claim that, "community problem-solving, rather than economic competition, is the social foundation of sustainable agriculture" (Lyson 2002, p. 195 as cited in Hoffman 2007).

While I included a slightly different line of questioning and solicited more information about past influences and rewards, it is interesting to note that the results of this study and Hoffman's share many similarities and seem to support Lyson's argument that sustainable and Civic Agriculture is more suited to a collaborative community oriented model rather than a competitive neoclassical economic model.

While this study mirrors Hoffman's in some ways, the method for choosing participants is purposefully different. He narrowed his field of potential producer participants by production style. Alternatively, I chose to include all producers in the area, regardless of production style, and limited the pool instead by targeting those producing food for local distribution. Both concern about sustainability in production methods and production oriented to a local market are attributes of Civic Agriculture. However I felt that limiting by production style would entail the problematic task of defining sustainable methods, limit farms in transitional phases, and potentially provide a deceptively uniform set of responses. While my conclusions are similar to Hoffman's I believe I have a slightly more diverse representation of local agriculture, including producers who are being "pulled" through the market by local consumer demands as well as those collaborating with consumers who hold shared values.

Choice of Participants

My goal was not to present a statistically relevant sampling of all agricultural producers in the Southern Willamette Valley. Instead I focused on those who publicly advertise to be growing for the local market near Eugene, this was my main screening criterion. I used the Willamette Food and Farm Coalition's "Locally Grown" directory to target growers. I also sent out an announcement through the OSU extension service's list-serve, which is a common resource for many local farmers. Contact was made via email. The emails contained a link to an anonymous survey allowing interested parties to opt-in and then, if they wished, sign up for more detailed interviews.

The organic movement's original tenets were a precursor to a variety of movements working for alternatives to industrial agrifood in the U.S. Michael Pollan portrays the original tenets of the organic movement as being supported by three struts in his book *Omnivore's Dilemma*. The movement consisted of production methods, consumer choices and expectations, and distribution channels. As he put it, "...the early organic movement sought to establish not just an alternative mode of production (the chemical-free farms), but an alternative system of distribution (the anticapitalist food co-ops), and even an alternative mode of consumption (the "countercuisine")" (p. 143). This study is really an investigation into all three elements of this counter culture food movement's tenets, however as seen specifically through the lens of producers. There seems to be more research regarding producers in terms of production styles and methods, but less investigation on why they choose to do what they do in a socio-cultural sense and then how they engage the local food systems as a whole (Hoffman, 2007; Allen, 1993). So with this study I wanted to present a brief portrait of who these producers consider themselves to be both through demographic analysis and also by questioning their motivations, influences, challenges and perceived opportunities. I have tried to add a more social and

cultural dimension to counter the criticism that sustainable agriculture studies are often too heavily rooted in the natural sciences and have in the past overlooked the intrinsically interconnected human elements at work (Allen, 1993, pp. 6-11; Thrupp, 1993, pp. 47-74).

Location

I chose to look at producers growing for the local market within a 50 mile radius of Eugene, Oregon. This location is significant to me personally being my birthplace. From a research point of view it is also a useful, though perhaps exceptional, site.

Eugene is situated at the southern end of the Willamette River valley. It is characterized generally by rich soils, and a good proportion of arable land to developed areas. It has a mild, maritime climate with ample winter rain and drier summers. Eugene is home to the University of Oregon which infuses the community with a diversity and level of education that would otherwise be unusual for a town of its size. It is also known for the remaining influences of the social movements of the sixties and seventies. The Lane County Farmers' Market, held in downtown Eugene two times a week from April through October, cites on their website that "...its beginnings can be traced back to the first public market in this part of Oregon, the Eugene Producers Market, which began in 1915" (Lane County Farmers Market, 2010). Though it should be noted, the market was closed from 1959 until its re-emergence in 1979. Several organic farms in the area, such as Wintergreen (part of this study) which are still in operation today, were also founded in this time period of the late seventies or early eighties. There are also a number of surviving locally owned grocery stores, shops, butchers, and fish mongers. And it should be mentioned that there are a couple of innovative local distribution methods available utilizing technology to

connect producers and consumers such as Eugene Local Foods and Food Hub ⁵.

While Eugene is certainly not representative of the situation in all U.S. cities, I think it is a useful community to investigate because there is a semblance of a framework to support local production and distribution of food. Teasing the edges of a functioning, if not robust, community food system helps to reveal the groundwork already laid and also the areas still in need of improvement. Many communities across the country are experimenting with local food improvements such as farmers' markets and community supported agriculture schemes (CSA's). Eugene is a community that has been active in these areas for decades which may be helpful in analyzing the life-cycle challenges that are faced over time. Also, due to the active local food momentum, it is a community that is pioneering novel approaches to local food distribution which may be appropriate in other communities as well.

Timing

These producers were interviewed during the summer of 2010. Summer is a challenging season to approach farmers who are often at their peak work load. However, it also provides an ideal time to observe the farms while they were actively producing a wide variety of products and engaging their customer base through markets, farm tours, festivals, etc. In addition it was a convenient time for me due to scheduling as I had a break from other class work.

⁵ For more information on these organizations please see Appendix A at the end of this paper.

Surveys and Interviews

Of the approximately 60 producers who were specifically targeted 23 completed the survey and 15 volunteered for more in depth interviews though only 11 actually followed through and completed the in-person interviews.

The surveys included demographic questions and also questions about farm size, output, products, etc. The main goal of the survey, however, was to gather a pool of local food producers who were willing to participate further in the research by volunteering for more detailed interviews, preferably on their production site, about their motivations, challenges, influences and perceived opportunities.

The interviews followed a standard set of questions. I had a sufficient number of participants opt-in to the interviews from the survey sample and therefore did not have to rely on my back-up method of approaching particular producers to specifically request their participation, which is positive since the resulting sample is more randomized.

I asked a standard set of open-ended questions to each farmer. I asked questions to explore their influences, motivations, and history, their current and previous marketing and distribution strategies, their perceived challenges, resources they have found helpful, their understanding of their customers as well as their visions for the future. See Appendix C for a complete list of questions.

I focused on representing the producers in their own words and asking open ended questions which reveal both in the answer and the interpretation of the question the views of the individual interviewee.

In the first two interviews I relied on copious note taking, fearing that a digital recorder might be off-putting for some. I however changed my approach, with the express permission of the interviewees, at the third interview and feel this was the superior method. I do not think that

the results were significantly different, however it was much easier for me in practical terms.

There was certainly a wide variety of responses to many questions and I have included information disclosed by farms, in some cases even if only one producer felt that way. With such a small sample of such a small segment of agriculture I think even one response may prove useful and worthwhile to investigate. There were of course also trends that emerged. I have tried to indicate when there was a general consensus of experience amongst producers on certain topics.

I have chosen to specifically mention individuals and their responses in some cases and purposefully obscured individual identity in others. The producers shared a lot of detailed information and I feel that in some cases it could be detrimental for them in business and social terms to reveal their responses. In these cases I have made charts that detail the number of farms in particular categories, but have not attributed individual identities.

CHAPTER V

SURVEYS

As stated in the methodology section, I specifically targeted 60 farms who advertise food production aimed at the local market by distributing an email with a link to an anonymous, online survey in June of 2010. Additionally, I advertised the survey through the OSU Extension's listserve, which reached approximately 200 farms. This listserve has a wider range of farms and farmers than those that I was specifically targeting, including those that produce non-food crops or sell through commodity channels. However, I wanted to encourage participation by all local food producers, including those that may not have had the chance to actively and publicly advertise their products in places that I was likely to find them. I sent out a total of three messages, an initial letter and two reminders to encourage participation.

The anonymous survey contained 27 questions, concerning mostly demographic information and general farm composition. The final section included a request for producers to opt-in to the interview portion of this study. For a complete list of survey questions please see Appendix B. Participants were not offered any compensation for their participation.

The result was a total of 24 completed surveys, with 18 participants answering all questions. The most commonly skipped question was about estimated gross sales.

Even from the preliminary surveys an interesting picture began to emerge. Those who participated in the surveys diverged in many ways from the demographically average U.S. farmer.

Please note that I have not included all information gathered from these initial surveys since the interviews, rather than the surveys, were

the primary focus of data collection. I have focused on brief, pertinent demographic information.

Demographic Results

Age

The producers who completed the survey are slightly younger on average than the national average of about 57 years old (USDA Agricultural Census, 2007). Sixty percent were under 55 and 40% were 56 to 70 years old. Refer to Table 1 for more detail.

Gender

I was struck by the number of women who responded (63%) and was interested to discover that this is the largest demographic trend change nationally in farmers. In the U.S. there has been a large (7%) increase in the number of women farmers from 2002-2007, the date of the most currently available agricultural census. This brings total women farm operators up to 30% (USDA Agricultural Census Factsheet, 2007). My survey did not specify whether the participants consider themselves the head of farm operations, and so I chose to compare my resulting pool to USDA data that also generally categorizes farmers, not specifically “farm heads”. My sense is that I likely drew a disproportionately female pool in the surveys due to common distribution of labor which I witnessed later on in my interviews and farm visits. Often women were responsible for the computer related tasks such as email correspondence and accounting, which would mean that they were the most likely recipients of the online surveys. I also think that the national increase in female farmers documented by the USDA could in part be influenced by women’s changing definition of themselves and their roles in the farm enterprise. While certainly it is likely that there are more women entering farming, I think it is also likely that more women who have been in farming for a long time are now labeling

themselves as farmers. Or that new generations of women farmers are defining themselves as such when perhaps the previous generation did not.

Education

The producers surveyed are diversely and highly educated. All but three have obtained bachelor’s degree compared with the national average degree achievement rate for farmers of about 25% (USDA, 2010). Incidentally the national average bachelor degree achievement rate, regardless of industry, is about 30% (USDA, 2010). So these producers are more highly educated than both the average farmer and the average American.

Table 1. Demographic Comparisons

This Study		U.S. Farmer Average	
Age		Age	
Range	26-70 Years	Average	57 Years
Average	51-55 Years		
Gender		Gender	
Female	63%	Female	30%
Male	37%	Male	70%
Education		Education	
Some College	10%	Bachelor's Degree	25%
Associate Degree	5%	<i>(more granular data not available)</i>	
Bachelor's Degree	65%		
Master's Degree	15%		
Doctorate	5%		
Years in Farming		Years in Farming	
Range	0-50 Years	New Farmer (<10 years)	20%
Median	0-10 Years	Established Farmer (>10 years)	80%
Average	11-20 Years		

Years in Farming

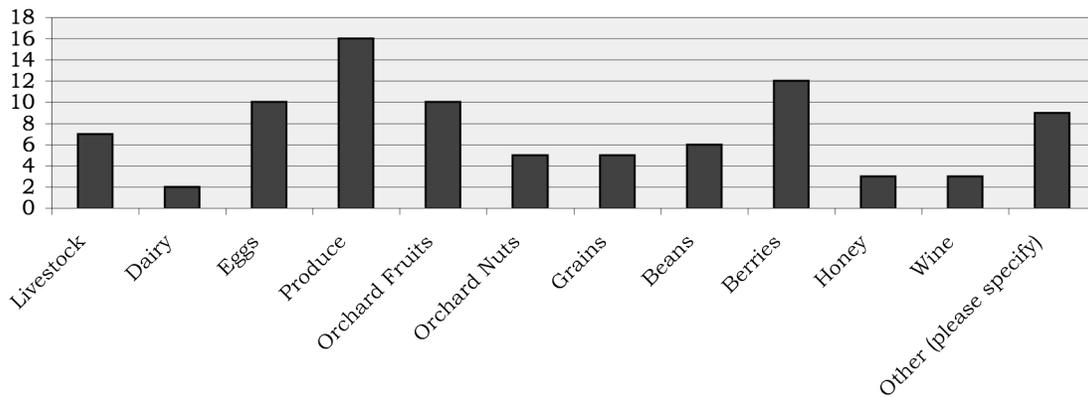
These producers, as a sample, are also newer to farming than the national average. Fully half have been in farming ten years or less,

which is the definition of new farmer by the USDA. Beginning farms make up about 20% of all farms nationally (USDA, 2010).

Products

As Figure 1 below makes clear, there are a wide variety of products represented even by the relatively small sample size. In the “other” category grass seed, vegetable seeds, nursery starts, poultry for meat, culinary herbs, hard cider, baked goods, forest products and lentils were also listed.

**Figure 1. What Types of Products do You Currently Produce?
(mark all that apply)**

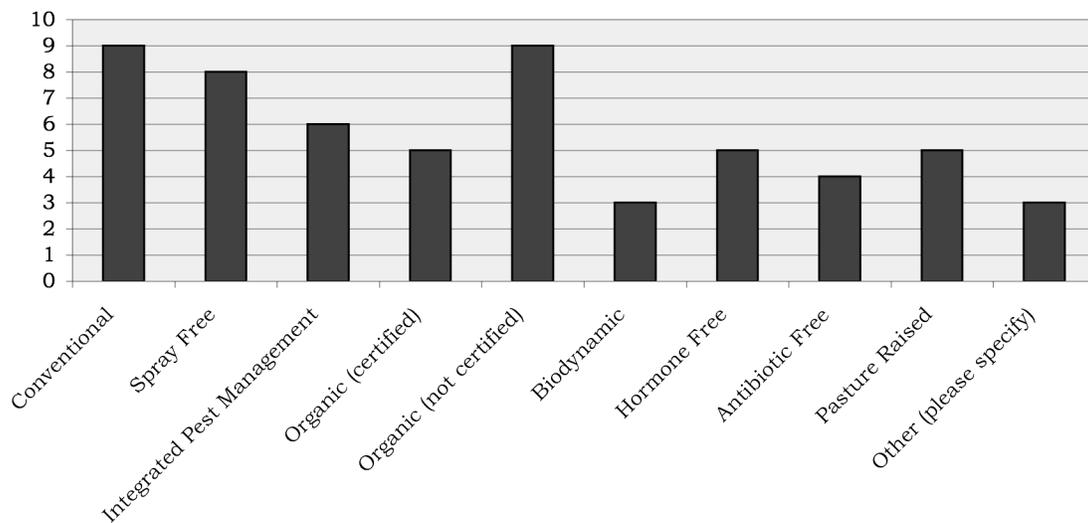


To provide some context, Oregon’s top agricultural commodity (in terms of cash receipts) are as follows: nursery, cattle, milk, hay, grass seed, potatoes, Christmas trees and onions (Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), 2009). Oregon is the nation’s top producing state (in terms of units) of the following products: blackberries, boysenberries, loganberries, black raspberries, hazelnuts, plums, storage onions, grass seed (rye, fescue, orchard grass), Christmas trees and potted azaleas (ODA, 2009).

Production Styles

There was also diversity in production style, sometimes even on one farm site which is illustrated in Figure 2. Producers were allowed to select all production style characteristics that applied to their farms. This trend held true for the interview sample as well. There were conventional, organic (certified), organic (not certified), transitional, and “other” production styles listed. In the “other” category cage free poultry, and Certified Naturally Grown⁶ were listed.

Figure 2. Mark All the Production Styles that Apply to Your Operations



Acreage

There was a huge range in acreage amongst the survey respondents. The largest farm was 2800 acres and the smallest farm was less than one acre. The average acreage was 200 acres. Because the 2800 acre farm was 2200 acres larger than any other farm I think it is also useful to consider the average acreage after removing it from the sample. By removing the largest farm the average drops to 65 acres. I

⁶ “Certified Naturally Grown” is part of the growing trend of “Participatory Guarantee Systems”. It verifies production style by using USDA organic standards and cooperative inspections. For more details see www.naturallygrown.org.

think this is a more representative number but still higher than the mode and median. Interestingly, the median farm size in this sample is 10 acres. Thirteen of the respondents farm 15 acres or less. There is a notable jump between these farms and the larger seven farms, of which the smallest is 100 acres. See Figures 3 and 4 below for comparison.

Figure 3. Productive Acreage All Farms

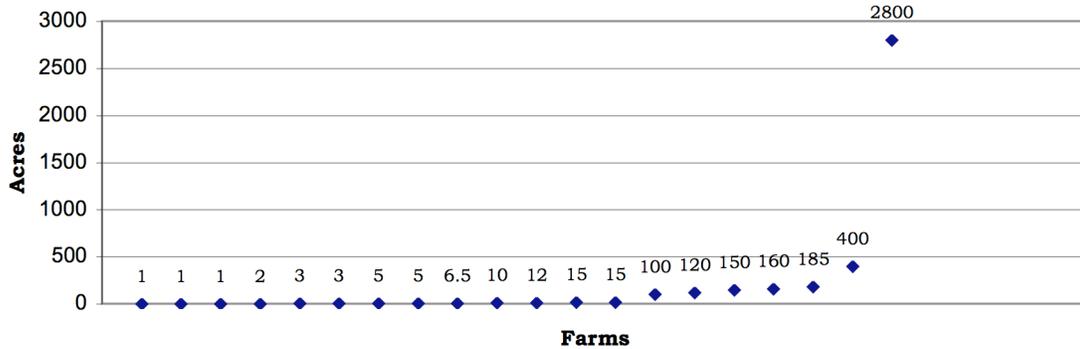
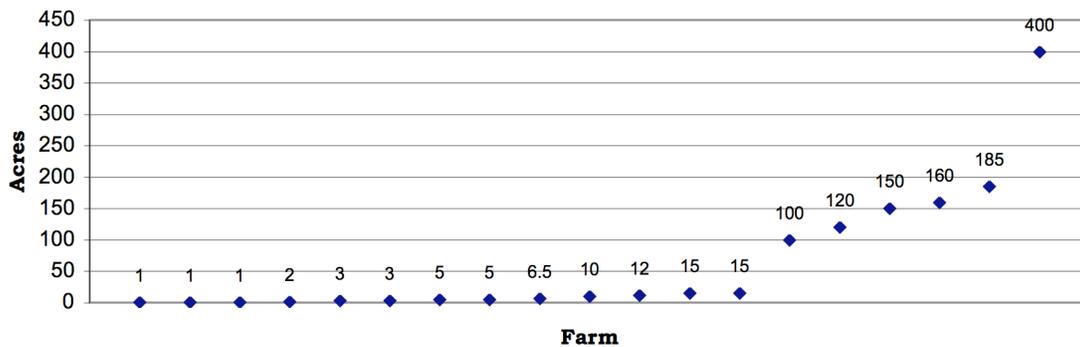


Figure 4. Productive Acreage Without Largest Farm



The average farm in Oregon in 2010 was 423 acres, down slightly from 2009 figures of 425 acres and in line with the trend of decreasing average farm size since at least 1990 (ODA, 2011). This trend in decreasing farm size holds true for both national and state samples. According to USDA statistics in 1960 the average farm size was about 200 acres, compared with a little over 400 acres in the early nineties.

Looking at averages however can be deceiving as the national trend is that very large and very small farms are on the rise while mid-sized farms continue to disappear (Key & Roberts, 2007). These averages don't reveal the full picture of consolidation in land ownership. My sample is therefore on average representing smaller farms, those that are more in line with historical farm sizes in the U.S. and fairly consistent with national trends in small farm growth. The number of new farmers likely influences these averages, as new farmers are likely to have less extensive land holdings. However my sample also contains one large farm and several farms that fit within the mid-sized farm range, which are of particular interest in national agricultural policy (Key & Roberts, 2007).

Survey Conclusion

I am pleased with the diversity of producers who participated in the surveys. There are producers who work larger 2000 acre operations and tiny 1 acre plots. I expected that there would be vegetable and fruit growers, as these are relatively high value crops that are common in local markets. Excitingly, there are also producers represented in this study growing grains like wheat and barley, legumes such lentils and black beans, chickens for meat and eggs, hazelnuts, and some small scale dairy. The diversity of these producers hints at a local consumer base that is looking to fulfill a large or at least increasing part, of their diet through local means. They are looking beyond fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables, so commonly the focus of local food system revitalization and perhaps a logical starting point. I think this indicates a maturity in a localized food system that, while perhaps unusual, is encouraging and worth investigating.

CHAPTER VI

INTERVIEWS AND FARMER PROFILES

As stated in the methodology section, 15 producers volunteered to be interviewed in response to the final section of the survey. As with the surveys there was no compensation offered to participants, though I think some of the volunteers saw it as a good public relations opportunity. I contacted all 15 volunteers to schedule interviews. Of these, 11 followed up with my requests and completed the interviews. My goal was to interview at least ten producers, so after three attempts to get in touch with the remaining four producers I discontinued contact.

As previously mentioned, 11 producers completed the in depth interviews for this project. I gave each farmer the option to remain anonymous, though no participants chose that option. I asked a standard set of 27 questions to each farmer. What emerged from the interviews was a wide array of influences, motivations and elegant localized solutions. All of the producers indicated awareness of the greater industrial agrifood system and their place outside of or on the fringes of this way of farming. I have chosen to outline brief farm and farmer profiles, and then to focus on the motivations, rewards, and challenges indicated by producers during the interviews for the sake of this thesis. For more complete and detailed responses given by each farmer please see Appendix D.

Farm and Farmer Profiles

The following are brief sketches of the farmers who volunteered to be interviewed and also a simple description of their farms. They provide a hint of the level of detail and individual context inherent in evaluating local food systems. I have included sections of the interview that

describe who the farmers are, what they are doing and why. Full descriptions are located in Appendix D of this paper. The complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Though I asked a standard set of questions to each producer the interview results are somewhat uneven. Some producers honed in on certain topics and strayed a bit from the original outline. There were also a couple of producers who seemed rather guarded in their answers, especially to questions about production and land-holding details. This is not surprising given the competitive nature of business and also the fact that most of the farmers had never met me before the interview. None of them declined to answer any questions, but there were certainly some vague replies.

Sharon Blick, Living Earth Farm, Eugene, Oregon

I interviewed Sharon Blick while touring her operations at Living Earth Farm. We spent most of our time outside visiting the various animals in their respective enclosures and also toured the building that she uses for processing milk and customer pick-ups.

Sharon was in 4-H as a child. Though she grew up in the city her parents let her keep animals in the backyard illegally. She has always loved animals. She started the non-profit “Nearby Nature” and has also worked in education. She has been concerned about food and where it comes from for a long time. She mentioned that she and her husband were vegetarians for about 20 years due in part to the influence of reading *Diet for a Small Planet* (Lappe, 1971). However she has decided that some land, like theirs, is marginal and can be used for grazing which produces food where otherwise food production would be unlikely. She felt like she needed to learn how to butcher the animals if she was going to eat them so she began taking any classes she could find (she mentioned specifically Sunbow farms and Harry McCormack). They now eat occasional meat but only what they grow themselves or friends raise

and slaughter. She is very opposed to concentrated animal feeding operations for animal welfare and food safety reasons.

She went to school at University of California, Davis and studied ecology. She did research for the Environmental Protection Agency for a little while and then got a master's degree in education. She taught in the small Oregon town of Drain for a year. She lived in Alaska for a few years and did environmental education and then moved back to Eugene and started working with the school garden project. She got connected to local farms and that really gave her the idea to become a farmer. She also cited the importance of the book *Omnivore's Dilemma* (Pollan, 2006). She didn't grow up on a farm but her grandparents were farmers and passed the farm to her cousin. She says that she always wanted to live in the country.

Living Earth Farm is located on the west side of Eugene, about 10 miles from downtown just outside the city limits. Sharon bought the property three years ago with her husband, who works at the University of Oregon. She lives there with her husband and daughter. It wasn't farmed originally. There was a lot of blackberry, no irrigation, and it was not properly fenced. There was a building at the front of the property, which was used as a daycare by the previous owners. Currently they process their goat milk there and have refrigerators for customers to pick up their orders. Sharon originally had planned to wait to start farming until her daughter was out of high school since she was concerned about quality education in a rural district. However, she and her husband thought by then they'd be too old. So they were excited to find a place that is still in Eugene 4-J school district. It is a 30 acre parcel, long and skinny, with limited irrigation. Most of it is being used for rotational grazing of the various animals, and the goats are being used to clear blackberry and poison oak. She estimates that about five acres are currently in active use.

Their current products include goat milk, duck and chicken eggs, and a small amount of produce. They also raise pigs, sheep, Rhode Island Red chickens which are a mixed purpose meat and egg bird, and run bees. They are at the beginning of their farming career, but the milk and eggs have been the main focus of their operations. This may change in the future with a more expanded garden area.

Her motivation for serving the local food market is to help connect people with where their food comes from. “Most people don’t have time to be a full time farmer” she says, but many can help with things around the farm occasionally in exchange for food. In terms of reward she really enjoys that customers, friends and acquaintances send notes about how excited they are about what she is doing. “There’s all these people out there that are living vicariously through my newsletter about farming. It’s like they want to do it but can’t for some reason and they really eat it up”. She relates story about how she enjoys the work parties for butchering chickens and that people are interested in coming out and learning how to do it. In a way Sharon says Living Earth Farm has become a chicken butchering school. She notes that it is hard to see the process, but she feels alright about eating the meat knowing that the animal had a happy life and that they don’t seem to know that the end is coming. She agrees with Michael Pollan that people should eat less meat but of a higher quality. “We charge a lot for our chickens but we always sell them”. Sharon thinks people are coming around to this idea of paying more for higher quality food, which means they have to cut down meat consumption.

Jack Gray, Wintergreen Farm, Noti, Oregon

I interviewed Jack Gray under some oak trees overlooking the fields of Wintergreen Farm. Our interview went long so my tour of the farm was limited but I did get a glimpse of the processing area for the basil and pesto business.

Jack studied environmental studies and geology in college and considers himself an environmentalist. He knew he wanted to work outside. He started out working for a magazine called the “Small Farmers Journal”. At the time the journal was located in Junction City, now it is run out of Sisters, Oregon.

His family has off and on agricultural ties. His grandfathers were in agriculture. His dad worked agriculture growing up until “he could get away” and after that was a business man in Portland. After working at the journal for a while Jack realized that he wanted to be outside and in farming so he started looking for a place. He found this place while he was still working for the journal and then transitioned into full time farming. He bought this farm in late 1980.

Wintergreen Farm is located about 20 miles west of Eugene near the foothills of the coastal range. There are three families that own it now, they are all partners with equal say in the farm but different ownership levels. Jack lives on the farm. It is organized as an LLC. They run about 170 acres and there are a few non-contiguous pieces that are rented, especially for cattle production. When I asked how much land was in “active production” he had an interesting take on the definition of productivity: “There is some land that is non agriculturally productive. We’ve done some restoration work with our watershed council [Long Tom River]. So there’s a fair amount of land that’s not productive”.

They grow a wide array of fresh vegetables. They also have strawberries, blueberries, organic grass fed beef that they sell as locker meat), both fresh and dried burdock root, and basil which they process into pesto. They bought a small pesto business about three years ago that supplies pesto and pesto base to the food service industry through large distributors like Sysco. They have a cold storage facility in Portland and they pick it up and deliver it to various institutions like universities and hospitals. “In terms of what they’re used to dealing with we’re tiny”.

Their production has changed a lot over time. They were a founding member of the Organically Grown Co-op, which is now Organically Grown Company (OGC). Now the only thing they sell through OGC is burdock root. So they “Had an evolutionary process where we started out with raspberries. Those were our first crop back in the 80’s. Then OGC started up and we started growing a lot of lettuce, cauliflower and celery for the co-op. We kept doing that but then we started doing medicinal herbs. Then around 1990 we started a CSA. And then the CSA grew, medicinal herbs started going doing, partly because of Eastern Europe’s competition...then medicinal herbs went out. We brought on a new partner and they started up farmer’s markets and since then CSA and farmer’s market has been predominant”. Now they are primarily a CSA and fresh market operation with a few wholesale crops.

In terms of motivation for serving the local market through food production he said, “Well we believe it’s what really needs to happen. We have a strong belief that it’s what we need to be doing. In the long run it’s the only real security we have is if we’re producing our own food”. “I think of the instability of marketing channels at a global level, I don’t see how anyone can think that’s very stable. Beyond that, environmentally, sustainability wise we think it’s the way to go. On a geo-political basis on an environmental basis it all makes sense. It doesn’t make economic sense all the time.”

The rewards of producing local food that he mentioned focused primarily on relationships with customers. He loves “feedback from people, how much they love it”. They have a series of different farm events out at the farm and he really enjoys having people out there and recognizing where their food is coming from. He also likes the contact and feedback from the “That’s My Farmer”⁷ event at the First Methodist

⁷ See Appendix A for more information

Church in Eugene. He also mentions that he considers farming a “right livelihood”. “We believe this is the right thing to be doing. It’s somewhat rare in our society to get paid and make a livelihood doing what you actually believe in and so that’s pretty phenomenal”.

Herman Hempke, Quality Acres/All About Quality Sod, Coburg, Oregon

I met up with Herman Hempke at his home in Coburg where he farms and runs Quality Acres and All About Quality Sod. I accompanied him on sod deliveries while we completed the interview.

Herman grew up on a small family farm in the Netherlands. He went to university and studied agricultural business management. He missed farming though and when he graduated he got back into it. He did so on leased land and was a separate business from his family. That’s when he started in sod. He moved to the U.S. a few years ago and started All About Quality Sod.

Herman now farms 160 acres about three miles north of Eugene in the town of Coburg. He started diversifying, especially into food crops, because he was worried that sod orders would decrease because of the bad economy. He has two employees and wanted to keep them busy so he started diversifying into other crops. He lives on the rented farm with his wife and their five children.

Sod is his primary business in terms of acreage and revenue. He also grows a variety of seed crops, mostly on contract, including a variety of vegetables and some grass seed. He has grown peppermint, experimented with soy for the bio-fuel market and most recently diversified into food crops. His food crops include carrots, particularly specialty varieties, eggs and some wheat and flour for the local market. He grows his food crops without the use of chemicals.

Growing organically is different for him. He finds it interesting to see what he can do by working with and understanding nature. “It’s a nice test for me personally to check my skills”. “If you are not in tune

with nature you get rewarded with bad crops. I think I understand nature to a certain degree, to be able to work with nature to grow organic crops.” So far in Willamette Valley Bean and Grain Project⁸ meetings others are having problems with weeds, but he hasn’t had this challenge so far. “That makes the difference I guess between the farmers, their skills and abilities to understand what they are doing with nature. I don’t want to say that I am a master there, but I think I understand what is going on and try to anticipate as much as possible. And so far I am rewarded with satisfying yields and results. It takes a lot of dedication of time and effort it’s not all easy, you have to stand behind it”.

He was motivated to start in local food production for a couple of reasons. First, as previously mentioned, he was worried about decreases in sod orders due to the bad economy. Also it is something that his kids can be involved in. It gives his kids a summer job and also provide income for their college funds. He enjoys knowing his customers, and communicating with them. Though his contact with food customers is limited as sod is his primary source of revenue and therefore demands most of his time.

Tom Hunton, Hunton Farm/Sure Crop Farm Service, Junction City, Oregon

I interviewed Tom Hunton in his office, which houses administration for his fertilizer and seed cleaning business as well as Hunton Farms. I came out a second day to tour a few of his fields.

Tom grew up farming. His parents raised him in Harrisburg, and moved the family to the farm that he currently runs in 1954. Tom went to school at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and graduated with a degree in animal science and a minor in crops. He always wanted to farm. After college he came back to the farm. He says he went away to see new things get an education elsewhere and then came back. His dad started the farm and seed cleaning business and Tom started the fertilizer

⁸ For more information see Appendix A

business. Tom's son now works for the family businesses as well. He says they've tried a lot of different crops over the years. He values the connection with the community and the land. "It something we enjoy doing, not for the money, but for the experience".

Hunton farms is located about ten miles north of Eugene, just north of the airport, on the southern side of Junction City. It is a 2700 acre farm and also houses a fertilizer and seed cleaning business. Tom's son is the third generation of Hunton's to farm this land, and currently works on the farm. They also have hired employees. Tom lives on the property with his wife, Sue.

In terms of business importance, fertilizer and seed cleaning are primary. In terms of crops the vast majority of the land is planted to grass seed. After that winter wheat for the export commodity market and meadow foam are significant crops. Soft winter wheat has a low gluten content and is not suitable for bread baking. Now they are also diversifying into regionally oriented food crops: hard red spring wheat, hard white spring wheat, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, black turtle beans, teff, and three different kinds of lentils. Growing and milling hard wheats, which are used for bread baking, is a new venture that started in 2009. The first year for the bean and lentil crops was 2010. They are expanding their seed cleaning capabilities to process the beans and lentils, which will also allow them to process their own clover seed (which they've outsourced in the past). They have also grown red, white, and crimson clover seeds, turnip seeds, pea seeds, barley, and coriander.

Tom delineates a two part motivation for producing food to serve the local market. First of all he addresses the economic reasons. He thinks the food business model is going to radically change, and he doesn't want to get run over. He says that they tend to be early adopters in their operations that they think there is an advantage to that. He thinks that their scale helps to bring a "critical mass" to the local food movement. He also states that he has a more liberal/environmental

mindset than his neighbors and he is comfortable working with people from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints. “It’s not economically satisfying yet, but I am confident that we are so fortunate in Western Oregon and Washington to have an educated consumer, who are willing to pay a premium for locally and sustainably produced food”. He also details “emotional or societal motivations”. “There’s a wonderful feeling and connection to be able to say that you’re feeding your neighbor, and to be a part of that”. He tells a nice story about John Pitney, who is an old classmate of Tom’s sister and a neighbor. John is the current minister of the First Methodist Church in downtown Eugene. Tom says he has always stayed in touch with John and likes his connectedness. They don’t go to that church but the Sunday after Easter John invited Tom and Sue to participate in the Earth Day service. John asked them to bring some wheat berries, flour, and bread for the service and to share with the children. “So my wife baked some beautiful hearth loaves from our wheat”. Along with John from Deck family farms and Wally from Wintergreen they came forward and talked about what they do on their farms. “Then they used Sue’s bread for the communion bread that day. You can’t make a better connection with community than that. It was really a moving experience”.

Tom illuminated an important twist on comparative advantage in agricultural production. “People tell me you can’t compete with Montana wheat. No I can’t, but the Montana wheat grower can’t compete with me for a market. They’re 1000 miles away or 800 miles away and don’t know these people...or do whatever it takes to be a part of this community like we can”. The way he sees it, they have the comparative advantage of relationship in the local grain market.

He feels the greatest reward of growing food for the local market is getting people out to the farm who are excited about what they are doing. This is a big contrast to his experience coming from the grass seed business, which is perceived as bad for the environment. He says that

growing locally oriented food crops make him feel “like a valuable community member”.

John Karlik, Sweetwater Farm, Creswell, Oregon

My interview with John Karlik was done in two sessions. The first interview began in his home on Sweetwater Farm and continued while he ran an errand to the neighbor’s to pick up horse manure. We toured some of his fields as well as his shop and greenhouses. The second part of the interview was completed over the phone.

John says that farming, “got into me”. His mom kept a garden that he participated in as a child. She grew up on a farm and he has fond memories of visiting that place as a child. By the age of 16 he knew that he wanted a rural lifestyle. He had a meandering educational path with a strong interest in the sciences such as biology and physics. He has also taken classes in psychology and urban planning. He settled in on a pre-med track but by his early twenties came to the conclusion that western medicine was not really about healing it was about treating symptoms. John thinks his dad influenced this conclusion as he was an early adopter of natural health foods. About ten years ago he came to the conclusion that health all starts with food and that nutrient dense food comes from good nutrient dense soil. Other points of interest along his path to becoming a farmer include being a founding member of University of Oregon’s urban farm in the early seventies. He also recalls a venture he had selling “pick your own” basil with the produce vendor at what has become Sundance Market in Eugene. He would tend the plants and people would pick their basil and pay for it. He eventually started just bagging up the basil and selling it through the same guy. Now he lives on the farm and focuses mainly on food with a variety of plants and animals.

Sweetwater Farm is located about 20 miles south west of Eugene, seven miles west of the town of Creswell. It is about 20 acres, including a

woodlot, greenhouses, fields, and is supplemented by some additional pastureland that is cooperatively managed with a neighbor and a hay lot that is owned by a neighbor and used for free. John lives on the farm with his wife Lynn. He bought the current property that he lives on and farms cooperatively with a group of friends in 1979. He now owns the land. He spends a lot of time, energy, and money on soil testing which he believes is important to growing truly healthy food. He is also passionate about educating new farmers and helping to develop solutions for farming secondary agricultural land. He also enjoys inventing labor saving devices. He showed me a mobile chicken pen that he has fabricated that is sort of like a hoop house on wheels that will keep out predators and is easy to move.

They grow year-round. He laughed when I asked him about his main products and said that he grows over 300 varieties of fruits and vegetables. They grow “most vegetables” from both direct seeding and transplant. They also raise mushrooms, pasture raised hens for eggs, meat chickens in mobile pens, pastured steer, tomatoes in greenhouses, eggplants, and they are starting an orchard with Asian pears and plums. Production has changed a lot over time. They started out growing house plants and bedding plants (ornamentals). The next evolution was bee-keeping and then gardening for personal use. Then came the pick and pay basil operation which became the bagged basil operation, that led to a thriving herbs business. He grew 30 varieties and sold through many local grocers such as Price Chopper (now Market of Choice) Winco, health food stores, and then also restaurants like the Excelsior. He states that he got tired of growing for restaurants and grocery stores. He wanted to grow food directly for people. In 2000 he started his own farmer’s market at 28th and Oak in Eugene. Shortly afterwards he started a CSA which is year round with between 180 and 200 members. His products are all organically grown but he isn’t certified. He believes

that the certification has been co-opted and robbed of its true value. He considers himself really beyond what organic has come to mean.

We had a lengthy discussion on organic standards and certification over time. “I can call it organic I just can’t label it organic. You can call it whatever you want. That’s freedom of speech they can’t really mess with that”. However he says that “The term organic means less than what I invest it with. I mean that you start with the NOP⁹ rules, that’s a good start, and you go from there”. “Organic agriculture internalizes all the costs where as chemical agriculture externalizes all the cost. We don’t internalize the costs of cancers...” for instance as a society. He has been involved in the organic movement for many years. “I think organic was a real dream early on, in the seventies it was a youthful concept...use compost, use this fair and clean production method, [it was] more egalitarian, more diffuse. When we came together in Ellensburg in ‘74 to talk about the NOP it attempted to codify that concept and make it something that could become law. A lot of things fell by the wayside, like there really isn’t any concept of human health codified into the law. It’s now you either have organic by neglect or you have substitution organic”.

He states that serving local people and providing them with health through a very high quality, nutrient dense diet is a great motivation and reward of producing for the local market. He thinks it is important to produce “...mineral dense food for people which quite frankly they aren’t getting unless they are paying attention”. He goes on to point out that, “Just because it is an organic farm doesn’t mean it is mineral dense production. It’s something very few people pay attention to. It incurs cost that you don’t need to incur to make a product that looks the same. We go beyond the surface level of value”.

⁹ National Organic Program rules outlined by USDA Organic Certification

Sarah Kleeger and Andrew Still, Open Oak Farm/Adaptive Seed, Crawford, Oregon

Sarah and Andrew volunteered to be interviewed together at their home on Open Oak Farm, near Crawford, Oregon. We completed the interview over coffee and then toured their seed operation Adaptive Seed, and some of the grain fields along with the barn and farmyard animal enclosures.

Neither of them come from farming backgrounds, though both of them had grandmothers involved in farming. Sarah is originally from urban Anaheim, California and hated all the cement. She went to University at Humboldt State in Northern California, majored in Political Science, Environmental Politics and Sustainable Society with a minor in appropriate technology. When she graduated in 2001 she was eager to leave theory behind and “do something real”. She saw so much about the world around her “promoting death” and she wanted to do something that “promoted life”. Andrew was a wildlife biology major originally and then switched to philosophy. “Philosophy told me I needed to find something real and go out and do it practically”. They met at Humboldt State and then also worked at Willow Creek Farms together which was a 20 acres operation in mixed vegetables. They also worked at another local organic farm together. They reflect that they learned a lot in their practical farming experience, though it wasn’t necessarily a lot of fun. They say that they learned “how to work”. They also learned how they would do things differently on their own place. “Here we’re working for ourselves so if something is painful we can design it differently and change things. And we have the flexibility to do so because our financial situation is not dictating absolute production necessarily”.

Open Oak is a 30 acre farm located about 30 miles north east of Eugene, ten miles east of Brownsville. Sarah and Andrew are in their first season of production on this land and are currently working about seven acres. The unusually rainy summer weather prevented them from

planting as much as they had hoped. They live on the farm which was purchased by another family about a year ago. That family leases Sarah and Andrew the land and has helped to capitalize start-up expenses for a share in the bean and grain CSA that they are founding.

Their intention is to pioneer a bean and grain CSA. In this first year, they were hoping for nine acres of beans and nine acres of mixed grains, but the weather and the soil made it impossible. Instead they have three quarters of an acre heirloom dry beans and about one acre each of rye, oats, barley, hard red spring wheat and winter wheat. They plan to have about 20 acres in production next year by bringing existing holdings into production. They also have an heirloom seed business and keep about 1 acre in seed production on the property. They spend a lot of time working their diverse seed crops including varieties of beans, wheats, rye and also vegetables. “Plan B” for this year is to do a winter vegetable CSA. They are planting an acre of kole crops and root crops supplemented with beans and grains. They also showed me garlic and shallot crops, ducks, chickens and a turkey (that they keep for eggs and fertility).

When discussing motivations for producing for the local market at the top of the list was “peak oil”. They mentioned that the people who own the property want to be prepared for “doom” scenarios. They go on to discuss trying to facilitate local eating and raising foundational crops like beans and grains. Sarah points out, “It’s a gaping hole in our local diet. We have really incredible soils here, why aren’t we growing things that are the foundation of our diets?” Andrew also points out the necessity of local, direct distribution to make their small scale staple production economically viable. “If you’re growing wheat and sell it as a commodity it’s a borderline loser. If you grow it here on organic soil, and mill it yourself and sell it to people you know you can get for \$4 per pound for it ...it’s a completely different kind of scale and it works”. They

find the local market provides them with an opportunity to be financially viable and do something personally fulfilling.

Andrew also details that they place a high priority on agricultural biodiversity. He mentions that there are only about four varieties of wheat commonly grown in the Willamette Valley, and that this year for instance many of them got rust really bad. Their wheat didn't. Though they aren't sure whether that is because they don't over fertilize (which they think is part of the problem) or because the different varieties that they grow are more rust resistant and more tolerant to trouble in general. In terms of future agricultural sustainability they think that, "We need more good seed that's adapted to organic growing on low input fields We need to get these varieties out and get people saving it...Growing local food for local markets using seeds from who knows where is not necessarily good. For the system to be sustainable the seed should be internalized...which will also improve resilience."

They think the rewards of producing food for the local market are, "Greater health for people because they are eating good quality staple foods" and also "a more resilient food system" (Andrew). This will ensure the availability of food that is, "Tasty, flexible, and adaptable to changes in availability of oil" (Andrew).

Annette Pershern, River Bend Farm, Pleasant Hill, Oregon

Annette agreed to be interviewed on her place, River Bend Farm. We completed the interview in front of the store and saw a few fields, though I did not tour the whole operation.

She was raised in Lorane, Oregon on a property that is now owned and operated by Hey Bales Farm. Though her folks weren't farmers they did raise strawberries and cattle. She notes her ethnic background and that her mom was raised in a predominantly Polish community in Illinois. She considers herself German- Polish. She feels that the love of agriculture amongst these people led her to highly value agriculture. She

participated actively in 4-H as a kid and also helped in the family garden. She thinks growing up in Oregon, a big agriculture state, and being exposed to a lot of local agriculture while she was young got her interested in farming. She says her mom used to drive her down River Road, which was mostly farms at the time. This left an impression on her of the richness of agricultural possibility here.

In college she was a biology major and she expressed a deep interest in things that grow. Her brother studied at Oregon State University and developed an interest in managing orchards.

When her daughters were quite young she lived in west Eugene. It was at that time that her brother approached her with the idea of an orchard and farm. She wanted a farming lifestyle and experience for her kids and was glad to move out of the city a bit.

River Bend Farm is a 50 acre farm situated about ten miles south of Eugene on the northern end of Pleasant Hill. It is run by Annette. Originally her brother, her parents and herself were all one third owners. She has since taken over the management of her brother's portion and owns the land equally with her parents. She lives on the farm together with her two daughters and her husband. Her parents also have a home on the property. Her two daughters work on the farm with her when they're not busy with school. She also has hired labor. She mentions that her husband works a full time off farm job which provides income and, importantly, health insurance.

They raise mainly cane berries which include raspberries, marionberries, and tayberries. They also grow strawberries, orchard crops like peaches, cherries, apples, and hazelnuts. Though she didn't mention it in the interview I also saw vegetable starts and some corn growing. There is a newer farm store on the property, which is open about half of the year. The store also houses a certified kitchen that turns out a variety of baked goods, jams, jellies, and soups. The store

also features nuts, and a few other local products like pork and some craft items.

When asked about her motivation for serving the local market she reminisced a bit about growing up in the sixties when sustainable food production was “a big thing”. She reflected on her childhood in the area and her impression of the agricultural potential here. She also stated that she felt the current globally networked food chain cannot provide people with “safe nutritious food, clean water, clean soil, and a clean environment for our kids”. She considers herself lucky to live in an area where it is possible to produce a wide variety of seasonal foods for local people. She is also concerned about global fuel supplies. She thinks that decreases in supplies and increases in price will make long distance (especially trans-hemispheric) shipping of foods impractical. In short, she feels the globalized system is “unsafe and insecure”.

Annette feels a great sense of pride producing for the local market. “I’m planting this seed and it’s growing and it comes to fruition, it will be tasty nutritious, what it should be. Compared to produce in the supermarket it will be superior in safety, tastiness and quality, it has not been shipped and stored”.

Shanna Suttner, Smith’s Blueberries, Springfield, Oregon

I interviewed Shanna Suttner in her home overlooking the Smith’s Blueberries operation. We also walked through both blueberry patches and the u-pick boxing and weighing area.

She grew up on this blueberry farm. Shanna does not consider herself from a farming background however, since it wasn’t her dad’s primary occupation. Her family gardened extensively and ran the blueberry business on the side. Her husband was from the Midwest and was from a farming family. She went to Oregon State University to study art, and then married her husband who studied agriculture and was from Illinois. They moved away, spending time mostly in Midwest and

then Singapore. Her parents continued doing the blueberries part time until Shanna and her husband bought the place a few years ago.

Smith's Blueberries is a one acre blueberry farm located just east of Eugene/Springfield. It is owned and operated by Shanna and her husband (who was not present for the interview). Her dad was a carpenter and like many in the neighborhood started a little side business to add to their income. Others in the area sold eggs, sharpened saws, etc. He put in blueberries in the late fifties and began selling in the early sixties as best she can remember. Her mother was a school teacher so she tended the blueberries and ran the picking in her summer breaks which Shanna says her mother didn't like at all. When Shanna's husband retired they moved back and bought the place from her folks, that was in about 2006.

Blueberries take about five years from planting to harvest. The bushes are mostly original from her fathers' plantings. They replace sick or dead bushes periodically but their production seems to be more or less indefinite. They have one patch that is about a half acre of "Olympias" which produce a smaller berry that have a more complex flavor. She considers this somewhat of a "heritage" variety as they have had a hard time finding replacement bushes of this type commercially, though they have been able to find a local farmer who is scaling back their blueberries and buy some off of her. The front patch is about one half acre also and is mixed with about two rows each of "Jerseys", "Dixies", "Herberts", "Covilles", "Ivanhoes", "Early Blues", "Blue Rays", "Dukes", and "Toros". They started out row by row and as they needed to replace bushes they'd get mixed in with different varieties.

When asked about her motivation for serving the local market she listed a few reasons. Practically speaking u-pick is the easiest, cheapest, and least time consuming method of selling. She also mentions that she enjoys seeing the same people every year. Her mother always knew everyone and their families and she finds she is learning the stories and

people as well. Many people come from as far away as Grants Pass, Coos Bay, Albany. Some have been coming for years from when there weren't very many blueberry places. "People have been coming for years", one customer told her that she had been picking there for 32 years. "We have people who came as children to pick who now bring their grandchildren". Also, Shanna and her husband wanted to move back here when they retired. The farm was already set up, the location was great, and it gives her husband a great outlet for his "tinkering and farm interests".

Gina Thomas, Stillpoint Farm, Veneta, Oregon

I interviewed Gina on a cool, rainy day, which was typical for the summer of 2010. We talked under the shelter of her farm-stand and also toured the nearby historic barn that they recently re-roofed. Customers stopped by as we completed the interview to buy eggs and tomatoes and we were interrupted numerous times by calls coming in.

Gina is not from a farming background. She grew up in Los Angeles and felt like it was too urban with too much asphalt. She always loved the earth and felt a deep connection with it, so when she had the chance she left Los Angeles and moved to San Luis Obispo and spent time outdoors. She mentions that she grew up in the seventies and has a degree in behavioral studies. She cites her extensive gardening experience in St. Helens, Oregon as a huge influence on her current occupation. She grew many things in her garden there and relished feeding family and friends. Gina and her partner were searching for a new place and wanted horse property when they came across their farm. She says that they hadn't really intended to farm but saw the property and they decided it was a great place to have a u-pick strawberry operation. She notes that it was an adjustment due to the change of scale from gardening. For instance she thinks it took about three years to learn how to grow the strawberries, which are an ever-bearing variety,

really well. In terms of their production she says that they are providing things that the community is telling them that it wants. Then, she devotes herself to growing those things really well.

We talked a lot about the feminization of agriculture and culture in general, shifting the human condition from being one of greed and competition, which is masculine to one of sharing and openness which is feminine. “When we live separate from the whole, we live separate from the whole, we are not whole...stop the judgement, the division, the competition and what happens when you stop is that you open, open to abundance, open to community, to support to the love that’s there.”

Stillpoint Farm is located about 12 miles west of Eugene, just two miles south of the town of Veneta. It is about five acres in active production, mostly strawberries. The farm is bordered by timber property and conveniently located on the way to a couple of wineries. Gina farms full-time and lives on the farm with her partner, who also helps with farm management part-time. They also host events on the farm, such as The Mother Earth Festival, which was held for the first time in summer of 2010. They are on their eighth year at Stillpoint.

Gina says that they specialize in “sweet” which aptly describes their strawberries and raspberries. They also grow basil, garlic, okra and melon. This year was a tough year because of the weather, especially the cool rainy summer. The okra and melon crops failed, so they put in extra basil. They also raise chickens for eggs and I tested some sweet yellow cherry tomatoes at their farm-stand as well.

They are “Certified Naturally Grown”. “Certified Naturally Grown is the quintessential alternative because it’s a coop of farmers across the United States that help each other certify. You don’t even have to be a certified naturally grown farmer because you’re given such a complete and specific [set of guidelines]. It’s like six pages to do and the farmer doesn’t go along with the certifier and pressure them. You just go along and walk the farm and take along the questionnaire which asks [the

certifier] you know do you see weeds, do you see no weeds, do things look healthy, do you see any chemicals stored away in the barn or whatever. It goes on and on and on. If you're moving away from the top down large organizational, which I think we are, then accepting things like one person who has your best interest at heart supporting someone else who has your best interest at heart, being Certified Naturally Grown is exactly what that is".

When asked about her motivation for farming she had a two part answer. "On the more esoteric side, and I've thought about this a lot, the acceptable way for me to share the love I have for others is growing the product, putting the love into the product and then someone coming and taking that product into their bodies." She thinks that she is "helping people get in touch with the land and listen to the land". "On the practical side, boy it makes sense. We grow a better quality product, people appreciate that we grow a better quality product, they are willing to pay a fair price for it. It gives people an alternative to the conglomerates which is huge because if you talk about this movement that people are waking up and thinking oh my god these conglomerates and what they've done...that's just awful, we have asthma and diabetes and fertility issues...there's something terribly wrong, but if there's not an alternative to it that what can we do? Nothing. So we offer an alternative to people who really do care". She relates a story about how they have two families that are customers who are vegan and never eat eggs. "But they buy eggs from us because they know that the girls are treated royally, the eggs aren't fertile...etc". She says that they feel comfortable eating their eggs because they trust that the chickens and eggs are being raised in a way that is compatible with their values, unlike the industrial alternative.

"The answer is not understanding it scientifically but understanding it from our heart understanding it because we know it is

the right thing that it fits, that's the motivation, that's the reward. Our job is to hold the light".

Rachel Weiner, Seasonal Local Organic (S.L.O.) Farm, Eugene, Oregon

I interviewed Rachel Weiner as she gathered strawberries and blackberries for CSA members of S.L.O. Farm. We walked through most of the fields and the orchards on the Seavey Loop site as she worked.

Rachel is not from a farming family. Her mother was from New York City, her dad from Chicago and she grew up in Washington D.C. She didn't garden as a child; in fact she didn't even have a yard. She says that she got into farming "by chance". She was drawn to farming following a stint gardening in a community living and education situation. She thinks a keen interest in quality, healthy food also influenced her path and mentions the books *Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Nourishing Traditions* as important contributors to her decision to go into farming. She has a strong interest in fruit trees which serves her well at S.L.O. since they specialize in orchard fruits. She met Tom and teamed up with him since he needed help establishing S.L.O. She feels that travelling was an important influence and that ultimately it has brought her to this place. She studied cultural anthropology so she is generally interested in people and how they live their lives. Seeing places where people have very little resources or access to resources gives her a great appreciation of what is possible here. "This place is such a playground, we have access to everything. We can do so much with so little." She thinks seeing how people live with very little makes her appreciate the simplicity of life, how easy and important it is to be happy. Though she points out it doesn't always add up financially to farm this way. "It's more than about the money, it's more about community and eating well and being healthy and living a positive life". "I feel that when I'm outside the US people understand that and live that way".

S.L.O. Farm is located off of Seavey Loop in Eugene, Oregon. Rachel farms this land with her partner Tom, who was not present during the interview. The land was at one time part of the farm “Me and Moore” and is still bordered by that farm. There are about 13 acres in mixed orchards and two acres in field production. Currently this land is leased. This land is all in active production. It is also shared with a seed producer who raises mostly flowers for seed. S.L.O. was in their fourth year of production at the time of the interview. The same farmers (Rachel and Tom) also lease an orchard in Cottage Grove, 20 miles south of Eugene. It is two acres of apple orchard. Rachel does not live on either farm site. Rachel mentions that she usually also works part time for the Eugene Library, which is helpful both for income and health insurance.

Their main product is apples, including 17 cultivars. They also grow asian pears, pears, plums, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, potatoes, garlic, beans, tomatoes, leeks, and cucumbers. They are looking to increase their potato production and utilize a tractor for cultivation and harvesting to increase the supply in the local market.

“Connection to local people and community” is Rachel’s motivation for serving the local food market. “Our local community is big enough in local and healthy foods, why go farther away?” She does note that they could get a higher price by going to Bend or Portland but “The ideal is to get rid of everything locally. It is easier to set up market here than to drive to Portland or Bend”. Staying local also helps to keep their investment in vehicles and time lower. Rachel cites a sense of pride and sense of community as the greatest rewards of producing food for the local market. She also mentions peak oil and feels a sense of urgency to preserve local knowledge and build relationships in the local food system. She thinks this will help to cushion the blow when it becomes impractical to ship food long distances.

Richard Wilen, Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm, Yoncalla, Oregon

Richard is the only farmer that I did not interview on farm. Instead, we met in town at my home on his way back to the farm after making deliveries. He owns and operates Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm near Yoncalla, Oregon.

Richard is a first generation farmer and has been in agriculture for over 30 years. He got into farming as part of the “back to the land movement” in the seventies. He enjoys that farming is a “jack of all trades” occupation which has allowed him to try and learn many different skills. He mentions a love for growing things and states that watching things grow is “kind of a miracle”. He also has a doctorate degree in archaeology, and thinks that the best form of human habitation can be found in tightly knit agrarian societies. In addition to all these things he also mentions that he considers his occupation a “right livelihood” in the Buddhist sense.

Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm and Nursery is located about 45 miles south west of Eugene. Richard and his family own the 83 acre farm, of which only a few acres are in active production including several greenhouses. He says that though they are small they are very intensive and take great advantage of the space and resources they do have. They purchased the farm about 19 years ago. Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm grows produce for the local market, which they have done for years. They also have a burgeoning nursery business specializing in organic vegetable starts.

They raise a wide variety of truck garden produce almost exclusively for direct sale. Richard has participated in the Lane County Farmers Market and also a smaller local market in the community of Drain, which is near to the farm. He said that he prefers to focus on direct marketing, especially for the vegetables. This allows him to focus on quality vs. quantity since wholesale is quantity driven. He sells the nursery starts both directly and through wholesale accounts. Over time

the nursery part of the business has grown a lot. Richard enjoys this because it is “farming in miniature” and he also feels it is less competitive than the produce market. He mentions that the produce business can be a “real grind” and that the nursery business has provided a nice alternative opportunity. Even though the farmers markets are very labor intensive he mentions how important they are in social ways, “If you were a government entity you couldn’t spend dollars any more effectively to build community than in a farmers market...the social discourse that goes on down there is so important and necessary to our society...”.

When asked about his motivations for serving the local market Richard states that “I just believe in the local food system”. He mentions that every mile food is transported makes it less ecologically viable and also poses a risk to domestic food security. He also brings up the point that this is an abundant area, what the pioneers called “the land of milk and honey”. Because of this access to high quality land, water and a sympathetic consumer base he thinks the local area is in a position to have a strong local food economy. He thinks that this area is an important test case for local food because if it can’t be done here it will be very difficult anywhere. Ultimately he concludes that, “We should have more people living and working on farms, more people involved with the food network, and keep it closer so that it all sort of feeds together. This is my home these are my community, neighbors. It’s important to be part of a system and a process”.

CHAPTER VII

INTERVIEW DETAILS AND COMPARISON

Distribution Methods

Since I targeted producers who specifically advertise food crops for the local market it is not surprising that all of the interview participants have at least one direct market distribution method. However, some are also employing other distribution methods such as local online consolidators like Eugene Local Foods and mixing in wholesale accounts. The following is a chart of the distribution methods that these 11 producers described during the course of our interviews. Please note that though some of these farms produce agricultural products other than local food, these distribution methods are focused only on the local food crops. These answers were provided in response to the question: What distribution methods have you historically used?

Producers detailed current distribution practices and also gave me a brief history of other methods that they have tried or considered over the years. Figure 5 on page 59 represents current distribution.

Direct marketing through CSA's and farmers' markets are important for the farmers in this study, which is not surprising considering they have a local food focus. It is clear however that the Lane County Farmer's Market is not meeting all local producers' needs, especially less established growers with a small diversity of products and those who are newer to the farmer's market scene. Smaller markets are emerging both around town and in surrounding communities. The long term viability of these smaller markets is still unclear, but many of these producers are participating in them none the less. It is interesting to note five of these 11 producers are utilizing online tools such as Eugene Local Foods. Farmers just beginning to dabble in local food like Herman

Hempke and Sharon Blick both cite the ease of use and flexibility of Eugene Local Foods. It is also important to point out the level of local wholesale business that these farmers are doing. I think that this is indicative of the relatively large number of thriving local businesses that are providing local farms with an outlet for their products. U-pick operations and on site farm-stands encourage interaction between the producers and their customers at the farm which adds another layer of connection between consumers and their food, five farms are encouraging this kind of business. Every farm uses more than one distribution channel for their local food crops. Overall, every farm in this sample has at least one face to face distribution method even if they make use of other more removed outlets as well. This puts them squarely outside of mainstream industrial agrifood in terms of distribution.

To provide comparison, direct sales accounts for only .7% of all agricultural sales in the U.S. annually. However of this .7%, 97% is sold directly by small farms (USDA, 2007).

Figure 5. Distribution Methods

	CSA	Lane County Farmers Market	Other Local Farmers Market	Other Distant Farmers Market	Internet Sales Direct and Other*	U-pick	Farmstand	Wholesale Local	Wholesale Distant
Hayhurst		x	x					x	
Hunton		x**						x	
Living Earth					x		x		
Open Oak	x		x		x				
Quality Acres					x		x		
Stillpoint			x			x	x	x	
Riverbend	x	x	x		x	x	x		
Smith's Blueberries						x			
S.L.O.	x	x	x		x			x	
Wintergreen	x		x	x				x	x
Totals	4	4	6	1	5	3	4	5	1

* Eugene Local Foods
 ** holiday market

Motivations

The following two sections will specifically highlight and compare answers to these two questions that I asked during the course of my interviews: What is your motivation for serving the local market/family needs through food production? And also, what is the greatest reward of producing for the local market?

Answers to these questions illuminate key differences between these producers growing food for local consumption and those involved in more mainstream industrial agriculture. These answers also emphasize the pivotal role that relationships play in production that is geared for local eaters as opposed to “local production for distant consumers” (Fonte, 2006).

I questioned the producers on their motivations to produce food for the local market. Please note that some of these producers produce both food for the local market and a variety of other agricultural products such as sod and seed which have both local and global markets. The producers were instructed to focus their answers to these questions on the local food production aspects of their businesses.

The motivations fall roughly into six categories: economic, community, environmental/ecological, food/homeland security, stewarding local gifts, and lifestyle.

These categories demonstrate motivations that are self-rewarding in nature and also those that concern things beyond direct personal benefit. As I will detail below, it is important to note that economic motivations are only part of the picture.

Economic

Eight of the 11 producers explicitly cite economic motivations for local food production. There were a number underlying economic benefits that these producers listed.

Shanna from Smith's Blueberries for instance focused on the fact that for her small 1 acre blueberry patch u-pick is the easiest harvesting and marketing method. She has looked into other outlets for her blueberries but has really only considered other local options such as the nearby Springfield farmer's market. She determined however that the cost and logistics were prohibitive. Picking, boxing, and spending the day at the market didn't seem like a good investment of resources when she can sell the blueberries for free at her place and reliably dispose of the entire harvest that way. The cost and energy required to find a non-local buyer is nonsensical in this case. So the small scale of her operation and the fact that they can sell their entire harvest easily through a local channel without paying for labor, transport or booth fees provide an economic incentive to sell this way. Similarly, Rachel from S.L.O. farm lists the economic benefits of selling to the Eugene market as opposed to a more distant clientele. She said that it keeps their investment in time and vehicles lower to sell in Eugene versus driving to a more distant market like Portland.

For Sarah and Andrew at Open Oak Farm they identify the economics of the local market as key to their financial success and also go a step further to link the higher margins to their ability to pursue a meaningful livelihood that would otherwise be impossible. Sarah said, "I don't understand what motivates people in conventional farming or how they make it financially feasible". Alternatively growing for local markets gives them the opportunity to be financially viable and do something personally fulfilling. "If you're growing wheat and selling it as a commodity it's a borderline loser, if you grow it here on organic soil, and mill it yourself and sell it to people you know you can get \$4 per pound for it ...it's a completely different kind of scale and it works" (Andrew). What Andrew identified are key components of the economic advantages to producers of selling in a local market. The producer has the opportunity to eliminate many middlemen, processors, brokers, etc. and

therefore capture a higher margin for their product. In addition the local producer can differentiate themselves from the more homogenous products and conventionally grown products and therefore command a higher price by capitalizing on quality.

This is an important point in the category of economic motivation; the ability to capitalize on quality through the local market. Gina from Stillpoint illustrated it this way: “On the practical side, boy it makes sense. We grow a better quality product, people appreciate that we grow a better quality product, and they are willing to pay a fair price for it”. The insinuation is that a better educated and connected local consumer is going to be more likely to pay a fair (usually higher than average) price for quality products. Tom Hunton supports this idea with his comment in regards to growing locally oriented staple crops that “It’s not economically satisfying yet, but I am confident [that it will be]. We are so fortunate in Western Oregon and Washington to have an educated consumer, who is willing to pay a premium for locally and sustainably produced food”. Andrew’s earlier comment also includes an element of processing, which adds value that is not ordinarily captured by the producer in an industrialized system. Additionally Andrew hints at what Tom Hunton referred to as the “comparative advantage of relationship”. These are all key elements that make growing at a smaller scale for a local market more economically appealing for producers. Selling a high quality, finished product, grown on organic soil, to people with whom they have relationships allows producers to command a higher price and also retain more margin. Though not all of the farmers interviewed explicitly mentioned these factors, they certainly provide economic viability to small scale production that would otherwise be impossible.

Herman Hempke, whose primary business is sod decided to diversify his production into local food crops. He started diversifying, especially into food crops, because he was worried that sod orders would decrease due to the economic downturn and he has two employees that

he wanted to keep busy. He also mentioned that “It is something that the kids can be involved in.” It gives his kids a summer job and also provides income for their college funds. Local food in this case was seen as a way to diversify business holdings and capture different market segments. Herman also perceived local food as a more stable market, likely to have more consistent demands than an ornamental product like sod. He is motivated to diversify his business and seek out new market opportunities to keep his employees busy and also support his family. It is worth noting that he is the sole wage earner for his large family and that as such he must have a close eye on the bottom line. This type of economic decision making is closely in line with neoclassical values. In fact, Herman’s interview is the most closely in line with conventional agribusiness decision making. This is not surprising given his agricultural education, number of years in farming, and status as primary breadwinner. Even his motivation to produce his food crops organically are tightly connected to profit maximization and market demand. He believes that people who purchase local food are likely to expect that it be grown organically. He therefore chooses to manage his food crops without chemicals, in contrast to his other products. I think that Herman’s responses add useful diversity to the sample. I think that his move into local food is based on perceived market demand and opportunity which indicates he is being “pulled” through the market. This makes him distinct from the other producers who are more closely following a market “push” strategy.

Community/Society

Engagement in community is another motivating factor for producing local food. Five of the 11 producers specifically mention the importance of community in their motivation for serving the local food market.

Tom Hunton, who also produces commodity crops for the global market, reflected upon growing food for the local market in this way, “There’s a wonderful feeling and connection to be able to say that you’re feeding your neighbor, and to be a part of that.” As detailed in his profile, he was deeply moved by the experience of participating in Earth Day communion at a local congregation and commented on what a profound sense of community he experienced. He cited this sense of community as a main motivating factor in changing his production towards locally oriented bean and grain production. He contrasted this with his experience as a grass seed farmer, which left him feeling that he was not a valuable community member. Rachel from S.L.O. Farm also specifically mentioned “Connection to local people and community” as motivation for producing locally oriented food.

For Gina from Stillpoint farms producing food for the local market is a way to nurture people and the community. “On the more esoteric side, and I’ve thought about this a lot, the acceptable way for me to share the love I have for others is growing the product, putting the love into the product and then someone coming and taking that product into their bodies.” This is a powerful statement demonstrating feelings of deep connection to others through the act of locally oriented food production and distribution. This physical, visceral connection to community through food is also connected to other comments made by Gina in reference to health and Annette Perhern’s motivation to provide food for the local market that is healthful and wholesome. Annette referenced the importance of growing nutritious produce for local families and children. Gina also elaborates that local food production provides a healthy food alternative to large industrial agrifood producers, “Which is huge because if you talk about this movement that people are waking up and thinking oh my god these conglomerates and what they’ve done...that’s just awful, we have asthma and diabetes and fertility issues...there’s something terribly wrong”. Though health could be

broken out as its own section I have chosen to classify it as an extension of community motivation. I think this is in line with the intent of these responses.

For Richard Wilen, his belief in the importance of agriculture on community life comes from a background in archaeology. “I’ve studied the history of agriculture and humans so to me agrarian societies that are really strongly knitted is the best form of human habitation. I really feel that we’ve strayed so far from that so this is re-building that. We should have more people living and working on farms, more people involved with the food network, and keep it closer so that it all sort of feeds together. This is my home these are my community, neighbors. It’s important to be part of a system and a process.” This reference to previous experience in a different field was common in the interviews. Most of these farmers did not come from agricultural backgrounds or study agriculture at university. It is interesting to see how their diversity of experiences informs their chosen agricultural livelihoods.

Environmental/Ecological

Environmental motivations were wide ranging in this sample of producers. It is worth mentioning that three producers came from environmental science backgrounds and explicitly produce food for the local market due to their conclusions about what an environmentally sustainable system looks like.

There is the benefit of reducing food miles, as expressed by Richard Wilen of Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm, “I just believe in the local food system. I believe every mile you transport stuff makes it less ecologically viable”. Annette Pershern, of River Bend, agrees with limiting miles but also goes beyond food miles and states that the current global food chain cannot provide people with “safe nutritious food, clean soil, clean water or a clean environment for our children”. In a general way, Jack Gray from Wintergreen Farm agrees, “environmentally,

sustainability wise we think [producing food for the local market] is the way to go”.

Another way that this set of producers diverges from mainstream industrial agriculture is land use decisions. When farmers are competing on the national or global commodity markets the margins are often very thin. This encourages farmers to bring every inch of land that they can into active agricultural production to increase total yield, even if that land has environmentally valuable alternative uses. On the other hand, serving the local market allows these farmers to capture more profit from food sales than mainstream alternatives. This allows them to farm less land in a more considerate way. It also allows them to leave tracts of land in non-agriculturally active production, such as native riparian ecosystems. Two farmers specifically mention such projects that they have undertaken with their local watershed councils to restore and maintain riparian areas on their land.

Another key component of environmental concern was agricultural biodiversity preservation, which has implications for food system durability and food security as well. Agricultural biodiversity was both explicitly and implicitly addressed throughout the interviews. Though there were producers who specialized in one or two crops, for the most part producers were growing a wide variety of products, more so than would be expected from large scale, conventional agriculture. For instance when I questioned John Karlik from Sweetwater Farm about his main products he chuckled and replied that he grew over 300 varieties of fruits, vegetable, fungi and also raised chickens for meat and eggs and cattle for meat. Even when one crop was the main focus on a particular farm, the specific variety or varieties chosen are not always the most common commercially available, high yielding varieties. For instance Shanna Suttner of Smith’s blueberries related that as they have needed to replace older “Olympia” variety blueberry bushes they have had difficulty in finding a supplier. They have found a solution in

transplanting bushes from another operation that is down-sizing as this variety is not commonly commercially available any longer. The crops and varieties chosen by these local producers are not chosen only for yield. They are chosen for a more diverse range of qualities: seasonality (early/late producers extend the season and fetch high prices), drought resistance, flavor, color, ability to process into value added products, even explicitly to preserve a rare variety for the sake of its survival. As is demonstrated by the work at Open Oak farm. Open Oak farm's founding farmers Sarah and Andrew have a particular focus in preserving agricultural biodiversity and also the benefits of saving seed. They also run the company Adaptive Seed. They have traveled extensively to both collect heirloom seeds and also to give workshops on seed saving and the urgency of preserving these techniques. In terms of future agricultural sustainability they think that, "We need more good seed that's adapted to organic growing on low input fields We need to get these varieties out and get people saving it...Growing local food for local markets using seeds from who knows where is not necessarily good. For the system to be sustainable the seed should be internalized...which will also improve resilience" (Andrew). He goes on to state, "My biggest reason for doing what we're doing is coming from the seed side. I got into beans and grains early on because I started finding these cool seeds of grain and beans varieties that no one else was growing. And when I grew it, it grew really well" He stated that there are only about four varieties of wheat in the valley and this year for instance many of them got rust really bad. Their wheat didn't. They think that their different varieties are likely more rust resistance and more tolerant to trouble in general.

There are also a wide variety of crops that are grown because of the diversity of desire within the local market, which also leads to agricultural biodiversity preservation. Tom Hunton, from Hunton Farms provided commentary on this. "People tell me you can't compete with Montana wheat. No I can't but the Montana wheat grower can't compete

with me for a market. They're 1000 miles away or 800 miles away and don't know these people...or have the ability to do whatever it takes to be a part of this community like we can". For them diversifying into hard red and white winter wheats and a variety of legumes is based on local demand for staple foods though it is at this point of questionable economic value. This is an interesting reworking of the concept of comparative advantage. Hunton Farm does not have the traditional economically defined comparative advantage in hard wheat production (high yields for the lowest cost). The farm does, however, have the comparative advantage in relationship to the local community, which cannot be easily replicated by growers farther away who are not embedded in the community.

Those growing for CSA's also have a high incentive due to consumer demands to produce a wide variety of products. Because people want to eat a wide diversity of foods, those who participate in a CSA as an integral part of their food consumption will be most content with a wide variety of products. This is similar to gardening in a way. Home gardens tend to grow a small amount of many things rather than a large amount of only one item, even if some of the crops are only marginally productive. Of the 11 farms, four use the CSA model of food box subscriptions to distribute at least some of their products. They vary in membership from about 12 families to over 200.

Homeland Security/Food Security

Richard Wilen succinctly describes security in the local system this way, "I believe [the local food system] is the ultimate form of homeland security. Getting food from overseas to me is a real bad idea, the less capacity we have at home sets us up for problems in the future. Part of it is just maintaining capacity, be it agricultural or manufacturing. If we lose this capacity it will be hard to ramp it up if we ever needed it." This concept of maintaining capacity to remedy vulnerability is echoed in

several other interviews as well. Rachel Weiner expressed a sense of urgency to preserve agricultural knowledge, which will provide options and alternatives if the current system of food distribution fails. Andrew and Sarah from Open Oak also see maintaining diverse, heirloom seeds as a maintenance of capacity. Annette Pershern more generally referred to the globalized food system being “unsafe and insecure”. While Jack from Wintergreen put it this way, “Well we believe it’s what really needs to happen. We have a strong belief that it’s what we need to be doing. In the long run it’s the only real security we have is if we’re producing our own food.” “I think of the instability of marketing channels at a global level, I don’t see how anyone can think that’s very stable”. Tom Hunton also refers to elements of food security by saying about his local food production, “on a geo-political basis on an environmental basis it all makes sense. It doesn’t make economic sense all the time”.

My sense is that many of these producers are absorbing economic costs in the short term due to a feelings of long term insecurity in the globally oriented industrial agrifood system.

The local food system provides an option for producers who want to avoid or diversify away from total reliance on the mainstream industrial agrifood system. It provides an outlet for their products that allows them to fetch a high enough price to be financially sustainable. From the consumer side, it provides the local community with the ability to opt-out of industrial agrifood as well. As Gina Thomas put it "If there’s not an alternative to it that what can we do? Nothing”. Related to food security is another common interview response, peak oil.

“Peak oil” was a common phrase in the interviews. It could be easily categorized as either an environmental motivation or a food security motivation. I chose to categorize it mainly as a food security issue since I think this is what most producers indicated was their primary concern. However I do detail some environmental concerns in this section as well. It was listed by several farmers as a reason they

got into farming for the local market. Since all but two of the producers I interviewed are first generation farmers, it was often cited as the primary reason they began farming. I'm not sure if it is significant, but I do notice that four of the farms represented were founded in proximity to the oil crisis of the late seventies, and another three producers shifted focus to more local foods in proximity to the oil and food crisis of this past decade. I think it is possible that the vulnerability of our current food system becomes obvious, and seeking alternatives becomes more urgent, when the system is stressed by high oil prices.

For instance Annette Pershern cited the trouble with shipping food long distances and noted that this type of transportation would become increasingly costly and unreliable as fuel prices rise. She thinks that in the future the price of fuel will go up and the availability will go down, that long distance shipping across hemispheres (she specifically mentioned New Zealand and Chile) will not be cost effective. She is motivated to produce for the local market in part to eliminate the need to ship food long distances, by producing a variety of locally demanded products that would require less overall fuel and also provide a foundation for a future system that is less fuel dependent. Sarah Kleeger and Andrew Still, indicated explicitly that one of their motivations in farming is to create a more "durable" localized food system that can withstand shocks in oil supply and prices and also challenges of climate, disease and pests. In their case the owners of the land that they rent for their farm were motivated to purchase the land and rent specifically to people who would use it to grow local staples because of their apprehensions about peak oil and the shocks it could cause to food supplies.

Many producers stated that they feel what they are doing is important for a future with less availability of oil, because localized production will: limit reliance on long distance transport, limit reliance

on petro-chemicals, increase regional food independence, and act as a kind of national security.

Stewarding Local Gifts

This was a motivation that I hadn't anticipated in any way. Four producers explicitly reflected upon the unique situation in this area and indicated a sense of responsibility for maintaining both human and natural resources.

“We live in an abundant area, the pioneers called it the land of milk and honey so it is a shame to see an area like this not utilized to the fullest extent. We are in the position to have a strong local food network. And we could do it if we put our mind to it. Eugene is surrounded by really high quality land and water...If it can't be done in a place like this then it's going to be really hard to do it anywhere: because people are really sympathetic to buying it, to producing it, and have the resources. To me it is an important test case.” (Richard, Hayhurst Valley). Sarah Kleeger from Open Oak farm put it this way, "We have really incredible soils here, why aren't we growing things that are the foundation of our diets?"

Annette Pershern grew up in the area and has seen what Lane County can produce and how rich it is in agricultural potential. She thinks we are lucky that here we can produce a wide variety of seasonal food for local people.

Lifestyle

Lifestyle was cited as a major motivating factor amongst these producers, which is not surprising given that it is often listed amongst farmers generally. Amongst my sample there were several lifestyle factors that were mentioned by producers.

In the case of Smith's Blueberries they wanted to move back to the area when they retired. They chose to purchase her family's blueberry

operation because it was already set up, the location was great, and it gave Mr. Suttner a great outlet for his "tinkering and farm interests".

Others like Jack Gray and Herman Hempke mentioned the desire to work outside. Richard Wilen also indicated the appeal of an occupation that allowed him to be a "jack of all trades" as opposed to a specialist in any one thing.

Another lifestyle factor was the desire for a rural, farming upbringing for the producers' children. Herman Hempke and Annette Pershern specifically mention the motivation to farm because of family lifestyle considerations particularly the value of raising children in a rural environment with opportunities to participate in farming.

In summary, agriculture offers an opportunity to work outside, learn a wide variety of skills, and rely on one's own labor in a more direct way than many other lines of work. It also provides a rural experience for raising children, which has both social and environmental benefits.

Rewards

The following are a few categories of rewards or benefits that the producers I interviewed listed. It was a broad question, "What are the greatest rewards of producing for the local market?" I consider this slightly different than motivation, though it certainly was linked in some responses.

Not one producer listed profit or monetary gain as a reward of producing for the local market. In fact some producers expressed that they would be better paid in other lines of work. However, from my own observation as I discussed above, the scale of these farms preclude them from being able to compete well in a broader food market so the local market is really the only financially viable choice.

Relationship with Customers, Sense of Community

This was by far the most common response. Every producer indicated connection with their customers as a reward in producing for the local vs. the global market. This connection was translated into community by many in their responses to this question. The answer from Tom Hunton is a useful example since he has experience growing for global commodity markets and local food markets. He has grown mainly grass seed up until recently and he compared the experience being a grass seed farmer with his experience growing locally marketed beans and grains. He stated that he loved having people come out the farm, who were excited about what they were doing. He said that he now feels like “a valuable community member”, which is in contrast to the sentiments he perceived as a grass seed grower. Herman Hempke also enjoys the direct customer contact. He said that the greatest reward of producing local food was similar to that for his sod business, “Knowing what the customer wants, what’s on their mind, what’s important to them”.

Jack Gray also specifically mentioned how much he enjoyed people coming out and visiting the farm, being enthusiastic about what he is doing, and communicating with customers directly. Three producers, including Jack, also brought up the local “That’s My Farmer” event sponsored by the First Methodist Church in downtown Eugene. They enjoyed the positive feedback, support, and sense of community that the event fostered.

Sense of Pride

This response was listed by two producers as a reward. Annette Pershern from River Bend Farms put it this way, “I’m planting this seed and it will grow and come to fruition. It will be tasty nutritious, what is should be”. She is proud that compared to supermarket produce her

food is superior in taste, quality and safety. Rachel Weiner also put “sense of pride” in her work at the top of her list of rewards.

Spiritual Satisfaction

Three farmers stated spiritual rewards of producing food for the local market and one more alluded to spirituality indirectly. Gina Thomas said this, “Knowing that I’m following my truth and that I’m offering something that is so important to the survival of the planet and the humans and that I can be part of the support for those who are ready and are listening to that little voice inside...being able to connect. When you’re being asked to go and find that; be that truth that bliss, that wholeness, that love, come here to find that”. She goes on to say, “The answer is not understanding it scientifically but understanding it from our heart understanding it because we know it is the right thing that it fits, that’s the motivation, that’s the reward”.

Both Jack Gray and Richard Wilen refer to the pleasure of being able to pursue a “right livelihood”. Jack put it this way, “There’s the whole right livelihood thing. We believe this is the right thing to be doing. It’s somewhat rare in our society to get paid and make a livelihood doing what you actually believe in and so that’s pretty phenomenal”

Security in a Changing World

Though he was the only producer to specifically list it as a reward, I think Andrew Still’s comments on this topic mesh well with the motivations that other producers listed. He stated that a great reward of producing food for the local market was growing something that is, “Tasty, flexible, and adaptable to changes in availability of oil”. This concept of food system durability and creating the potential for future alternatives to industrial agrifood is a concern to many of these

producers, as is evidenced by their response both in terms of motivation and in Andrew's case, also reward.

Health for Customers

Andrew Still and John Karlik said that they are rewarded by the knowledge that their food is improving people's health. John put it this way, "Knowing that I'm serving people and to help increase the general health of the general population. Providing mineral dense food for people which quite frankly they aren't getting unless they are paying attention. Just because it is an organic farm doesn't mean it is mineral dense production. It's something very few people pay attention to. It incurs cost that you don't need to incur to make a product that looks the same. We go beyond the surface level of value".

This last statement cuts to the core issue demonstrated by the diverse list of motivations and rewards given by these producers. These producers generally are concerned with going beyond, "the surface level of value" in both physical and philosophical sense. They may all produce food that has some superficially similar characteristics to industrial agrifood. At a certain level an egg is an egg. However they would really consider the value of their products greater than the mere caloric utility, some would probably even argue that a locally, sustainably produced egg is actually a different product than an industrially produced egg even if they look similar from the outside. These farmers demonstrate that they think their foods are superior in nutrition and safety. They also demonstrate that they are embedding their foods with values such as positive community relationships, and greater security in a world with many uncertainties. The spiritual rewards mentioned go even one step beyond that to the spiritual value of producing locally oriented sustainable food, both for the producer and their partnering consumer.

Challenges

The challenges that these farmers face demonstrate the dominance of the mainstream agrifood system. Price sensitivity and perceptions of value was the most commonly listed challenge amongst these producers. The mainstream system encourages producers and consumers to focus on quantity over quality. Many of these farmers specifically mention their focus on small scale, quality oriented production, which for some is a transition from practices that they have used in the past. The mainstream system does not reward quality with a sufficiently high price to justify the costs to the producer. Consumers have been trained to “search for ten cent a pound potatoes” as Andrew Still put it; to maximize personal or familial utility by purchasing the largest quantity of calories for the lowest price. They have been purposefully distanced from the negative social and environmental consequences of their cheap purchases and indoctrinated into a system that glorifies inexpensive food above other qualities. The local consumers that these farmers describe are working against the mainstream system and choosing to voluntarily forgo their “right” to purchase cheap food. According to these farmers though some of their customers are sufficiently wealthy to shop irrespective of price, they think that most of their customers give up their “right” to purchase cheaper food at the cost of other expenditures. In other words they are sacrificing purchasing power in other areas of their lives to dedicate a larger percentage of their income to food purchases.

Customer Descriptions

This brings me to the way these producers described their customers. I asked two questions on this topic: What do you perceive is your greatest marketable attribute to your customers? and Describe your average customer.

This survey of customers is by no means all encompassing. However I think that since these producers do have fairly close contact

with many of their customers that their observations are valuable. There are notable trends across the producers' answers that are illuminating and provide useful context for the local food system in this area.

Five producers indicated specifically that they have a pretty diverse customer base and were careful point out that they were broadly generalizing. Two also said that they don't think that they capture this kind of market information in a meaningful or systematic way and therefore their observations would be anecdotal.

Demographics

Five producers used age to describe their average customers. The most frequent age range listed were people in their thirties. However retirees were also mentioned. As John Karlik from Sweetwater Farm put it his customers are often, "people with families that want to serve their kids real food and old people that want to live forever".

Seven producers indicate that many of their customers have children and think that having a young family motivates them to buy local food. This would mesh well with the thirty-something age group.

Five producers specifically address income amongst their customers. Of these five, they think that middle and upper middle income people are a large portion of their customer base. However three specifically mention that they think some of their customers do not have high incomes, but instead choose to purposefully devote a large portion of their income to food. For instance Sharon Blick from Living Earth Farm said this, "They are not all high income, some of them are just really committed to sustainability and health and are willing to pay the price even though it is a big part of their income". Tom Hunton addresses the income amongst his customers this way, "Not that they shop irrespective of cost but that they have a different value equation that they are willing to support local agriculture to know where their food is coming from and that they are using it to make a social statement".

There were also three producers who specifically mention that some of their customers utilize programs like WIC or other assistance aimed at low income people.

Of the five producers that mention education to describe their customers, all think that their customers are highly educated.

Taking all of this together, these producers generally describe their local food customers as often young with families or older and retired, of middle income, and higher than average educational achievement. This meshes well with the values listed below that the producers think are important to their customer base.

Motivations and Concerns

There were a few health and safety concerns listed including issues of food safety, the nutritive quality of food and also a desire to purchase foods grown without chemicals. Four producers indicated that safe food was a main priority amongst their customers. It is worth mentioning that during the course of my interview schedule there was a major nation-wide egg recall and several producers who were interviewed alluded to customer desires for safer and more traceable food in response to this crisis. Six producers think that their customers are concerned with the healthfulness of food and perceive local food as more healthy than industrial agrifood. This includes desires for whole, fresh foods and also nutrient dense foods. John Karlik says, “Some people rave about the health effects [saying], ‘your food has healed my family’”. Four producers mentioned that they think their customers value food produced without the use of chemicals.

Seven producers think that flavor and quality of food are important to their customers. As Shanna Suttner put it, “They always mention the flavor and that the patch is well taken care of and that it is easy to pick. They keep coming back because they ‘like our berries’”. Or as Rachel

Weiner put it, their customers at S.L.O. Farm, “Want to eat good food and recognize what good food is”.

Three producers specifically mention the value of a farm experience for their customers. It is important to note that not all of the producers have operations that ordinarily invite customers to their farms, but most of them do have special events or encourage occasional farm tours. Four producers think that connection to food and knowing where the food is coming from is important to their customers. Like Gina Thomas who thinks that for her customers it’s not just about getting food but also good for the farm experiences of being outdoors, playing with the animals and harvesting themselves. Shanna Suttner specifically mentions that in some cases it is cheaper to buy blueberries in the store however some customers value the experience of picking the berries themselves.

Four producers identify relationship to the farmer as an important value to their customers. Part of this relationship is built upon trust. Trust was mentioned by three producers as important to their customer base. Richard Wilen illustrated the importance of these trust based relationships with a story about his production methods and certification history, “People trust my food, there was a small period that I wasn’t certified organic and it didn’t make a difference. I was organic I just wasn’t certified, but they trusted me. Who do you trust more, do you trust me or do you trust the USDA. You’ve been buying from me for 25 years”. Just to be clear, Richard renewed his organic certification eventually and was certified organic at the time of interview. However this story demonstrates the value of a trust relationship that can at least supplement if not supplant certifications.

Five producers think that their customers highly value participating in a localized economy. They list local stores that they think their customers probably also shop at. They also mention that food may be just one way that their customers are aiming to live more local lifestyles. No one dwelled on this topic or offered a lot of detail,

however since five producers did mention it in passing I thought it was worth mentioning.

Five producers indicated that they perceive that their customers are doing more than just purchasing food when they go to a local market or purchase a CSA share. These producers say their consumers are also consciously “making a statement”. Richard Wilen put it this way, “Definitely it’s people that understand they’re participating for a purpose, not just buying food...People are sort of making a statement when they go down there. It’s not just that they are getting good food. They know where they’re getting their food from and the purpose of doing that. Because they could go to a grocery store and get fairly similar organic produce”. Herman Hempke agrees, “It’s not the average person who wants to go out and buy food just to eat, but people who have an ideology they want to have fulfilled”.

This final point ties in to the final question that I asked in the interviews. As you will see below, many of these local food producers and the consumers that support them are purposefully rejecting industrial agrifood and participating in a movement for a more localized and sustainable food system.

Local Production as Social Movement

At the end of the interviews I asked each producer the following questions: Do you feel like part of a local, regional, national or global movement? Why?

Two producers were really outliers, feeling that they were neither connected to nor participating in a “movement”. Interestingly, while these two outlying producers demonstrate some features of Civic Agriculture, they didn’t fit as well as the other nine producers within that framework. In terms of motivation it appears that these two farms produce food for the local market for more economic than social or environmental reasons, though they both list social rewards as a nice

benefit of producing food for local people. They also both described measures that they take that would have positive environmental side-effects, like limiting or eliminating chemical use on food when possible and experimenting with organic methods. I think this indicates that they are being “pulled” through the market, and are mirroring features of Civic Agriculture due to perceived or actual consumer demand for those traits in a local food producer rather than personal conviction about any particular movement.

The remaining nine of the eleven producers indicate that they do feel like part of a “movement” or even something greater, more like an “awakening”.

After completing my interviews and compiling the results I noticed a trend in the responses. When I compared the responses of the eleven producers against the social and economic aspects of Civic Agriculture (as outlined in the chart below) the nine of the eleven that indicate they do feel like part of a movement also have features that closely match. It is interesting to note though that none of the producers mentioned Civic Agriculture specifically by name. Several movements that were mentioned include the Back to the Land Movement, Slow Food, and the Environmental Movement. However there was no consensus or consistency between all the producers.

Civic Agriculture also has tenets that specifically address production methods, but these are really beyond the purview of this study. So I have chosen to focus on the tenets specifically addressed by my interviews which are generally more social and economic in nature.

While many of the producers I interviewed mentioned the Slow Food movement as important only two actively participate in the Slow Food movement in a formal way, as is evidenced by attendance at local meetings, participation in international events like Terra Madre, or reference to Slow Food publications. Slow Food and Civic Agriculture share many common visions and are generally compatible as resistance

movements. There are, however, some key distinctions that I think are important to describe, as well as some commonalities that I will reflect upon in my conclusion.

In terms of differences, the revalorization of taste and the pleurability of eating is a key element of the Slow Food movement (Petrini, 2007, pp. 96-110). This fits within one of the three standards of the definition of quality for Slow Food, that food should be “good”, “clean”, and “fair” (Petrini, 2007, p. 93). Focusing on the valorization of taste and pleurability of food, many in the U.S. marginalize Slow Food and perceive it as a bourgeoisie “foodie” affair or as described by interview participant John Karlik “a wine and cheese club”. As John also points out however, the valorization of taste is really not the whole story, it supports the other two goals that food and agriculture should be environmentally and socially sustainable in a rather comprehensive and sometimes radical way. The valorization of taste is not part of the Civic Agriculture framework.

Another key difference is the level of interaction between producers and consumers. Both Civic Agriculture and Slow Food seek to reframe the producer/consumer relationship by creating “food citizens” in the Civic Agriculture framework or “co-producers” in Slow Food. It is clear that both movements are keen on creating viable methods for reintegrating consumption patterns within a more tightly woven social and environmental network in addition to the economic system. While Slow Food doesn’t discourage personal, direct contact between producers and consumers, it also leaves room for relationships that are more distant either due to geography or supply chains. Meaning, Slow Food has made room for the concept of “local production for distant consumers” in a way that Civic Agriculture has not (Fonte, 2006). One of the key features of Civic Agriculture is the direct contact between producers and consumers. Ten of the producers interviewed for this study had at least one direct distribution method that necessitated

customer contact. Because of the necessity for this contact in the Civic Agriculture model I have chosen to focus the rest of my discussion on that framework. As I stated previously in the introduction, I think the reflexive communication that is fostered by direct producer/consumer contact creates an important communication loop. It provides consumers with the opportunity to know their producer, create a relationship of trust, and perhaps most importantly provide direct feedback to their food producers. With a more distant consumer the relationship and communication is more one-sided, privileging the consumer. All the information flows in one direction, from the producer to the consumer, through a network of labeling laws, certifications, etc. The only communication left intact between the consumer and the producer is monetary. The producer can track and measure the amount of products purchased, the price consumers were willing to pay, etc. They miss out on a key benefit that all the producers in this study mention, the positive feedback from customers and social interaction that direct sales facilitates. This positive feedback is critical in terms of sustaining a movement opposing a hegemonic system. I will go into more detail on this topic in my conclusion.

So while these producers could be evaluated through the lens of Slow Food or Civic Agriculture I think Civic Agriculture is a better fit. Even those who are active in Slow Food still fit perfectly within the Civic Agriculture model, and therefore I think the conclusions won't be negatively affected.

Table 2 below is adapted from the six tenets of Civic Agriculture as outlined by Lyson (2004, p.85). I have chosen the four tenets that were explicitly addressed in my interviews. An "X" in the chart indicates that the particular farm possesses that particular trait. The chart clearly shows the proximity of these producers and their farms to social elements of the Civic Agriculture movement. I suspect that a more complete survey of production methods would support these findings on

the production side as well and provide a complete picture of all six tenets. I have also included my question about feeling like part of a movement on this chart. What emerges is a clear picture that those who feel like part of a movement also very closely matched the tenets of Civic Agriculture, more so than the two producers that don't feel like part of a movement.

Table 2. Civic Agriculture Comparison

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Local Production for Local Consumption	X										
Advertise to Local End Users	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Distribution Methods Focusing on Local Customers	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Value of Community	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Stated Motivations	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
Stated Rewards	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Participation in Clubs/Organizations/Programs	x	x	x			x	x		x	x	
Contact with Customers	X										
Distribution with Direct Consumer Contact	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Quality Versus Quantity	X										
Stated Customer Values for Taste/Quality/Safety	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Feel Like Part of a Movement	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X

At the outset of this project my expectations were that the producers growing food for the local Eugene market would diverge from the strict neoclassical economic mindset, which is at the core of globally networked industrial agriculture. I suspected that they were growing a larger diversity of products, on less land, with more concern for environmental and social sustainability. In addition I expected that their decision making at a variety of levels, from why they got into farming to what they choose to grow, would demonstrate a more complex decision making process than strict profit maximization. I also anticipated that these producers would identify themselves as part of a larger movement in resistance to mainstream agriculture. For the most part, these

expectations have been supported by my surveys, interviews and observations.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In this study I set out to investigate the features of producers growing food for the local market in Eugene, Oregon. My findings suggest that nine of the 11 interview participants in this study are actively engaged in Civic Agriculture and resisting the “food from nowhere” regime (McMichael, 2002). This leaves two producers who are participating in the local food market for more conventional, economic reasons, and are not sympathetic with any type of resistance movement.

Interestingly, while all but two participants stated they felt they were part of a larger “movement” none of them specifically identified Civic Agriculture by name and only two really strongly identified with any named movement, Slow Food. So I have instead demonstrated their proximity to the tenets of Civic Agriculture by comparing stated attitudes, values, and observable practices as opposed to relying on their explicit claims of participation.

I argue that the nine producers who fit within the Civic Agriculture model (which is not incompatible with Slow Food) not only demonstrate participation in the move towards “food from somewhere” (McMichael, 2002) which could include preservation of terroir through certification and audit processes, but also a burgeoning movement emphasizing what I am calling “food from someone” on the consumer side and “food for someone” from the producer perspective. These producers are re-embedding their food production into community, environment, and the local economy in a purposeful way.

The complex and diverse nature of the motivations described by these producers, especially the nine that produce and distribute in line with the tenets of Civic Agriculture, demonstrate the limitations of neoclassical economic decision making in their food production

operations. Economic decisions are accompanied by, and in some cases tempered by, larger social and environmental goals. This is in sharp contrast to the industrial agrifood model which would categorize such decision making as idealistic or irrational. The goal in the industrial agrifood system is to maximize profit and externalize social and environmental costs (Perlas, 1999, p. 11).

Using a more complex array of values for both motivation and evaluation of success or reward allow these producers to feel more satisfied with the outcome of the choices they make which may ultimately limit profitability when compared to operating within the mainstream industrial agrifood system. Without such positive reinforcement it is unlikely that the local food movement would be able to keep up momentum and build in strength, as these producers indicate it has here in Eugene over the last thirty years.

Interviews with these eleven farmers demonstrate that they are purposefully serving the local food market. The local market, especially the direct market, provides the opportunity to maintain a relatively small operation growing products for which this region does not necessarily have a comparative advantage. There are economic realities that make the local market favorable for all of these farms, either in current or potential future revenue. There are also practical logistical benefits, such as reduction in transport costs and time.

These farmers also express social benefits of growing food for the local market, especially through methods that encourage direct customer contact. Direct contact to their customer bases gives these farmers positive feedback and a sense of value as community members. Direct contact also has economic benefits, with fewer middlemen and therefore higher margins for the farmers themselves. Direct contact also allows for the cultivation of relationships and trust. These trust relationships decrease reliance on certifications to demonstrate quality and also increase accountability for food safety. As Campbell points out, the

measurement, auditing, and labeling of emerging “quality” oriented progress in the industrial agrifood system, including social, ecological, and gustatory considerations, can be “argued to have created information flows and feedbacks between consumers and distant ecologies” (Campbell, 2009). Though there is some optimism that these global solutions can appropriately connect consumers to ecological and social feedbacks in their food purchases through international audits and quality oriented supply chain management I remain somewhat more skeptical. The internationally networked audit culture (such as organic or fair trade) has produced some levels of informational closeness between producers and consumers of these niche products. However it still leaves consumers and producers distant in terms of social relationship and community engagement. Also there is a lack of positive reflexive interaction between the consumer and the producer, leading to less positive feedback in the opposite direction (from consumer to producer) other than through purchases and monetary reward. According to the producers I interviewed monetary reward was only a small part of the benefit and motivation they indicate for their chosen livelihood.

According to these farmers, there is a local consumer population that strongly supports local businesses in general and farmers more specifically. I believe that these consumers have played a key role in the burgeoning local food movement by seeking to fulfill an increasing portion of their consumption needs through local sources. This creates a diversity of demand in the local system and encourages a diversity of production amongst producers. Customers buying direct from the farmers ensure a higher profit for the farmer. Though these producers say that some of their customers shop irrespective of price, most indicate that many of their customers are purposefully choosing to pay more for food and spend less on other things. Five producers say that many of their customers also feel like part of a movement and that their

participation in the local economy, particularly with food purchases, is “making a statement”. In a way this mirrors the activism of the nine of these producers who agree that they are part of a larger resistance movement working towards a more sustainable food system. This also supports my claim that Civic Agriculture is a useful model of comparison for this local food system as the customers described fit well within Lyson’s description of “food citizens” (2004).

These interviews reveal that there are also environmental benefits stemming from local food production. Several of these farmers come from environmental science backgrounds and most are trying to pursue a lifestyle and livelihood that is environmentally sustainable. All of them express long term commitment to the land and a desire to steward it well, either for their own long term viability or for the greater good. There are producers who are working for biodiversity preservation, both in the wild and agricultural sense. There are also producers in this study who are motivated to serve the local market to reduce food miles and therefore fossil fuel dependence in the food system. All of the producers in this study have at least experimented with low input methods of production, though for some this hasn’t been a sustainable long-term option. Even those who are not opposed to chemical inputs often utilize more natural or organic growing methods for their local food crops. By producing food crops for the local market these farmers are able to decrease their negative impact on both the local and the global environment by decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, decreasing chemical usage, protecting native habitat, and preserving biodiversity.

I also think that in the context of major shifts in cost of production, transport, and processing due to peak oil, globally managed food supply chains will become increasingly problematic. Areas, especially in the developing world, that have become completely reliant upon these global supply chains both as an outlet for the export oriented commodity products which drive their economies and also as a supply of

staple foods remain acutely vulnerable. In my opinion alternatives to this type of insecurity must inherently be localized, meaning that there is no large structural answer but instead multitudes of micro-solutions (echoing Allen 1993, Friedmann 1993 and many others). The durability of the global food system will rely upon a re-diversification of production, processing, and distribution to combat the lingering effects of the first two food regimes and provide a viable alternative to the mainstream global food culture that will undoubtedly continue to supply the bulk of population's caloric needs for some time to come. This re-diversification, even on the micro level, provides alternatives "as we face a historic threshold governed by peak oil, peak soil, climate change, and malnutrition of the 'stuffed and starved' kind across the world (Patel 2007)" (McMichael 2009). Whereas the result, whether explicitly sought or simply a by-product of the system, of the first two food regimes was a simplification and homogenization of agriculture, supply chains, food culture, and standards I recommend that the solutions must instead be more complicated, more diverse, locally adapted, and culturally relevant.

The movement I see at work here towards Civic Agriculture and food from and for someone, which all of my participants identified with in some way, is an example of the type of micro-solution described earlier. This burgeoning desire on the part of both producers and consumers to connect with one another in a meaningful way holds great promise due to the built-in social contracts that certainly complement and in some cases may even surpass legislation as a way to ensure food safety, food security and more diversified regionalized agricultures.

Identity of location and production style standards are relatively straightforward to preserve and audit in a globalized supply chain and in addition to convert into a monetary value. On the other hand, personal identity of producer, community relationship, and personal responsibility, which can occur with direct interaction between producer and consumer are not so well suited to this type of international

regulation or monetization. In a way because it is difficult to co-opt and capitalize on this relationship by the large corporate players in food, this food for someone movement may hold promise as a more democratic form of resistance. In places where regionalized or localized food production has not been completely destroyed, there is hope that by legitimizing and encouraging the relationships engendered by food for someone these systems may be preserved and potentially even expanded. The open-source nature of resistance movements such as Civic Agriculture provide a poignant counter-point to the proprietary nature of industrial agrifood.

According to Soper, resistance to the global system which enriches a few while denying even basic needs to many cannot sustain itself on denial and negativity alone (2006, p. 370). There must be the creation of positive alternative outcomes and less materialistic more “spiritual” rewards that reinforce the movement. The producers interviewed for this study give several examples of alternative, non-materialistic rewards for participating in the Civic Agriculture. These rewards include the positive reflexive feedback with customers, the chance to engage in a meaningful livelihood, and even feelings of greater security in the face of future uncertainties. It is the combination of voluntary divestment of privilege and profit maximization in combination with the positive creation of an alternative and rewarding system that makes the local food system described by these producers powerful. While there must be sufficient economic return to ensure livelihood for the farmers, both the producers and the consumers represented in this study are demonstrating a willingness to forgo personal utility maximization in a neoclassical sense and exchange this sacrifice for a host of other benefits such as: pride in occupation, sense of community, ideals of environmental stewardship, feelings of increased food security in the present and future, healthier food, lifestyle, and participation in and support of a local economy. In other words, the reflexive relationship that is cultivated between the

producer and the consumer allow them to engage in an exchange for which currency is only the beginning, not the singular end. They are exchanging life and livelihood. It allows for the communication of values, value, and ideals not only through the mediums of labeling and money but also through the subtleties of social interaction. It creates a positive feedback loop for the producers to continue to engage in an activity that may, at the present, provide limited financial reward. And similarly, on the part of the consumer, may require significant sacrifices in other areas of personal consumption.

There are structural inequalities in the current industrial agrifood system that persist in moves to re-localize agriculture. These issues cannot be denied; there are those who cannot afford to purchase even mainstream industrially produced foods, let alone the consistently more expensive local varieties. However, these populations are and will remain acutely vulnerable within the current industrial agrifood system as well. Fluctuations in global food and oil supplies expose these populations to price surges for which they are not prepared. In addition, the industrial agrifood system with its focus on profit maximization perpetuates a stratified populations of consumers; those with plenty of money who are privileged with a wealth of healthy and reliable food choices and those with limited purchasing power who must suffer from limits in healthy and reliably available options. However, where the mainstream system removes alternatives, the localized system provides them. This process of resistance through Civic Agriculture constitutes a move away from the monocultural problem solving of neoclassical economics towards a more diverse set of reasoning and rewards. As demonstrated by this study, local food systems preserve the technical capacity to grow food outside the industrial agrifood complex by preserving land, knowledge, seeds, and local distribution networks. Civic Agriculture, with its focus on local food for local consumers, also provides a host of non-materialistic rewards such as satisfaction with livelihood, sense of community,

environmental preservation and security. Ultimately I think the types of localized food systems represented by this study provide alternatives to the mainstream system that, like a monoculture, is extractive, overly simplistic, and ultimately vulnerable. On the other hand, localized food systems utilized as resistance to industrial agrifood are focused on diversity, investing in land and communities, and are durable in the face of future uncertainties such as oil scarcity and climate change.

APPENDIX A

LOCAL RESOURCES

Local Food Projects and Organizations

Food For Lane County: www.foodforlanecounty.org

Oregon Tilth: www.tilth.org

School Garden Project of Lane County: www.schoolgardenproject.org

Slow Food Eugene: www.slowfoodeugene.org

Southern Willamette Bean and Grain Project:
www.mudcitypress.com/beanandgrain.html

That's My Farmer: www.lanefood.org/thats-my-farmer.php

Willamette Farm and Food Coalition: www.lanefood.org

Willamette Valley Sustainable Food Alliance: www.wvsfalliance.org

Online Retailers and Networks

Eugene Local Foods: www.eugenelocalfoods.com

Food Hub: www.foodhub.org

Local Grocers

Capella Market: www.capellamarket.com

Friendly Street Market

The Kiva: www.kivagrocery.com

Market of Choice: www.marketofchioce.com

Sundance: www.sundancenaturalfoods.com

Local Wholesalers

GloryBee Foods: www.glorybeefoods.com

Hummingbird Wholesale: www.hummingbirdwholesale.com

Organically Grown Company: www.organicgrown.com

Farmers' Markets:

Brownsville Farmers' Market

Hideaway Bakery Market

Lane County Farmers' Market: www.lanecountyfarmersmarket.org

South Eugene Farmers' Market

Springfield Farmers' Market: www.springfieldfarmersmarket.net

Veneta Farmers' Market: www.ci.veneta.or/usfarmersmarket.html

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONS

Do you produce food for familial consumption or for sale?

Yes No

(If No, then you are done!)

Age:

20 – 25 26 – 30 31 – 35 36 – 40 41 – 45 46 – 50 51 – 55 56 – 60 61 – 65 66 –
70 71 – 75 76 – 80 over 80

Gender:

Female Male

Education Level:

Some High School High School Diploma or GED Some College Associates Degree
Bachelors Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Degree

Did you grow up on a farm? Yes No

Did you grow up tending a family garden? Yes No

Did you participate in agriculture clubs during your youth (ie. 4-H or FFA)? Yes No

Type of foods you are currently producing: (circle all that apply)

Livestock/Produce/Grains/Dairy/Orchard Fruits/Orchard Nuts/Honey/Beans/Berries
Other (please specify) _____

Please list your main products in order of importance from most to least:

Production Style: (circle all that apply)

conventional, spray free, integrated pest management, organic (certified), organic (not
certified), biodynamic, other (please specify) _____

Do you process any food? Yes No

If yes what kind of processing? _____

Number of Acres in Production:

Land Ownership:

Own Rent Other _____

Do you live on the farm or production site? Yes No

Approximately how many miles is your production site from Eugene? _____

How many years have you been in production?

0-10 11-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 50+

What percentage (estimate) of family diet comes from farming/gardening?

0% 1-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%

What is the purpose of your production? (circle all that apply)

personal/family consumption

sale

food bank

other (please specify) _____

(if you do *NOT* produce for SALE you are done with the survey)

Gross Sales:

Number of Employees (non-family):

Number of Employees (family):

Do you or your partners work off farm jobs also? Yes No

What percentage (estimate) of family income is provided by farming?

0% 1-10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

Do you produce for the local market? Yes No

What percentage of sales comes from the local market?

0-10% 11-20% 21-30% 31-40% 41-50% 51-60% 61-70% 71-80% 81-90% 91-100%

What are your distribution methods? (circle all that apply)

farm stand, u-pick, CSA, farmer's markets, local grocers, chain supermarkets, co-ops, direct sale to restaurants, direct sale through craigslist, Eugene Local Foods, farm to school program, wholesalers (please specify which)_____, other (please specify)_____

If you are within 50 miles of Eugene and willing to be interviewed in depth for this study please *list your email and I will contact you to schedule.*

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name:

Farm Name:

How did you get into farming/gardening?

What are your main products now?

Has this changed over time?

Are you from a farming family?

Is this your family's land?

Do you own or rent your land?

Is all of it in active production?

Do you live on your farm?

Are your neighbors in agriculture? What/how do they produce? Do you have positive relationships with them?

What is your motivation for serving the local market/family needs through food production?

What do you perceive as the greatest challenges of producing for a local market?

What is the greatest reward in producing for the local market?

What are some distribution methods that you have used historically?

What methods do you use now?

Which methods do you find the most effective?

What kind of resources have been helpful for you as a local food producer?

Do you belong to any clubs or associations?

Were any of these founded or active over seas?

Do you have any favorite books on food production?

What types of tools/resources do you wish you had?

Have you ever been abroad? Has this influenced your practices in any way?

Have you encountered other farmers from different countries? Has this influenced your practices, seeds, attitudes?

Do you know anything about how people in other countries are dealing with local food? If so please describe. Why is this important to you?

Do you have any role models? If so who? How have they influenced your life and production?

What do you perceive as your greatest marketable attribute to your customers?

Describe your average customer:

Do you plan to continue food production in the future?

Which direction do you see it taking you?

Do you feel like you are part of a local movement? Regional movement? National movement? Global movement? Why for each.

Do you have any questions for me?

APPENDIX D

FARMER PROFILES

Sarah Kleeger and Andrew Still, Open Oak Farm/Adaptive Seed, Crawford, Oregon

Open Oak is a 30 acre farm located 30 miles north east of Eugene near Brownsville, Oregon. Sarah Kleeger and Andrew Still are in their first season of production on this land and are currently working about seven acres. The unusually rainy summer weather prevented them from planting as much as they had hoped. They live on the farm which was purchased by another family about a year ago. That family leases them the land and has helped to capitalize their start-up expenses for a share in the bean and grain CSA that they are founding.

Their intention is to pioneer a bean and grain CSA. In this first year, they were hoping for nine acres of beans and nine acres of mixed grains, but the weather and the soil made it impossible. Instead they have $\frac{3}{4}$ acre heirloom dry beans and about one acre each of rye, oats, barley, hard red spring wheat and winter wheat. They plan to bring about 20 acres in production next year. They also have an heirloom seed business and keep about one acre in seed production on the property. They spend a lot of time working their diverse seed crops including a variety of beans, wheat, rye and also vegetables. “Plan B” for this year is to do a winter vegetable CSA. They are planting an acre is kole crops and root crops supplemented with beans and grains. They also showed me garlic and shallot crops, ducks, chickens and a turkey (that they keep for eggs and fertility).

They have worked with the Brownsville Farmers’ Market this year though not with their own booth. They are considering other direct retail sale venues such as Eugene Local Foods and Willamette Local Foods. They are trying to avoid wholesale, though they would consider selling to

a few friends who have restaurants. They specifically mention that they would like to avoid having their own farmers' market booth due to the fact they will have a very limited variety of products. In terms of their seeds, they work with Seed Saver's Exchange (yearbook), sell wholesale through local retailers like Down to Earth and Naomi's, and also sell to individuals who purchase from their website.

Andrew described their target market this way, "My goal for our customer base is people like us who want to spend their money on quality food". Sarah added, "We're not shooting for people who have a lot of money but people who value food more than a lot of other things, people who want to spend 40% of their income on food again". They believe they are selling more than just food. They are also selling a new "more resilient paradigm". "We're selling the world we want to create. The ideological value of a more durable food system". Which they conclude is better for the environment, future agricultural sustainability and human health.

Neither of them come from farming backgrounds, though both of them had grandmothers involved in farming. Sarah is originally from an urban area, Anaheim, and hated all the cement. She went to university at Humbolt State in Northern California, majored in Political Science, Environmental Politics and Sustainable Society with a minor in Appropriate Technology. When she graduated in 2001 she was eager to leave theory behind and "do something real". She saw so much about the world around her promoting death and she wanted to do something that promoted life. Andrew was a Wildlife Biology major and switched to Philosophy. "Philosophy told me I needed to find something real and go out and do it practically". They met at Humboldt State and then also worked at Willow Creek Farms which was 20 acres in mixed vegetables. They also worked at another local organic farm. They reflect that they learned a lot in their practical farming experience, though didn't necessarily have a lot of fun they learned how to work. They also learned

how they would do things differently on their own place. “Here we’re working for ourselves so if something is painful we can design it differently and change things. And we have the flexibility to do so because our financial situation is not dictating absolute production necessarily”.

When discussing motivations for producing for the local market the top of this list was peak oil. They mentioned that the people who own the property want to be prepared for “doom scenarios”. They went on to discuss trying to facilitate local eating and raising foundational crops like beans and grains. Sarah points out, “It’s a gaping hole in our local diet. We have really incredible soils here, why aren’t we growing things that are the foundation of our diets?” Andrew also points out the necessity of local, direct distribution to make their small scale staple production economically viable, “If you’re growing wheat and selling it as a commodity it’s a borderline loser. If you grow it here on organic soil, and mill it yourself and sell it to people you know you can get \$4/lb for it ...it’s a completely different kind of scale and it works”. They find the local market provides them with an opportunity to be financially viable and do something personally fulfilling.

Andrew also places a high priority on agricultural biodiversity. He mentions that there are only about 4 varieties of wheat commonly grown in the Willamette Valley, and that this year for instance many of them got rust really bad. Their wheat didn’t, and they are not sure whether that is because they don’t over fertilize (which they think is part of the problem) or perhaps because the different varieties that they grow are more rust resistant and more tolerant to trouble in general. In terms of future agricultural sustainability they think that, “We need more good seed that’s adapted to organic growing on low input fields We need to get these varieties out and get people saving it...Growing local food for local markets using seeds from who knows where is not necessarily good. For

the system to be sustainable the seed should be internalized...which will also improve resilience.”

They think the rewards of producing food for the local market are, “Greater health for people because they are eating good quality staple foods” and also “a more resilient food system” (Andrew). Ensuring the availability of food that is, “Tasty, flexible, adaptable to changes in availability of oil”(Andrew).

Challenges they faced this year are mainly technical and weather related. They had a hard time getting the beans in on time so they could get them out on time for storage and processing due to the weather. For them, scaling up is a new challenge since the attention to tiny details that they can give test plots isn’t possible on a larger scale. They also mention the challenge of finding appropriately scaled equipment, since most is too big or old and broken down or simply non-existent.

There are several resources they wish they had to combat some of their challenges. Sarah mentions, “I wish I had an old farmer neighbor who could teach me how to use a combine”. Andrew wishes“...we had access to cheap equipment that is the right size” or the possibility of shared ownership.

They have spent quite a bit of time abroad. They specifically relay their experiences from what they call their “seed odyssey”. This was a trip through nine countries (Eastern block countries, Switzerland, Russia, Germany, Denmark, England, Ireland) giving and attending seed saving workshops and gathering many seeds to bring back. They have a permit to bring tiny amounts of seeds through customs (50-100 seeds). Walking through their seed garden they can point to varieties and describe who gave them that seed, where it is from and why it is unique. They specifically described their experience in Romania. They were there the year that it had joined the EU. They saw this as particularly disruptive because of land speculation and consolidation by foreign

owners and the consolidation of farm land ownership to make Romania a “new breadbasket”. On top of that, many young people were flooding into western Europe. Andrew marvels that “It’s amazing how fast things disappear”. He notes that there were very few people still saving seed. They felt humbled by their interaction with older generations. “We’re young farmers...what are you going to get from us?...You should teach us. The one thing that we know that you are struggling with is that you are losing your heirlooms and if you don’t save seed on them they are going to be gone in 10 years...so if you like something and you don’t want it to disappear then preserve it”. They see a parallel with their own situation in the U.S. and the farmers in Romania. They think that focusing on high value, specialty, good quality crops, sold through direct consumer local networks is how Open Oak can compete with very few acres against the American industrial farming system, which is like what many small farmers in Romania were facing for the first time with EU accession and exposure to that giant market.

They do feel like they are part of a movement, though they are focusing on the local level and they don’t have a particular name for it. They think trying to work at the global level seems too diffuse.

They don’t pay membership dues to Slow Food but they participate in local events, give seed saving workshops and have been selected as delegates by the national organization to attend Terra Madre this fall. “We’re not necessarily chefs...but the other half of Slow Food is out there”. They find that many people are interested in what they are doing, people who are really trying hard to make things better. They see a big critical mass of people “welling up”.

Annette Pershern, River Bend Farm, Pleasant Hill, Oregon

River Bend Farm is a 50 acre farm situated about ten miles south of Eugene on the northern end of Pleasant Hill. It is run by Annette Pershern. Originally her brother, her parents and herself were all one

third owners. She has since taken over the management of her brother's portion and owns the land equally with her parents. She lives on the farm together with her two daughters and her husband. Her parents also have a home on the property. Her two daughters work on the farm with her when they're not busy with school. She also has hired labor. She mentions that her husband works a full time off farm job which provides income and, importantly, health insurance.

The raise mainly cane berries which include raspberries, marionberries, and tayberries. They also raise strawberries, and orchard crops like peaches, cherries, apples and hazelnuts. Though she didn't mention it in the interview I also saw vegetable starts and some corn growing. There is a newer farm store on the property which is open about half of the year where she also has a certified kitchen that turns out a variety of baked goods, including jams, jellies, and soups. The store also features nuts, and a few other local products like pork and craft items.

In terms of distribution Annette has been at the Lane County Farmers' Market for 15 years and has also participated in the Creswell and Springfield markets. She admits that the markets are very labor intensive and that she has backed off of the smaller markets recently to conserve energy, which she considers a precious resource. She also sells retail at her farm store and wholesale through Eugene Local Foods (see Appendix A for more information). She started a CSA in 2009 for the first time in cooperation with a neighbor. In 2010 she decided to run one herself. She does half fruit and half veggies with cider and hazelnuts in the fall as well, she sold every share available and could expand as there were people on the list who didn't get in. She bartered with a customers 3 years ago for a website and has been using that and social marketing through Facebook to stay in touch and drive business. She has over 800 people on her email list. She sends out weekly emails with info, recipes, etc.

She feels pretty dialed-in to her customer base, which has been greatly facilitated by demographic information she can gather through Facebook. When asked to describe her average customer she stated that they were most likely women, age 18-32, conscientious about wanting a safe product and mostly mothers. She thinks her customers value her honesty, friendliness, ability to educate and build community, and that she can grow something that is tasty, nutritious, and safe.

Annette was raised in Lorane, Oregon on a property that is now owned and operated by Hey Bales Farm. Though her folks weren't farmers they did raise strawberries and cattle. She notes her ethnic background and that her mom was raised in a predominantly Polish community in Illinois. She considers herself German- Polish. She feels that the love of agriculture amongst these people led her to highly value agriculture. She participated actively in 4-H as a kid and also helped in the family garden. She thinks growing up in Oregon, a big agriculture state, and being exposed to a lot of local agriculture while she was young got her interested in farming. She says her mom used to drive her down River Road, which was mostly farms at the time. This left an impression on her of the richness of agricultural possibility here.

In college she was a Biology major and she expressed a deep interest in things that grow. Her brother studied at Oregon State University and developed an interest in managing orchards.

When her daughters were quite young she lived in west Eugene. It was at that time that her brother approached her with the idea of an orchard and farm. She wanted a farming lifestyle and experience for her kids and was glad to move out of the city a bit.

When asked about her motivation for serving the local market she reminisced a bit about growing up in the sixties when sustainable food production was "a big thing". She reflected on her childhood in the area and her impression of the agricultural potential here. She also stated that she felt the current globally networked food chain cannot provide

people with “safe nutritious food, clean water, clean soil, and a clean environment for our kids”. She considers herself lucky to live in an area where it is possible to produce a wide variety of seasonal foods for local people. She is also concerned about global fuel supplies. She thinks that decreases in supplies and increases in price will make long distance (especially trans-hemispheric) shipping of foods impractical. In short, she feels the globalized system is “unsafe and insecure”.

Annette feels a great sense of pride producing for the local market. “I’m planting this seed and it’s growing and it comes to fruition, it will be tasty nutritious, what it should be. Compared to produce in the supermarket it will be superior in safety, tastiness and quality. It has not been shipped and stored”.

On the other hand she lists several challenges. A major concern for her is that her labor cost is high, especially because she likes to pay her workers more than minimum wage. Her overhead is increasing over time and yet often peoples’ perception of how much food should cost hasn’t changed for years. She specifically mentions people from the older generation who think that her products are too expensive. “Prices can’t be like the 1940’s it costs more than that to produce”. She stated that retail prices in the stores do not keep up with her increasing overhead which means that there is an adjustment that has to happen on the part of her customers. “People have to get used to the prices that we charge”.

Though she hasn’t been abroad she expressed a strong interest in visiting Southern France and Northern Italy to see a high intensity hazelnut system that is used there in situations where there is limited space. From what she’s read she gets the impression that overseas people generally live more in tune with local agriculture. They live in more dense housing structures and can walk to local markets with local products. They don’t stock up several weeks of groceries at one time, but instead buy fresh every few days. This keeps them in tune with their local growers and the seasons.

She listed several local farms and farmers as role models such as Detering Orchards, Coast Fork Farm, Grateful Harvest, and Thistledown. She is interested in the agritourism aspect of a lot of these farms and feels the farmers have been a good resources to her. She laments that there seems to be less camaraderie amongst the younger generation of farmers.

She belongs to a couple of groups including the Hazelnut Growers Association and Willamette Tree Fruit Association. She also has friends who are involved in Slow Food and is interested in learning more about that. She lists the OSU Extension Service and specifically Ross Penhallagon as a great resource. Ross visits her place a couple times a year. She finds “Vegetable Grower” and “Tree Fruit Grower” to be helpful publications and also reads Capitol Press (a statewide agriculture oriented weekly) and Sunset magazine for ideas on regional recipes. In terms of resources that she would like she lists another tractor for the bigger trees, better incentives for solar panels, and potentially grant money (which she feels may already be available but inaccessible to her due to inexperience and lack of time to research). She specifically mentions she wants to avoid over burdening herself with debt.

She does feel part of a “movement” global, national, but especially local. She cites involvement with the local school doing education and teaching the kids about where their food comes from, giving community farm tours and also working with Food for Lane County. She stated that “We are not just individuals, what we do affects other people and can be positive”

She had some specific comments on the farm to school program, which she’d like to work with more extensively:

The district asked for “X” number of bins at “Y” price. The price wasn’t necessarily too low, but none of the farms could produce the volume

from a single farm. Her suggestion is to have individual farms “sponsor” a school since a school sized volume is manageable and it would increase the sense of connection between the school and the farm. She realizes that the buyers’ money is tight because of the economy but that their price was “close” to realistic.

When asked if she planned to continue farming in the future her answer was “yes, always”. She’s looking to expand into hazelnuts and enter the world market more as it is growing and relatively labor efficient compared to some other orchard products that she has. Tree fruit are high risk and labor intensive year round. She plans to stay in tree fruits, but just diversify more into hazelnuts. They have down time and not as much overhead because there is less labor involved for harvest. She’s also considering building a cidery and going into hard cider production. When making decisions about direction family is a major concern. She has children in the house and aging parents so how she spends her time and energy is really important to her

Gina Thomas, Stillpoint Farm, Veneta, Oregon

Stillpoint Farm is located about 12 miles west of Eugene, just two miles south of the town of Veneta. There are about five acres in active production, mostly strawberries. The farm is bordered by timber property and conveniently located on the way to a couple of wineries. Gina Thomas farms full-time and lives on the farm with her partner, who also helps with farm management part-time. They also host events on the farm, such as The Mother Earth Festival, which was held for the first time in summer of 2010. They are in their eighth year at Stillpoint.

Gina says that they specialize in “sweet” which aptly describes their strawberries and raspberries. They also grow basil, okra and melon. This year was a tough year because of the weather, especially the cool rainy summer. The okra and melon crops failed so they put in extra basil. They also raise chickens for eggs and I tested some sweet yellow

cherry tomatoes at their farm-stand as well. They are “Certified Naturally Grown”. “Certified Naturally Grown is the quintessential alternative because it’s a coop of farmers across the United States that help each other certify. You don’t even have to be a Certified Naturally Grown farmer because you’re given such a complete and specific [set of guidelines]. It’s like six pages to do and the farmer doesn’t go along with the certifier and pressure them. You just go along and walk the farm and take along the questionnaire which asks [the certifier] do you see weeds, do you see no weeds, do things look healthy, do you see any chemicals stored away in the barn or whatever. It goes on and on and on. If you’re moving away from the top down large organizational, which I think we are, then accepting things like one person who has your best interest at heart supporting someone else who has your best interest at heart, being Certified Naturally Grown is exactly what that is”

They distribute directly to customers mostly on site through their farmstand and the u-pick strawberry and raspberry part of the operation. She thinks their location, on the way to several popular wineries, makes their sweet farm-stand offerings extra popular. She also has a stand at the Veneta farmers market. She notes that they mainly advertise through word of mouth, though they are also listed on a national u-pick website, the “Locally Grown” directory and have a beautiful website. They do sell some wholesale in Eugene to local grocery stores and also a bakery that they have developed a relationship with. They are listed on the Food Hub website, but she notes that she hasn’t done much with them. Her goal is to increase the u-pick operation.

She describes her customers as mostly the “Subaru and Volvo crowd, especially moms and some dads coming out with young children”. She thinks that they value the fact that “Things are done well” and feel safe that there is “no contamination”. She thinks that they also value the overall farm experience, the chance to get out of the city and even play with the animals if they like. She thinks that the benefits of buying

local, organic food like theirs include reduced medical cost, helping environment, supporting local economy, getting out in the sun, and instilling work ethic in children.

Gina is not from a farming background. She grew up in Los Angeles and felt like it was too urban with too much asphalt. She always loved the earth and felt a deep connection with it, so when she had the chance she left Los Angeles and moved to San Luis Obispo and spent time outdoors. She mentions that she grew up in the seventies and has a degree in behavioral studies. She cites her extensive gardening experience in St. Helens, Oregon as a huge influence on her current occupation. She grew many things in her garden there and relished feeding family and friends. Gina and her partner were searching for a new place and wanted horse property when they came across their farm. She says that they hadn't really intended to farm but saw the property and they decided it was a great place to have a u-pick strawberry operation. She notes that it was an adjustment due to the change of scale from gardening. For instance she thinks it took about 3 years to learn how to grow the strawberries, which are an ever-bearing variety, really well. In terms of their production she says that they are providing things that the community is telling them that it wants. Then, she devotes herself to growing those things really well.

We talked a lot about the feminization of agriculture and culture in general, shifting the human condition from being one of greed and competition, which is masculine to one of sharing and openness which is feminine. "When we live separate from the whole, we live separate from the whole, we are not whole...stop the judgment, the division, the competition and what happens when you stop is that you open, open to abundance, open to community, to support to the love that's there."

When asked about her motivation for farming she had a two part answer. "On the more esoteric side, and I've thought about this a lot, the acceptable way for me to share the love I have for others is growing the

product, putting the love into the product and then someone coming and taking that product into their bodies.” She thinks that she is “helping people get in touch with the land and listen to the land”. “On the practical side, boy it makes sense. We grow a better quality product, people appreciate that we grow a better quality product, they are willing to pay a fair price for it. It gives people an alternative to the conglomerates which is huge because if you talk about this movement that people are waking up to and thinking oh my god these conglomerates and what they’ve done...that’s just awful, we have asthma and diabetes and fertility issues...there’s something terribly wrong, but if there’s not an alternative to it then what can we do? Nothing. So we offer an alternative to people who really do care”. She relates a story about how they have two families that are customers who are vegan and never eat eggs. “But they buy eggs from us because they know that the girls are treated royally, the eggs aren’t fertile...etc”. She says that these families feel comfortable eating their eggs because they trust that the chickens and eggs are being raised in a way that is compatible with their values, unlike the industrial alternative.

She smiles when I ask her about the greatest reward of producing for the local market and asks, “Besides seeing kids coming back [from the field] smeared with strawberries?” She adds “Knowing that I’m following my truth and that I’m offering something that is so important to the survival of the planet and the humans and that I can be part of the support for those who are ready and are listening to that little voice inside...being able to connect. When you’re being asked to go and find that, be that, truth that bliss, that wholeness, that love, come here to find that”. “The answer is not understanding it scientifically but understanding it from our heart understanding it because we know it is the right thing that it fits, that’s the motivation, that’s the reward. Our job is to hold the light”.

When we talked about challenges she said this, “We’re doing it despite the fact that we’re losing money. The conglomerates really are only doing it for money. So if we extrapolate it, then it seems to me it would be really easy to stop the conglomerates just by stopping the money. Because if that’s the only thing that’s driving them and there isn’t something in their heart saying that’s the right thing to do, there isn’t some global or universal imperative behind what they’re doing, but strictly doing it for the money, turn the valve of money off and that will stop and how incredibly powerful the capacity of this planet for us to do that with that one factor”. She also noted that “Maybe [customers] can find something a little cheaper...but they don’t they choose to buy from us. Not everyone does...but that’s not important we just offer it. And if they don’t support us then we don’t support them”. She also mentions in another part of the interview that getting connected with other local farmers was difficult, especially in terms of cooperation. She thinks that many of them are simply too busy to take the time to help out other newer farmers.

Resources that have been helpful for her include the “Locally Grown Directory”, the book *Growing Vegetables West of the Cascades* by Steve Solomon and also a woman named Gwendolyn Ellen who is now at OSU and does work with beneficial insects. They have also hosted three different interns this year through World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. She notes that on the farm “95% of everything is trial and error”. She belongs to several clubs including an agritourism club called Oregon Country Trails. She also is a member of the Veneta Chamber of Commerce.

In terms of desired resources she mentions that she wishes there were more general mass education of the benefits of supporting local farms. She doesn’t think there is a really holistic presentation of the overall benefits of local agriculture. “If they talk about how buying local is good they don’t talk about how local agriculture actually brings the

carbon dioxide level down, or if they talk about the carbon dioxide level they don't talk about the importance of getting back to the land and getting out to meet your farmer and how relationships are important...they don't really have a holistic strategy".

When we discussed international influences she talked about how the previous owners of her land were from Ecuador. "Down there labor is cheap and supplies are expensive, so it's a different perspective". She also notes that the gardeners that she meets from Europe are so far ahead of where we are here. "They haven't been brainwashed into the theory that mega is better". She notes that there are a lot of chemicals and drugs that we have in the U.S. that aren't allowed in Canada or Europe, "They are an example of what we need to move towards". She also expressed frustration at people in Haiti being offered GM seed, which of course they'd have to repurchase every year so they'd become dependent on the big conglomerates. She also describes her experience with the 13 indigenous grandmothers, from all over the globe who were honored guests at their Women's Festival. Two of the grandmothers live in the Amazonian rainforest and they are very involved in keeping the sacred plants alive, saving the seeds, doing a lot of work to preserve methods and seeds. "They literally believe that in each seed is the universe, each seed has infinite potential, and that it can change our future".

When asked if she plans to continue to produce local food in the future she answered, "Oh yeah. That would be like saying do you plan on eating food in the future?" She really isn't sure of the direction it will take her, but she says that, "Not knowing is part of the allure. I have no idea what next summer is going to look like". However she sees demand for what they do including their farming and their festivals continuing to grow.

She answered that, "Oh hell yes" she does feel like part of a movement but clarified, "For me it feels like a movement is like a beetle

crawling across the ground. Something is static and something smaller is on it's surface. What I feel is that this is at the core of the earth the core of the universe that this is an awakening, not just a movement”.

“This awakening that there's so much more that we have hidden that we have covered, that we have buried that we've ignored, that we've intentionally in some cases tried to eliminate from who we are as beings and that that part of us...is there despite all of those efforts, despite the really extreme measures that humans have wreaked on each other. Despite all of that, yet it is still there”. She feels like she's, “Shining a light in a place that's been dark, giving permission to people to feel again. So I feel like Stillpoint farm is a conduit for the awakening. It's one of many places that can hold that and will help be a place for people who are called to find that and search that out”.

Herman Hempke, Quality Acres/All About Quality Sod, Coburg, Oregon

Herman Hempke farms 160 acres about three miles north of Eugene in the town of Coburg. He is originally from the Netherlands, farmed for a while in Germany and eventually moved here to the U.S. and started All About Quality Sod, a turf business. He started diversifying, especially into food crops, because he was worried that sod orders would decrease because of the bad economy. He has two employees and wanted to keep them busy so he started diversifying into other crops. He lives on the rented farm with his wife and their five children.

Sod is his primary business in terms of acreage and revenue. He also grows a variety of seed crops, mostly on contract, including a variety of vegetables and some grass seed. He has grown peppermint, experimented with soy for the biofuel market and most recently diversified into food crops. His food crops include carrots, particularly

specialty varieties, eggs and some wheat and flour for the local market. He grows his food crops without the use of chemicals.

He sells his sod primarily through direct marketing but also uses some limited wholesalers. He sells mostly to landscapers. His seeds are grown on contract. He sells his carrots and eggs in a variety of ways: through a neighbor's farmstand, internet sales generated from Craigslist, and Eugene Local Foods. He also sells his wheat berries and flour through Eugene Local Foods. He was interested in working with Hummingbird Wholesale but had trouble with follow through on their part. Margin wise, he thinks that selling retail is the best. But to move quantity you need more organization, infrastructure, and logistics. As a small farm, selling quantity to large buyers takes too much time marketing, there has to be time for the actual farming.

Herman thinks that his average food customers "Have a common ideology. Most of them want to buy local, fresh". He sells through a neighbor's farm stand. People who buy there want to go out to the farm, meet the farmer, and see where their produce comes from. "It's not the average person who wants to go out and buy food just to eat, but people who have an ideology they want to have fulfilled". He has a very business oriented reply to the value of his products for his sod customers, referencing the four "P's" of marketing. He thinks they get a lot of product for their money, their place is close to the market which gives him an advantage in distribution, people can come out and see what they are buying, they can provide high quality service, and since he used to grow in Europe he has some different techniques which allows him to grow a differentiated product from his colleagues. He didn't see a great decrease in sod sales like many other people. For his food crops he believes that customers value the fact that he doesn't spray or use chemical fertilizers on those products. He hasn't used sprays or chemical fertilizers for the past 3 years on his food crops. He feels this is essential to sell in the local market because the consumer thinks it is

more valuable and that's why he produces his food crops this way. When I asked him why he uses different methods for his food crops than his other crops he replied that, "The market demands for the local market has a certain ideology. People who want to buy local also want organic". He considers them idealists in that way, so that's why he thought if he wants a chance to sell his product he has to grow that way. The way he sees it, he can fulfill conventional demand with organic but he can't fulfill organic demand with conventional. So if he wants a bigger piece of the pie and an easier time marketing then he has to produce organic food. He also thinks that they perceive that local is good, they like that his kids are involved and that they are supporting them. He also thinks that differentiating their carrots by offering unusual varieties is important.

Growing organically is different for him. He finds it interesting to see what he can do by working with and understanding nature. "To see if I understand nature. If I understand nature right, which I think I do, then to grow it that way. It's a nice test for me personally to check my skills". "If you are not in tune with nature you get rewarded with bad crops. I think I understand nature to a certain degree, to be able to work with nature to grow organic crops." So far in Bean and Grain meetings there are problems that others are having with weeds, but he hasn't had this challenge so far. "I think I understand nature and understand how to deal with it or work with nature as chief". "That makes the difference I guess between the farmers, their skills and abilities to understand what they are doing with nature. I don't want to say that I am a master there, but I think I understand what is going on and try to anticipate as much as possible and so far I am rewarded with satisfying yields and results. It takes a lot of dedication of time and effort it's not all easy, you have to stand behind it".

Herman grew up on a small family farm in the Netherlands. He went to university and studied agricultural business management.

However, he missed farming and got back into farming as soon as he could. He did so on leased land and was a separate business from his family. That's when he started in sod. He moved to the U.S. several years ago and started All About Quality Sod.

He was motivated to start in local food production for a couple of reasons. First he was worried about decreases in sod orders due to the bad economy. Also it is something that his kids can be involved in. It gives his kids a summer job and also provides income for their college funds.

Herman thinks that the infrastructure to distribute food through the local market is lacking. He wishes there was something like an auction house system, which they have in the Netherlands. He thinks that many small farms focusing on production for local areas is where real food security lies. Even regional suppliers like the Organically Grown Company who source from CA, OR, and WA can be an issue. They would prefer to deal with fewer and larger suppliers who have more processing capabilities. They then set the bar for the smaller guys in terms of price. It's more work to deal with many small producers individually. It affects their margin too much. It's all about the money. The farms here have a huge production potential to produce food according to Herman, it's the infrastructure that is lacking. "Big companies like Organically Grown kill all the incentives for small farms to start up. Whereas an auction house you can bring your product and everybody has a chance."

In Germany they have the same problems with distribution as here. He knows a grower who grows carrots and he has the same trouble creating his own market, and selling his product himself. Whereas in Holland small farmers can go to the auction house and ask which products are in high demand and then expand those crops or new products that maybe are unique in color or size and the auction house can promote it to their buyers as a new product to take the pressure off

the farmer to interact so closely with buyers. The marketing time is enjoyable with his sod business, but if he is going to sell food for the local market he doesn't have enough time to devote to direct marketing since he has to prioritize sod as his main crop.

Herman came to the U.S. with his European farming experience since he was part of an entirely different system. He thinks that when a country like the US thinks they have arrived and they have the best way of doing things others will continue to innovate and pass them by. He gives an example in the case of high intensity farming in Europe. In Europe there are certain centers with excellent soils, like northern Italy, Western Holland, parts of Germany. But ground is limited. So people with these highly productive soils and better margins can spend time and money innovating good intensive techniques. These techniques are then useful for people all over the world. He also notes that in Europe there are more things like neighborhood butchers/meat processors. This type of processing and local distribution would be good here too. He notes that they don't have malls or large shopping centers in Europe. The space isn't available. So everything happens in the town centers, which are mostly pedestrian oriented. This leads to many small shops, which are individually owned.

In terms of local resources he says Eugene Local Foods is very helpful however the main problem now is that there are too many suppliers so now marketing becomes more important.

Herman thinks that food security and local food challenges have nothing to do with production capacity in this area. "I think that production is not a factor at all. The biggest issue is distributing your product. Fifteen years ago there was a cannery, they sold all over the US. The capacity to feed Lane county production wise is here". "A great example was the eggs at Eugene Local Foods. They said they were short on eggs and they sold out all the time. Within a couple of weeks the problem was solved because some other people who produced eggs put it

on Eugene Local Foods. The problem was solved in a heartbeat” “So what I think is scary is that people focus on the wrong issues on production...that’s not the problem in our local food supply. I think for the farmers a good option would be what we have in Holland, auction houses”. In an auction house system all the farmers bring their produce and all the buyers come there. You have the structure where the farmers can bring their products and the buyers know where to go. Schools, stores, restaurants, organizational buyers can utilize this method of purchasing in large quantities from multiple buyers with ease. The auction houses run 2-3 days per week. They are farmer owned. There is also processing set up around the building. This system would solve another challenge here, processing and storage. “I see the problem is in the logistics side of it. And the same with the grain and bean project” They are converting big farms into food production. Those big farms won’t leave any opportunity for the smaller scaled farms to be involved in the local food movement which he thinks won’t improve food security. He also thinks that the farmer’s market is overcrowded as it is now. He thinks that there should be more markets in other areas, though it is impossible to get to every single farmer’s market. It is too time consuming for too little return.

We talked extensively about bottlenecks in distribution and creating market for the products. “Production is, in my opinion, not a problem whatsoever” It’s just the sales part of it, there’s no logistics, organization, structure, nothing. You’ve got the farmer’s market but it’s just a small portion of all the food sold in the Eugene.” Most food is sold through supermarkets and convenience stores.

Herman is uncertain about his future in local food production. He says that there are a lot of barriers to getting products to market. His future in food production will depend mostly on his girls and their motivation to continue. He feels local foods can sometimes be a fickle and undependable market.

He doesn't feel like he's part of a movement. He has some frustration about this in fact. "The movement, these people they put up a lot of dust. But in a working environment a lot of dust isn't good" He just tries to see what is going on in the market and to see how it fits into farming, and into his farm and the way he operates the farm and how he can make ends meet.

Jack Gray, Wintergreen Farm, Noti, Oregon

Wintergreen Farm is located about 20 miles west of Eugene in the foothills of the coastal range. There are three families that own Wintergreen Farm now. They are all partners with equal say in the farm but different ownership levels. Jack lives on the farm. It is organized as an LLC. They run about 170 acres and there are a few non-contiguous pieces that are rented (especially for cattle production). When I asked how much land was in "active production" he had an interesting take on the definition of productivity: "There is some land that is non-agriculturally productive. We've done some restoration work with our watershed council [Long Tom River]. So there's a fair amount of land that's not 'productive'".

They grow a wide array of fresh vegetables, they also have strawberries, blueberries, organic grass fed beef which is sold as locker meat, both fresh and dried burdock root, and basil which they process into pesto and pesto base. They bought a small pesto business about three years ago that supplies pesto and pesto base to the food service industry through large distributors like Sysco. They have a cold storage facility in Portland and they pick it up and deliver it to various institutions like universities and hospitals. "In terms of what they're used to dealing with we're tiny". Their production has changed a lot over time. They used to grow a lot of medicinal herbs on contract and dry them. They have just recently decommissioned the drier. They were a founding member of the Organically Grown Company however now the

only thing they sell through them is burdock root. So they have, “Had an evolutionary process where they started out with raspberries. Those were our first crop back in the eighties. Then Organically Grown Co-op started up and we started growing a lot of lettuce, cauliflower and celery for the co-op. We kept doing that but then we started doing medicinal herbs. Then around 1990 we started a CSA. And then the CSA grew, medicinal herbs started going down, partly because of Eastern Europe’s competition...then medicinal herbs went out. We brought on a new partner and they started up farmer’s markets and since then CSA and farmer’s market has been predominant”. Now they are primarily a CSA and fresh market farm with a few wholesale crops.

The distribute through a farmstand, farmer’s markets, their CSA program and wholesale outlets for their pesto. They sell through farmer’s markets in Bend and Portland. They dropped the Lane County Farmer’s Market after four years, he thinks that it serves only a handful of growers that have been there a long time really well. He also thinks that the hours and the parking situation were an issue. They wanted a direct market access in Eugene however, so they started a farmstand in cooperation with a local Lutheran church in Eugene. They deliver CSA shares all the way to Coos Bay on the coast. He comments that Bend and Coos Bay are natural markets in a way because there is less local food production near those cities than in other places like Portland.

He thought it was a bit hard to generalize about their customer base since there are a lot of reasons why people belong to their CSA or buy from them at markets. “We have some people who are members in lieu of health insurance and some people who just like the concept of local, some people like the taste. You have a wide range of motivations. Local is probably the biggest one but that incorporates all of these things...organic is important to a lot of our customers, we’ve been certified since ‘84”. For the most part there are a lot of customers that are professionals, late thirties, young kids, young families. “I think that’s

another motivation people have is that they want to do something right for their kids. That's by no means our only type of members but I think it's a big chunk". He also notes that amongst their customers that education level is probably higher than average

Jack studied environmental studies and geology in college and considers himself an environmentalist. He knew he wanted to work outside. He started out working for a magazine called the "Small Farmers Journal" which is about draft horses in farming. The journal was originally out of Junction City and now out of Sisters. His family has off and on agricultural ties. His grandfathers were in agriculture, his dad worked agriculture growing up until "he could get away" and after that was a business man in Portland. After working at the journal for a while he realized that he wanted to be outside and in farming so he started looking for a place and found this place while he was still working for the journal and then transitioned into full time farming. He bought the farm in late 1980.

In terms of motivation for serving the local market through food production he said, "Well we believe it's what really needs to happen. We have a strong belief that it's what we need to be doing. In the long run it's the only real security we have is if we're producing our own food". "I think of the instability of marketing channels at a global level, I don't see how anyone can think that's very stable. Beyond that, environmentally, sustainability wise we think it's the way to go. On a geo-political basis on an environmental basis it all makes sense. It doesn't make economic sense all the time."

The rewards of producing local food that he mentioned focused primarily on relationships with customers. He loves "feedback from people, how much they love it". They have a series of different farm events out at the farm and he really enjoys having people out there and recognizing where their food is coming from. He also likes the contact and feedback from the "That's My Farmer" event at the First Methodist

Church in Eugene. He also mentions that he considers farming a “right livelihood”. “We believe this is the right thing to be doing. It’s somewhat rare in our society to get paid and make a livelihood doing what you actually believe in and so that’s pretty phenomenal”.

There are challenges that he mentions in growing local food. At the top of his list is, “getting paid what the produce is actually worth”. He comments that it can be challenging to balance efficiencies of production and production of products that the local market wants. “For example there’s always been an issue of how much is it right to pay for a product when the production of that product was really questionable in terms of its efficiency”? He also thinks part of the issue has to do with customer perceptions of value. To get enough out of products he thinks that there has to be “Enough people to recognize food as something more valuable than it has been billed as of late in agriculture”.

He lists many resources for local food production. “Our greatest resource has always been our people. The people we’re able to attract here, not only us the owners, but our crew gives us a really wonderful group of people to work with commitment to what we’re doing”. He also comments on the unique nature of the Eugene community. “Eugene is a very good place to be in terms of the people and perceptions, the thought processes people have in terms of supporting us”. When I asked him why that was he guessed that it was partly because of education level being a university town. “But I think it is really going beyond that now. Large segments of the population are willing to consider other things...you get bombarded with it long enough and people are willing to try it”. He told a story about a retired FBI agent with really different political views than his own, but who was really into the idea of local food. He also thinks that other farmers have been a great resource over the years. As listed above he is a big fan of the “That’s My Farmer” event. He also thinks that universities and the extension service are starting to come through with sharing of knowledge on organic production. “Way

back it wasn't that way, there was a lot of hostility and that's pretty much gone".

In terms of resources that could be improved he honed in on soil fertility. It would "be really nice to have a better infrastructure for soil fertility consultants". He mentions that there are pockets in the Midwest where they have good experts but that those resources are lacking here. Instead they have had to take a trial and error approach. He also says that he likes conferences, especially those that facilitate face to face meetings between growers. Marketing resources would also be good. He thinks that they could use better access to inexpensive marketing help, especially market research. Infrastructure for meat processing would also be good. He says they'd use a different system if there were different facilities around.

Jack says that he plans to continue to produce locally oriented food in the future, but the exact direction is unclear. "We'd like to keep going in the local realm. We're always kind of remaking ourselves and adding things over time I think we need to do that to survive". They're starting to deal with succession planning, two families are the same age and the third family is almost 20 years younger, and Jack thinks the next group would be 8 years younger than them. He says feels like part of a movement, though his focus is mostly on the local.

John Karlik, Sweetwater Farm, Creswell, Oregon

Sweetwater Farm is located 20 miles south of Eugene, west of the town of Creswell. It is about 20 acres, including a woodlot, greenhouses, fields, and is supplemented by some additional pastureland that is cooperatively managed with a neighbor and a hay lot that is owned by a neighbor and used for free. John Karlik lives on the farm with his wife Lynn. He bought the current property that he lives on and farms cooperatively with a group of friends in 1979. They raised and sold mostly house plants at venues like the street fair at the University of

Oregon. He recalls that they sold \$800 per day for three days and thought they had struck it rich. The potted plant craze faded and they changed the production in other directions. He also recalls a venture he had selling “pick your own” basil with the produce vendor at what has become Sundance market. He would tend the plants and people would pick their basil and pay for it. He eventually started just bagging up the basil and selling it through the same guy. Now he lives on the farm and focuses mainly on food with a variety of food plants and animals. He spends a lot of time, energy, and money on soil testing which he believes is important to growing truly healthy food. He is also passionate about educating new farmers and helping to develop solutions for farming secondary agricultural land. He enjoys inventing labor saving devices. He showed me a mobile chicken pen that he has fabricated that is sort of like a hoop house on wheels that will keep out predators and be easy to move.

He laughed when I asked about his “main crops”. He told me he has over 400 varieties of plants. They grow year-round. They grow “most vegetables” from both direct seeding and transplant, mushrooms, pasture raised hens for eggs, meat chickens in mobile pens, pastured steer, tomatoes in greenhouses, eggplants, they are starting an orchard with asian pears and plums, he also grows cardoon (an artichoke relative). When I asked about seeds he said that he buys from Johnny’s in Maine. He does save one seed, it is a Czech dry bean that is purple. He grows it really just for personal use and makes a special pink Christmas soup with it, which is a family tradition. Production has changed a lot over time. As mentioned above, they started with house plants and bedding plants (ornamentals), bee-keeping and then gardening for personal use was the next evolution. Then came the pick and pay basil operation which became the bagged basil operation, that led to a thriving herbs business. He grew 30 varieties and sold through many local grocers such as Price Chopper (now Market of Choice) Winco,

health food stores, and then also restaurants like the Excelsior. He states that he got tired of growing for restaurants and grocery stores. He wanted to grow food directly for people. In 2000 he started his own farmer's market at 28th and Oak in Eugene. Shortly afterwards he started a CSA which is year round with between 180 and 200 members. His products are all organically grown but he isn't certified, he believes that the certification has been co-opted and robbed of its true value. He considers himself really beyond what organic has come to mean.

At the moment their primary distribution method is the CSA. They also sell through their farm stand in town. In terms of the basil and culinary herbs they only really work with one wholesale account anymore, mostly because of a personal relationship. From the consumer point of view John thinks the CSA gets them a higher quality food at a lower cost than the market. It's just a matter of how it's done. "You give them stuff at the proper time so you know you can sell it to them cheaper because you have a guaranteed market". At the farmers market the mark up will be substantially more. He thinks the customers at the market often see it more as entertainment. He doesn't see that as the best way to support agriculture in a meaningful way. "The market is so inefficient for the farmer's time to energy use". He also has specific issues with the Lane County Farmers' Market, "Especially our market here in Eugene, it's gotten to the point where you can't park close enough to buy enough to make a difference. It's good that people are exposed to stuff through farmers' markets but that is not the desired end result". He mentions that he really focuses the quality and quantity produce to the CSA. He feels some farmers use the farmers' market as their primary sale point and just put the leftovers in the CSA shares. He feels the opposite, the CSA members have made a commitment to him and therefore he packs their shares first and then sells the rest at the market. His wife Lynn gave me a copy of their CSA newsletter, which she

makes up once a week. It has the list of products and also tips for storage and preparation. The back also has three recipes.

When I asked about customers John replied, “We don’t capture that information in a meaningful manner so anecdotally it is young people that are interested people with families that want to serve their kids real food and old people that want to live forever”. He says, “Some people rave about the health effects” and tell him, “your food has healed my family”. He also outlines the following segments, those who love to cook, those who see it as a time savings rather than going to the store and those that want to see local agriculture re-emerge and “realize this is a real way to do that”. He considers his greatest marketable attribute as raising, “pharmaceutical grade food”.

When I asked John how he got into farming he answered that farming, “got into me”. His mom kept a garden that he participated in as a child. She grew up on a farm and he has fond memories of visiting that place as a child. By the age of 16 he knew that he wanted a rural lifestyle. He had a meandering educational path with a strong interest in the sciences such as biology and physics. He has also taken classes in psychology and urban planning. He settled in on a pre-med track but by his early twenties came to the conclusion that western medicine was not really about healing it was about treating symptoms. He thinks his dad influenced this conclusion as he was an early adopter of natural health foods. About ten years ago he came to the conclusion that health all starts with food and that nutrient dense food comes from good nutrient dense soil. Other points of interest along his path to becoming a farmer include being a founding member of University of Oregon’s urban farm in the early seventies.

He states that serving local people and providing them with health through a very high quality, nutrient dense diet is a great motivation and reward of producing for the local market. He thinks it is important to produce “...mineral dense food for people which quite frankly they aren’t

getting unless they are paying attention”. He goes on to point out that, “Just because it is an organic farm doesn’t mean it is mineral dense production. It’s something very few people pay attention to. It incurs cost that you don’t need to incur to make a product that looks the same. We go beyond the surface level of value”

We had a lengthy discussion on organic standards and certification . “I can call it organic I just can’t label it organic. You can call it whatever you want. That’s freedom of speech, they can’t really mess with that”. However he says that “The term organic means less than what I invest it with. I mean that you start with the NOP rules, that’s a good start, and you go from there”. “Organic agriculture internalizes all the costs whereas chemical agriculture externalizes all the cost. We don’t internalize the costs of cancers...” for instance as a society. He has been involved in the organic movement for many years. “I think organic was a real dream early on, in the seventies it was a youthful concept...use compost, use this fair and clean production method, [it was] more egalitarian, more diffuse. When we came together in Ellensburg in ‘74 to talk about the NOP it attempted to codify that concept and make it something that could become law. A lot of things fell by the wayside, like there really isn’t any concept of human health codified into the law. It’s now you either have organic by neglect or you have substitution organic”.

He thinks the greatest challenge of producing for the local market is “Getting past the misconceptions about food in terms of looks versus quality”. He thinks the concept of quality amongst consumers is gone. They don’t know “what quality means in produce”. In terms of production farmers focus on yield versus quality so that is what people are used to. Then the customers don’t understand why it costs more.

He mentions that he wishes he had access to appropriately scaled equipment. He says you can find it but it is mostly out of places like Italy, France, and China where the agriculture is at a smaller scale and there are more farms that do a lot of different things. “In this country

the smallest combine you can buy is a \$200,000 behemoth. Whereas you see these really cool rice harvesters in China that cut a swath 6 feet wide”. In response they are developing equipment and he builds himself. For instance he fabricated a universal tool frame that can be fit with many implements. He has also sourced some equipment from abroad, he had to get his potato harvester out of Germany for example.

When asked what he knows about how people are dealing with food at a global level and if it is important to him he stated, “It’s not vitally important because I don’t eat that food” but from a humanitarian point of view I am interested”. He notes that “People are trying to save local food, but the global interests have really pulled off this whole globalized trading scheme that works really well for a few people. I think in other countries you see people taking local agriculture more seriously. In Italy, France, England you hear about these movements. In the U.S. we were kind of blessed and cursed with the confluence of more land than we needed and so much energy that we don’t have to pay for its use plus our munitions that led to this chemicalized agricultural homogeny. I think the U.S. will be the last to adopt it [local food]. It’s against a lot of peoples’ better self interest”.

When we talked about being part of a movement John preceded his answer with the following thoughts,

This whole globalization of agriculture has been a freaking disaster. You get people thinking the green revolution is great. But you look at “golden rice”and how it interacts with the system and kills it. They make the spurious arguments that don’t look at the whole. We create about 4,000 calories of food per day, it takes 2000 calories to exist. We don’t need to grow more food we need to make it locally diversified. When it is concentrated the path is so easily corrupted for political and economic gains. The experiment is not working. What would work more for food security for everyone is smaller diversified farms. People produce what people

want to eat and people aren't forced to eat GM wheat and corn and soy beans.

John says that he feels like part of a local movement, and that he sees momentum building particularly in the last ten years, "people are waking up". John also clearly identifies with the Slow Food movement. He and Lynn were delegates to Terra Madre gathering in Italy and are members of the local Presidia. He mentions that in the U.S., Slow Food is often viewed as a "wine and cheese club", but "If you look at where Slow Food came from, it's a radical agricultural organization. It was founded by a guy who was kicked out of the communist party for being too left-leaning". He also specifically mentions the work of Vandanna Shiva. "I've seen her in different countries around the world and she is a great spokesperson for where we need to go".

When asked about the future and if he plans to continue producing food John replied, in a jovial way, that since he plans to continue eating, and generally can't find truly high quality food elsewhere he plans to continue producing. He sees the farm incorporating more protein sources, chickens specifically, developing a little table grape vineyard, and expanding the orchard. He thinks that in terms of the CSA they are hovering near their optimal level of membership, and that they don't really want to get any bigger.

Rachel Weiner, Seasonal Local Organic (SLO) Farm, Eugene, Oregon

Seasonal Local Organic (S.L.O.) Farm is located off of Seavey Loop in Eugene, Oregon. I interviewed Rachel Weiner who farms this land with her partner Tom, who was not present during the interview. The land was at one time part of the farm "Me and Moore" and is still bordered by that farm. There are about 13 acres in mixed orchards and two acres in field production. Currently this land is leased. This land is all in active production. It is also shared with a seed producer who raises mostly flowers for seed. S.L.O. was in their fourth year of production at the time

of the interview. The same farmers (Rachel and Tom) also lease an orchard in Cottage Grove, 20 miles south of Eugene. It is a two acre apple orchard. Rachel does not live on the farm site. Rachel mentions that she usually also works part time for the Eugene Library, which is helpful both for income and health insurance.

Their main product is apples, including 17 cultivars. They also grow asian pears, pears, plums, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, potatoes, garlic, beans, tomatoes, leeks, and cucumbers. They are looking to increase their potato production and utilize a tractor for cultivation and harvesting to increase the supply in the local market.

Rachel cites a variety of methods for distribution. They have spent eight years at the Lane County Farmers' Market, they also set up a stand in the South University neighborhood on Sundays. They also have a CSA with 12 current shareholders, though she'd like to see this expand and thinks they can accommodate more. A woman in Eugene allows them to use her house as a drop site for the CSA and has been a location for other CSA producers for years. With their CSA share they include a newsletter with news from the farm, an explanation of the share, preparation suggestions, and botanical explanations of little known varieties. Rachel likes the CSA model because "People can see the soil and meet the people who grow their food". They also sell some wholesale to local stores like Sundance and Kiva. Rachel comments that she likes wholesale because it is a reliable source of income , but that she also likes the face to face interaction of markets. When asked about internet based solutions such as Food Hub of Eugene Local Foods she stated that she wasn't a big fan. She feels that food shopping should be a sensory experience that the internet can't provide and that the internet propagates a disconnect between people and their food. She also thinks that Eugene Local Foods doesn't accommodate producers with overlapping products well. She notes that they participate in the "That's My Farmer" event hosted by the First Methodist Church in downtown

Eugene. She says this is the main way they advertise and that it is a good way to meet people.

In terms of average customer she thinks that they are generally: interested in food safety and where their food comes from, health conscious, “want to eat good food and recognize what good food is”, are well educated, and “semi-professionals”. She also notes that more people at the markets are using WIC farm direct vouchers. She notices that they are sometimes a little unsure of themselves in the market setting but that they are excited to trade their vouchers for fresh produce since fruits and vegetables are often out of reach for people on a tight budget. She thinks that the direct connection with people and the land is what her customers value most. “We grow the things we want to eat and we want to share that with people”. She thinks their name sums up both her own and also her customers’ values, they prioritize food that is seasonal, local and organic.

Rachel is not from a farming family. Her mother was from New York City, her dad from Chicago and she grew up in Washington D.C. She didn’t garden as a child, in fact she didn’t even have a yard. She says that she got into farming “by chance”. She was drawn to farming following a stint gardening in a community living and education situation. She thinks a keen interest in quality, healthy food also influenced her path and mentions the books *Omnivore’s Dilemma* and *Nourishing Traditions* as important contributors to her decision to go into farming. She has a strong interest in fruit trees which serves her well at S.L.O. since they specialize in orchard fruits. She met Tom and teamed up with him since he needed help establishing S.L.O. She feels that travelling was an important influence and that ultimately it has brought her to this place. She studied cultural anthropology so she is generally interested in people and how they live their lives. Seeing places where people have very little resources or access to resources gives her a great appreciation of what is possible here. “This place is such a playground,

we have access to everything. We can do so much with so little.” She says travelling makes her appreciate the simplicity of life and how easy and important it is to be happy. She adds that it doesn’t always add up financially to farm this way. “It’s more than about the money, it’s more about community and eating well and being healthy and living a positive life” “I feel that when I’m outside the U.S. people understand that and live that way”.

“Connection to local people and community” is Rachel’s motivation for serving the local food market. “Our local community is big enough in local and healthy foods, why go farther away?” She does note that they could get a higher price by going to Bend or Portland but “The ideal is to get rid of everything locally. It is easier to set up market here than to drive to Portland or Bend”. Staying local also helps to keep their investment in vehicles and time lower. Rachel cites a sense of pride and sense of community as the greatest rewards of producing food for the local market. She also mentions peak oil and feels a sense of urgency to preserve local knowledge and build relationships in the local food system. She thinks this will help to cushion the blow when it becomes impractical to ship food long distances.

Distribution is listed as a major challenge of producing for the local market along with price and customer perception of value. Rachel points out that there are a lot of vegetable growers and they are often larger more established farms. That is one of the reasons S.L.O. has diversified into fruit. She feels that the Lane County Farmers’ Market being the only venue in town is problematic, that is why they are focusing on trying to establish smaller neighborhood markets. She thinks that customer education is critical so that they understand where their food comes from and what goes into it, which helps them understand the price. In regards to price she wondered aloud, “What is the true cost? For what it costs to produce? That I am spending my life doing this it should be

worth twice as much if not more, there are so many things that are difficult to translate into price”.

In terms of wholesale she notes that Organically Grown Company (OGC) is so large that they often set the price in town for wholesale organic produce. Since they source from Oregon, California and Washington and often from larger farms the OGC price is usually much lower than S.L.O. can sell for.

She has travelled internationally, mostly in Latin America but also in the Caribbean, Israel, and Italy. She spent last winter farming in Argentina in a homestead community which was very remote with no road access and about six kilometer hike to the nearest town. She lived and worked there mostly with Argentines. They raised potatoes, beans, peas, and brassicas. They were in northern Patagonia so there was no frost free period, in fact they had to deal with hard frosts even in the summer. They saved their seeds because there was so little seed to be had. The only commercially available seed had been treated and wasn't organic. While in Argentina she witnessed a local craft market, with just one vegetable vendor. There was a huge line around the block to buy from this stand and they were always sold out. The access to fresh food was much lower and often the food available was very processed, or looked rotten. In this case she notes that people were growing gardens to provide more options for themselves, the local people felt the need support themselves and their families. She says that she's always been interested in self sufficiency. “So traveling you see what people have to make use of”. She thinks the most important thing she has gained from these experiences is to embrace the lessons of simplicity. She mentions that though Tom hasn't traveled outside the U.S., he holds these same values of simplicity.

In terms of resources Rachel counts other young farmers trying to make a living off of the land and feels a strong sense of community with these people. She also lists the Local Food Convention at Lane

Community College and the Willamette Valley Food and Farm Coalition (they have a listing in their directory). She knows some members of the local Slow Food presidia and is thinking of becoming more involved. She cites some handbooks for winter vegetable production that are useful, since they are trying to grow through the winter this year. However she notes that it is sometimes hard to get good information on local, sustainable, small scale production. Rachel also mentions that she wishes that they had more water. They use domestic wells and the pressure is low and they don't have access to the river. She would also like a wood chipper for the orchard, along with new tractor implements such as a tiller and potato related implements such as hillers, mounding discs and cultivators.

Rachel says that she feels like part of a movement at the global, national and local level. "... it's all connected. Definitely a local movement with a growing community and building relationships. It is important to do so due to peak oil and scarcity. It is important to preserve knowledge and train others so that we can deal with the reality of not being able to ship food so far in the future". She thinks she will see this in her lifetime.

When asked if she planned to continue to farm in the future her response was yes, always. She says she can't imagine another life. However she is unclear about the direction that this will take her.

Richard Wilen, Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm, Yoncalla, Oregon

Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm and Nursery is located about 45 miles south west of Eugene. Richard Wilen and his family own the 83 acre farm, of which only a few acres are in active production including several greenhouses. He says that though they are small they are very intensive and take great advantage of the space and resources they do have. They purchased the farm about 19 years ago. Hayhurst Valley Organic Farm grows produce for the local market, which they have done

for years. They also have a burgeoning nursery business specializing in organic vegetable starts.

They raise a wide variety of truck garden produce almost exclusively for direct sale. Richard has participated in the Lane County Farmers Market and also a smaller local market in the community of Drain, which is near to the farm. He said that he prefers to focus on direct marketing, especially for the vegetables. This allows him to focus on quality vs. quantity (wholesale being quantity driven). He sells the nursery starts both directly and through wholesale accounts. Over time the nursery part of the business has grown a lot. Richard enjoys this because it is “farming in miniature” and he also feels it is less competitive than the produce market. He mentions that the produce business can be a “real grind” and that the nursery business has provided a nice alternative opportunity. Even though the markets are very labor intensive he mentions how important they are in social ways, “If you were a government entity you couldn’t spend dollars any more effectively to build community than in a farmers market...the social discourse that goes on down there is so important and necessary to our society...”.

He gives a detailed postulation of the structural evolution of producers growing for the local market. In the first years he himself considered it a success just to be selling and though he didn’t make much profit he didn’t need much to live on and so it all worked out. He then gives a hypothetical journey through this cycle and describes how economic needs increase as time goes on and concerns such as children, growing numbers of employees, increased infrastructure and debt enter the picture. In this scenario as time goes on the need to become more concerned about the profitability of production increases. Eventually aging enters the picture and concerns over retirement and bringing in the next generation of people to work the land becomes an issue. Since often farm kids don’t stay on the farm the need to match up young

farmers who lack resources with older farmers who can no longer engage in the heavy work becomes important. According to Richard there is a big disconnect in this process of bringing in young farmers as things stand now. He feels this whole process is a predictable and cyclical pattern that is worth investigating from a structural point of view.

His description of his customers and their motivations was concise: “Probably over 30, a little better off, a little more aware. They like good food, they appreciate food, they appreciate the local economy aspect of it. I think a large part of our customers participate purposefully in the local economy. They appreciate us and what we do”. He concludes that his customers are generally people who are “making a statement” with their food purchases since he feels they can get relatively comparable organic produce in the supermarket. His customers are purposefully engaging in the local economy and creating connection to locale and farmers with their food purchases. His customers enjoy the personable relationship that they can establish with him as a producer and being part of a community. He also thinks that his customers highly value the trust and relationship that they have built with Richard over the years. Even when there was a time that his organic certification lapsed, people still bought from him. They trusted that he was producing the food in a safe and organic way and so it didn’t affect his sales.

Richard is a first generation farmer and has been in agriculture for over 30 years. He got into farming as part of the “back to the land movement” in the 70’s. He enjoys that farming is a “jack of all trades” occupation which has allowed him to try and learn many different skills. He mentions a love for growing things and states that watching things grow is “kind of a miracle”. He also has a doctorate degree in archaeology, and thinks that the best form of human habitation can be found in tightly knit agrarian societies. In addition to all these things

he also mentions that he considers his occupation a “right livelihood” in the Buddhist sense.

When asked about his motivations for serving the local market Richard states that “I just believe in the local food system”. He mentions that every mile food is transported makes it less ecologically viable and also poses a risk to domestic food security. He also brings up the point that this is an abundant area, what the pioneers called “the land of milk and honey”. Because of this access to high quality land, water and a sympathetic consumer base we are in a position to have a strong local food economy. He thinks that this area is an important test case for local food because if it can’t be done here it will be very difficult anywhere. Ultimately he concludes that, “We should have more people living and working on farms, more people involved with the food network, and keep it closer so that it all sort of feeds together. This is my home these are my community, neighbors. It’s important to be part of a system and a process”.

In terms of challenges he laments what he perceives as the erosion of community between local producers. Since he has been in the area a long time he has witnessed this process and feels that as more producers enter the market competition begins to trump community. Ultimately he thinks that this could be at least partially alleviated by growing the customer base so that there is more room in the market for producers. As he sees it now the number of producers and volume of locally oriented production is increasing at a rate that is outstripping growth in the customer base. This is causing cannibalization in the market. He also mentions that price and access can be barriers for customers since the produce is more expensive and not everyone likes the atmosphere of the farmer’s market. He thinks there is room for expansion into new areas to reach different consumers, such as a year-round permanent market (though this project has been derailed).

Richard spent a good deal of time abroad, especially in South East Asia. Though he doesn't think it has greatly influenced his production he thinks that it really opened his eyes to see the amazing resources at his disposal here. He compared the agricultural systems of Thailand and the Philippines in the 80's. He made specific note about how a focus on cash crops in the Philippines had produced incredible products for export but left little in the local markets. He witnessed a similar transition from local production and a more subsistence based economy in Thailand. "Thailand was never colonized so they were very intact culture and they were a subsistence country, 80 percent of the people were participating in agriculture and were incredibly well fed. You could go to any restaurant in the country and no matter how dingy it looked they had great food, it was all fresh. And so they had the best of all possible worlds and they just threw it away. It was difficult to watch".

Richard feels that he is part of a "movement" in some diffuse way. He doesn't think that it is particularly well organized though there are segments (like Slow Food) that are. He imagines younger people would answer differently, they are more motivated and organized. He thinks it's an amorphous movement.

His final conclusion at the end of the interview was that although the local food movement is fighting against modern culture, "If we had this huge area around us populated with these small farms and people were buying from them and we had this whole culture we could sustain ourselves in a pretty impressive way". He sees great potential. Though for himself he sees growing organic produce for the local market as a diminishing part of his future, "I've been in it a long time, I'm tired. The failure to sell everything, the competition, the grind is what's wearing me out".

Shanna Suttner, Smith's Blueberries, Springfield, Oregon

Smith's Blueberries is a one acre blueberry farm located just east of Springfield. It is owned and operated by Shanna Suttner and her husband. She grew up on this blueberry farm. Her dad was a carpenter and like many in the neighborhood started a little side business to add to their income (others sold eggs, sharpened saws, etc). He put in the blueberries in the late fifties and began selling in the early sixties as best she can remember. Her mother was a school teacher so she tended the blueberries and ran the picking in her summer breaks (which Shanna says she didn't like at all). When Shanna's husband retired they moved back and bought the place from her folks, that was in about 2006.

Blueberries take about five years from planting to harvest. The bushes are mostly original from her fathers' plantings. They replace sick or dead bushes periodically but their production seems to be more or less indefinite. They have one patch about ½ acre "Olympias" which produce a smaller berry that have a more complex flavor. She considers this somewhat of a "heritage" variety as they have had a hard time finding replacement bushes of this type commercially, though they have been able to find a local farmer who is scaling back their blueberries and buy some off of her. The front patch is about ½ acre also and is mixed with about two rows each of "Jerseys", "Dixies", "Herberts", "Covilles", "Ivahoes", "Early Blues", "Blue Rays", "Dukes", "Toros". They started out row by rows and as they needed replaced they'd get mixed in with different varieties.

We had an extensive discussion about a disease called "mummy berry" that has been the culprit for their very low yields the past few years (less than half of ordinary). For two years they tried to eliminate the problem by vacuuming up the infected berries from which the spores erupt and mulching heavily but this was not effective. So this year they sprayed five times when the bushes were in bloom and their yields have come back. This is a disease that is carried by pollinators like bees and

their neighbors (also in blueberries) have an infestation as well that they are not treating. Therefore they will continue to have this problem until it is eradicated from the wider area. She didn't seem particularly perturbed by this.

They run the business primarily as a u-pick operation, though she notes that they do pick an odd order for those who aren't able to pick themselves. As a kid they would pick and sell all the berries boxed up. Her dad didn't like u-pick because he thought people left the fields a mess and dropped too many berries. On the other hand she finds that it is a lot easier to do u-pick. She considered doing the Springfield farmer's market but they can easily dispose of their entire harvest through the u-pick method so it doesn't seem like it is worth the time, energy and money to haul the blueberries to town. They are doing more picked berry sales over time though she thinks the actual act of picking is attractive to some people. They used to get a lot of families who made a day trip of it to pick berries. Even though sometimes they can buy in the stores cheaper they like to come and pick for themselves.

Many of her customers are retirees. She notes that some of them come "with fire in their eyes and pick 100 pounds" for their daily use. She estimates they are often between 55 and 85, though there are also occasional young families as well. When they are opened on the weekends they see more working people and people with kids. Most people have been coming for years. They don't advertise. It's word of mouth and the phone number's been the same since 1949. They sell everything they can come up with this way. She says that "They always mention the flavor and that the patch is well taken care of and that it is easy to pick. They keep coming back because they like our berries". We discussed price briefly. People very rarely complain about price. They had one customer cancel a picked order when they found out how much it would be. Most of the time their prices are less than the organic places

and less than Lonepine, Thistledown, and Harricks (other local farms). She feels their prices are at store prices or below.

Shanna does not consider herself from a farming background (it wasn't her dad's primary job), but her family gardened extensively and ran the blueberry business on the side. Her husband was from the Midwest and from a farming family. She went to Oregon State University to study art, and then married her husband who studied agriculture and was from Illinois. They moved away (more on that below mostly Midwest and then Singapore) and her parents continued doing the blueberries part time until Shanna and her husband bought the place a few years ago.

When asked about her motivation for serving the local market she lists a few reasons. Practically speaking u-pick is easiest, cheapest, and least time consuming method of selling. She also mentions that she enjoys seeing the same people every year. Her mother always knew everyone and their families and she finds she is learning the stories and people as well. Many people come from as far away as Grants Pass, Coos Bay, and Albany. Some have been coming for years, from when there weren't very many blueberry places. "People have been coming for years", one customer told her that she had been picking there for 32 years. "We have people who came as children to pick who now bring their grandchildren". Also, Shanna and her husband wanted to move back here when they retired. The farm was already set up, the location was great, and it gives her husband a great outlet for his "tinkering and farm interests".

In terms of challenges Shanna feels stress to gear up for the first day of picking. This year there was huge rush opening day with 30 cars and 850 pounds of berries picked. She points out that the last 4 or 5 years the crops have been unreliable. So those people who came every year and wanted to make sure that they got some rush the first days. One year they were picked out after only 1 ½ days of operation. One

year they were only open 3 or 4 days. She is trying to assure people this year that there is no need to rush that there will be picking for weeks because the crop is much larger because they have sprayed to control the disease.

Shanna and her husband lived in Singapore for four years. Her husband worked for Monsanto and did research at the International Rice Institute in the Phillipines he also worked in India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand. He was the South East Asia regional manager for herbicide research. They also traveled in Europe on their way home for home leave so they went to Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Turkey, Wales, and Hungary. She thinks that being abroad “gives you a bigger picture of what’s going on beyond your community and even beyond your country”. “We’ve noticed things like a lot of times in the U.S. we don’t get that much world news”. “We were amazed when we got back that you couldn’t find out anything about what was going on in Malaysia or Indonesia, that most people don’t even know where they are”.

Her dad was a big role model for her since he started the business and then ran it together with her mom. She is constantly amazed at how much her parents got done while raising four kids.

They belong to the Oregon Blueberry Commission, National High-Bush Blueberry Commission, and Blueberry Growers Association. This gets them some website listings but she doesn’t find them particularly helpful. She has been listed in the “Locally Grown” directory in the past which has driven some business. She finds the resources from Oregon State very helpful for information on disease control, production methods, new varieties, issues with pest control, research on fertilizer and when to fertilize for maximal benefit. She notes that this year’s “field day” was mostly about organic production so she didn’t go because she doesn’t find that to be viable for them. They usually do attend the annual field days however. She mentions that she thinks, “It’s criminal that the extension is going away”.

When asked if she feels like she's part of a movement she answered, that she doesn't really, that they've been doing it for so long she feels that they were "pre-movement". She does think it is interesting to see other people getting into it and there being more homegrown things available.

She plans to continue to produce in the future. They don't plan to enlarge they are just trying to bring the patch back into good health, replace dying bushes, do more soil analysis and keep working to eliminate the "mummy berry".

Sharon Blick, Living Earth Farm, Eugene, Oregon

Living Earth Farm is located on the west side of Eugene, about 5 miles from downtown. Sharon bought the property three years ago with her husband, who works at the University of Oregon. It wasn't farmed originally, there were a lot of blackberry bushes, no irrigation, and was not properly fenced. There was a building at the front of the property, which was used as a daycare by the previous owners. They currently use that building to house an incubator, process the goat milk, and have refrigerators for customers to pick up their orders. She originally had planned to wait to start farming until her daughter was out of high school since she was concerned about quality education in a rural district. But she and her husband thought by then they'd be too old. They were excited to find a place that is still in Eugene 4-J school district. It is a 30 acre parcel, long and skinny, with limited irrigation. Most of it is being used for rotational grazing of the various animals, and the goats are being used to clear blackberry and poison oak. She estimates that about 5 acres are in active use.

Their current products include goat milk, duck and chicken eggs, and a small amount of produce. They also raise pigs, sheep, Rhode Island Red chickens which are a mixed purpose meat/egg bird, and run bees. They are at the beginning of their farming career, but the milk and

eggs have been the main focus of their operations though this may change in the future with a more an expanded garden area.

They have used Eugene Local Foods for distributing their eggs and also some vegetables. They have an extensive email list that Sharon started with personal contacts that has grown to several hundred people who are interested in certain products such as the milk or eggs. They have waiting lists, so direct marketing has been effective for them at their current scale. Customers come out to her place to pick up their milk. Since they have grown their business some she doesn't personally know all of her customers anymore, but she does know many of them. They find her, through resources like the Willamette Food and Farm Coalition's Locally Grown directory, the "real milk" website, and sometimes through ads on Craigslist.

Generally she thinks her customers "...are pretty well educated, have a pretty good income, they have to [be] to afford the expensive food I sell. They care about the future of the earth, about issues. They see this as an important choice that they are making, a lot of them have kids so they are concerned with the kind of food they are getting. Some of their kids have allergies to cow milk". This year a lot of her goat milk customers have cited health reasons for wanting the goats milk, like diverticulitis and osteoporosis. "This egg recall has turned a lot of people on to trying to get better eggs". "They are not all high income, some of them are just really committed sustainability and health and are willing to pay the price even though it is a big part of their income, but they are enthusiastic about what we are doing". She related an interesting story about price. To start buying organic feed for their hens they had to raise their prices. They let the customers know the situation and they didn't loose any customers. She thinks her customers value feeling connected. They do "open farm" events. In the fall they usually do an event where customers can come out help make apple cider and get a tour. They also do work parties in exchange for food credit.

Sharon was in 4-H as a child, though she grew up in the city her parents let her keep animals in the backyard illegally. She has always loved animals. She started the non-profit “Nearby Nature” and has also worked in education. She has been concerned about food and where it comes from for a long time. She mentioned she and her husband were vegetarians for about 20 years due in part to the influence of reading *Diet for a Small Planet* (Lappe, 1971). However she has decided that some land, like theirs, is marginal and can be used for grazing which produces food where otherwise food production would be unlikely. Sharon felt like she needed to learn how to butcher the animals if she was going to eat them so she began taking any classes she could find (she mentioned specifically Sunbow Farms and Harry McCormack). They now eat occasional meat but only what they grow themselves or friends raise and slaughter. She is very opposed to concentrated animal feeding operations for animal welfare and food safety reasons.

She went to school at University of California at Davis and studied ecology. She did research for the EPA for a little while and then got a master’s degree in teaching. She taught in the small Oregon town of Drain for a year. She lived in Alaska for a few years and did environmental education and then moved back to Eugene started working with the school garden project. She got connected to local farms and that really gave her the idea to become a farmer. She also cited the importance of the book *Omnivore’s Dilemma* (Pollan, 2008). Sharon didn’t grow up on a farm but her grandparents were farmers and passed the farm to her cousin. She says that she always wanted to live in the country.

Her motivation for serving the local food market is to help connect people with where their food comes from. “Most people don’t have time to be a full time farmer but many can help with things around the farm occasionally in exchange for food”. In terms of reward she really enjoys that customers, friends and acquaintances send notes about how excited

they are about what she is doing. “There’s all these people out there that are living vicariously through my newsletter about farming. It’s like they want to do it but can’t for some reason and they really eat it up”. She relates story about how she enjoys the work parties for butchering chickens and that people are interested in coming out and learning how to do it. In a way it has become a chicken butchering school. She notes that it is hard to see but she feels alright about eating the meat knowing that the animal had a happy life and that they don’t seem to know that the end is coming. She agrees with Michael Pollan that people should eat less meat but of a higher quality. “We charge a lot for our chickens but we always sell them” she thinks people are coming around to this idea.

There are challenges of producing food for the local market and at a small scale. Insurance, specifically product liability insurance is a great challenge and very expensive. She also cites challenges with government regulations, specifically for raw milk, since they can’t advertise or deliver raw milk or have more than nine goats. They can’t really afford to hire labor so they rely mostly on bartering labor for products and work party style situations. Milking is such a time consuming task she specifically mentioned more help for milking would be good. She has one woman that does come out and help, for instance when they are on vacation. But she also notes that goats like to get used to people who milk them so it is better if there is not too much change from day to day.

Making a profit is also tough; to find the balance between price and demand. She says she used to go to the farmers’ market and think that things were really expensive. However, now she realizes that it is really time consuming to do this kind of work, especially the livestock, and that the prices should be high. Since they are new to the property they also have lots of building projects like fences and re-roofing the barn. She is

trying to avoid burn out in the face of all these challenges by pacing herself.

She mentions a lot of local resources that have been helpful for her as a beginning farmer. She specifically notes Sunbow Farms classes and workshops. She also counts on mentors, like another woman who keeps a goat herd and is a great resource especially for natural remedies to issues like mastitis. She bought her goats from this woman. She also appreciates other more experienced farmers, like the woman she bought her ducks from.

She specifically mentions that her farmer mentors are all women. She used to be involved with Master Composting through the Lane OSU Extension Service.

Sharon wishes that she had more help. A lot of organic farms make a place for people to live and then have interns. She thinks this is a good idea. She also has a lot of questions like “why didn’t our chickens ever grow their feathers back”, how to treat animals without antibiotics, or other things that aren’t in books. She wishes there were something like an organic extension service. She would also like to find a source good organic animal feed that is high in protein.

She has some relatives in Canada that are farmers. They grow canola and pigs. She visited them many years ago but doesn’t really think this was a big influence on what she’s doing now. She’s read some things about food systems in other countries, for instance Slow Food and the Terra Madre conference. There was an “Edible Portland” article about a woman who went to Terra Madre to learn how to butcher pigs. She thinks it is great to bring these skills back. She notes that good butchers are hard to find around here.

It is her goal to continue to produce food for the local market in the future. “We have to figure out how to make it profitable and sustainable in terms of energy to avoid burn-out”. She specifically mentions that she would like to develop a good business plan. They will keep the goat herd

at same size for next year but probably expand vegetable production. “I’m not sure yet how big we want to get. Do we want employees, do we want partners?” For now, she would like to do more education, stick to a mixture of crops and animals, maybe add turkeys, plant more fruit trees, and put in greenhouses.

She feels like part of a movement. She considers herself as aligned with the Slow Food Movement, which is international. She thinks that she has always been a part of the environmental movement. Now, as a farmer, she also feels like part of the “back to the land movement”. She also considers herself part of an educational movement focused on experiential learning opportunities.

Tom Hunton, Hunton Farms, Surecrop Farm Services, Junction City, Oregon

Hunton farms is located about ten miles north of Eugene, just north of the airport, on the southern side of Junction City. It is a 2300 acre farm and also houses a fertilizer and seed cleaning business. Tom is the second generation of Hunttons to farm this land, which his father purchased in 1954. Tom’s son is the third generation, and currently works on the farm. They also have hired employees. Tom lives on the property with his wife, Sue.

In terms of business importance, fertilizer and seed cleaning are primary. In terms of crops the vast majority of the land is planted to grass seed. After that winter wheat for the export commodity market and meadow foam are significant crops. Soft winter wheat has a low gluten content and is not suitable for bread baking. Now they are diversifying into regionally oriented food crops: hard red spring wheat, hard white spring wheat, pinto beans, garbanzo beans, black turtle beans, teff, and three different kinds of lentils. Growing and milling hard wheats, which are used for bread baking, is a new venture that started in 2009. 2010 was the first year for the bean and lentil crops. They are expanding their

seed cleaning capabilities to specialize in the beans and lentils, which will also allow them to process their own clover seed (which they've outsourced in the past). They have also grown red, white, and crimson clover seeds, turnip seeds, pea seeds, barley, and coriander.

In terms of the local food crops they have a couple of distribution methods. They primarily work with a local food distributor, Hummingbird Wholesale. He has developed a close relationship with the owners, Julie and Charlie Tilt through the Bean and Grain Project. They prefer to market all organic, but he is transitional and believes strongly in no till (as opposed to organic in some cases). Over time they have built trust and found common values and they feel like it is a good fit. Tom said that Hunton Farms needed someone to help them market, someone to get feedback and communicate what the market needs so they could grow it. "Like most farmers, we're good producers but we don't understand markets. We can't devote the resources and the time". He has also raised lentils for another local natural food company, Glory Bee Foods. He has done some limited direct marketing to local bakers and chefs. I also saw his products at the local Holiday Market, which is an extension of the Lane County Farmer's Market that runs during the winter.

Tom describes his customers as well educated, loyal to the local economy and dedicated to shopping at small local grocery stores. He thinks that they primarily live in the urban Eugene/Springfield area, with many living in the South Eugene area. He categorizes their economic status in this way, "not that they shop irrespective of cost but that they have a different value equation that they are willing to support local agriculture to know where their food is coming from and that they are using it to make a social statement. In their mind it's not just buying food it's helping make a social statement". When I asked him why his customers want to know where their food comes from he replied, "We've all become so disconnected. The Eugene community has very

enlightened food consumers. The fresh markets, the CSA's have already done the work, pioneered the work. Now we are evolving to a lower value per acre and per unit pound dry bulk commodities of the grains and beans. That's a different scale of grower obviously because it's more acres, it's a different infrastructure for the processing, and so on. That consumer is already very keyed in. We're riding their coat tails. A lot of work has been done, the customers now are very enlightened". He thinks that his customers value that Hunton Farms does things sustainably, that they have a beautiful location, that they are close to Eugene, that they have a good reputation and long history in the community, and that they have strong ethics and values.

Tom grew up farming. His parents raised him in Harrisburg, and moved to the farm that he currently runs in 1954. He went to school at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo and graduated with a degree in animal science and a minor in crops. He always wanted to farm. After college he came back to the farm. He says he went away to see new things get an education elsewhere and then came back. His dad started the farm and seed cleaning business and Tom started the fertilizer business. Now his son works for the family businesses as well. He says they've tried a lot of different crops over the years. He values the connection with the community and the land. "It something we enjoy doing, not for the money, but for the experience".

Tom delineates a two part motivation for producing food to serve the local market. First of all he addresses the economic reasons. He thinks the food business model is going to radically change, and he doesn't want to get run over. He says that they tend to be early adopters in their operations that they think there is an advantage to that. He thinks that their scale helps to bring a "critical mass" to the local food movement. He also states that he has a more liberal/environmental mindset than his neighbors and he is comfortable working with people from a variety of backgrounds and viewpoints. "It's not economically

satisfying yet, but I am confident that we are so fortunate in Western Oregon and Washington to have an educated consumer, who are willing to pay a premium for locally and sustainably produced food”[sic]. He also details “emotional or societal motivations”. “There’s a wonderful feeling and connection to be able to say that you’re feeding your neighbor, and to be a part of that”.

He tells a nice story about John Pitney, who is an old classmate of his sister and a neighbor. John is the current minister of the First Methodist Church in downtown Eugene. He always stayed in touch with John and like his connectedness. They don’t go to that church but the Sunday after Easter John invited them to participate in the Earth Day service. John asked them to bring some wheat berries, flour, and bread for the service and to share with the children. “So my wife baked some beautiful hearth loaves from our wheat”. Along with John from Deck family farms and Wally from Wintergreen they came forward and talked about what they do on their farms. “Then they used Sue’s bread for the communion bread that day. You can’t make a better connection with community than that. It’s really a moving experience”.

Tom illuminated an important twist on comparative advantage in agricultural production. “People tell me you can’t compete with Montana wheat. No I can’t, but the Montana wheat grower can’t compete with me for a market. They’re 1000 miles away or 800 miles away and doesn’t know these people...or do whatever it takes to be a part of this community like we can”. The way he sees it, they have the comparative advantage of relationship.

He feels the greatest reward of growing food for the local market is getting people out to the farm who are excited about what they are doing. This is a big contrast to his experience coming from the grass seed business, which is perceived as bad for the environment. He says that growing locally oriented food crops make him feel “like a valuable community member”.

The Southern Willamette Valley Bean and Grain project is one of the resources that Tom listed as a local food producer. He relates the first Bean and Grain meeting he went to: “the questions that came out, if your grandfather was still alive you’d need to go and talk to him because we’re talking about re-adopting what was here in the thirties and forties; growing oats and vetch together, utilizing cover crops again. We’re not reinventing, now there are some technologies that are there, but the personal experience of what has worked, that’s what we need”. He also thinks the internet has been an essential tool. It has allowed them to seek out heirloom varieties of wheat from Scotland, and four other hard wheats. He also has sourced some heirloom red fife seed from Saskatchewan which has a low yield but is popular with bakers, which he plans to save. He says that the Willamette valley has a reputation for not being able to grow bread wheats, “It’s not that we can’t it’s that we don’t”. He says that they have to select wheats for their protein content and reconcile themselves to the fact that they won’t have the highest yield. “We’re going to forgo yield for a while and learn how to manage them [hard wheats]. But select those that the bakers want and start growing a reputation.” “It’s a real interesting mindset to move from a high volume producer...you don’t get a premium for quality...this is almost like becoming a winemaker...now it’s not yield that you’re after, but a balance of yield and quality factors that haven’t usually played into it”. They used the Washington State Foundation Seed Project to get their initial seed stock of beans, which they also plan to save from year to year to begin localizing them. He reads the High Plains Journal (out of Kansas and Nebraska) and also went with his wife on a “no till” tour in Kansas and Nebraska sponsored by “No Till on the Plains” which focused on working with cover crops. “Sometimes you have to get a long way away from home to learn best”. He also counts local bakers as an asset and Hummingbird Wholesale.

He wishes that they had the ability to do a better job replicating the trials from this year.; to have the resources to replicate trials year after year to gather information. He also would like to see good cover crop rotation resource for this particular area and environment. They are finding that even in their legume fields treated with chicken manure they have nitrogen deficiency. So they are trying to build up nitrogen even in their legume fields which conventional wisdom would say wasn't necessary. The people who got cut at extension first were those who had expertise in cover cropping. Now he uses resources mostly from the Midwest, which he says are good as a reference but difficult to directly implement here due to climactic differences. He also sees challenges in an area that has transitioned so heavily into grass seed. "Grass seed...was too good of money too easy. It's the cannery crops, the green beans, the sweet corn that came under pressure from other areas. It was a good outlet for growers that had good ground, very productive tall fescue ground, to make that transition and there's no going back. The infrastructure of the cannery is no longer there. So what do we do?"

He is president of the Ag Retailers Association, which serves his fertilizer business. He also participates in the Oregon Seed Council, the Oregon Seed League, works with an organization to protect Long Tom River, serves on Department of Environmental Quality advisory committees and also a soil conservation association.

He has been abroad several times. "I love Australia because in the rural areas it's the United States 20 years ago. Not just agriculture. Here Walmart's run over all our small rural towns, and there you can walk down the street and there's a baker, butcher, shoe store...I miss that. I enjoy trying to think how we can maintain or reinvigorate that here."

Tom plans to continue and grow their production of locally oriented food crops. "I've got a position as a senior leader to reposition our land base and our businesses for the future generations not just of our families but of our employees who have devoted a lot of time here. If

a path isn't working we can find new avenues...we don't chase the dollar if it's going to destroy the environment". They are installing a grain mill, which he envisions will grow as time goes on. However he doesn't envision seeking a national or international market with their food crops. He feels their operation is geared to a limited west coast territory, "that's fairly local". "I think we can stake out that position fairly early...Not just for us but it shows other communities what's doable".

He feels like part of a movement. In terms of global influence he sees local food production "Bringing back to our community what is achievable in so many other communities. You can have a very well based nutritious diet in a small radius". In a more local context he sees local food increasing in importance in the Willamette Valley due to the quality of the soils and the dedication of the local consumer.

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