

Sustainable Agriculture Resource List

Books:

Animal, Vegetable, Miracle

Barbara Kingsolver (2007)

Kingsolver's part memoir, part journalistic investigation tells the story of how her family was changed by one year of deliberately eating food produced in the place where they live. With recipes, meal plans, and sidebars on the food production industry, it will make you want garden your entire yard or at the very least be a regular at your farmers market. For more info, see <http://www.animalvegetablemiracle.com/>

In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto

Michael Pollan (2008)

Good fat, bad fat, low-fat, low-carb...if the ever-changing advice of nutritionists has you befuddled, you're not alone. Pollan explains why food science, food manufacturers, and the media that cover them are likely to continue to fail us, while offering some simple rules for eating a healthy, environmentally responsible diet, chief among them: Shake the hand that feeds you.

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals

Michael Pollan (2006)

Pollan's award-winning book follows four meals from three different food chains from their origins to the dinner plate. He examines their ethical, political, and ecological underpinnings and the resulting environmental and health consequences, all the while calling into question whether agribusiness has lost touch with the food it markets.

Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment

Sandra Steingraber (1998)

Beautifully written, Steingraber documents the increasing evidence of a strong link between rising cancer rates and environmental contamination in central Illinois and around the U.S. as she looks at the data from her unique perspective as both a cancer survivor and as a scientist.

The Last Harvest: The Genetic Gamble That Threatens to Destroy American Agriculture

Paul Raeburn (1997)

Former Associated Press science writer Paul Raeburn does a tremendous job of entertaining while explaining the science behind threats to the diversity of our major food crops.

Cadillac Desert

Marc Reisner (3rd edition 2001)

Reisner is the consummate conservationist and storyteller as he takes you through the history of deceit, graft, and political and bureaucratic corruption that changed an inhospitable desert into one of the most densely populated and crop planted areas of the U.S., but one that is most surely on borrowed time.

First the Seed: The Political Economy of Plant Biotechnology (Science and Technology in Society)

Jack Ralph Kloppenburg, Jr. (2nd edition 2005)

Kloppenburg, a rural sociologist, saw the true future of genetic engineering long before the pack by sifting through dry minutes of seed breeders conferences and looking at corporate acquisitions of seed companies by large multinationals. First written nearly 20 years ago, his revised edition looks at the controversy that has evolved in the interim and whether society will be able to use genetic engineering

to develop new plant varieties in ways that are economically productive, socially equitable, and ecologically benign.

Fat of the Land

Fred Powledge (1984)

An overview of the U.S. food industry which looks with a critical eye at the way foods are grown, packaged, and sold in America, and offers advice on how to get the cheapest, freshest, and most healthful foods. Though 20 years old, Powledge's advice still applies.

Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future

Bill McKibben (2007)

Examines whether growth should be the be all and end all of capitalism, and whether we should instead be pursuing "prosperity" within our communities and regions to produce more of our own food, generate more of our own energy, and create more of our own culture and entertainment.

Websites:

www.localharvest.org

One of the best ways to find csas, farmstands, farmers markets, and other sources of local food wherever you are in the U.S.

www.foodroutes.org

A sister of local harvest, food routes is a great resource for information on the importance of local eating and connecting with others to encourage local food

www.eatwild.com

Your best bet for finding farmers raising animals the way they were meant to be raised.

www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/interactives/farmaid/

This site details the Post's year long investigation of the abuses, inequities, and fallacies of the U.S. Federal Farm Program

www.foodnews.org/fulldataset.php

If you have limited funds to spend on organic produce, this site can tell you where you will make the most impact in terms of reducing your pesticide exposure.

www.prairielandcsa.org

If you want to learn more about CSA locally or join a local CSA

[www.fruitedplain.org/information/localfood/](http://www fruitedplain.org/information/localfood/)

A good guide for local food that will eventually be moving to the Prairieland website in the coming months

Films:

The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil (Community Service Inc. 2006)

A look at Cuba's transition from highly mechanized and fossil fuel-dependent agriculture in the face of slashed energy imports. 53 min.

The Price of Bounty (University of Illinois 1992 distribution halted in 1994)

A balanced look at the environmental costs of agriculture in Illinois in the late 1980s and early 1990s

from the points of view of environmentalists and farmers. This film was produced with fertilizer checkoff money (i.e. fertilizer tax revenues) and drew fire from the fertilizer industry and the then Illinois Secretary of Agriculture who called for the firing of those who were involved with the project within the U of I College of Agriculture. 56 min.

Strong Roots, Fragile Farms (Farm Aid, National Council of Churches 2002)

Strong Roots puts human faces on the complex problem of globalization as it looks at the struggles of family farmers in Iowa, North Carolina, as well as the Phillipines and Mexico. 58 min.

The Future of Food (Lily Films 2004)

An examination of genetically engineered crops and their impact on the future of agriculture cast against an environment increasing control of multinational corporations. The Future of Food looks at both the unsuspecting shoppers buying unlabeled genetically engineered foods in grocery stores, as well farmers from Canada to Mexico. It also explores alternatives to large-scale industrial agriculture, in the form of organic and sustainable agriculture. 88 min. (<http://www.thefutureoffood.com/>)

The Real Dirt on Farmer John (2005, 2007)

A moving look at a community supported agriculture farms history and struggles, as its farmer tries to find his identity and place in his community amidst an ocean of conventional thinking and conventional farming. 82 min.

<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/realdirt/> and <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0439774/>

The Plow that Broke the Plains (1934)

At its core a propaganda film, this documentary produced by the U.S. Resettlement Administration had one of the tallest orders of the day, to convince the desperately poor settlers of the drought- and plow-ravaged Wheat Belt to move to greener, albeit via Colorado River water, pastures of the West with the few pennies they had left to their names. At the same time, it could not disparage the achievements of “modern” agriculture. This film is a heartbreaking look at the human, animal, and environmental costs of the Dust Bowl, brought on by inappropriate land use, resource destruction, and the inequity of sharecropping. 25 min.

Curriculums for Groups and Individuals:

Just Eating? Practicing Our Faith at the Table (Presbyterian Hunger Program 2005)

Just Eating? is a seven-session curriculum for congregations that explores the relationship between the way we eat and the way we live. Using scripture, prayer, and stories from the local and global community Just Eating? explores five key aspects of our relationship with food. As Presbyterian Hunger Program staffer Andrew Kang Bartlett says, "We can just eat as a mundane activity done without mindfulness, or we can eat justly and explore the relationship between our food and justice. Eating can be a vehicle for practicing our faith."