

October 22, 2008

WHO IS MICHAEL POLLAN?

Michael Pollan is the Knight Professor of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the author of "The Botany of Desire," "The Omnivore's Dilemma," and, most recently, "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto."

TIMES ARE CHANGING:

"Whatever we may have liked about the era of cheap, oil-based food, it is drawing to a close. Even if we were willing to continue paying the environmental or public-health price, we're not going to have the cheap energy (or the water) needed to keep the system going, much less expand production. But as is so often the case, a crisis provides opportunity for reform, and the current food crisis presents opportunities that must be seized.

MESSAGE TO THE NEXT PRESIDENT:

"First, your administration's food policy must strive to provide a healthful diet for all our people; this means focusing on the quality and diversity (and not merely the quantity) of the calories that

American agriculture produces and American eaters consume. Second, your policies should aim to improve the resilience, safety and security of our food supply. Among other things, this means promoting regional food economies both in America and around the world. And lastly, your policies need to reconceive agriculture as part of the solution to environmental problems like climate change.

Most of the problems our food system faces today are because of its reliance on fossil fuels, and to the extent that our policies wring the oil out of the system and replace it with the energy of the sun, those policies will simultaneously improve the state of our health, our environment and our security.

Steps to take:

"I. Resolarize The American Farm:

Sunlight nourishes the grasses and grains, the plants nourish the animals, the animals then nourish the soil, which in turn nourishes the next season's grasses and grains. Animals on pasture can

also harvest their own feed and dispose of their own waste — all without our help or fossil fuel.



II. Re-regionalize the Food System:

Resolarizing the food system means building the infrastructure for a regional food economy — one that can support diversified farming and, by shortening the food chain, reduce the amount of fossil fuel in the American diet. A decentralized food system offers a great many other benefits as well. Food eaten closer to where it is grown will be fresher and require less processing, making it more nutritious. Whatever may be lost in efficiency by localizing food production is gained in resilience: regional food systems can better withstand all kinds of shocks.

III. Rebuild America's Food Culture:

Imagine . . .

Knowing where your food comes from, who is producing it, and their ethics and farming practices

Working in support of the health of your local community food shed where energy stays local and supports our rural economy

In the end, shifting the American diet from a foundation of imported fossil fuel to local sunshine will require changes in our daily lives, which by now are deeply implicated in the economy and culture of fast, cheap and easy food. We need to use all the tools at our disposal to promote a new culture of food that can undergird your sun-food agenda. Indeed, it enlists all of us in this great cause by turning food consumers into part-time producers, reconnecting the American people with the American land and demonstrating that we need not choose between the welfare of our families and the health of the environment — that eating less oil and more sunlight will redound to the benefit of both."

TAKE PART IN IT!

o See Michael Pollan when he visits the Wood River Valley on November 13th at Place. For tickets, contact the Sun Valley Center for the Art

o Come to Taste of Idaho's Bounty on November 14th to help support local farmers and producers. AtNextStage from 4-8pm. Ketchum.

o Read the entire article, "Farmer in Chief" online at www.nytimes.com