

**Show Transcript
Deconstructing Dinner
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JON STEINMAN: And welcome to Deconstructing Dinner – produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. My name is Jon Steinman. Here on Deconstructing Dinner, we take apart our breakfast, our lunch, our dinner and everything in between, and take a closer look at how these daily food choices impact ourselves, our communities, and our planet. For more information on this program or to comment on the program itself, you can visit the Deconstructing Dinner website at www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

Today on Deconstructing Dinner we will hear three incredibly passionate and inspiring speeches conducted by some of the most visionary individuals who have spoken on the topic of food. One of the advantages of acquiring information through listening to others speak, is the ease at which sentiment and intensity can be heard. Television even takes this advantage a step further by combining both voice and visual in conveying a given message. On the other hand, while the messages passed on via television can be further enhanced by images, very often, these messages can be equally skewed as a result of these very images. While on the topic, we can look at print media for one, which poses the greatest difficulty of all in expressing emotion and animation. The greatest writers are those that can achieve this emotion, this intensity and passion simply through their writing style. But then there is radio and recorded sound – a medium through which all that is able to be heard are the words being spoken by the mind that conceived them.

But regardless of the medium through which we are receiving information, too often this information is relayed to us in the form of soundbites or jargon – just enough to fill up a one minute segment on the evening news, or a ten word quote in the daily newspaper headlines, and in many cases, this news can quite simply become entertainment. We could spend the next hour debating the question of “what is news?” but it could be argued that news is only news if it directly affects the person receiving it. And by affecting that person, this news possesses the ability to inspire and perhaps invoke a response. Sit down and listen to someone speak on a topic that they are passionate about, and there presents an opportunity to be inspired, to be moved, and perhaps encourage us to change our direction. On the topic of food, this is news that affects each and every one of us.

In relation to the food that is available to us, our ability to spontaneously change direction may seem more limited than we would perhaps prefer. And as is the case on this program Deconstructing Dinner, the barriers and limitations that prevent us from freely choosing how our food is produced, grown and made available to us, is and will be exposed regularly. On the other hand, these barriers presented on Deconstructing Dinner are only exposed alongside the many alternatives that do exist, but may in some cases seem out of reach to the passing eye.

The three speakers we will hear on today's broadcast are those very inspiring voices that along with exposing the frightening state of our food supply, may also help encourage us to step back from our daily routine and acknowledge that there are in fact more efficient, economical and ecological methods by which we can purchase and consume food. The common thread tying these three speakers together, is that they all will be speaking of agriculture – the foundation of the food we eat on a daily basis – a foundation mind you that our culture here in Canada and North America is increasingly becoming disconnected with.

increase music and fade out

The three recordings that will be presented to you today on Deconstructing Dinner are all courtesy of the Bioneers project, also known as the Collective Heritage Institute – a non-profit organization formed in 1990 that promotes practical environmental solutions and innovative social strategies for restoring the Earth and communities. One of their initiatives is the Bioneers Radio Series, which features interviews and presentations that take place at the annual Bioneers Conferences.

During the last half hour of today's broadcast will be hearing speeches by Michael Ableman of The Centre for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens and author of the books From the Good Earth, On Good Land, and his most recent title - Fields of Plenty, and we will also hear a speech given by the incredibly funny yet serious, Joel Salatin – a Virginia-based third-generation alternative farmer and author of the recent book Holy Cows and Hog Heaven. Again, we will hear those speeches in the last half hour of the show.

But for the first half hour we will take a listen to the Bioneers recording entitled Organic and Beyond – Toward the De-Industrialization of Agriculture and this recording features a speech by Andrew Kimbrell who was once named by Utne Reader as one of the world's leading visionaries. Andrew is the Executive Director of the Washington, DC-based Center for Food Safety - a non-profit public interest and environmental organization, which was established in 1997 for the purpose of challenging harmful food production technologies and promoting sustainable alternatives. Courtesy of the Bioneers radio series, here is the Organic and Beyond recording featuring Andrew Kimbrell speaking on the Deindustrialization of Agriculture.

NEIL HARVEY: Industrial high tech agriculture, a cold evil? What are the images we associate with farming nowadays? In TV ads we see rows to the horizon of golden corn reaching to the sky. Fat, happy, cows grazing contentedly. A salt of the earth farmer on a giant combine harvesting amber waves of grain. What we seldom see are the plumes of chemical run-off expanding down rivers, closing beaches and smothering coral reefs. Lagoons of animal feces on factory farms the size of small cities. Pyres of diseased cows burning, while traumatized farmers weep.

Industrial High Tech Agriculture is arguably the single most destructive human activity to the environment, and to farmers. But it's also in the early stages of a global transformation to organic and ecological practices. At stake are global food security, the environment, public health, and the lives of half the world's people who make their living off the land.

Andrew Kimbrell is a public interest lawyer who's been on the forefront of tackling the most fundamental issues facing our civilization. In 1997 Kimbrell established the Centre for Food Safety to look at technologies impact on food and farming. He edited the recently published book Fatal Harvest. Fatal Harvest details both the catastrophic consequences of industrial farming and the promise of organic and beyond.

In this program we explore organic and beyond toward the de-industrialization of agriculture with Andrew Kimbrell. I'm Neil Harvey, I'll be your host. Welcome to the Bioneers: Revolution From the Heart of Nature. Andrew Kimbrell spoke at a recent Bioneers conference.

ANDREW KIMBRELL: In the introduction to Fatal Harvest, I say that the industrial food has not just brought us to an environmental crisis but also a moral crisis. And in his wonderfully written essay, Wendell Barry has, the first paragraph, I'm just going to read to you. It really brings us to this moral crisis that we're in. Wendell says this, he says "One of the primary results - and one of the primary needs - of industrialism is the separation of people and places and products from their histories. To the extent that we participate in the industrial economy, we do not know the histories of our families or our habitats, or of our meals. This is an economy, and in fact a culture, of the one-night stand. 'I had a good time' says industrial lover 'but don't ask me my last name.' Just so, the industrial eater says to the svelte industrial hog, 'we'll be together for breakfast. I just don't want to see you before then, and I won't care to remember you afterwards.'"

So I wanted the context of our work, all of our work together in organic and beyond, or at least explore with you the moral context of this.

NEIL HARVEY: The rationale for industrial food production has been that it's more efficient and productive. But according to the landmark study on alternative agriculture, by The National Academy of Sciences, small and medium sized farms are more efficient than giant industrial

super farms. The National Academy also found that smaller farms are equally and more productive and certainly more beneficial to the environment.

As more and more harms resulting from industrial food production become evident it's becoming clear, Kimbrell points out, that imposing the simplified machine factory model onto the complex biology of farming simply does not work. Nature has its own operating instructions time tested, by four billion years of evolution. This is just one glimpse of organic and beyond, the food revolution that Andrew Kimbrell supports. It directly addresses the ethical distancing and cold evil that results from large scale technology based food production. By stressing a return to a ecologically informed agriculture, an agriculture of relationships.

ANDREW KIMBRELL: About thirty years ago, I was in New York City, and part of the anti-Vietnam war movement, and I saw a play, and the play was called *The Rescue* and it was very badly acted in the sort of earnest acting that was de rigueur at the time, and the plot was pretty cliché, but as the play went on I got more and more absorbed in it. It was about a pilot, an American pilot who was doing a bombing mission over North Vietnam and bombing various villages and targets, and he gets shot down, and the play begins with him sort of limping off with the broken leg, and he gets taken in by a North Vietnamese farmer who defends him and because the North Vietnamese army brigade comes by and he's not there, and the angry neighbour whose farm has been destroyed, and some relatives been killed and he protects the young American pilot who slowly recovers. And to give some romantic interest, the farmer has a beautiful daughter and over a period of time, the young American pilot really comes to appreciate, he works on the farm, and appreciate the farmer and falls deeply in love with the daughter. When a group of green berets comes in, they actually have broken across a national boundary in North Vietnam to save the young pilot, and there's a greeting when the Americans greet each other and the young man does say "You know as much as I love it here, I do want to go home." They say "One problem, we've broken international law to get here, you have to kill the farmer and his daughter, we have to kill them as security risks" and he says "You can't do that, they protected me. They're not going to say anything they protected me for months." And when he sees the orders are intractable, the young pilot says "Well at least let me do it myself." So he takes them into a room, he pulls his revolver and after a short period of time he shoots himself.

I remember afterwards, there had just been the bombing of Cambodia, and so the coffee house conversation afterwards was everyone talking about the politics. But I remained just completely involved and absorbed in this dilemma which subsequently I've called the pilots dilemma. I mean here is a young man who is thought of as even a hero for dropping ordinance as they call it at 30,000 feet on targets killing men, women, and children, destroying their lives. But face to face, after he'd had a relationship with these people, he killed himself rather than escape and kill them. And over a period of time I've come to believe that this pilots dilemma is not some unique dilemma of this pilot but something that we all face in a technological system. It's really at the

basis of the moral problem with our industrial food system in so much the rest of our industrial system.

I've never heard the word evil used more than I've heard it in the last year. We have Axis of Evil and every version of that evil. And indeed there is evil out there, but I think we tend to concentrate and I've never heard a sermon yet that didn't concentrate on a kind of a hot evil, on an evil of people who are psychologically, pathological or weak, or morally compromised and we certainly have. There's no shortage of greed, lust, anger through terrorism. We know the prejudices of hate, homophobia, and sexism, and racism and the horrible damage they cause.

But now, thirty years later as I look at the world and I look at global warming and I look at genetic engineering and I look at industrial systems of energy and agriculture, I'm convinced that the real evil of our times is not this individual hot evil we continue to concentrate on, despite the real suffering it causes, but rather a cold evil, an evil that is created not by individuals but by the technological system in which we all live.

I've been in a lot of corporate boardrooms and they don't do high fives every time that they have a policy that destroys people or their environment. The Institute for Policy Studies came out with a study on structural adjustment programs. As you all know The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund grant huge grants to third world countries which are often very large industrial projects and then when the debt comes due usually through corruption or just due to the fact that these projects don't work, they can't repay that debt.

So they force structural adjustments, a lovely cold evil term, on these countries, which means they cut their environmental policies, their human health and welfare policies, their education policy, unemployment insurance, all these things are cut. And IPS said that because of these structural adjustment programs sixteen thousand children die each day, sixteen thousand a day in the developing world.

What if there were terrorists or a sniper that was killing sixteen thousand people a day? (applause) Where are our preachers, where are our ethicists? At this slaughter of cold evil, this grey eminence, this part of our system?

NEIL HARVEY: Andrew Kimbrell says that the industrial food system is a classic example of this technological distancing, this cold evil. For instance, as the family farm has fallen into the modern mechanized, chemical based food factory each year in the United States, seventy six million people now get food poisoning from a food system more dangerous than it was fifty years ago. Mad cow disease continues to spread world-wide, and foot and mouth disease in England led to the slaughter of almost five million farm animals.

Industrial agriculture makes it frightening to imagine a farmer putting his or her hands in the soil, or actually touching a cow or a chicken. The technology and pressures of a globalized corporate economy seem to have rendered the art of growing food into a highly dangerous endeavour, to the farmer, to the customer the farmer feeds, and to the earth. Where did we go so wrong? Again.
Andrew Kimbrell

ANDREW KIMBRELL: I'm old enough to have been brought up with great minds like oh, I don't know, Better Living through Chemistry huh? And Progress is our Middle Name. And Marty Mellon, a wonderful scientist who showed me this full size Life Magazine ad that said DDT is good for *me* and it showed a farm wife tripping out of her little you know farm house, and she's singing it and the media has lots of little e's on it with 8th notes and 16th notes, and it says DDT is good for me, it's good for the cows, it's good for the farm.

Anyone here remember the Jetsons? You remember what the Jetsons ate? Pills! If you want to know the Reductio ad absurdum of industrial agriculture is that we're all going to be eating pills. The artificial is better is pills and you want to know what they drank, that yellow stuff they drank which we all assume was Tang because after all that was the drink of the astronauts. (laughter)

But this artificial is better, the massive uses of chemicals, the view that nature is something to be as Bacon said so many centuries before, "A whore who needs to be tamed." That view, that mechanical view of agriculture, really survived after World War II for almost fifty years. And one of the reasons that it survived, one of the reasons cold evil of industrial agriculture has been with us is the fact that our demographic changed remarkably at that time from a population, the majority of which worked in the soil, and became a primarily urbanized culture where we lined up in supermarkets for slick packaged foods, and as Wendell said, his history, we knew very, very little about.

And in this distance, in this distance, the huge eco-crimes and the social crimes, the industrial agriculture system thrived. It was their crucial cover, this distance and the crimes were there. During this period of time, we lost two million farms and seven million farmers, and the recent census said by 2008, per capita, farming will still have the greatest job loss of any sector in the United States economy, and as we know these aren't just statistics. Last year, the University of Kentucky came out with a study that showed in the Kentucky, North and South Carolina area over 1,100 farmers committed suicide. In Nebraska every year, we're seeing between 50 and 80 suicides. So by the way when people tell you industrial food is cheap, how do you assay into that price the loss of farmers, the farm communities, the tragedies in each one of these families. Seven million farmers, two million farms, and of course it isn't just the farmers who were destroyed in this hidden onslaught, top soil was lost at seventeen times greater rate that could be replaced. We lost 75% as some of you know, of our crop diversity 97% of our vegetable diversity.

And despite Rachel Carson's Silent Spring, which this is the 40th anniversary of it by the way, more than seven hundred million birds become ill each year because of our pesticide use with over sixty million dying. 70% of the species on the endangered list are there because of farming and ranching so when we call it Fatal Harvest it's not rhetorical.

JON STEINMAN: You're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. We are presently hearing a speech given by Andrew Kimbrell – the Executive Director of the Washington DC-based Centre for Food Safety. This recording is courtesy of the Bioneers radio series. In continuing on with today's broadcast, here is the second half of the Bioneers recording featuring Andrew Kimbrell, as he speaks on the deindustrialization of agriculture.

NEIL HARVEY: Over the past thirty years an alternative system of agriculture has emerged and organic farming is showing itself superior both in the field and in the marketplace. The documented benefits of organic and ecological agriculture are undeniable. Organic production reduces topsoil erosion by over 95%. It produces from 200 to 1,000% higher output. Organic crops contain higher nutrition, they resist drought better, and are less prone to insect damage. Organic production is superior at conserving bio-diversity and communities surrounded by small populous farms have markedly healthier, local economies, than those around corporate super farms.

And of course the bottom line is that organic food is currently a 25 billion dollar market, the only high growth food sector at a galloping 20 to 30% a year, and the number of European countries will be 30 to 50% organic by 2010. The United Nations now recommends organic farming as a development vehicle, because organic programs in Africa have increased yields by 50 to 100%, and have brought local food security.

Growing organically, mostly means not using synthetic fertilizers and toxic chemicals, and Kimbrell believes organic is just the beginning. This path includes large scale shifts, such as that in Germany, which recently adopted an official national policy to, in their words, de-industrialize agriculture. But Kimbrell says that agribusiness never saw these popular movements coming.

ANDREW KIMBRELL: They assumed, I think, that we were inevitably on a path toward the Jetson's with that little tablet in the middle of our table. And maybe it did start with Rachel Carson who, forty years ago fighting cancer herself, wrote Silent Spring. And she began to make the connections, this distancing, this cold evil they were thriving on.

Ms. Carson began to say "No we're not going to accept that distance, this is the chemicals that we're using," and in a lovely sentence of Rachel Carson she says, "Every time we substitute

something artificial for something natural, we retard the spiritual growth of humankind.”
(applause)

And I think in that sentence she encapsulates the moral and spiritual beauty of the work that we do. Of course there wasn't just her alone. I remember having the privilege of meeting, and working briefly with Cesar Chavez and he was able to make those connections wasn't he? He was telling every consumer out there, everytime you reach for a grape, you need to think about the people that picked that grape and the conditions they're living in. You cannot just pick it as an alienated consumer; you have to think about that. And people did, and then within a couple of years here in Maine, and then here in California, the organic food movement began. Now, as you know, it's the fastest growing sector in US agriculture, a multi-billion dollar industry, tens of thousands of farmers involved. We're also not just having an organic movement, we have a whole 'beyond organic' movement where people are working on farming and marketing products, as so many of you are, that are local and appropriately scaled and humane, socially just, biologically diverse. And one of the things that is part of my dream that we have in Fatal Harvest is a merging of agriculture with the wild that protects wildlife habitats. (applause)

They did not, they did not predict this but now that they've seen it they're coming after it. The organic and beyond movement is being threatened. The reason we call it the organic and beyond movement is because it has two goals for us. One is to protect the organic standards as we currently see them, and as a basement, maybe even a sub-basement of American agriculture depending on what you think about the standards, but definitely the floor. And above that we need to build this beyond organic house, so we protect the standards and evolve the ethic. That's what we're trying to do.

When I was younger, and I know so many of you people, my comrades out there. We always thought eventually E.F. Schumacher, that wonderful prophet and great man was going to be right. We knew that technology was no longer going to be able to support and sustain life. We knew that technology was destroying life. So we're going to have to de-evolve our technology to appropriate technology that will fit our living systems. It was inevitable. What we didn't realize was that they had another plan. Let's not change technology so it fits life. Let's change life so it fits technology.

So if you spray too many herbicides on your crops what happens? You destroy the crops right? Monsanto had a really interesting idea in this entire mindset, this worldview. They said no, no, no. We're not going to de-evolve our herbicide use so it fits the crops. We're going to change the crops so that they can withstand any amount of our Roundup we want to put on them. And that's at 50% of your genetically engineered crops out there are created by Monsanto to withstand any amount you want to put on of Roundup.

NEIL HARVEY: Kimbrell sees two major threats to the organic and beyond movement. One is the fact that agribusiness companies have planted genetically modified crops across the United States and elsewhere, spreading genetic pollution into the environment which is also contaminating organic crops seed stocks. The second threat is corporate. The resistance by huge food and chemical companies against the rise of organic food and farming. In many cases, food giants are now taking over the burgeoning organic business and trying to weaken the strict certification standards for organic crops.

ANDREW KIMBRELL: They're stacking the national organic standard board against us. We just sued them on Wednesday for not putting peer review panel into what they're doing. So this is what we need to defend, the corporate takeover that's being sponsored right now by the Bush Administration. And that's the biological and the corporate threat to our future. And ultimately I think that we need not only to fight these legal battles and fight the biotechnology takeover, but I think we also have to change consciousness, and I think there are a few ways that we can do that, very briefly, and I'll finish with this. One major step is I'm sick of the word consumer. (applause) Fires consume, they used to call tuberculosis consumption because it consumed the bodies of it's' victims. You know whether we like it or not, believe me, I don't always stand up to this standard myself. But whether we like it or not we're not consumers we're creators. Every decision we make, the food we grow, the food we buy, but not just the food, the music we listen to, the music we make. Everything we do we're actually creating a new future, a different future, good or bad, for the earth, for ourselves, for the future generations.

We need to take that responsibility. Really the only way we're going to be able to breach this distance, and the one thing I've learned in this regard is that there really is no healing without relationship. This is hard for some of us guys in therapy by the way ladies out there, it's hard dealing with this sometimes. It took me a long time to figure this out, but there really is no healing without relationship, and when we apply that to the food system that we're looking at. That is the agenda of organic and beyond. How can we create a relationship between all of us and the food we eat, you know the creators to the farmers. Each and every one, you know the wonderful CSA's we're looking at out there, the farmers markets, that's all about creating a new relationship. Remember our pilot's dilemma that I started with? In a way his suicide was his redemption because it created relationship. We could not commit these crimes if we were truly in relationship, we couldn't. (applause)

So I think that the organic and beyond movement then yes, it is an environmental movement, and yes, eating is a political movement, a political decision, but I also think it's an extremely important moral and spiritual battle that we're facing against the governing evil of our time and we're defeating the alienation and distance of this technological cold evil with the one antidote that it could not handle and that is relationship. Thank you very much. (applause)

NEIL HARVEY: Andrew Kimbrell, the editor of the book Fatal Harvest, who spoke at a recent Bioneers conference.

If the antidote to the alienation and distance of the technological cold evil, which Andrew Kimbrell speaks of, is building relationship, what might we do? The Bioneers suggest we look to nature, that going organic, going local, and going small is all about creating relationships. The biological reality is that farming needs to be connected to place and localized food sheds they say. The cultural reality is that there are no better stewards than the Jeffersonian vision of small farmers who live on the land and are responsible to it. Local community food systems provide the only real food security, while also affording an economic flow that keeps money in rural communities.

In ten years will we look back and say yes, we knew these things, and we acted to assure that future? If the answer is yes will it be because of visionaries like Andrew Kimbrell? Organic and beyond toward the de-industrialization of agriculture.

JON STEINMAN: You're tuned in to Deconstructing Dinner, produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia.

That last clip concludes the speech given by Andrew Kimbrell of the Washington D.C.-based Center for Food Safety. This recording was courtesy of the Bioneers radio series, and you can check out more on the series at www.bioneers.org, and you can also check out Andrew Kimbrell's Center for Food Safety at www.centerforfoodsafety.org, and that's the American spelling of center.

And on the topic of websites, you can also visit the Deconstructing Dinner website at www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner where all weekly broadcasts are archived. During this next half hour of Deconstructing Dinner, we will continue on with hearing two more speeches courtesy of the Bioneers radio series. These two speeches can be found on the recording Soil and Soul – the Future of Farming. And this first speech features British Columbian farmer Michael Ableman who is the founder of the Centre for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens, located in Southern California. Michael is most recently the author of Fields of Plenty – a farmer's journey in search of real food and the people who grow it.

Here's the Bioneers recording Soil and Soul featuring Michael Ableman.

MICHAEL TOMS: The average American family spends 11% of its income on food. Which means that Americans enjoy spending less money percentage-wise of what they eat than most of their neighbours around the world. However, research shows that cheap food in America comes at a cost. To keep beef, pork, and chicken prices low in the supermarket and to maintain low

milk, bread and vegetable prices requires something more than just squeezing the farmer's profits.

What are the hidden costs of agribusiness with its chemical dependent mega farms? Poor nutrition is one. Scientific studies tell us we have plenty to eat, but what we are getting is less and less nutritional value. Consequently physical and mental illness connected to poor nutrition are on the rise in the United States. These illnesses cost billions of dollars to treat. Soil degradation, toxic pesticides, livestock waste runoff, and biological contamination from genetically modified organisms are just some of the added costs of the techno-industrial agribusiness approach, which serves up a hamburger, fries, soda combo for under \$2.

In response the Bioneers present evidence of a rapidly growing "eco" nomical food and farming movement. In this program Michael Ableman and Joel Salatin, express the soul that is returning to farming the land. Brilliant new approaches of bringing food to the world are being revealed and these methods support farmers, consumer health, and the earth.

Join us for the next half hour as we explore Soil and Soul - the Future of Farming. My name is Michael Toms; I'll be your host. Welcome to the Bioneers - Revolution From the Heart of Nature.

Michael Ableman is the founder and director of the centre for urban agriculture at Fairview Gardens in Santa Barbara, California. A working farm and non-profit community education centre, that is an important national model for urban agriculture and farmland preservation, He's the author of From the Good Earth: A Celebration of Growing Food Around the World, and On Good Land: the Autobiography of an Urban Farm.

He spoke to a Bioneers conference audience.

MICHAEL ABLEMAN: For the first time in many years, I worked alone in the fields. No telephones ringing, no visitors to show around, no interviews to give, no students or apprentices to instruct, no lectures or classes to teach, no staff to give direction, and the best part, no meetings to attend.

And while the return to pure physical work has had its challenges, it was like coming home, returning to my roots, finding my way back, which brought me to farming in the first place. The love of land and good food and the desire to share that with others. Pretty simple stuff. My hands are fully callused again and the calluses on my brain have begun to soften, allowing my mind to slow down to the quiet rhythms of the land.

Now this change has not come with some difficulty. After years of living a very public life, I suddenly found myself in a very quiet, very private space. At first it was pure bliss, the quiet and the simplicity were incredible. But after a few months the thoughts and the questions started to creep in. What gives me the right to be off on my own private land and doing my own thing? Don't I have a responsibility to the world? How does this little farm on an island fit into my broader worldview? And I realized that I was carrying around a very common misconception. That activism is only manifested in the street protests, political challenges of public campaigns. But I am coming to believe that my quiet time on the land rebuilding soils, engaging in community life, providing food for my neighbourhood, is as political and as powerful as all of my years of more frantic public life. (applause)

Now this summer my twenty year old son was with us on the farm and I cannot describe the sense of deep satisfaction and fulfillment it was to have him working next to me in the fields. To watch him patiently explain the qualities of fresh dug potatoes or green garlic to customers at the farmers market. To discover that all of these years he had really been paying attention. And I remembered that another form of activism is in how we raise our children. (applause)

During this time I also took a break from the news aside from the island paper which focuses on local news and events, I did not listen to the radio, watch TV or read a major newspaper for five and a half months. (applause) I guess that's something to be proud of.

Remarkably instead of being out of touch, the further I dropped out the more I seemed to tune in, the more quiet time I spent on my land and within my local community, the more *real* information I seem to be receiving. I discovered that important news does not only come from CNN or NBC or NPR, it comes as I walk my land, meet people at the mailbox, or the hardware store, or across the table at the farmers market. Now I heard about the big stories. George W's fumbblings around the globe, the battle over the arctic refuge, the economic slowdown, but in a strange way it seemed more important for me to know that my friend who farms down the road got a good crop of potatoes. That my neighbours wife had her baby and that all is well. That our island community has created its own currency with pictures of Orca whales and local farms and farmers instead of queens and dead presidents. And that it is unified, and protecting its watershed, its forests and its farmland. Until Tuesday, September 11th. A young man who arrived to help us harvest gave us the news. Yanked back into reality, I found myself looking over the edge, contemplating how and why America could be hated so much, considering the repercussions of revenge affecting as it only can the innocent, creating more suffering and perpetuating a far greater cycle of hatred and violence. I also considered the incredible symbolism, that the centre's of commerce and defense could so instantly be reduced to dust and rubble. And I am amazed that a government that has sponsored terrorism in many parts of the world and has supplied the tools and the knowledge to carry it out, would only ask who, instead of why? (applause)

It is strange that through all the tragedy and the loss of life and pain and destruction of recent events that I've had this distinct feeling that something very positive could come out of this. Catastrophic events can bring people together, force them to re-evaluate life's priorities and create new perspective. It is terrible that it came in this form but in our headlong high speed worship of technology and economy, our blind quest for more we seriously needed a reality check. They tell us that we need to get back to normal, back to our frenetic, kinetic, hyped up sped up pace. And it's as if we've all become cogs in the wheel of Federal Express, fax machines, and instant internet. The scary thing is it never seems to be fast enough. And yet, every time I plant a seed and I see it emerge, it slows me down and allows me once again to experience one of the great mysteries of life. On some level, each time I cannot help but be renewed.

And this is why I farm. My back gets sore, and its hot or its cold or its wet, I'm tired and my brain starts to add up how many of the same boxes I've filled and lifted, and put away and filled and lifted year after year. How many trucks I've loaded and unloaded. Rows cultivated, peaches thinned, carrots bunched. But some impulse far more powerful than my rational mind keeps me going cycle after cycle. Worn out and exhausted by the time winter arrives, but thoroughly excited to begin anew each spring. With minor on interruption I've has this experience over and over for the last twenty seven years. I feel pretty lucky. I can plant, and nurture, and harvest, and share and enjoy each day the bounty of the land right outside my backdoor. But even as I am having this blessed experience, I often feel a bit of sadness. I'm aware that most of our society no longer has this opportunity. No longer knows what it is like to pull a carrot from the ground, or eat the heart out of a watermelon still warm from the sun. Or munch on beans that are so fresh, they explode in your mouth when you eat them.

There is a different kind of nourishment, less tangible than the carrots and the beans and the melons, that being connected with the land provides. A deeper, soulful nourishment that I think our society is desperately longing for. It cannot be had from food that travels an average thirteen hundred miles from the field to the plate. It can't be absorbed from a package, or from the shelves at the supermarket or from anonymous ingredients floating out of context. It cannot be enhanced or disguised or manufactured. Even the most complex preparations, the most sublime sauces cannot bring to life what is not already there. The kind of nourishment I'm describing is the result of understanding connections. Knowing the person who grew the food, knowing that their family was paid a living wage, knowing that the land is well cared for and protected from development, knowing that the ingredients have not been assaulted with an array of chemistry, and that it hasn't been irradiated, or that its genetic makeup hasn't been messed with.

Organic growers and eaters must now renew their commitment to the values that inspired our movement, the movement started by asking questions. How is this grown? What materials were used in its production? We now need to start asking questions again. New questions, like how far does food travel from the field to the plate? And at what cost in terms of energy, fossil fuel, and

food quality? Whose hands grow and harvest our produce? and are they paid a living wage? Does the farmer or the community own the land? Or will we rebuild soils only to lose land to real estate development? How do we make pure food available to all? not just those who can afford it. (applause) How do we educate consumers and future farmers? The USDA, Codex, Iphone, the FAO in Washington, cannot answer these questions for us. Nor can they place a definition on the values they reflect. For they are spiritual values and rely on a system of regulation that far exceeds any that can be legislated. I like to call it community certification. It's based on some old fashioned values called honour and trust. It's dependent on the most vital aspect of a healthy food system, relationships, local, biological, interpersonal, ecological. And ultimately we've got to find new ways to talk about what we do and we may have to use different words. As invested as we may think we are in organic, let's not be afraid to let the word go. For when any movement becomes institutionalized and industrialized and globalized, it's time to move on. (applause)

Now we noticed a lot of flag waving driving down, and I suppose it provides some sense of belonging to some. But it seems to me that if you really love your country then it would be more useful to join in the work that some many folks here are a part of. Protect and restore some wildness, support local agriculture, plant a garden. After all what good is a country and a flag if there is no more fertile soil, no ancient forest, no clean water, no pure food. Those who work to protect and restore these things are the real patriots in my mind. (applause)

MICHAEL TOMS: Michael Abelman, the author of *From the Good Earth: A Celebration of Growing Food Around the World*. And *On Good Land: The Autobiography of an Urban Farm*.

JON STEIMAN: You're tuned in to *Deconstructing Dinner*, produced in the studios of Kootenay Co-op Radio in Nelson, British Columbia. That last recording was a speech given by British Columbian farmer Michael Abelman at a recent Bioneers conference. The recording was courtesy of the Bioneers Radio series. For more information on Michael Ableman's Centre for Urban Agriculture at Fairview Gardens or his recent book *Fields of Plenty*, you can visit the *Deconstructing Dinner* website at www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

In concluding today's broadcast, I have one more speech here by the incredibly funny Joel Salatin, who although is amusing to listen to, speaks on a topic that is as serious as the energy crisis that faces our planet and agriculture. Joel speaks of the future of farming, and uses his personal experience as a third-generation farmer located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to convey a message that concerns us all. Joel's speech does an excellent job in awakening our senses to the realities behind the unsustainable methods by which the vast majority of our food here in Canada and across the globe is produced.

Here's the continuation of the Bioneers recording *Soil and Soul* featuring Joel Salatin.

MICHAEL TOMS: Joel Salatin is a third generation alternative farmer for Virginia Shenandoah Valley, who works the land with his mother, wife and two children. He has innovated extraordinary systems of restorative farming. For example some of the new equipment he works with on his farm are chicken tractors, egg mobiles, and pig tractors. He spoke at a recent Bioneers conference.

JOEL SALATIN: It's fun to go down to the feed store and you know you buy hog nipples, and the guy says, "I thought you were into profit wire culture don't you know there's no money in hogs," and the guys says "These aren't hogs these are tractors." And you know he kinds of scratched his head and says "Does these things have steering wheels on them?" They grunt and they make their own manure at .30 cents a pound for John Deere green and it ain't too bad I'll tell ya. So we buy these pigs for .50 cents a pound and keep em for a hundred days and sell em for \$500 you know pretty good profit. But the beauty is here, that these pigs here work for free, they don't need their oil changed, the parts don't wear out, what a retirement program, when you're done with them you eat them. So it's a fantastic system, completely changed the economies, and a lot of people say "Well why don't you try to get all of this benefit out of your manure? You go to a lot of pains to compost it and all that stuff." I say "Well you better believe it, because every time I see a cow pie I see dollar signs." That's the way I always look.

And part of the problem in this country is that we've treated our soil like dirt, and we call our manure, waste. And it ought to be called black gold or something. And these waste measurement experts ought to have little gold medallions around their neck, or gold whatever. But this is our problem, and so what we want to do is, see the weak link on your farm and my farm. You know the weak link is not the latest genetics, it's not the latest machinery, it's not the latest gimmick, it's not the latest anything. It's getting control of the resources we already have. Because the answer for your farm and mine is not at the bank, it's not down at the extension office its right between your ears. That's my point. Are you with me? And what holds us back is between our ears. And if we can break out of the box, and start thinking creatively, the answers are right there and they don't cost us anything.

So when we're creating a landscape and we need to think about the next generation, and creating a system and letting the pigs do the work. It really changes it. And then come into next year and plant corn, and let the hogs, hog it down, so while everybody else is paying for diesel equipment to come in and clear off the land to make this conversion we're just getting \$3,000 an acre with pigs and everything, and then you've got pasture. And you've never done any diesel fuel, you've never flattened any tractors, and you know even it didn't make any economic sense it's a lot more fun to watch your kids put a five gallon bucket over the snout of a 400 pound hog and ride him through the corn, than it is to watch dad try to get the tire fixed on the tractor. You with me? I mean are you with me? You know you gotta think of the whole thing ok? Alright.

All this talk about perennial prairie polycultures, the open land, we want us to see us a multiple species. What we're trying to do is mimic natural patterns with herbivores which is mobbing and movement. The idea here is that in nature all herbivores mob and move so what we do is we give these cattle a fresh salad bar every single day. The idea of a salad bar is it's a multi-species vegetative, fresh and clean, every 24 hours. How we move them? Well our foxes, wolves that's with the electric fence. It's a portable electric fence and that's what keeps them mobbed up and lets us manage them. The bottom line here is that Augusta County the average cow days per acre is seventy, that's our county, seventy cow days per acre. And we are getting paddocks that are producing over four hundred cow days per acre without an ounce of fertilizer in thirty-six years. (applause)

Ok now people talk about over population, people talk about there's not enough food to go around. I'm here to tell you that I have not seen nor ear heard, nor has anyone in the heart of man what can be produced if we would begin managing things. And so it's real exciting to see this. I mean this is how the prairies were built. This is the way these big, this rich eight foot deep low mead ground was built was with livestock, managed with mobbing and moving. When you get that, when you start mimicking those natural patterns everything happens. Now these cows are dropping something that critters like so we take that folder out of nature, we say well how does nature sanitize behind out of herbivores? Well with birds. So behind the cows, well that's a funny looking egg mobile, behind the cows, we bring the egg mobile, it's a portable chicken house, the chickens free range out behind the cattle and pick the fly larva out of the cow pies and spread out the cow patties, so while all the neighbours are running around shooting up their cattle with a bunch or pharmaceuticals and vaccines and everything we just gather \$4,000 worth of eggs a year as a byproduct to the pasture sanitation program, and this is work that any little child can do. Ok. We raise about a hundred dozen eggs a day on pasture, pastured eggs. These pins get moved every day to a fresh spot. Chickens are laying in the nest boxes there. Gives us an egg that's unbelievable, a real gourmet egg that they're selling for \$4 a dozen in Washington, D.C. It has three times the beta carotenes and the minerals, it's an unbelievable egg. And in the wintertime they come into the hoop houses. You got chickens on the floor, and the earthworm beds under there, the chickens are roosting on the earthworm beds, the rabbits droppings are going on the earthworms and then we wet the bedding here the worms crawl out, the chickens harvest the worms, and if you're going to build a building you may as well get full use out of it. So in the summer we use it for vegetables and growing multiple crops, there's several thousand dollars in that compost in the summertime and the chickens de-bug it between time in the wintertime. Are you with me? So it's a constant. Ok. Alright, good.

And the nice thing about this is, it's family friendly. There's nothing here that I can't take the kids to. A room on the place or nothing I put on the soil. Nothing I do with the animals I can't take the kids with me. One of our problems in our agriculture is we've created such a monster with turbo charged diesel tractors and everything else that the kids have to be shoved aside and

shoved aside and when they finally get old enough to help there're into ballet, and little league, and blockbuster videos and we've lost them. And until we create agricultural paradigms that will romance the next generation into them we're wasting our time at a conference like this. (applause) That's the farm of the 21st century! It's clean, green and doesn't smell up the atmosphere for all the neighbours.

A lot of people say "Well how do you get it all done?" "Well I don't really do it all, the animals do all the work I'm just an orchestra conductor making sure they're all in the right place at the right time." And then we process all the birds right there so they don't have to travel a hundred miles up the road. And it gives us a bird that's un-paralleled in the world. And then all the guts will just compost right there on site. And we can return them to the soil instead of feeding them back to chickens, just like the industry does, or feeding them to cows, which is even worse. And when it's over it's over. That's one of the emotionally enjoyable parts of this landscaping. You know you can only push yourself so hard, so far. And we talk about changing and restoring the landscape, we've also got to thinking about the emotional landscapes, and taking the drudgery out of farming, so that this time of year we can sit by the fire and read to the kids.

We've created a monster in agriculture, that's so fragile and so people unfriendly that we can't let anybody on the farms anymore. I know this is for biosecurity but that's too bad. We should have something that is better so we bring people to the farm. We're in the business of building bridges instead of barriers. We've created an agriculturally illiterate, consuming populace today with no relationship to the land. So what we do is we direct market everything, we call it relationship marketing. We're not really in business, we're in building relationships with people and if we're in business in building relationships, allowing them to have a link to the land suddenly the eyes open and there's a loyalty there, and we call them our cheerleaders. They're not our customers they're our cheerleaders, rooting us on and that gives us emotional support, and all sorts of things that the average farmer has no clue of, for a lifestyle and a quality of life, and a family and a sustainability standpoint. And we do the farmers market too, and it gives us an agriculture that we can pass on to the next generation. No matter what happens things go wrong sometimes, you just have to scratch your head, and you step back and you continue to pursue truth and you look for what's right, and I'm here to tell you, and what I want to do is give you a vision. I want to give you a vision of what's possible because if you pursue truth, the cornucopia of plenty will come your way. Believe me it'll happen, it takes time, it takes perseverance, and commitment, and discipline, and stick-to-itiveness, but it will come your way. As the moderator says, "for you, for your children, for your community and for your world." Thank you. (applause)

MICHAEL TOMS: Joel Salatin, a farmer growing healthy food and healthy relationships in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

JON STEINMAN: And that was Joel Salatin speaking at a recent Bioneers Conference. Joel is a third-generation farmer farming in Virginia and is the recent author of the book Holy Cows and Hog Heaven.

All of these recordings we heard today were courtesy of the Bioneers radio series and you can find out more on the series by visiting www.bioneers.org.

I would like to highly recommend a book to all our listeners titled, Food for All: the Need for a New Agriculture authored by John Madeley and it relates to many of the topics discussed by the three speakers on the show today. And once again it is Food for All: the Need For a New Agriculture and it is published by Fernwood Books here in Canada and is a great read. There is more information on the Deconstructing Dinner website at <http://www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner>.

ending theme

That was this week's edition of Deconstructing Dinner, produced and recorded in the studios of Nelson, British Columbia's Kootenay Co-op Radio. I've been your host Jon Steinman. I thank my technical assistant tonight Dianne Matenko. All of those affiliated with this station are volunteers, and financial support for this station is received through membership, donations and sponsorship from local businesses and organizations. For more information on the station or to become a member, you can visit www.cjly.net or dial 250-352-9600. And should you have any comments about tonight's show, want to learn more about topics covered, or want to listen to this broadcast all over again, you can visit the website for Deconstructing Dinner at www.cjly.net/deconstructingdinner.

Till next week...
