GREENHORNS BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO GETTING INTO FARMING

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Third Edition

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ABOUT THE GREENHORNS

Greenhorns works to create a welcoming and hospitable culture for new entrants in sustainable agriculture. We have made films, radio, guidebooks, parties and trainings, almanacs, anthologies, song collections, exhibits, mixers, art-stunts and trans-media collaboratives that defy classification.

We are a community powered studio dedicated to grassroots media, cultural programming and land repair for the benefit of the human and non-human worlds.

Our various programs and projects address the practical and social concerns of those in their first years farming, we emphasize restorative land-practices, skill-building, networking and dialogue.

Other Greenhorns media projects you may enjoy:

- New Farmers Almanac volumes 1-4: a literary journal for, by and about farming
- OURLAND.tv: a cool, free web series
- UP UP Farm film festival: a film festival that you can screen in your local theater
- Greenhorns Radio: eight years of a podcast interviewing amazing farmers
- More guidebooks online
- Greenhorns Youtube Channel

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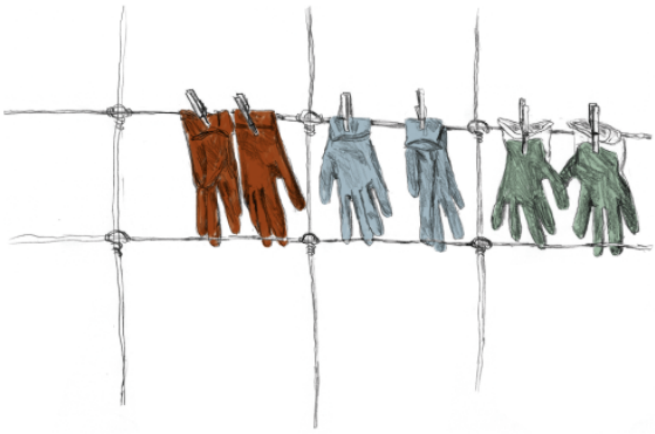


INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

We all eat food.

They say it's the crisis of the century. The re-arrangement of everything. A global depression. But while our immediate attention is drawn to disease vectors, epidemiology, and the straining of an already faulted health care system, the coronavirus has also brought havoc on our food system and our faith in it - if we had any.

We made this little illustration for high schoolers a few years ago.

In the kitchen they say " If you've got time to lean you've got time to clean." A corollary might be, "when times get lean, start living clean." Many of you reading this book may be recently released from your employment as food workers, or have found it psychologically or financially untenable to live in the high-rent cities on the verge of another recession. We've hurried this book out into the world to offer for your consideration a career path even closer to the source: life, food, farming, and land.

This summer 2020 will surely see a very unusual farm employment situation as the H2A (guest worker) program that many organic and family farms depend on has been suspended. For young American citizens, there's no better time to go get a job in Agriculture than right now, and remember-- being a farmworker makes you an "essential worker" which could be a helpful hall pass to roadblocks and mobility restrictions.Just be aware that farms are fragile human ecosystems - farmers need help, but they also need to stay healthy to keep their livelihood and livestock alive.

This is a guidebook about getting into agriculture, a choose-your-own-adventure playbook into a highly diverse set of lifeworlds. It's about tuning in, finding the path, finding consonance, and weighing all the co-factors that will allow you to 'rule your destiny' and design a place for yourself on the land. In the wake of all this corona cancellation, perhaps you've had more philosophical time to contemplate this moment in history, the needs and workings of your own body, and how you might want to prepare yourself for the unknowable future.

Remember, farming is work!

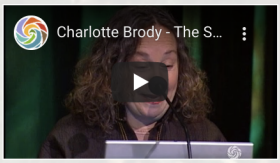
As you can see, this animated guidebook is a bit like a blog: you can click on videos, websites and out-links to find educational opportunities, farm jobs, workshops, online courses and business classes, free films, free reading and good listening. Obviously there are different pathways and different roles and paths to viability - our goal is to help you direct and shape your own professional slalom like a champion.

Kimball wrote a great book you'd like, The Dirty Life.

Each of these pathways will require you to learn the basic principles, skills, stamina and attentiveness to engage with a living system. Agriculture is an economic practice, but it is fundamentally an ecological practice, requiring observation of details, mastery of mechanical approaches, precise techniques, and tuning into the timing of the tended crops. Nature gives tenfold, and she also takes away. "Where there is livestock, there is dead stock," as my friend Kristin Kimball always says.

Participating in agriculture means interacting with a complex living system that has its own temporality, and which is bounded by a farm policy and macro-economy defined by the settler, colonial, monoculture-dominated supply chain of doom we've inherited from our history as a young nation. Not all lightness and buttercups.

Keep in mind, it is not easy to start a farm. It takes significant and sustained effort, a certain amount of good luck, serious preparation, an intense burst of concentrated entrepreneurship, and let's not forget, capital. It takes money, money that is quite difficult to earn in agriculture. Much like getting into the restaurant world, finding stability and success in farming will require good credit, adaptability and inventiveness in financial planning, and often outside investment. But it can be done.



Nature's law is generous, and generative, but at times not forgiving.

In the US especially, farm businesses are volatile and risky. It will take more than idealism and the desire to do what's right. You'll need tenacity, long-term planning, and an understanding of the market forces that may determine your farm or your farming contract's survival. This guidebook will not have all the answers - but it can show you how and where to look for help, resources, and ways of working that will help you succeed.

https://youtu.be/PDcfbmDNfmQ

https://youtu.be/Gs0EK1z9xhc

https://youtu.be/Y6mMhed59bs

https://youtu.be/kbwSwUMNyPU

The Dirty Life: A Memoir of Farming, Food, and Love
Kristin Kimball

1. LANDING ON THE LAND

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1. Look Around
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LOOK AROUND

The rising hills, the slopes, of statistics lie before us.
the steep climb of everything, going up, up, as we all go down.
In the next century or the one beyond that, they say, are valleys, pastures, we can meet there in peace if we make it.
To climb these coming crests one word to you, to you and your children:
stay together
learn the flowers
go light.

- Gary Snyder

This is an invitation to orient yourself.

As Gary Snyder would say: Stay calm and learn the landscape.

Every one of you, dear readers, is living in a watershed. We challenge you to look at a satellite map, and spend a bit of time discovering and familiarizing yourself with the landscape around you, the uplands, the parks, the land around the local church, library, hospital, fair ground, community center, school/ after-school campus, the forest, the wetlands, the remaining agricultural remnants. There is land. It is all land. And we can change what happens on the land.

Web film about toxic soils and how to remidiate.

There are infinite ways of orienting yourself with the land around you - even if you're stuck in a two-bedroom apartment in the city. Wherever you are, especially in North America, you can learn who's land you're living on.

Call a USDA National Resources Conservation Service office, or university extension program to learn about the soil types in your area, and if there is free lead-testing to see if the land you have access to is safe enough to grow food in. Even if it isn't, pollinator plants aren't a bad concession.in. Our friends as the soil kitchen have been working to bioremediate soil so it can start to produce food. Check out their work here.

If you live in a city, learn about urban ecology centers, community-supporting urban farming or (in less isolated times) talk to the vendors at local farmers markets about the farms, food, and resources around you. Learn about the agricultural history of your town, and call the planning committee to find out whether and what food crops you're allowed to plant in the front yard, livestock you can raise, and other zoning restrictions; you can also call and learn if there is municipal composting and if you can get access to it. Finally, you can use the local tax office to find out who owns those vacant lots, and sometimes get contact information

We have easy access to many of the digital tools for looking at landscapes - Looking at the broader landscape to identify the remaining scraps of farmland nearby to where you live, or to scope out where you might want to live.

Below are some links to get you started. Some are maps and interpretive sites designed to help farmers, some are resources for exploring the land around you in different ways. Take some time to explore these and other interactive maps, and enjoy yourself! The point is not to learn everything there is to know - but to start thinking like someone whose decisions are based on the needs and capacities of the land around them - that is the job of the ecological farmer. As Wendell Berry says, the farmer is the people's representative on the land, an intermediary between the two.

Land Resources:

- Native Land can help you better understand the indigenous history of the land you live on– once you know, start learning about indigenous groups active in your area.
- The NCRS Web Soil Survey is one of the most important resources– start learning about soil types today!
- California provides an important complement to the Federal soil mapping resources– California Soil Resource Lab SoilWeb Apps
- Check our your home state's Department of Natural Resources or natural resource agency to learn more about ecosystems around you.
- USGS recently created a resource for historical and current maps, focused on topography.
- You can learn about your watershed and those around you through Fern Leaf Interactive.
- The Nature Conservancy has a great collection of conservation mapping resources.
- You can also learn how to use GIS to understand land around you in your own way. Here's a good video to get you started, though if you have access to community classes, its a resource worth learning to use. You can also sign up to use ArcGIS online.
- American Farmland Trust has resources for helping beginning farmers understand land use evaluation, soil siting, and more.
- Open Forests helps stakeholders understand forest management with mapping, planning, and other resources.

https://vimeo.com/39032509

HOW DID WE GET HERE? BIG BOX EVERYTHING

There is a health crisis that predated the corona crisis. The last century has seen the concentration, corporatization and financialization of our food system. This concentration in ownership has terrible consequences in terms of human health, especially for minorities and people of color. Over-use of herbicides and poisons reduces the nutrient density (vitamins and minerals) of food while interrupting important ecological functions. Lobbyists from industries that create over-processed and unhealthy foods have distorted our policy environment, allowing the nutritional poverty of cheap, highly-processed food that has caused skyrocketing diabetes, obesity, and metabolic disorders.

Meanwhile, the land that produces the food is also suffering: herbicides and pesticides have decimated pollinator populations and interrupted the ecology of wide swaths of the planet. The practices of industrial agriculture directly contribute to global warming, by destroying soils that store fixed carbon in subterranean biomass.

Finally, agribusiness-driven farm policy has undermined family farmers, carved out rural towns and means that many young people from farm families join the military or go to the city to find work instead of taking over their family's farm. Part and parcel with the agribusiness trend has been the dispossession of land from black farmers. Giant acreage monocultures supplying a global market chain are not resilient, and they are not just.

While you orient yourself in the world of farming, try to stay tuned to the big picture: the pressures, patterns, and policies that shape how we treat the land and our food systems. While this guidebook can be used to fashion a life and livelihood in the fields, we also want to help you become aware of how global markets, rural decline, climate, conservation, and resource extraction are deeply linked to the land. Without greater citizen understanding of such issues, we don't stand a chance against Zombie Ag.

These trends imperil us all.

We -- all of us who live on this landscape together -- we all need many more brains, bodies and businesses involved in the restoration of a regional food system. We, those of us humans who live together in this society, need to make it easier to make a living as a farmer. We, as civil society, need to reform the perverse incentives that currently run our food system. The coming decades will see climate changes unprecedented in the history of this nation. Each region will need to figure out where the climate is heading and what kinds and varieties of crops make sense in this new climate, and will need to discover how to change their agronomic systems to be more resilient. New farms and new kinds of farms, economic diversity, and community self determination will all be necessary for the safety of our food supply. We need thousands of original ideas, risk taking and adaptation in our food system. And so, welcome, those of you who are newly interested in the production of food and the management of ecological landscapes that support health, habitat, clean water and a living planet.

Small is beautiful, big is subsidized. You can listen to free lectures on economic theory and transition in the 30 years of annual lectures at the Schumacher Center for New Economics.

Recommended Reading:

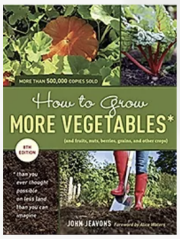
Recommended Reading:

Farming for the Long Haul - Michael Foley

Labor and the Lovacore: The Making of a Comprehensive Food Ethic - Margaret Gray

Agrarian Dreams: The Paradox of Organic Farming in California, Second Edition - Julie Guthman

PLACES TO LAND



Read Jeavon's book, How to Grow More Vegetables.

We need land to survive. Land produces all our food.

The churches, hospitals, community centers, museums and state parks are places where we can be growing food, planting flower gardens, attracting birds and pollinators and creating beauty. Brownfields, waste sites, highway medians may not be suitable for food, but they can grow fiber, building material, and provide habitat for critical species.

If every person on earth got an equal portion of arable land, it would be 1.5 acres. That is enough land to grow vegetables for at least 20 families according to John Jeavons. 1.5 ACRES. That's about a soccer field. That is also about how much land the Ugandan government assigns to refugees fleeing from Sudan so that they can sustain themselves.

Who has the wealth? Who has the health? Who owns the land?

Farmers and farmworkers - their work, their knowledge, and their importance to communities - have been consistently and rather successfully stripped of value. For young farmers-to-be, it may seem that choosing to farm is a dangerous path to financial uncertainty at best - and quite possibly poverty and severe debt. It can also be a swift way to earn a hard conversation with your parents. For those of us who hold student debt or come from disadvantaged backgrounds, this makes the choice to farm especially daunting. But by ignoring the market signals that tell us to opt for tech and real estate, we choose to leverage our bodies, minds, and passion for the sake of the earth, our communities, and our ability to feed ourselves.

Watch movies about Jeavon's methods from Earth Lodge Studio.

Indeed, practically everyone in agriculture will admit that they farm for the lifestyle and not for the money, and that frequently someone on the farm needs to keep a job outside the farm - as a nurse, a teacher, a fireman, a carpenter, a massage therapist, an after-school teacher, working for extension or for a land trust-- at the very least for healthcare benefits. But if security can be attained, small farms are the movement of young people who have the skills, networks, social enterprise, technical knowledge and improvisational logistical power to deliver real food security to their communities. Farming presents a whole set of creative, local-scale solutions to massive problems - from loss of biodiversity and climate change to food security and rural brain drain. You can participate in this.

Click the signs for films and recommended reading on the land!

Choose Your Own Adventure

Each of us can react in place.

Even some farmers who have been growing for 50 years still say they are constantly learning. As a greenhorn, as a beginner-- you will be astounded once you tune into earthlife--when you begin to see how much is going on on the land. One strategy to remember is that life has its own volition. Always has, always will. Each cell, each organ, each organism, each mutualist community of organisms is reacting in real time to the conditions they (we) are faced with.

The atmosphere we enjoy today, plentiful with oxygen, is thanks to the explosive growth of ancient algae (precursor to the first terrestrial life) that began photosynthesizing at least a billion years ago, synthesizing the energy of the sun and creating oxygen as a by product. Algae did much of the maintenance of our world in its early stages; Over time algae increased oxygen levels to the point where the first vascular plants could grow, creating a pathway for individual trees, species of trees and evolutionary lineages of speciating communities of trees by changing the chemical composition of the atmosphere. Trees also actively shape the local climate, cope with stressors, and cycling water and creating with their transpiring bodies the conditions for more life. Adaptation is what life does.

Allow algae to be your model. You are also a creature, and also have the ability to adapt to ecosystem changes, and to create and modify ecosystem functions around you to suit you and other inhabitants. If you feel called to do so, trust the impulse. The future is a long time.

https://www.earthlodgestudio.com/ecology-action

How to Grow More Vegetables - John Jeavons

Reading List

Here are some great Journals and Publishers to check out or pick up:

- Chelsea Green Publishing
- New Society Publishers
- Storey Publishing
- HeyDay Books
- Contra Viento - Cowboy Literary Journal
- Yale Agrarian Studies Program student research papers
- Small Farmer's Journal
- The Land Magazine
- The New Farmer's Almanac

2. BASIC PATHWAYS

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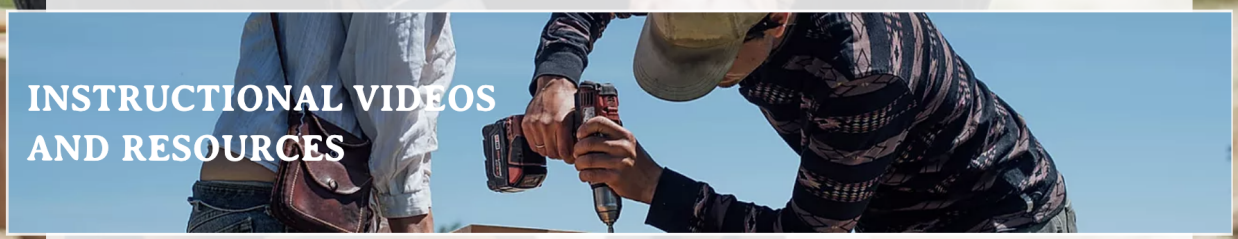
1. Learn From Your Laptop
2. Farm in Place
3. Give it a Try for a Season
4. A Job in the Food Sector
5. Urban Farming

There are a lot of ways to begin thinking about and learning how to be a farmer - and not all of them require leaving your current home place to start a life elsewhere. Really, it doesn't make sense to uproot yourself without learning a little first; rather, be like a tree and take root where you are. Below, we've outlined some resources to help you learn from isolation, or wherever you can access the internet; then we've given some recommendations on farming in place - whether that's in a city, your neighborhood church, or a vacant lot. After that, we've outlined farm apprenticeship programs and other jobs you can get to introduce you to the food and farming world, and finally some considerations for those who wish to practice urban agriculture.

LEARN FROM YOUR LAPTOP

There is a great wealth online. YouTube clips, Farmer's Associations, non-profits, extension organizations and permaculture groups have more content than you could possibly consume - and more than you want to! This guide is meant to help point you in the right direction, in order to find media and information that suits your interest, your style, and your context.



Classes and Online Organizational Resources:

- Practical Farmer's of Iowa Farminars
- ATTRA
- USDA National Agricultural Library (NAL)
- Food Finance Institute
- Food First, Transnational Institute and Yale University Food Sovereignty Symposium with free videos
- You can watch Michael Pollan and Raj Patel's UC Berkeley Seminars

Videos and Lectures on Farms and Food:

- Web learning series from Savanna Institute
- Marion Nestle's nutrition and food policy seminars are great.
- Oxford Real Farming Conference
- How to make a living staying on the land (lots of lovely lectures at DO Lectures website as well).
- Rodale Institute videos

Podcasts and Media:

- Slow Food does a nice job
- Just Food Podcast
- Delicious Revolution Podcast
- Farmerama Podcast
- Cal Ag Roots Podcast
- Greenhorns Podcast more than 8 years of weekly interviews. (Part of the Heritage Radio Network, lots of great content on there.)
- Food Policy IATP Podcast
- Down to Earth Podcast, partnership with the Quivira coalition.
- Permaculture Voices Podcast
- And Over Grow The System, nice Australians
- And awesome farm and food tours with The Perrenial Plate
- MOSES Organic Farming Podcast
- Point of Origin

Instructional Videos and Resources:

- ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture videos
- Market Gardening instructional videos from Alys Fowler and Charles Dowding
- And if you're in the mood for counterculture, check out the Lindis Farne tapes.
- Years ago we made an open-source, community-run resource called Farm Hack that's in need of maintenance– but is still filled with good ideas, inventions, and user-friendly technology

FARM IN PLACE

As of writing, over half the world is under government orders to shelter in place, distance ourselves from others, and limit nonessential travel. The reach into our mobility, while practically necessary, is frightening, and the technofuture being manufactured even more so. These restrictions, top of so many other constraints, makes starting to farm or garden daunting. But the restriction provides an opportunity for a valuable idea to germinate: farming in place.

Whether you live in a remote rural county or in a packed city, you can make plans to go work on a farm for the season (covered in the next section), or else put down some roots where you are and learn to orient yourself within the biological, social, and market environment around you. Barriers to growing food like land use planning restricting food production can be hard to surmount, but it is not impossible. In South Central Los Angeles, Ron Finley has successfully pushed for zoning laws to change in order to feed his community in a food desert. In the real desert, Brad Lancaster has helped change Tuscon's city policy to allow rainwater harvesting to feed plants and shade trees in marginal urban spaces.

Explore more commoning resources below!

LAND IN COMMON

AGRARIAN TRUST

LAND'S SAKE

SEAWEED COMMONS

Meanwhile, there's so much to read!

Our Land in Common!

Historic sites, state parks, churches, monasteries, waysides, schoolyards - these are all spaces with the potential to give safe harbor to diverse life, ecological services, beauty, and food. Learning how to tend the land and ecosystems around us is important not just to give you experience working with soil, but also to learn the importance of individual and community stewardship practices.

A few years ago we worked alongside our partner organization Agrarian Trust, to talk about land reform and stewardship over commonly held resources. With AT, we've learned about acequia irrigation practices looked over by communities in the Southwest; similar practices in diverse ecosystems exist the world over, where people come together to manage commonly held resources like water, air, and wildlife without necessitating unified private property ownership.

Much more work, more 'commoning' needs to be done. If we want to see land justice - not merely ecological, but economic, racial, and political justice - then the transformation of exploitative real estate markets into land held in common for the common good is a necessity.

OUR LAND was Agrarian Trust's land reform symposium; also wonderful talks.

Gardening behind the church and along the parking lot

Farming in place can mean planting a orchard around the school, starting a nursery behind the church, planting fruit trees in the overgrown gulches near your house that nobody tends, asking permission to plant edible windbreaks and hedgerows on the land of the older farmers in your town, or on county owned land, or transportation owned land. The playground, the train station parking lot, the area behind the grocery store. You can look up who owns land on your county website, or by contacting the town clerk. Contacting landowners you don't know can be intimidating, but if you do it respectfully and with tact, much can be accomplished.

It helps if you are actually qualified to do this work-- which you can learn how to do by working with/ for an existing organization. So first learn how to do it - then get involved in doing it on the territory that you can access through your social networks. And don't be afraid to ask! Few people are ideologically opposed to peach trees.

It's not so much about "beg, borrow or steal," but rather about becoming competent, gaining strength and skills, building relationships that are mutually beneficial, acting honorably, and working for the long term solutions that will have a greater impact on the environment and your community.

Building coalitions, gaining experience, and finding creative ways to farm in the margins., By working this way, you can learn about ecological restoration techniques and partner with people that you know, that you don't yet know, or who own land around you.

Here's a series of videos on ecological restoration that may inspire you!

https://youtu.be/v_ccpOdrmMQ

https://www.landincommon.org/

https://agrariantrust.org/

https://seaweedcommons.org/

https://landssake.org/

GIVE IT A TRY FOR A SEASON

One of the best ways to learn about farming - and to learn whether farming is right for you - is to try it out for a season. Working as a farm apprentice provides you with an intentional learning arrangement in which you are brought on as a kind of farm intern - sometimes taking on projects yourself or making consequential decisions. Often, apprenticeships are paid quite meagerly but are compensated with food and unglamourous housing. Farmworkers can sometimes be paid more than apprentices, and will generally perform more basic labor rather than learning-intensive activities. Nevertheless, work on small organic farms in particular can be rewarding and deeply educational.

Let's be frank - the financial side of farm work can be harsh. If you have relative privilege, taking a season to farm might mean a drastic pay cut in exchange for a change of scenery and a chance to learn, but migrant and POC farmworkers are often seriously marginalized by the imbalances of our food system. This is a system to fight on a large scale - on the small scale, small farmers struggle to pay bills, and paying workers a top-shelf rate is untenable. If you have the means to make very little, take the chance to learn and to help shift the system for the future.

Here's our HipCAMP Guidebook, Habitat Everywhere.

With shutdowns and quarantine orders afoot, farm work counts as essential labor, and generally farm apprenticeships are ongoing - although a handful farmers may not be willing to invite more bodies into cramped quarters this season. If you're taking a job as an apprentice or farm worker this year or next, be careful! Three weeks out sick for a farmer can mean the end of the farm.

Finally, if you aren't sure about a full-on apprenticeship or you can't sacrifice such a long period of income, during less infectious times you can arrange to visit or camp on a farm for a few weeks and learn a little without too much of a commitment.

What does a farm job require?

- Farming is hard work and happens in the sun, rain, snow, and storms.
- Drinking plenty of water, getting plenty of sleep - these are habits to practice before you show up, as you'll need them when you arrive.
- Mental fortitude - long days, sore muscles, and messy tasks can take a psychological toll if you aren't prepared.
- Physical ability is important - if you have limited mobility or stamina, talk to your prospective bosses about what you can and can't do.
- Access to a car or bike is a big help.

What to Expect

Notes on farm intern expectations.

- Most apprenticeships start in early spring, and continue to Thanksgiving
- Farm Jobs usually include on-farm housing - but if you can, check out the housing before you get there.
- Farming does pay- this goes for workers or owners and is connected to a centuries-long crisis of expropriation, colonization and extraction
- Farms set up for formal apprenticeships will have work agreements that clarify expectations and stipends. A model program is the MOFGA Apprenticeship and Journeyperson program
- Farm jobs often include access to free/very affordable local food and cooking facilities where you can cook for yourself. Make sure you talk to prospective employers about these benefits.
- You will meet really awesome people who care a lot about what they do.
- You will get healthy and strong and be well fed and surrounded by birdsong.

Once you get to the farm-- you will want to start making fermented vegetables as soon as you can - it will save you money, time, and prevent food waste. Here is some inspiration from the incredible Sandor Katz.

Getting Ready

- Save up some money if you can, this will be a lifeline if changes in housing, income, or family emergencies crop up. Start minimizing expenses as soon as you can.
- Make sure to learn as much as you can! CRAFT programs and regional sustainable ag - education and farmer training programs are available and will help you get the best educational experience.
- Even if you're farming in an urban setting, it will help to have your own car. If you can't afford one, ask whether there will be other farmworkers who can rideshare with you
- Farming is easier if you are a couple or a team- it makes housing cheaper, chores faster, and getting up early a bit nicer.
- Your diet will be rich with what you can make for yourself: amazing food projects, such as vegetable ferments, chili sauces and salsas, jams and syrups, pickles and preserves, dried foods, wild foods etc. Learning how to make good food for yourself is a valuable skill in itself, but it will also save you money.

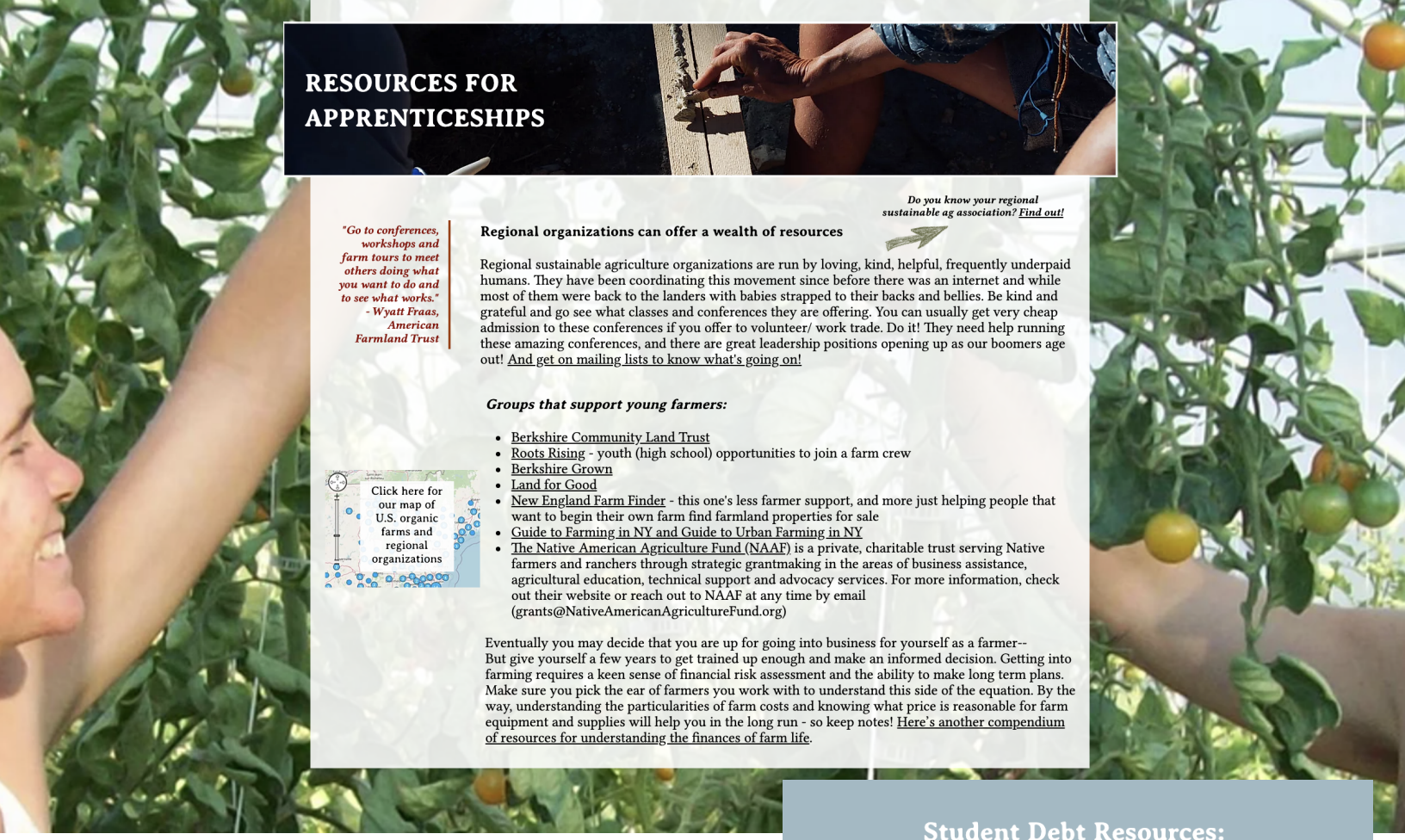
Here is some advice from experienced farmers.

First steps to secure an apprenticeship on a farm, or a farmworker job:

1. Check out the farm opportunities in the region you have decided to farm in.
2. If you are a renter and cannot pay your rent without a job because your work was impacted by Covid19, speak with your landlord to decide how to end your lease or find someone to take over for you…
3. Prepare a good cover letter and resume that describes why you would make a good farm employee and your passion for learning. Make sure your letter demonstrates that you have studied the farm's website and their local area, and are interested to learn what they are teaching. Show off your business-like communication and ability to show up. Do not be flaky in your correspondence, try to discover how they need to be communicated with, remember that you are interacting with someone who likely spends most of their time outside and managing a complex set of agricultural and business decisions and doesn't have an HR department. Include references. Try not to be too needy.
4. Start exercising every day to get yourself into good condition …for working outdoors in hot/cold/humid/buggy/wet conditions, to bend and squat and lift heavy and bulky things, to be available and sunny-dispositioned in all conditions with supervisors and coworkers.
5. Apply to 5-10 farms, be prepared, professional and respectful - and get the job!
6. If you can, visit the farms you're most interested in, and try to reply quickly to the offer. Ask a lot of questions before you arrive - every farm is different and you want to know what you're getting into.
7. Be polite, and don't bring too much stuff.
8. Do bring:
    1. Sturdy shoes
    2. Rain gear
    3. Wool sweaters and shirts
    4. Sturdy work pants
    5. Plenty of pairs of socks and long underwear
    6. Pocket knife
    7. Hat/sun protection
9. Put your non essential stuff in storage, in your mother's basement, or sell it.
10. Practice positive thinking and keep a journal of what you learn. You will not remember everything!
11. Read as many books about farming as you can get access to - and talk to your mentor farmer about what you are learning - their experience is worth testing against what the books say.

Awesome Publishers of Farm Topics:

- *Chelsea Green*
- *New Society Publishers*
- *Storey Publishing*
- *HeyDay Books*



RESOURCES FOR APPRENTICESHIPS

"Go to conferences, workshops and farm tours to meet others doing what you want to do and to see what works." - Wyatt Fraas, American Farmland Trust

Do you know your regional sustainable ag association? Find out!

Regional organizations can offer a wealth of resources

Regional sustainable agriculture organizations are run by loving, kind, helpful, frequently underpaid humans. They have been coordinating this movement since before there was an internet and while most of them were back to the landers with babies strapped to their backs and bellies. Be kind and grateful and go see what classes and conferences they are offering. You can usually get very cheap admission to these conferences if you offer to volunteer/ work trade. Do it! They need help running these amazing conferences, and there are great leadership positions opening up as our boomers age out! And get on mailing lists to know what's going on!

Groups that support young farmers:

- Berkshire Community Land Trust
- Roots Rising - youth (high school) opportunities to join a farm crew
- Berkshire Grown
- Land for Good
- New England Farm Finder - this one's less farmer support, and more just helping people that want to begin their own farm find farmland properties for sale
- Guide to Farming in NY and Guide to Urban Farming in NY
- The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) is a private, charitable trust serving Native farmers and ranchers through strategic grantmaking in the areas of business assistance, agricultural education, technical support and advocacy services. For more information, check out their website or reach out to NAAF at any time by email (grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org)

Eventually you may decide that you are up for going into business for yourself as a farmer-- But give yourself a few years to get trained up enough and make an informed decision. Getting into farming requires a keen sense of financial risk assessment and the ability to make long term plans. Make sure you pick the ear of farmers you work with to understand this side of the equation. By the way, understanding the particularities of farm costs and knowing what price is reasonable for farm equipment and supplies will help you in the long run - so keep notes! Here's another compendium of resources for understanding the finances of farm life.

GIVE IT A TRY FOR A SEASON

RESOURCES:

AFFORDABLE TRAVEL VIA HipCAMP

VIDEOS:

ADVICE TO FARMERS ABOUT INTERNS/WWOOFERS
paul wheaton on youtube

SOME ADVICE FROM EXPERIENCED FARMERS
Voices of Experience: Good Advice for New Farmers
CornellCALS on youtube

INFORMATION ON FERMENTED VEGETABLES FROM SANDOR KATZ
sandorkraut on youtube

PUBLISHERS OF FARM TOPICS:

CHELSEA GREEN
https://www.chelseagreen.com/

NEW SOCIETY PUBLISHERS
https://newsociety.com/

STOREY PUBLISHING
https://www.storey.com/

HEYDAY BOOKS
https://heydaybooks.com/

Student Debt Resources:

- Strike Debt!
- NYFC Debt forgiveness campaign
- Peace Corps, Teach for America, FoodCorps, AmeriCorps, and rural nursing all have debt relief programs associated, there may be more such programs as the nation grapples with joblessness.

Resources for Apprenticeships:

- The Great National Directory of Farm Apprenticeships
- A great resource to find a ranch job
- You can WWOOF (Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms) - This is an international network of farms who offer work-stay. You work in exchange for accommodation and food. Some WWOOF farms are amazing, some just want cheap labor to paint their outbuildings and weed their olive trees. You'll have to assess based on their listing and speaking with them. Obviously, have a way out and if you are a single traveller– make safe choices.

You can also look at farmer training programs:

- Farmanswers.org
- FarmBeginnings.org
- Biodynamic Apprenticeship Program
- Regional CRAFT Programs (Collaborative Regional Apprentice Farmer Training)

These organizations offer good support for finding work– but if you don't want to use their portals, you can simply as a farm worker, as an employee or as a summer part time worker. Expect between $10-18 per hour for such work, depending on the region. Remember that in the larger context of farmworkers, this is much more than most migrant workers make.

A JOB IN THE FOOD SECTOR

As the new Coronavirus sweeps the globe, restaurants are closing and lots of food service workers are losing employment. Even as restrictions settle, restaurants will be regrouping and rethinking their strategies with fewer full-time employees and a profound uncertainty. However, there are other jobs in food production that you may be qualified for and that can help you gain a foothold and a keen understanding of how to move forward in the world of food and farming.

Consider:

- Approaching farms that produce goods that could have a value-added product: that is, become an entrepreneur who helps process the produce that someone else is growing, stacking your small business onto their small business. You can rent kitchen space from churches, schools, restaurants in order to have a certified space to do this in. You may need to complete a HACCP plan and certification to do this, but often you can work on a small scale or work in partnership with a restaurant that can support you.
- There is a lot of work to do with food security, and there are government programs to place workers into non profit organizations working on food gardens, food banks, food access programs around the country. Look at FoodCorps and AmeriCorps.
- You can also call your local food bank and ask if they are hiring, or, more likely, looking for volunteers. This is a good way of connecting with people who know what's going on around you
- The quakers are really good at doing agricultural justice work.
- Community supported agriculture farms often want volunteers to help with harvest and other chores. They expect to train and oversee their volunteers. Check with local CSAs and join one to get some experience. Localharvest.org lists CSAs and other direct market farms (although many farms don't keep their listing current).
- The Catholic workers are amazing at providing services to those in need.
- Traditional food jobs: www.GoodFoodJobs.com
- Non profit/ethical jobs: www.Idealist.org
- Jobs in community food security (list serve): COMFOODS.tufts
- Land/Conservation Jobs: www.highcountrynews.org/jobsboard
- Conservation Corps

URBAN FARMING

A few great organizations that you might be inspired by are doing work to feed communities and create stronger coalitions between neighbors (listed below) -- and there is much more to do. There is room for new organizations, organizational expansion, inter-generational synergy and radical new social and economic forms to meet the emerging needs in the communities where things are happening. We just need boots on the ground.

Because of the pandemic, with the youth employment context so massively changed, the corporations that currently dominate our politics, own our politicians and hack the policy to suit their ends will not be able to act as nimbly as you and I will. We have the advantage of being smart little mice!

- Black Urban Farmers
- Oakland and the World
- Detroit Black Community Food Security Network (DBCFSN)
- Land access information from 596 Acres
- Community Harvest Project, Western Mass
- Soil Kitchen
- Cultivating Communities, near Portland, Maine
- Also check out Mano en Mano in Milbridge, Maine!

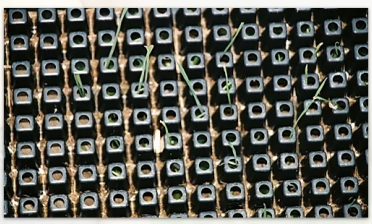
There are urban gardens and farms, but there is so much need to meet. If you are able to mobilize and partner with those who are already talented at farming, there are many non profit and social mission organizations and institutions who could "ACTIVATE THEIR LAND PORTFOLIO" for the good of the community. You may be able to convince them, or you may be able to build a coalition with someone who has some pull, like the pastor, the board president, the organist, the groundskeeper.

Make sure you have good credibility, focus and follow-through before you start working your angle into organizations. Once you have proven your stuff as an urban gardener/farmer know that your stewardship should earn you access to as much land as you can tend. Ask around, you'll see - there is informal land tenure going on all over the place.

Whatever your method, get involved. These are groups of people already working on transforming urban land into food production spaces. The creativity and ability to mobilize for the common good is a hallmark of this movement. Many of these projects are led by people of color and oriented towards the production of affordable food for working families.

Look for:

- *"Food Justice"*
- *"Community Garden"*
- *"Urban Farm"*
- *"Community Food Security"*
- *"Farm to School"*
- *"Community Land Trust"*
- *"Urban Forestry"*
- *"Street Trees"*



3. THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT AGRICULTURE

Contents

1. Multi-Party Agroforestry
2. Land Access and Land Trusts
3. Restoration, Reparation, and Driving Food Justice

Techniques, practices, and paradigms are reshaping the land and our relationship to it.

Keefe's Top Ten Tips for Farm Resilience

Next steps

This guide is enough to get you started - getting your feet wet and learning your surroundings is vital, and an important part of becoming a farmer, grower, and steward of the land - but testing the waters is not the same as diving in. So go get your feet wet, but create a bona fide business plan before you jump. During your apprenticeships, food jobs, and other farm experiences, don't shy away from the business end of the deal, even though spreadsheets might not be as romantic as the landscape.

There is a great bundle of tools you can use to finance a farm - and most young farmers don't use just one. Creating a viable farm business is yet another aspect of the complex ecosystem of taking care of the land - without it, you won't be able to provide what the land wants and needs. Here's a short list of financial resources and tools created for farmers, including examples of financing tools being produced and supported by communities as a way of tackling the effects of predatory capitalism and debt.

Keefe's Top Ten Tips for Farm Resilience:

1. ***LEARN*** - Make your mistakes small, and then go big (enough).
2. ***STRATEGIZE***- Grow what grows, grow what you love, grow. what you know, and know your markets.
3. ***DIVERSIFY*** - Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
4. ***FOCUS*** - Buy a goat to keep you on the farm.
5. ***KEEP RECORDS*** - If you think you'll remember, you won't.
6. ***CONSERVE*** - Wild soil, flora & fauna are the source of fertility.
7. ***ADAPT*** - Plan, Assess, Adjust, Repeat.
8. ***COOPERATE*** - Get help, give help.
9. ***EARN*** - Don't quit your day job.
10. ***COMMUNICATE*** - Listen to the land, and tell your story to anyone who will listen.

Keefe is full of sage guidance, you can download agroforestry books from Savanna Institute for *FREE* here:

Savanna Institute Agroforestry books

MULTI-PARTY AGROFORESTRY

What we need for most of North America is what used to be here: A rightly managed ecosystem - including open grasslands, sagebrush, savanna, and forests.

Agroforestry is the practice of creating farming systems that function more like forests, with multi-layer food and forage production and many important ecosystem services. Agroforestry is a modern science-based form of agriculture, but it's not a new invention. Many traditional and indigenous food systems are - prior to colonial and capitalistic conquest of land and people were much more so - based on trees and the many things they provide us two-legs.

Edible tree species are totally normal food crops, including apples, hazelnuts, walnuts, pecans. However, we can also grow tree crops that are not as familiar like chestnuts, oak trees, paw paws, or carobs. Agroforestry can include nitrogen fixing trees, trees grown for animal fodder, trees grown to be regeneratively cut and used for crafts or mulch, and trees useful as nurse crop to support the young plantings.

Agroforestry is a large field of practice that involves thousands of people who are working to enact durable, productive, high-calorie perennial landscapes that have awesome ecosystem performance. You can learn about agroforestry practices on the internet and watch some videos here:

Or check out these great books and organizations working to support agroforestry.

Click the tree for more agroforestry resources!

One solution for agriculture in the long term is to adopt partnerships between multiple parties that achieve the shared goal of land health. Seventy percent of farmland is owned by people over 65 in this country, and young people with the passion for agriculture are often unable to get access to land or capital - especially for tree crops that can take at least 5 years to come into production! Many of the land improvements that come with organic agriculture take longer to accrue than many single-party leases can cover.

Creative solutions must be found. We can rub two problems together and come up with a workable solution-- the young agro-foresters can plan their diverse polycultures of edible fruit and nut trees on land that they do not own, and have assurance that they will have access to the products of those trees for a negotiated amount of time, usually 30 years. If the heirs of the landowner inherit the land, they inherit better land that builds rich leaf-litter carbon in the soil, slows the wind and erosion, helps infiltrate rain into the ground water, creates habitat for birds, insects, mammals, and produces food.

Agroforestry Resources (Part 2!):

- Planting Tree Crops and Agroforestry Lease workbooks
- We refer you to the wonderful paper Severine co-authored with Keefe and other wonderful friends from the Savanna Institute: MultiParty Agroforestry.
- Land Access Spotlights from the Savanna Institute
- Amazing videos of farmers in agroforestry situations
- Learn about deforestation, forest peoples and industrial palm oil
- Learn about rangeland management

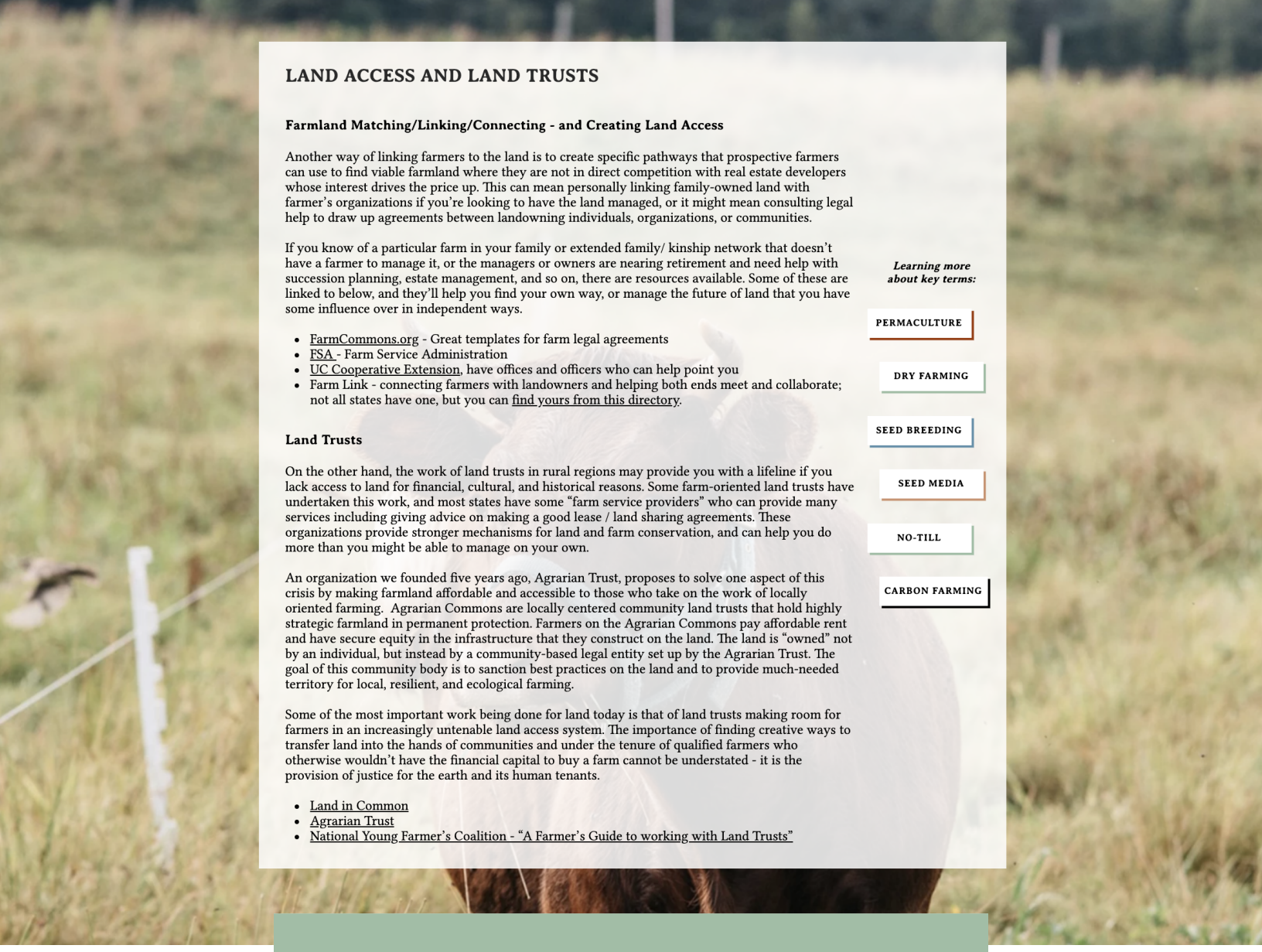
https://www.joanbaxter.ca/audio/

Agroforestry Resources:

- Savanna Institute
- Restoration Agriculture
- Regrarians
- Goeff Lawton, Permaculture
- Brad Landcaster, *Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond*
- World Agroforestry Center

Bullock Brothers Homestead - A 25-Year Permaculture Project
peakmoment on youtube - https://youtu.be/oW7LcNAYBWg

Woodlanders Episode 23: Japanese Shiitake Forestry
costa on vimeo - https://vimeo.com/253720536



LAND ACCESS AND LAND TRUSTS

Farmland Matching/Linking/Connecting - and Creating Land Access

Another way of linking farmers to the land is to create specific pathways that prospective farmers can use to find viable farmland where they are not in direct competition with real estate developers whose interest drives the price up. This can mean personally linking family-owned land with farmer's organizations if you're looking to have the land managed, or it might mean consulting legal help to draw up agreements between landowning individuals, organizations, or communities.

If you know of a particular farm in your family or extended family/ kinship network that doesn't have a farmer to manage it, or the managers or owners are nearing retirement and need help with succession planning, estate management, and so on, there are resources available. Some of these are linked to below, and they'll help you find your own way, or manage the future of land that you have some influence over in independent ways.

- FarmCommons.org - Great templates for farm legal agreements
- FSA - Farm Service Administration
- UC Cooperative Extension, have offices and officers who can help point you
- Farm Link - connecting farmers with landowners and helping both ends meet and collaborate; not all states have one, but you can find yours from this directory.

Learning more about key terms:

PERMACULTURE

DRY FARMING

SEED BREEDING

SEED MEDIA

NO-TILL

CARBON FARMING

Land Trusts

On the other hand, the work of land trusts in rural regions may provide you with a lifeline if you lack access to land for financial, cultural, and historical reasons. Some farm-oriented land trusts have undertaken this work, and most states have some "farm service providers" who can provide many services including giving advice on making a good lease / land sharing agreements. These organizations provide stronger mechanisms for land and farm conservation, and can help you do more than you might be able to manage on your own.

An organization we founded five years ago, Agrarian Trust, proposes to solve one aspect of this crisis by making farmland affordable and accessible to those who take on the work of locally oriented farming. Agrarian Commons are locally centered community land trusts that hold highly strategic farmland in permanent protection. Farmers on the Agrarian Commons pay affordable rent and have secure equity in the infrastructure that they construct on the land. The land is "owned" not by an individual, but instead by a community-based legal entity set up by the Agrarian Trust. The goal of this community body is to sanction best practices on the land and to provide much-needed territory for local, resilient, and ecological farming.

Some of the most important work being done for land today is that of land trusts making room for farmers in an increasingly untenable land access system. The importance of finding creative ways to transfer land into the hands of communities and under the tenure of qualified farmers who otherwise wouldn't have the financial capital to buy a farm cannot be understated - it is the provision of justice for the earth and its human tenants.

- Land in Common
- Agrarian Trust
- National Young Farmer's Coalition - "A Farmer's Guide to working with Land Trusts"

Permaculture Resources:

- Making Permaculture Stronger, video and blog
- Permaculture Voices, podcast
- Quail Springs
- Aranya Agricultural Alternatives
- Resilient Farm and Homestead, book from Whole Systems Design

Dry Farming Resources:

- Dry Farming Collaborative Facebook Group
- Paseo Project, "Acequia Aqui"
- Oregon State Center for Small Farms, "Dry Farming"
- California Ag Water Stewardship Initiative, "Dry Farming"

Seed Breeding Resources:

- Seeds Trust
- Experimental Farm Network
- Culinary Breeding Network
- Organic Seed Alliance
- Seed Savers Exchange
- Scatterseed Project - Will Bonsall

Seed Media:

- FRANCE 24 Interview with Vandana Shiva
- "Seed: The Untold Story" Movie
- Will Bonsall's Essential Guide to Radical, Self-Reliant Gardening

No Till Resources:

- No Till Info & Links
- The Land Institute
- Dr. Elaine Ingham
- Regeneration International - "What is No-Till Farming?"
- Indians, Insanity, and American History Blog - "Farming and Food"
- Civil Eats - "No-Till Farmers' Push for Healthy Soils Ignites a Movement in the Plains"
- The Soul of Soil by Joe Smillie and Grace Gershuny

Carbon Farming Resources:

- The Carbon Underground
- Bioneers
- Carbon Cycle Institute
- EU - Carbon Farming Schemes in Europe

RESTORATION, REPARATION, AND DRIVING FOOD JUSTICE

Health is wealth.

Our food system is rife with structural injustices that will take calculated, multi-layered work to fix. Real, justice-creating change will not come from a bailout of agribusiness, nor from top-down investment in greenwashing technology. This means we need to build strong political pressure at local, state, and national level for investment in the incoming generation's security and education -- not just a bail out, but a comprehensive shift toward better conditions for new entrants into agriculture.

After the dust bowl, the US created the Conservation Corps and employed nearly 300,000 young men to engage in maintenance and protection of natural resources (as you can imagine, this was implemented along the racist and sexist world-view of the day). Imagine the impact that such a program could have today - repair of the earth, production of healthy food from healthy ecosystems, and diversified youth employment across the country.

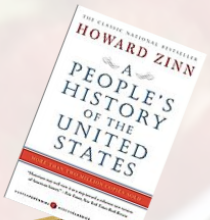
What about farmers in other countries? Here are videos about incredible visionary farmers in other countries.

Making this happen on any level is citizen engagement that requires each of us to tune in and figure out our own angle - for you, that may mean being involved in a local organization, showing up to speak with a state representative, or calling your congressperson. Part of the point is this: farming does not happen in a vacuum, but requires a deep engagement with the workings of the world.

- National Young Farmers Coalition
- National/State Farmers Union
- The California Farmers Guild
- National Family Farm Coalition
- Organic Coalition
- Real Organic Project
- Wild Farm Alliance

Agriculture has always been rigged by political and economic influences (from early pastoral city-states right through to Earl Butz and beyond). As an independent farm operator it's important to keep up with the agricultural climate and how national and international policies and circumstances may affect you. Although recent years have seen some progress, we still have a long way to go towards fostering a hospitable climate for small-scale farmers. It's vital that we not forget the inequality that persists in modern agriculture; agriculture as we know it in the U.S. would not exist without the labor of undocumented immigrants, and it would not have come to exist without the stolen lives and labor of enslaved black people. Industrial agriculture has exploited its workers immeasurably, but small-scale farming allows us to be more accountable in our relationships with co-workers, peers, and consumers. Stay informed and active! As the face of food in your community you have a unique opportunity to communicate on these issues. Take that job seriously.

Reading List:



But can't I just participate in the food system as an organic consumer and drive change that way?

As Michael Pollan says, eat with your fork - and sure, you can and it helps. But frankly, we have more prisoners than farmers in this country (that doesn't include farmworkers.) We have a massive acreage of land that needs to be restored. Ultimately, the work to be done is not merely supporting farmers trying to do the right thing, but actively changing the systems that put them at the margins of land stewardship in this country.

We are plagued by a 1% food system and a 1% healthcare system. This inequality does not serve us as a species, even in the best of times, let alone in a pandemic. Inequality, precarity, high rent, gauging technology costs (that are more than 3 times what Europeans Pay), chronic homelessness, food insecurity, and lack of access to a multitude of resources created the covid crisis, and are merely exacerbated by it. The solution to all of those problems lies in agriculture, even if a vaccine for the coronavirus doesn't.

Restoration and Reparation

The body of the earth is living. The vegetal life of the land needs to be strengthened. It may be cheap to spray herbicides on fencelines, sidewalks and playgrounds, it makes it expedient to maintain mowed monocultures of lawn-- but these places would serve us better if we made them into places of shade and shelter, slowing the wind, absorbing the rainwater and runoff, metabolizing the air pollution and fine dust as it drips down off of leaves, a place for birds to scratch and sing.

The over-paving of our public places makes them hotter than ever, and in a time of climate change, especially neighborhoods where residents cannot afford air conditioning, we need SHADE trees!

This means planting more trees, more diversity, more bushes, more flowers, more more more! Strengthening that vegetal life strengthens all animal, insect, and human lives. Every little bit of spongy mulchy earth helps!

This work makes our watersheds more durable against flooding, which means less run-off into our coastal waters, harbors and rivers. Happy watersheds mean happier otters, happier kelp beds, happier osprey, happier fish. The overall bio-mass of these creatures, their diversity and abundance is TOTALLY dependent on how we farm on land. Organic agriculture, agro-ecology, agro-forestry - these systems are not perfect, but they do not contaminate and burden wild nature.

Healing the earth - fulfilling, righteous, and good in the deepest sense - should not happen without recognition of other victims of colonization and oppression. Reparations for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, especially in the Americas, is central to all of our discussion of Land Access above. When we create private systems to feed privileged populations expensive food, our runoff poisons minority communities downstream. When we create a diversity of food justice and land justice and reparative justice, we create strong vegetation for us all to thrive on.

Facilitating earth repair won't atone for the generations of trauma and displacement that white people have brought upon the earth. When that repair is facilitated in the place of white settlement, the result is curated, saved spaces generally owned and enjoyed and by white people. We need to shift from a mindset of conservation of wild spaces, scenic spaces, etc., to a mindset that seeks to heal the inherited scars of pollution, extraction, and corporatization that are visible on the land itself and in our collective ability to use it equitably and justly.

The first step in taking reparative action is to self-educate. Reading and researching our national story of dispossession, ongoing discrimination, inequitable provisions of resources - this will help you engage more critically and productively in conversations and plans for reparations. Maybe more importantly, one critical aspect of reparations is that it is not merely a donation, but the recognition that reparative giving happens in conjunction with admission of past and ongoing injustices.

Conversation about reparations is increasingly focused of food justice and food supply. Understanding your place as a farmer in the fair distribution of healthy food and the capacity to create it can help direct your efforts and feed your community. Consider, for instance, the power an otherwise fallow field could hold for a group that otherwise lacks access to garden space - or the collective bounty of a whole farmer's market's unsold goods! These resources, often fairly left for the compost pile, forage, or paddock, can also be reimagined to fulfill gaping holes in the social food web. Creating long-term systems that build off of these opportunites for food justice are the first step towards creating land-based reparations.

What is Farming in a time after Corona?

A year ago, it might have seemed harder to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism-- but perhap that is no longer true. Trillions of dollars in "relief" funds were wrung violently from the earth-- from lithium batteries, hydro-electric damns, from lumber, from aluminum, from under-paid farm workers, from colonial conquest and debt-slavery. These tax dollars have come from an unfair globalized economy of which we (we, educated, computer literate we - but also we who carry that consuming trait of industrialized humanity) are the disproportionate beneficiaries. And yet we suffer as well-- we all suffer from the death of the blessed earth on which we depend.

As farmers, we know not to expect regularity. No matter how well our successions are planned, spreadsheeted out in full by march, and no matter how good our notions of the weather - our plans change. This is the tune of life in step with earthly, ecological, diversified, living, changing systems. The precarity we now face - uncertainty about what the future of farming, of apprenticeships, of land access - is scary, but it is also a function of our ecological life. Adapting to this new world will be hard work - it will be farmer's work. It can be your work.

Reading List:

Common Dreams: Breaking News & Videos for the Progressive Community
https://www.commondreams.org/

Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms And Forests in a New England Town
Brian Donahue

When Corporations Rule The World - David C. Korten

Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed
James C. Scott

A People's History of the United States - Howard Zinn

Videos:

1 History of land dispossession and negotiations in political transition
Nelson Mandela Foundation on youtube

What Happened to all the Black Farmers?
NBC Left Field on youtube

Check out these videos from visionary farmers abroad!

- Syntropic Agriculture in Brazil
- SepHoltzer, Permaculture Farm in Austria
- Masanobu Fukuoka, Natural Farming
- Korean Natural Farming
- Biodynamic Agriculture, an international movement

Want to learn more about land restoration or land justice?

Restoration:

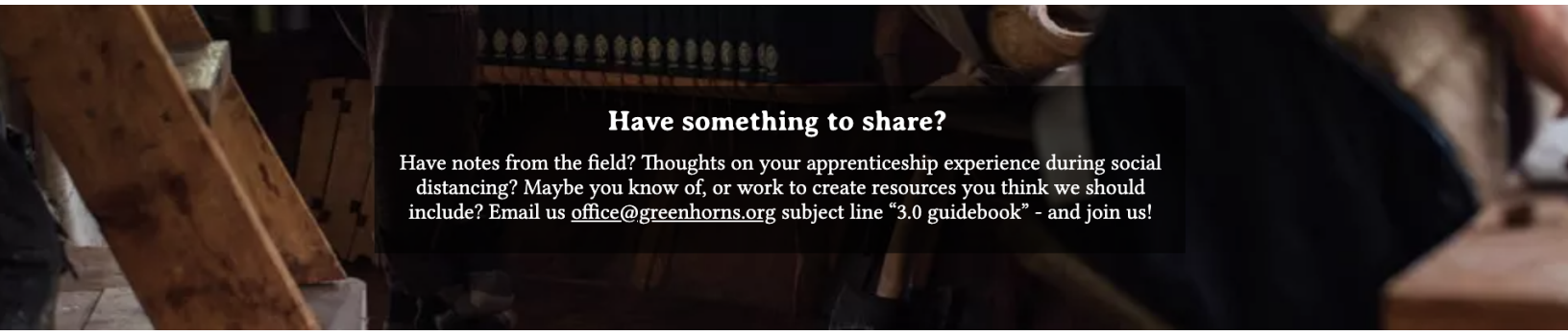
- Inhabit Film
- Sign up for an Earth Repair Camp
- Learn about holistic management framework for land health
- Society for Ecological Restoration

Migrant, Immigrant, and New Farmer demographics:

- Check out this article from the National Farm Worker Ministry
- Mano en Mano
- New Entry American Farmer Project

Reparations and Food Justice

- Soul Fire Farm
- Coming to the Table
- Land Reparations and Indigenous Solidarity Toolkit



Have something to share?

Have notes from the field? Thoughts on your apprenticeship experience during social distancing? Maybe you know of, or work to create resources you think we should include? Email us office@greenhorns.org subject line "3.0 guidebook" - and join us!

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