

Monoculture:

Monoculture is the agricultural practice of producing or growing one single crop over a wide area. The term is mostly used in agriculture and describes the practice of planting crops with the same patterns of growth resulting from genetic similarity. The dependence on monoculture crops can lead to large scale failures when the single genetic variant or cultivar becomes susceptible to a pathogen or when a change in weather patterns occur.

Cash Crop:

In agriculture, a cash crop is a crop which is grown for money. The term is used to differentiate from subsistence crops, which are those fed to the producer's own livestock or grown as food for the producer's family. In earlier times cash crops were usually only a small (but vital) part of a farm's total yield, while today, especially in the developed countries, almost all crops are mainly grown for cash. In agriculture, a cash crop is a crop which is grown for money.

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Subsistence Agriculture:

Subsistence agriculture is self-sufficient farming in which farmers grow only enough food to feed their family and to pay taxes or federal dues. The typical subsistence farm has a range of crops and animals needed by the family to eat during the year. Planting decisions are made with an eye toward what the family will need during the coming year, rather than market prices. "Subsistence peasants are people who grow what they eat, build their own houses, and live without regularly making purchases in the marketplace."

Subsistence farming typically uses few fertilizers and no machines. Instead the farmers may use draft animals which can be fed and raised on the farm. Subsistence farmers often rely on crop rotation, animal manure, and compost to restore the nutrients rather than purchasing expensive synthetic fertilizers. This agriculture can limit the amount of growth in a season.

Ecotourism:

Ecotourism (also known as ecological tourism) is a form of tourism, that appeals to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. Generally speaking, ecotourism focuses on volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on the planet. Ideally, ecotourism satisfies several general criteria, including the conservation of biological diversity and cultural diversity through ecosystem protection, promotion of sustainable use of biodiversity, share of socio-economic benefits with local communities through informed consent and participation, increase in environmental and cultural knowledge, affordability and reduced waste, and minimization of its own environmental impact. In such ways, it contributes to the long term benefits to both the environment and local communities.

development of each and every practitioner.

Common-sense practices include striving to be self-sufficient in energy, fertilizers, plants, and animals; structuring our activities based on working with nature's rhythms; using diversity in plant, fertilizers, and animals as building blocks of a healthy operation; being professional in our approach to reliability, cleanliness, order, focus on observation, and attention to detail; and being prompt and up-to-date in doing one's job.

Genetically Modified (GM) Foods:

Genetically modified (GM) foods are food items that have had their DNA changed through genetic engineering. Unlike conventional genetic modification that is carried out through conventional breeding and that have been consumed for thousands of years, GM foods were first put on the market in the early 1990s. Genetically engineered crops and foods are controversial. These commonly focus on the long-term health effects for anyone eating them, environmental safety, labelling and consumer choice, intellectual property rights, ethics, food security, poverty reduction, environmental conservation, and potential disruption or even possible destruction of the food chain. Potential impact on biodiversity may occur if herbicide-tolerant crops are sprayed with herbicide to the extent that no wild plants ('weeds') are able to survive. Plants toxic to insects may mean insect-free crops. This could result in declines in other wildlife (e.g. birds) which feed on weed seeds and/or insects for food resources.

Biodiversity:

Biodiversity is the variety of life: the different plants, animals and micro-organisms, their genes and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Biodiversity provides food for humans. Although about 80 percent of our food supply comes from just 20 kinds of plants, humans use at least 40,000 species of plants and animals a day. Many people around the world depend on these species for their food, shelter, and clothing. There is untapped potential for increasing the range of food products suitable for human consumption, provided that the high present extinction rate can be stopped.

Biodiversity can be defined as "the variety of life on earth and the natural patterns that it forms". While measures to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity will be beneficial for the environment, they can also have a positive effect in advancing our health and economic well-being. When people come to understand the importance of biodiversity, they are likely to encourage or even participate in activities which support conservation and the sustainable use of resources.

Polyculture:

Polyculture is agriculture using multiple crops in the same space, in imitation of the diversity of natural ecosystems, and avoiding large stands of single crops, or monoculture. It includes crop rotation, multi-cropping, intercropping, companion planting, beneficial weeds, and alley cropping. Polyculture, though it often requires more labour, has several advantages over monoculture: the diversity of crops avoids the susceptibility of monocultures to disease. For example, a study in China reported in Nature showed that planting several varieties of rice in the same field increased yields by 89%, largely because of a dramatic (94%) decrease in the incidence of disease, which made pesticides redundant. The greater variety of crops provides habitat for more species, increasing local biodiversity.

Intercropping:

Intercropping is the agricultural practice of cultivating two or more crops in the same space at the same time. A practice often associated with sustainable agriculture and organic farming, intercropping is one form of polyculture, using companion planting principles. It is commonly used in tropical parts of the world and by various indigenous peoples but in the mechanized agriculture of Europe, North America, and parts of Asia it is far less widespread. Intercropping may benefit crop yield or the control of some kind of pest, or may have other agronomic benefits.

Farmers practice free range to achieve free-range or humane certification (and thus capture high prices), to reduce feed costs, to improve the happiness and liveliness of their animals, to produce a higher-quality product, as a method of raising multiple crops on the same land, or for other reasons.

Organic Food:

Organic food is produced by farmers who emphasize the use of renewable resources and the conservation of soil and water to enhance environmental quality for future generations. Organic foods are made according to certain production standards, meaning they are grown without the use of conventional pesticides and artificial fertilizers, free from contamination by human or industrial waste, and processed without ionizing radiation or food additives. If livestock are involved, they must be reared without the routine use of antibiotics and without the use of growth hormones, and generally fed a healthy diet. In most countries, organic produce may not be genetically modified.

Organic Certification:

Organic certification is a certification process for producers of organic food and other organic agricultural products. Originally, in the 1960s through the 1980s, the organic food industry comprised mainly small, independent farmers, selling locally. Organic "certification" was a matter of trust, based on a direct relationship between farmer and consumer. Critics view regulatory certification as a potential barrier to entry for small producers, by burdening them with increased costs, paperwork, and bureaucracy. In general, any business directly involved in food production can be certified, including seed suppliers, farmers, food processors, retailers and restaurants. Requirements vary from country to country, and generally involve a set of production standards for growing, storage, processing, packaging and shipping.

Heirloom Plant:

An heirloom plant, heirloom variety, or heirloom vegetable is a cultivar that was commonly grown during earlier periods in human history, but which is not used in modern large-scale agriculture. Many heirloom vegetables have kept their traits through open pollination, while fruit varieties such as apples have been propagated over the centuries through grafts and cuttings. The trend of growing heirloom plants in gardens has been growing in popularity in the United States and Europe over the last decade. Heirloom growers have different motivations. Some people grow heirlooms for historical interest, while others want to increase the available gene pool for a particular plant for future generations. Some select heirloom plants due to an interest in traditional organic gardening.

Heritage Produce/Breeds:

Heirloom vegetables are defined in several ways. Some consider heirlooms to be any vegetable cultivars that have been grown for a certain length of time. Other people consider vegetables to be truly heirlooms only if being passed down by a family or group has preserved them. Heirlooms are always open-pollinated, since hybrid seed can not be maintained by ordinary means.

Heritage breeds are traditional livestock breeds that were raised by farmers in the past, before the drastic reduction of breed variety caused by the rise of industrial agriculture. Within the past 15 years, 190 breeds of farm animals have gone extinct worldwide, and there are currently 1,500 others at risk of becoming extinct. In the past five years alone, 60 breeds of cattle, goats, pigs, horses and poultry have become extinct.

Biodynamic Agriculture:

Biodynamic agriculture was inaugurated in 1924 by Austrian scientist Rudolf Steiner. It is the oldest, non-chemical agricultural movement and pre-dates organic agriculture by some twenty years. Biodynamic agriculture is a way of living, working and relating to nature and the vocations of agriculture based on good common-sense practices, a consciousness of the uniqueness of each landscape, and the inner

can be shown that the preservation of farmland is important for the health of the environment and water supply. According to the American Farmland Trust, sustainable and managed farms conserve soil and clean water and provide a habitat for wildlife. Moreover, modern farmers' markets help maintain important social ties, linking rural and urban populations and even close neighbours in mutually rewarding exchange.

Cooperatives:

An agricultural cooperative, also known as a farmers' co-op, is a cooperative where farmers pool their resources in certain areas of activity. A practical motivation for the creation of agricultural cooperatives is sometimes described as "overcoming the curse of smallness". A cooperative, being an association of a large number of small farmers, acts as a large business entity in the market, reaping the significant advantages of economies of scale that are not available to its members individually.

Slow Food:

The Slow Food movement was founded by Carlo Petrini in Italy to combat fast food. It claims to preserve the cultural cuisine and the associated food plants and seeds, domestic animals, and farming within an ecoregion.

The Slow Food movement incorporates a series of objectives within its mission, including:

- forming and sustaining seed banks to preserve heirloom varieties in cooperation with local food systems
- developing an "Ark of Taste" for each ecoregion, where local culinary traditions and foods are celebrated
- preserving and promoting local and traditional food products, along with their lore and preparation
- organizing small-scale processing (including facilities for slaughtering and short run products)
- organizing celebrations of local cuisine within regions (for example, the Feast of Fields held in some cities in Canada)
- promoting "taste education"
- educating consumers about the risks of fast food
- educating citizens about the drawbacks of commercial agribusiness and factory farms
- educating citizens about the risks of monoculture and reliance on too few genomes or varieties
- developing various political programs to preserve family farms
- lobbying for the inclusion of organic farming concerns within agricultural policy
- lobbying against government funding of genetic engineering
- lobbying against the use of pesticides
- teaching gardening skills to students and prisoners
- encouraging ethical buying in local marketplaces

Organic Movement:

The organic movement broadly refers to the organizations and individuals involved worldwide in the promotion of organic farming, which they believe to be a more sustainable mode of agriculture. Its history goes back to the first half of the 20th century, when modern large-scale agricultural practices began to appear. Organic farming methods have proven to be more effective than many conventional farmers realized, but they are still placed at a relative disadvantage by their lack of synthetic nitrogen. Thus they rely on price premiums, but these price premiums often allow them to reap higher profits than conventional farms.

Free Range Farming:

Free range is a method of farming husbandry where the animals are allowed to roam freely instead of being contained in any manner. The term is used in two senses that do not overlap completely: as a farmer-centric description of husbandry methods, and as a consumer-centric description of them.

Community Food Security (CFS):

Community food security is a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice. A community approach seeks to build up a community's food resources to meet its own needs. These resources may include supermarkets, farmers' markets, gardens, transportation, community-based food processing ventures, and urban farms to name a few. Community food security projects emphasize the need to build individuals' abilities to provide for their food needs. Community food security seeks to build upon community and individual assets, rather than focus on their deficiencies. CFS projects seek to engage community residents in all phases of project planning, implementation, and evaluation. A stable local agricultural base is key to a community responsive food system. Farmers need increased access to markets that pay them a decent wage for their labour, and farmland needs planning protection from suburban development. By building stronger ties between farmers and consumers, consumers gain a greater knowledge and appreciation for their food source.

Local food:

Local food (also regional food or food patriotism) or the local food movement is a "collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies - one in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption is integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place" and is considered to be a part of the broader sustainability movement. It is part of the concept of local purchasing and local economies, a preference to buy locally produced goods and services.

Buy Local:

The concept of buying local is simply to buy food (or any good or service) produced, grown, or raised as close to your home as possible. With industrialization, our food is now grown and processed in fewer and fewer locations, meaning it has to travel further to reach the average consumer's refrigerator. "Food miles" refer to the distance a food item travels from the farm to your home. The food miles for items you buy in the grocery store tend to be 27 times higher than the food miles for goods bought from local sources.

Local Economies:

Agribusiness often claims that its presence will have a positive impact on a local economy by creating new jobs and investing in the community. Recent experience, however, has shown that when large-scale farms enter communities and replace small farmers, they can actually create a downturn in the local economy. Since factory farms are vertically-integrated, farm materials are bought within the corporation, rather than at the local feed or hardware store. In addition, industrial farms are often too large to be locally-supplied, so they must buy feed and other materials in bulk from distant suppliers.

Farmer's Market:

Farmers' markets, sometimes called greenmarkets, are markets, usually held out-of-doors, in public spaces, where farmers can sell produce to the public. Farmers' market produce is renowned for being locally-grown and very fresh. People argue farmers' markets allow farmers to pick produce at the peak of flavour, preserve the nutritional content of fresh produce, and since locally-grown produce does not travel as far to get to your table, the difference in mileage saves fossil fuels. Farmers' markets often feature produce grown naturally or organically, meats that are raised humanely on pasture, handmade farmstead cheeses, eggs and poultry from free-range fowl, as well as heirloom produce and heritage breeds of meat and fowl.

Farmers' markets advocates believe the markets help farmers stay in business as well as preserve natural resources. Wholesale prices farmers get for their produce are very low, often near the cost of production. Farmers who sell direct to the public without going through a middle man get a better price. It

LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS LEXICON

Community Supported Agriculture CSA:

A CSA consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes the community's farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production. CSA's focus is usually on a system of weekly delivery or pick-up of vegetables and fruit, sometimes dairy products and meat.

Individuals, families or groups do not pay for x pounds or kilograms of produce, but rather support the budget of the whole farm and receive weekly what is seasonally ripe. This approach eliminates the marketing risks and costs for the producer and an enormous amount of time, often manpower too, and allows producers to focus on quality care of soils, crops, animals, co-workers — and on serving the customers. There is little to no loss in this system, since the producers know in advance who they are growing for and how much to grow.

Community Kitchen:

Customers are asked to pay (on the honour system) what they sincerely believe the meal would be worth if they were to pay for the same meal at an establishment where prices are posted and menus are set. If they cannot afford to pay, customers can volunteer at the cafe, doing dishes, cooking, or working in the garden, and they will receive meal vouchers for the work they perform.

Community Gardens:

A community garden is a piece of land gardened by a group of people. Community gardens provide access to fresh produce and plants as well as access to satisfying labour, neighbourhood improvement, sense of community and connection to the environment. They are publicly functioning in terms of ownership, access and management, as well as typically owned in trust by local governments or nonprofits.

Like traditional public parks, most community gardens are open to the public, and provide green space in urban areas, along with opportunities for social gatherings, beautification, education and recreation. However, in a key difference, community gardens are managed and maintained with the active participation of the gardeners themselves, rather than tended only by a professional staff. A second difference is food production: Unlike parks, where plantings are ornamental (or more recently ecological), community gardens often encourage food production by providing gardeners a place to grow vegetables and other crops. To facilitate this, a community garden may be divided into individual plots or tended in a communal fashion, depending on the size and quality of a garden and the members involved.

Community gardens encourage an urban community's food security, allowing citizens to grow their own food or for others to donate what they have grown. The gardens also combat two forms of alienation that plague modern urban life, by bringing urban gardeners closer in touch with the source of their food, and by breaking down isolation by creating a social community. It has also been found that active communities experience less crime and vandalism.

Food Security:

Food security refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is considered food secure when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. It is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain food security in a world beset by a confluence of "peak" phenomena, namely peak oil, peak water, peak grain and peak fish. Any disruption to farm supplies may precipitate a uniquely urban food crisis in a relatively short time.