

Cultivating the Web

High Tech Tools For the Sustainable Food Movement



A Note From the Editors

Some of the best things about being part of the sustainable food community are the gatherings. Many of us are in near-constant communication via phone or email, but getting together to talk about issues, celebrating our diverse food traditions, meeting people from around the country who share a common vision of a more sustainable food system — these in-person connections not only strengthen our relationships to each other, but to our food and, by extension, the land it grows on.

When we can't gather together in large numbers, we are glad we live in an age where we can communicate at lightning speed and find great local food with a click of a mouse. Through our work with the Eat Well Guide, connecting small-scale producers with those who hunger for healthier, more sustainably produced food, we find ourselves pioneering a new territory where the latest technologies support the oldest of agricultural methods.

This booklet contains many of the best web resources for foodies, farmers and activists, and highlights some of the smartest ways that new media is being used to grow the sustainable food movement. You can also download a copy from our site (www.eatwellguide.org). We welcome your feedback and suggestions as we continue to develop this resource for everyone to share. We also welcome your stories on our blog, the Green Fork — if you grow, cook, sell or eat sustainable food and have a triumph or tribulation that you'd like to share, email us at blog@eatwellguide.org.

Although it may seem the most unlikely of catalysts, digital technology is jogging our memories of real food and agrarian culture. We may be going back to the land, but many of us are bringing our laptops and smart phones.

Destin Joy Layne, director, Eat Well Guide
Leslie Hatfield, freelance editor, Green Fork Blog

Authors Leslie Hatfield, Destin Joy Layne, Lisa Kleger, Karen Corrèa, Chelsea DeWitt, Erin McCarthy

Contributors Temra Costa, Anya Fernald, Kate Fried, Mark Andrew Gravel, Marissa Guggiana, Joan Gussow, Fritz Haeg, Diane Hatz, Simon Huntley, Deborah Kane, Patty Lovera, Bill McKibben, Marion Nestle, Tom Philpott, Bonnie Azab Powell, Allison Radecki, Tim Schlitzer, Kerry Trueman, Severine Von Tsharner Fleming

Graphic Designer Katie Sweetman

Printer Inkworks

Photographers Jason Houston, Chelsea DeWitt, Leslie Hatfield, Jamie Henn

Contents

Recipe For a Food Revolution	6
Eat Well, Live Well, With the Eat Well Guide	10
Virtually Mapping Our Slow Food Nation	12
Voices of the Sustainable Food Movement	14
Mobilizing Web Users to Create Social Change	16
Getting Organized	18
Making Connections	21
Making a Splash With Viral Video	24
Sow Emails, Grow Visibility	25
Want to Make Change? Make a Moovie	26
A Flickr of Hope	28
From Barns to Bandwidth: Farmers On the Web	30
A New Route	32
Resources	33
Glossary of Terms	36



Recipe for a food revolution: Take one Internet . . .

Modern developments in food and farming technology have often done more harm than good. Biotechnology, pesticides, herbicides, industrial agriculture — all have taken a devastating toll on our ecology, our health, our local economies and our quality of life.

But technology — the digital kind — is also making some positive changes. Around the world, thousands of people are using digital technology to raise awareness of the consequences of industrial agriculture, connect conscientious eaters with local farmers and markets, and persuade corporations and policy makers to employ and support more responsible farming practices. From the young farmer looking for land to steward, to the suburban parents in search of a community supported agriculture (CSA) program, we are finding one another. Farmers, consumers, grassroots newsletter writers, musicians, activists, recipe sharers and chefs are using tools like blogs, websites, wikis and search engines to build the sustainable food movement.

Online organization is playing a vital role in developing many of the sustainable food movement's most vibrant food communities, including FoodRoutes Network's 70 Buy Fresh Buy Local chapters and Slow Food's 170+ chapters. The Internet will never take the place of the farmers' market, but it can help you find your way there. ☆

In the meat business, it is easy to get completely focused on the animals' well-worn path from farm to plate, which affords no end of education. But exploring online keeps me connected to the beautifully chaotic evolution of thought in the greater food community. Reading blogs, listening to podcasts and seeing other producers' websites also incites me to better my practices and keeps a sense of joyful growth in my work. This is part of sustainability for me on a personal and professional plane.

Technology is tools. A plow was once the newest technology and now we can communicate as fast as we can dream. If our spirit and values are rooted in community and sustainability, then technology can help our ideals bloom. **Marissa Guggiana**, president, Sonoma Direct

If you want to know where the nearest farmers' market might be, what better way than to look it up on the Internet? It makes me happy to know there are 55 farmers' markets within 20 miles of where I live. **Marion Nestle**, professor of nutrition, New York University, and author, *What to Eat*

Who would
have thought
that a high-
speed Internet
connection
could help us
build our slow
food nation?

There's no doubt we need big changes, and fast, in America's food system.



The symptoms of a country sick with fast food — obesity, heart disease, diabetes — are undeniable. Environmentally, we are paying the price too, with our air, water and soil quality all compromised by the way food is grown, processed and transported.

In this devastated system, Slow Food Nation has worked in partnership with Eat Well Guide and many other organizations to create an event that is a beautiful and joyous statement in favor of real food that makes you feel emotionally, intellectually and physically good.

Slow Food Nation and Eat Well Guide share the same vision — food that is good, clean and fair. Good means the food tastes delicious. Clean means it was sustainably grown. Fair means that those who produce it are sustained as well, and that people from every community can enjoy it.

In this publication and throughout Slow Food Nation, we are celebrating all the people who are growing,

producing, distributing and preparing food that is good, clean and fair. They've shown us that it's possible to be economically successful while meeting a sustainable triple bottom line. We are celebrating how far we've come — and acknowledging how far we can still go.

Through this publication, we want to show people that good, clean, and fair food is not an elite luxury but a universal birthright. Eat Well Guide helps you to vote with your fork, choosing foods that come from farmers, fishers and producers who are growing a more sustainable food system.

I hope this is just one of your tools as an advocate. You also have your voice, your vote, your community. Use all of them, and use them often. The fight to restore the health and vitality of America's food system is just beginning, and it will take all of us, working together and working hard, to win it.

Anya Fernald, executive director,
Slow Food Nation

Online organization is playing a vital role in developing many of the sustainable food movement's most vibrant communities. The organizations and sites below are some of the movement's heaviest hitters — find their URLs and those of other leading groups in our Resources section, beginning on page 33. ☆

- Eating Liberally Comm Food
- Food & Water Watch Thimmakka
- Small Planet FoodRoutes
- IATP Rodale Institute
- Eat Well Guide
- Sustainable Table CAFF
- Serve Your Country Food
- Animal Welfare Institute
- Organic Consumers Association
- Buy Fresh, Buy Local Leopold
- Slow Food

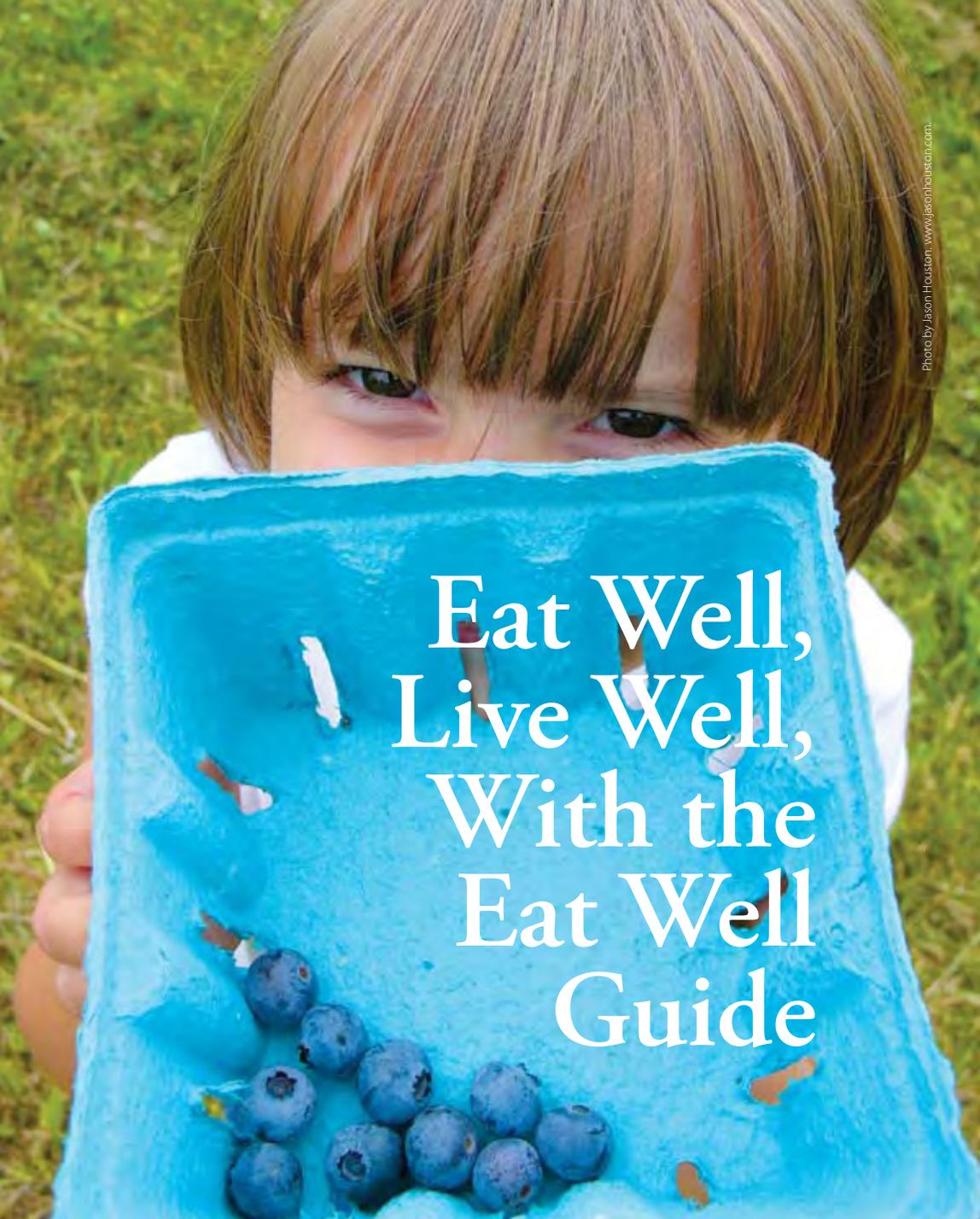


Photo by Jason Houston. www.jasonhouston.com.

Eat Well, Live Well, With the Eat Well Guide

The Eat Well Guide promotes the growing sustainable food movement through consumer education, partnerships with like-minded organizations, and the Guide, an online directory of family farms, restaurants, markets and other outlets of locally grown food throughout the United States and Canada. Visitors simply enter a zip or postal code to find good food and create free printable booklets. Originally a database of sustainably-raised meat, poultry, eggs and dairy, Guide listings have expanded to include farmers' markets, CSA programs, advocacy groups and vegetarian/vegan restaurants. Many listings are also accompanied by water conscious ratings. Use the Guide to:

- ★ **Find good food.** A simple search will help you find fresh, locally grown food. Our dynamic new mapping feature, Eat Well Everywhere, even shows you how to get there.
- ★ **Customize your choices.** Save listings in your online notebook, or use the create-a-guide feature to generate a customized PDF booklet to share with your friends.
- ★ **Support the movement.** Help farmers, co-ops and small business owners gain visibility by adding them to the Guide. Click on “suggest a listing” to help Eat Well put every sustainable producer in North America on the map. (And don't forget to add your own farm or business to the Guide!)
- ★ **Tune into the blogosphere.** Visit our blog, the Green Fork, to see what's shaking in the good food movement. Contribute a story by sending it to blog@eatwellguide.org.



Supporting the sustainable food movement, rebuilding local economies and distribution systems, finding good food — all of these require communication. The web is an excellent place for small-scale producers and locally owned businesses to bridge the communication gap, and for people to learn more and get involved. By working together, we can make it as easy to find a local farmer as it is to find a McDonald's or Starbucks.

Destin Joy Layne, director,
Eat Well Guide

Virtually Mapping Our Slow Food Nation



Our interactive mapping feature for Eat Well's thousands of listings of farms, markets, restaurants and other outlets of locally grown, sustainably produced food throughout the United States and Canada makes it easier than ever to find good food. Eat Well Everywhere (EWE) can help you explore your local foodshed and find all the sustainable food vendors in your area. Traveling? Steer clear of over-processed, industrially-produced food — EWE will lead you to great food, wherever you roam. Here's how Eat Well Everywhere works:

- ★ **Pinpoint your start and end locations.** EWE incorporates Google Maps functionality and can be used cross-town or cross-country.
- ★ **Filter by category.** Just looking for restaurants? Want to pack snacks from a local co-op? Narrow your search with Eat Well's sustainable vendor categories, like farmers, bakers, butchers, bed and breakfasts, etc.
- ★ **Create your eat-itinerary.** Based on your search results, EWE will generate a customized PDF booklet, ready for printing or sharing with friends.
- ★ **Take it with you.** Print your custom booklet, with business profiles and driving directions, or download it to your PDA.

Put your farm or business on the map with Eat Well's "Suggest a Listing" feature.

“

A little bit of research in advance of an adventure can offer an inquisitive eater a range of delicious memories that truly taste of a place. The three years I spent as a student at Slow Food's University of Gastronomic Sciences in Italy, studying and savoring my way around the globe, taught me this lesson well.

Finding food that tastes of a place is one of the easiest ways to learn about where you are and connect with the people who live there. Isn't that the root of why we travel, after all, for the chance to discover the flavor of a place? And what better way is there to experience local flavors than by supporting and savoring local foods?

With the vast number of enthusiastic bloggers and databases on the web, the Internet is a fantastic resource, primed and ready to steer a hungry traveler towards a goldmine of local flavors. I look forward to using Eat Well's new online travel tool, Eat Well Everywhere, to connect with local food chains, whether I'm traveling across town or across the country.

”

Allison Radecki, Graduate of
Slow Food's University of
Gastronomic Sciences

Voices of the Sustainable Food Movement

What began as a movement of online journals has evolved into a new form of journalism, one with a reputation for digging up the most important stories and thrusting them into the light. Blogging links people who share the same interests, be they recipes or politics, or both. Here are some of our favorite food news and policy blogs. Find even more (including recipe and green living blogs) on the Green Fork blogroll at blog.eatwellguide.org.

Blog for Rural America
www.cfra.org/blog

ChewsWise: Digesting the Sustainable Food Chain
www.chewswise.com

Culinate
www.culinate.com/home

The Daily Table
www.sustainabletable.org/blog

Diary of a Young Farmer
www.edibleportland.com/diary_of_a_young

Eating Liberally
www.eatingliberally.org

Eat Local Challenge
www.eatlocalchallenge.com

Edible Nation
www.ediblecommunities.com/portal/index.php

The Ethicurean
www.ethicurean.com

Food & Water Watch
www.foodandwaterwatch.org/blog

Garden of Eating
gardenofeatingblog.blogspot.com

Good Farm Movement
www.goodfarmmovement.com

Green Fork
blog.eatwellguide.org

Grist
gristmill.grist.org

Homegrown (Farm Aid)
www.homegrown.org

The Irresistible Fleet of Bicycles
thegreenhorns.wordpress.com

The Jew & the Carrot
www.jcarrot.org

La Vida Locavore
www.lavidalocavore.org

Mighty Foods
www.mightyfoods.com

Mulch
www.mulchblog.com

Slow Food Nation
www.slowfoodnation.org/blog

Slow Food USA
www.slowfoodblog.org

Take a Bite
www.takeabite.cc/blog

Thoughts on the Table
thoughtsonthetable.wordpress.com

US Food Policy
usfoodpolicy.blogspot.com

What to Eat
www.whattoeatbook.com

Bill McKibben, environmentalist and author, spoke to the crowd at the Powershift conference at the University of Maryland in November 2007.



Photo by Jamie Henn

“

It is undeniably odd, and lovely, that one of the most important parts of our food system — a little behind rain and sun and seed, but not so much — are the new digital tools that allow us to bypass the big advertisers, the mega-chains, the junk peddlers and instead find all the myriad other people growing, processing, cooking, and eating actual, delicious food.

”

Bill McKibben, writer, educator, environmentalist and author of *The End of Nature*, *Deep Economy*, and many other books

Mobilizing Web Users to Create Social Change



Photo by Jason Houston, www.jasonhouston.com.

On August 24, 2007, in a move that set off a domino effect throughout the retail dairy industry, coffee giant Starbucks committed to serving only rBGH-free milk in all of its company-owned U.S. stores.

How did this astounding change in corporate practices come about? Led by Food & Water Watch, the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit consumer organization that works to ensure clean water and safe food, and bolstered by efforts from Sustainable Table, Organic Consumers Association, Breast Cancer Action and others, tens of thousands of healthy food advocates participated in an online campaign designed to pressure the coffee giant to switch to milk produced without the controversial artificial hormone rBGH, also called rBST. After more than a year of

emails and calls, Starbucks relented. Since then, the move has swelled into a trend, with major retailers like Kroger, Publix and even Wal-Mart making their house brands of milk rBGH-free.

Online organizing around food issues has done much more than change the behavior of big companies. This year, it influenced the Farm Bill, the federal law that sets food and agriculture policy for the next five years. The most recent Farm Bill, passed in June 2008, saw an unprecedented level of citizen involvement — much of it

This year, online organizing may even change the landscape of the White House lawn! A movement to ask the next president to plant an organic garden at the White House, called “Eat the View,” started at www.ondayone.org, a collaborative website where visitors make suggestions for the next president. Within months, it received more votes than any other initiative. Now, Eat the View has its own website — www.eattheview.org.

through e-activism. Many groups used the web to generate emails and calls to legislators about the need for new policies to create a healthier food system.

One long-awaited change was the end to a ban on interstate shipment of state-inspected meat, making it easier for small farmers raising cattle, hogs and other food animals to get their meats to market. The Farm Bill also gave a boost to several important local food programs, including \$20 million for low-income seniors to use at farmers’ markets, and created new federal support for organic food production. These reforms wouldn’t have happened without online organization by people who want more sustainable food. But broader changes, which would have enormous ramifications for sustainable food, await the next Farm Bill, in about five years. It’s not too early to get involved. ☆

WEBSITES TO WATCH

Food & Water Watch
www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Sustainable Agriculture Coalition
www.sustainableagriculturecoalition.org

FarmPolicy.com
www.farmpolicy.com

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) Ag Observatory
www.agobservatory.org/issue_farmbill.cfm

Getting Organized

The vast array of web tools can be overwhelming (see our Glossary of Terms on page 36 for tips!), but most are quick, user-friendly, and infinitely useful, once you are familiar with them. Wikis and Google Groups are excellent for organizing, while social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook are great marketing tools for farms, restaurants and nonprofits. Ag-specific social networking sites help put volunteers and workers in touch with farmers, and photo and video sites like Flickr and YouTube make it easier to get your story out there. ☆

Eat Well's field team brings together college students and volunteers from around the United States and Canada to help build our local, regional and national food communities. Keeping the team connected involves constant online communication and collaboration. With the discovery of various free, online tools, we span the miles separating us. For example, using our customizable online wiki lets multiple users access, update, edit and jointly brainstorm new ideas and stay abreast of critical projects and deadlines. Sharing Google Docs allows for up-to-the-minute collaboration on documents by any number of people in different places. Google Alerts is invaluable for outreach. We use it to track keywords and follow where they're mentioned across the web, which helps us link to related content and find other media outlets and bloggers who are working on the same issues we are passionate about.



Photo courtesy of the Eat Well Guide.

Chelsea Dewitt, program coordinator,
Eat Well Guide



Photo by Jason Houston, www.jasonhouston.com.



Photo by Chelsea DeWitt.



Photo by Leslie Hatfield.

Google's free online tools have been invaluable to me for myriad food-related projects. For example, I use Google Groups to run two CSA programs for small, local meat producers. It integrates an email list manager with a central repository for files (like price lists) and group-editable pages (recipes). Google's online spreadsheets and new form-builder tool have automated the sign-up process for the CSAs. I also set up a public Google Calendar to promote sustainable food and farming events. More than 60 "co-editors" nationwide are able to add their own events and, with Google's help, embed an events calendar RSS feed in their websites.

Bonnie Azab Powell, deputy editor,
Edible San Francisco, and co-founder,
The Ethicurean



FOOD & FARMING NETWORKING SITES

ATTRA (National Sustainable
Agriculture Information Service)
www.attra.ncat.org

FarmFoody.org
www.farmfoody.org

Food System Creators Cafe
www.foodsystemcreators.com

For Young Farmers Wiki
foryoungfarmers.wikispaces.com

Harvest Eating
www2.harvesteating.com

Kitchen Gardeners
International
www.kitchengardeners.org

Local Food Networks
www.localfoodnetworks.net

Organic Volunteers
www.organicvolunteers.com

Serve Your Country Food
www.serveyourcountryfood.net

Sustainable Farmer
www.sustainablefarmer.com

World Wide Opportunities on
Organic Farms (WWOOF)
www.woof.org

Photos by Jason Houston, www.jasonhouston.com.

Making Connections

Social networking sites are not just for teenagers. Even mainstream sites like Facebook can further the movement, but the real action is on food- and farming-specific sites like WWOOF and ATTRA, which help would-be farmers find farms to work on, the Young Farmers Wiki, where new farmers share agrarian information, and sites like Eat Well and FarmFoody, which help customers find farmers and CSA programs. ✨

WWOOF uses bits and bytes zipping through cables to do something utterly concrete and necessary: get more hands in the dirt. I got my first taste of farming through WWOOF, and my own farm would not have survived without it.

Tom Philpott, food editor,
Grist.org, and co-founder, Maverick Farms

We want to demystify the process of building regional food networks of all scales, yet we know we don't hold all the answers. Online learning communities like our local food networks provide forums for brainstorming ideas and sharing best practices with individuals in your own region or from across the country.

Deborah Kane, vice president
of Food and Farms, Ecotrust

DELICIOUS, BUT
STINGING
NETTLE
+ 25 /



Serve Your Country Food (www.serveyourcountryfood.net) is an online database and map of America's young farming community.

This site is sponsored by Organic Valley and powered by greenhorns. A greenhorn is a new entrant into agriculture, someone either young in years or inexperienced, and what the USDA calls a "beginning farmer." *The Greenhorns* is a film project that documents the dramas, dreams and daily labors of this movement's members, bringing onto the screen heroes who are sometimes invisible in media culture.

Our mission is to promote, support and recruit young farmers in America. We believe that once you taste the food, meet the people, and see the dream, you too will want to farm.

Use the map to:

- Meet your farming neighbors.
- Watch as the next generation reclaims the human scale, safeguards our topsoil, and provides local food for the nation.
- Show the map to your parents or disbelieving guidance counselor at school, as if to say, "See, there are lots of people who learned how to make farming work, both financially as well as ecologically."
- Become accessible to the media and to community organizers who want to invite you to talk in churches and town halls about land use.
- Find landowners who are looking for land stewards.
- Become transparent in your commitment to your community, soil ecology and national food security.
- Help us gather rhetorically useful survey data about the next generation in agriculture. Here, we gather information about your farming practices, marketing venues, and off-farm jobs. Your answers help us better define the needs and values of new growers and the obstacles they face.
- Register your intention as a wannabe-agrarian. Perhaps you are in a city right now pursuing ambition, or capital fulfillment, or perhaps paying off your school debts. But give yourself a timeline, a lifeline forward towards an agricultural career and a rural lifestyle.

Severine Von Tsharner Fleming,
farmer and filmmaker



Making a Splash With Viral Video

In the spring of 2008, Food & Water Watch capitalized on the massive popularity of YouTube to spread the word about its Take Back the Tap campaign, which raises consciousness about the negative effects of bottled water, and drums up support for beleaguered public water systems.

The campaign was already making waves offline with college students. Eager to build on this momentum, Food & Water Watch turned to the Internet. The organization launched a video contest, hosted through YouTube, to promote its pro-tap-water message, and at the same time strengthen its base of support among young people. More than 140 entries rolled in. Submissions ranged in tone from the serious to the spirited, all united by a common theme: the rejection of bottled water in favor of tap. The contest entries and promotional videos took off: more than 60,000 people tuned in online.

Then Food & Water Watch reached out on YouTube again, inviting activists to apply for fellowships and internships with the organization. An extraordinary number of applicants answered the call, providing more dramatic proof of the

medium's effectiveness in reaching out to young people, engaging them, and supplementing organizing activities on the ground.

The video contest entries and applications were remarkable on their own. But it's the impact of the YouTube connection that is especially noteworthy. By making creative use of the medium's viral qualities, Food & Water Watch expanded its reach while simultaneously mobilizing its base of support. Through the video contest entries and internship and fellowship applications, the organization identified supporters of its causes, inspired them to take action, and incorporated them into its outreach for subsequent activities. Through YouTube, Food & Water Watch is building both its membership lists and a movement to Take Back the Tap nationwide. ★



Sow Emails, Grow Visibility

Sometimes, just building a good email list and sending out messages can lead to increased publicity. Artist Fritz Haeg found that out the easy way.

Haeg's Edible Estates project has made him a household name in the food activism and art worlds. The first Edible Estates garden was planted in Salina, Kansas, in 2005 as part of a local art show. Together with the Salina Art Center, Haeg found a suburban couple willing to trade their resource-sucking lawn for an edible, organic garden, and organized the food/art installation. Riding the rising surge of interest in local food and gardening, the Edible Estates project proved such a hit that it grew into a nine-part series.

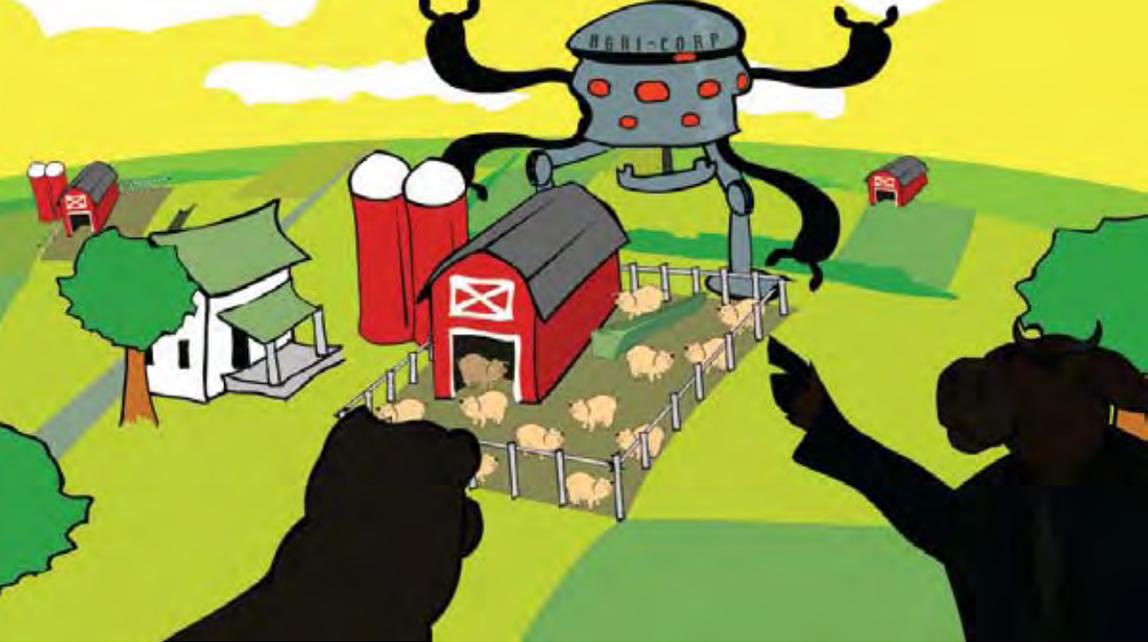
When Haeg set out to organize Edible Estates #2 in suburban Los Angeles, he turned to the web to put out a call for potential hosts. His email describing the project, with a photo of the Salina garden, instantly zipped out to 500 friends and fans. Within minutes, a dozen responses backing the project landed in his inbox. Treehugger.com caught wind of the idea and posted about it, and that's how the Foti family of Lakewood, California came to be keepers of Edible Estates #2.

Blogs spread the word to mainstream media, too. Over the last two years, Edible Estates has been covered by the *Associated Press*, *The New York Times* and *Men's Vogue*. Haeg harnessed the momentum and, in 2008, published his book, "Edible Estates: Attack on the Front Lawn." ★

People tend to think that the project has received so much attention because I was sending out press releases, but I've actually never done that. It has spread by word of mouth, and in particular by email and the web. Issues of food, energy, water, community, and the environment have gone from marginal discussions among environmentalists to mainstream topics of interest in the media. Perhaps that is why this project is resonating with people at the moment, and has received so much exposure. There is nothing remotely new about the project. As a matter of fact, growing your own food is one of the most basic human activities! So I always find it a bit funny that removing your front lawn and planting food is now a news story. That says something about who we are and how we are living.

Fritz Haeg, artist





Want to Make Change? Make a Moovie

One group that's no stranger to the innovative use of digital technology to promote the good food movement is Sustainable Table, which in 2003, along with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, created the Eat Well Guide. That same year, Sustainable Table joined forces with Free Range Studios to produce *The Meatrix* (www.themeatrix.com), a four-minute Flash animation that spoofs *The Matrix* movie trilogy while educating viewers about problems with industrial agriculture and meat production.

The Meatrix attracted millions of viewers in its first couple of weeks alone and, five years later, the film continues to receive hundreds of thousands of unique visits every month. It has been translated into more than 30 languages, and is the most successful online advocacy film ever, seen by more than 15 million viewers around the world.

The Meatrix has won worldwide critical acclaim and more than a dozen major film and web awards, including a highly prized Webby. It has spawned two sequels, *The Meatrix II: Revolting*, and *The Meatrix II½*, released to help promote the film *Fast Food Nation*.

A more recent project, Sustainable Table's Tour Journal (www.sustainabletable.org/roadtrip), was brought online to let people everywhere ride along on the 2007 Eat Well Guided Tour of America, a cross-country adventure calling attention to local, sustainable food. The blog will be used on an on-going basis to raise interest in events like this year's trip, "From Bonnaroo to Boulder." And soon, Sustainable Table will be launching online educational kits for consumers who want to spread the word. The kits will contain sample speeches and presentations, handouts, videos and other tools that motivated individuals can use to educate others about good food. Visit www.sustainabletable.org for more information.

Sustainable Table celebrates local sustainable food, educates consumers on food-related issues, and works to build community through food. Founded in 2003 as a program of GRACE, Sustainable Table uses creativity, innovation and entertainment to reach the public and provide information on eating healthier, shopping smarter and learning about issues with our food supply. The program also includes the Daily Table blog, The Parlour forum, a Recipes section and a 360-degree interactive educational feature. ☆



The Meatrix attracted millions of viewers in its first couple of weeks alone

A Flickr of Hope

One person (with a camera) really can make a difference

Cheyenne Glasgow, a mother in Portland, Oregon, was so appalled at the packaged, processed meals the local public school was serving to children through its free breakfast program that she just snapped. Photos, that is, a series documenting five days' worth of agribiz awfulness: a cereal bar loaded with sugars and chemicals, greasy sausages and eggs and so on — a nonstop parade of empty carbs and factory farmed fats.

She posted her photos on Flickr, an online photo sharing site, and emailed the series to a friend who blogs at Daily Kos, the progressive online community where anyone can weigh in. The friend, equally incensed, posted a diary on Daily Kos entitled "Food Culture = Crap," decrying this practice of dumping "the detritus of the corporate food machine" on kids from low-income families.

I picked up the story and blogged about it on Eating Liberally and Huffington Post. Soon, Kristy Obbink, head of Portland Public Schools Nutrition Services, sent Cheyenne an angry letter about her "sensational" story.

But as Kristy went on to describe the difficulties she faces trying to provide wholesome meals while meeting USDA requirements and coping with a tight budget, she morphed from a defensive bureaucrat

OTHER HELPFUL TOOLS

Facebook
www.facebook.com

MySpace
www.myspace.com

Flickr
www.flickr.com

YouTube
www.youtube.com

Blip TV
www.blip.tv

Current TV
www.current.com



Cheyenne Glasgow used her Flickr account to share photos of the unhealthy and overly-processed food served to her children via the school district's free lunch program. View more photos at flickr.com/photos/cowboy_montgomery.

into a frustrated human being soliciting Cheyenne's ideas about how to provide more nutritious meals for Portland's students, given all these constraints.

Cheyenne sent a sympathetic, conciliatory reply, but stood by her guns, which led to more emails and, eventually, a meeting that Cheyenne blogged about afterward:

"Despite our initial prickly email correspondence, I really enjoyed meeting Kristy. She was completely forthright and open about

the whole school lunch operation and that she and I were in complete agreement about the quality of the food and the overall unfairness of the situation."

Will this exchange translate into healthier meals for Portland's kids? We'll have to tune in next semester, but this is how change starts — one disgusted mother and digital camera at a time.

Kerry Trueman, co-founder, EatingLiberally.org

From Barns to Bandwidth: Farmers On the Web

Today's small farmers and producers are finding the web fertile ground on which to cultivate commerce. Luckily, there are folks like Simon Huntley who make setting up a website easy and affordable for small farmers, and new systems that allow for quick updating for those who are too busy planting, weeding or feeding to spend much time on web marketing. Staying afloat in an increasingly globalized market is no small feat, but with a little help from online technology, sustainable producers are farming the web straight to their customers' hearts and bellies. Their websites, email lists, blogs and videos are democratizing communication and allowing these artisans to reach their customers, tell their stories, and grow their livelihoods. ☆

As someone who has worked at "ground level" on a farm to grow and market products, I know how important it is to communicate a consistent vision of a farm to all the customers. Customers must constantly be reminded of why they make the decisions they make in relation to local food because it is time consuming and usually a little more expensive to source food locally.

The web happens to be a very inexpensive and easy way to get the word out to customers if the technology is taken care of. Emails don't cost anything to send, and the incremental cost of each visit to a website is almost nothing. My passion is to take care of the technology in ways that make sense to farmers and allow them to communicate their farm vision to customers whenever the fields allow them to get away.

Simon Huntley, lead developer,
Small Farm Central

The web is helping forge new relationships among farmers, their markets and the locavores eager to feast on their grown-within-100 miles, sustainably raised and artisanally crafted foods. In addition to presenting the visuals and stories that bring farms into people's homes, websites are creating more links among restaurants, retailers and the markets that help keep farms economically healthy and improve access to locally grown food. In these ways, the web is an important part of today's farming renaissance, spurred by advances in how information moves around the globe.

Many farmers, though, lack the time to keep their pages current, with up-to-date prices and accounts of what's available. They need to be able to see a direct benefit to justify spending time behind a computer instead of in the fields or at the farmers' market. But the benefit is undeniable. Just having a single web page up with the farm's address and contact information is valuable. More-developed sites that allow people to buy farm products require more time to maintain and are less likely to be kept up by farmers unless they see a real sales bump. We are often approached with new ideas for blogging/virtual farmers. Biggest challenge: farmers are some of the busiest people I know!



Photo courtesy of Temra Costa.

Temra Costa, Buy Fresh Buy Local director in California

To me, marketing is marketing, whether we are talking about the web or about my mom bragging at the grocery store about my lamb. The most effective marketing comes from a real connection to your product. I felt left out of the loop because as a start-up, we couldn't prioritize building the website of my dreams. Now I see our product has found a much happier home on the Internet in web communities and conversations because it is happening organically. It's like I have a thousand bragging moms instead of just another flashy website.

Marissa Guggiana, president,
Sonoma Direct

A New Route

Instead of mounting boycotts to pressure food corporations to become more sustainable, FoodRoutes Networks' (www.foodroutes.org) 70 Buy Fresh Buy Local Chapters engage consumers in "buycotts" — encouraging them to use their dollars to vote for safer, healthier, more sustainable food.

To date, FoodRoutes Network (which is changing its name to FoodRoutes Con-

servancy in 2009) has recruited more than 26,000 people into its buycotts, and it plans to expand the campaign next year. Not only will FoodRoutes continue to educate the public about the benefits of sustainable food, and to support existing local

food systems, but the nonprofit organization also plans to take steps to move public policy, bolster community investment and build on the infrastructure needed to grow a healthy, sustainable, local food system.

To help accomplish this, FoodRoutes aims to raise more than \$10 million dollars over the next few years. Through the Buy Fresh Buy Local chapter program, the group supports a growing network of organizations around the country dedicated

to sustainable agriculture, the environment, and sustainable culture and living. The network allows each organization to invest in the others to bring widespread change to our national and international food system.

Each chapter works with FoodRoutes to build its local online presence as a way to complement its other activities and communicate with other chapters and the public. This strategy is proving effective as the network creates a powerful synergy — local chapters serve consumers where they live, but collectively they blanket the entire nation.

Buy Fresh Buy Local's colorful artwork — on posters, stickers, signs and shopping bags — continues to prove itself in the marketplace as a recognizable brand that connects the entire local food movement and spreads the word.

FoodRoutes' strategy is to harness the current demand for local foods to help expand the supply of sustainably grown and produced food.

Tim Schlitzer, executive director,
FoodRoutes



Resources

NEWSLETTERS/PUBLICATIONS

Acres USA: A Voice for Eco-Agriculture
www.acresusa.com

American Pastured Poultry Producers Association
www.apppa.org

Edible Communities
www.ediblecommunities.com

Fertile Ground USA
www.fertilegroundusa.com

New Farm Newsletter (Rodale)
www.rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm

FOOD GUIDES

ATTRA
attra.ncat.org/attra-pub/localfood_dir.php

Eat Well Guide
www.eatwellguide.org

Eat Wild
www.eatwild.com

USDA Farmers Market Listings
www.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets

CONSUMER RESOURCES

Animal Welfare Institute
www.awionline.org

FoodRoutes (Buy Fresh, Buy Local)
www.foodroutes.org

Certified Humane Raised & Handled
www.certifiedhumane.org

Slow Food
www.slowfood.com

Sustainable Table
www.sustainabletable.org

Seafood Watch
www.mbayaq.org/cr/SeafoodWatch.asp

Thimakka
www.thimakka.org

FOOD POLICY/RESEARCH CENTERS

American Farmland Trust
www.farmland.org

Center for Food Safety
www.centerforfoodsafety.org

Community Food Security Coalition
www.foodsecurity.org

The Cornucopia Institute
www.cornucopia.org

Food & Water Watch
www.foodandwaterwatch.org

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
www.iatp.org

Johns Hopkins University Center for a Livable Future
www.jhsph.edu/clf

Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture
www.leopold.iastate.edu

Organic Consumers Association
www.organicconsumers.org

Worldwatch Institute
www.worldwatch.org

NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

American Community Gardening Association
www.communitygarden.org

American Grassfed Association
www.americangrassfed.org

Community Alliance with Family Farmers
www.caff.org

Family Farm Defenders
www.familyfarmdefenders.org

Farm Aid
www.farmaid.org

Land Stewardship Project
www.landstewardshipproject.org

Rodale Institute
www.rodaleinstitute.org

SARE: Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
www.sare.org

Soil and Health Library
www.soilandhealth.org

Wild Farm Alliance
www.wildfarmalliance.org

REGIONAL FOOD AND FARMING

Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network
www.asanonline.org

Berkshire Grown
www.berkshiregrown.org

California Certified Organic Farmers
www.ccof.org

Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
www.carolinafarmstewards.org

Colorado Local Sustainability
www.local sustainability.net

Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture
www.buylocalfood.com

FamilyFarmed.org
www.familyfarmed.org

Foodshed Alliance
www.foodshedalliance.org

Food Systems Network NYC
www.foodsystemsnyc.org

Future Harvest-CASA
www.futureharvestcasa.org

Georgia Organics
www.georgiaorganics.org

Just Food
www.justfood.org

The Land Connection
www.thelandconnection.org

Midwest Organic Services Association (MOSA)
www.mosaorganic.org

New Orleans Food & Farm Network (NOFFN)
www.noffn.org

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)
www.nofa.org

Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
www.nesawg.org

Oregon Sustainable Agriculture Land Trust (OSALT)
www.osalt.org

Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture (PASA)
www.pasafarming.org

Prince Edward Island Certified Organic Producers Co-op (COPC)
www.organicpei.com

Rural Vermont
www.ruralvermont.org

Vermont Fresh Network
www.vermontfresh.net

White Dog Community Enterprises
www.whitedogcafeoundation.org

EMAIL LISTS

COMFOOD (Community Food Security Coalition)
www.foodsecurity.org/list.html

GRIST: Eat Your Greens
www.grist.org/email/signmeup.php

The Greenhorns
www.thegreenhorns.net/maillinglist.html

Real Food Challenge
www.realfoodchallenge.org

Association for the Study of Food & Society (ASFS)
www.food-culture.org

Slow Food Nation
www.slowfoodnation.org

Michael Pollan Mailing List
www.michaelpollan.com

Union of Concerned Scientists Food & Environment (FEED)
www.ucsaction.org/ucsaction/join.html

MORE

Chefs Collaborative
www.chefscollaborative.org

Cooking up a Story
www.cookingupastory.com

Edible Schoolyard
www.edibleschoolyard.org

The Farmer's Guide to the Internet
www.rural.org/Farmers_Guide

Growing Power
www.growingpower.org

Glossary of Terms

- ★ **Blackberry** A brand of digital handheld device that is used mainly for its wireless email, built-in address book and personal scheduler features, in addition to being a phone.
- ★ **Blog** A website that is updated almost daily in journal style with posts ordered in reverse chronological order.
- ★ **Current TV** An interactive cable channel where viewers send in video stories they've created to be aired on the network.
- ★ **Facebook** An online social networking website that connects its members through networks, such as a school, place of employment or geographic region.
- ★ **Flickr** An online photo management application. Members can upload photos and share them with others.
- ★ **Google Alerts** Email updates of the latest relevant Google results (web, news, etc.) based on your choice of query or topic.
- ★ **Google Calendar** A free online shareable calendar service that allows for the creation of multiple calendars that can be shared with other Gmail users.
- ★ **Google Docs** Free web-based word processor, spreadsheet and presentation tools that allow for multiple users to create, share and jointly edit documents online with other Gmail users.
- ★ **Google Groups** Google Groups helps users connect with people, access information and communicate over email and on the web.
- ★ **PDA (Personal Digital Assistant)** A digital handheld device used for storing information such as personal schedules and address books.
- ★ **PDF (Portable Document Format)** A digital document format.
- ★ **Podcast** Digital media files that are distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers.
- ★ **MySpace** An online social networking website and blogging service.
- ★ **RSS Feed** Scans websites for updated information and allows users to stay informed when new content is posted.
- ★ **Search Engine** A directory of Internet content that can be searched for specified keywords and returns a list of the locations where the keywords were found.
- ★ **Social networking website** An Internet site that provides a virtual community where users may communicate and share information.
- ★ **YouTube** A video-sharing website where users can upload, view and share video clips.
- ★ **Wiki** A collaborative website where people are able to add, remove and sometimes edit shared content.

Across the country, the ubiquitous Sysco truck has left a trail of culinary devastation in its wake, homogenizing the fare at most of the few remaining locally owned establishments. The Eat Well Guide pinpoints the holdouts, the renegades — the restaurants that source from their foodsheds and in doing so, preserve delicious old traditions and create new ones.

Tom Philpott, food editor, *Grist.org*
and co-founder, *Maverick Farms*

As a confirmed technophobe — at least where electrons are concerned — I'm almost embarrassed to say how helpful I think on-line sources like the wonderful Eat Well Guide have been to the local food movement as we try to find ways of connecting growers and eaters.

Joan Gussow, professor of nutrition
at Columbia University and author of *This Organic Life*

**Slow Food
Nation '08**
Come to the Table



www.sustainabletable.org

www.eatwellguide.org

www.thematrix.com