Creation of a Farmer: A New Agrarianism

Apeiron Society 2014 Annual Weekend Symposium

Introduction to Jeremie and his Farm.

Defining the trend of professionals and college grads leaving, wholly or in part, city and career for agriculture.

A New Agrarianism – the motivations behind the move, healing communities and the environment.

Recognizing the Covenant with Creation – abad, shamer, and ecological hermeneutics – a motivating and sustaining factor in the Clyde’s adoption of agrarianism.

Introduction – Clyde’s and their Farm

What the Clyde’s farm produces

Part 1 – New Farmers

- Farmer Boy – pages 366 – 370
- Professionals and college grads choosing agriculture wholly or in part for income and lifestyle – US recorded 455,000 beginning farmers in 2012 – farmers with less than 10 years experience.
- More than 8,000 farmers’ markets in US, a 38% increase over five years.
- Learning to be a new farmer – course, youtube, social media.
- The new farmer’s farm... Organic, sustainable, innovative.
- Small mixed farms have greater production per acre through complexity and non-parasitic agriculture. Not only do they increase biodiversity but they are more resilient in today’s agriculture, essential for a healthier food system.
- New farms rely on food forests, permaculture, perennials, planting guilds, companion planting, compost, SPIN farming, aquaponics, and CSA.
- College grads, new farmers, and necessity of an education in critical thinking.

Part 1 – New Farmers
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- More than 8,000 farmers’ markets in US, a 38% increase over five years
- Learning to be a new farmer – course, youtube, social media
- The new farmers’ farm... Organic, sustainable, innovative
  - Small farms have greater production per acre through complexity and working with nature. In business, they are more resistant than conventional farms (cost of products and lower debt are major factors, locally solar, petroleum)
- New farmers rely on food forests, permaculture, perenials, planting guilds, companion planting, compost, SFN farming, aquaponics, growers cooperatives (NCG Growers) and CSA
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Part 2 - A New Agrarianism

- "A New Agrarianism is an ecological economy centered on food and land health that builds resilience, encourages ethical relationships, and celebrates life." – Courtney White
- Agrarianism, broadly conceived, reaches beyond food production and rural living to include a wide constellation of ideas, loyalties, sentiments, and hopes. It is a temperament and a moral orientation as well as a suite of economic practices, all arising out of the insistent truth that people everywhere are part of the land community, just as dependent on other life on the land’s fertility and just as shaped by its mysteries and possibilities." – Eric Freyfogle
- Scot Weir – Growing Gardens (Pol Sci New Grad)
  - I see it as important for local food production to be more than a novelty. The two between food and community have been weakened if not broken over time and I believe growing, as farmers or as gardeners rebuilds those bonds.
  - The community that builds around it, recognizes what you are doing and appreciates it.
  - The insecurity of it. A day a heat wave, when you are enrolling all your produce to a market and see customers no appreciate or value or understand what it takes to grow quality food.
  - To bring our produce to a market and see customers no appreciate it, other farmers, restaurants, community members, and community of people I feel deeply connected with and want to be around.
  - To withhold it from some is finally to destroy it for all. For a few powerful people to own or control it all, or decide its fate, is wrong.” – Wendell Berry (Quivira Coalition) Journal No. 34, June 2009, pg. 15

Part 2 – A New Agrarianism

1. What brought you to growing.
2. What do you value most in it.
3. What do you find hardest.
4. What would you tell a beginner.

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Dennis Scanland – Dirt Boys (IT Professional)
- I've always really enjoyed gardening and many people asked me to do it so I gave it a try.
- It results in a sense of mastery over the forces of nature as you work with the soil, the water, the weather, the plants.
- Learning to be a new farmer – course, youtube, social media
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Dave Carlton – Leaf Ninjas (Permaculture Designer)
- I never anticipated being a local hero for food production and security.
- Its flattering and humbling at the same time. I love when people ask if you feed on a weekly basis
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"There is another way to live and think: it’s called agrarianism. It is not so much a philosophy as a practice, an attitude, a loyalty and a passion – all based in close connection with the land. It results in a sound local economy in which producers and consumers are neighbors and in which nature herself becomes the standard for work and production" – Wendell Berry
- The agricultural industrialists like to say that their agrarian opponents are merely sentimental defenders of ways of farming that are hopelessly old-fashioned, silly dying out. They say that their opponents are the Victim, as Richard Leviston put it, of "a false nostalgia for a life that never existed.” But these are not criticisms. They are insults. For agrarians, the correct response is not stand confidently on our fundamental premise, which is both democratic and ecological: the land is a gift to all the living in all time. To withhold it from some is finally to destroy it for all. For a few powerful people to own or control it all, or decide its fate, is wrong.” – Wendell Berry (Quivira Coalition) Journal No. 34, June 2009, pg. 15
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Rod Olson – Leaf & Lyre (Singer, Refuge Support Baptist Church)
- I have always been growing, house plants and gardening on the family farm. The opportunity made this a business was something I wanted to see if it was possible.
- I value the soil and am convinced that healing the soil one yard at a time is going to eventually heal the globe. Sewing plants grow is one of the most satisfying things and plants Will tell you if they need something and that dictates what our job is. Plants become my boss. I like that.
- Farming is never done. I am still working out what work-life balance looks like.
- You must. Anything you do for the sake of growing will create a lasting effect. It is about life, it is life, right down at the core. Earth voices

Jennifer Miller – Hillhurst Micro Greens
- I grew up in the garden, so it feels unnatural not to grow food.
- I am a kinesthetic person and I love the zen flow of prepping, planting and harvesting
- I worry about not generating enough income to build a sustainable business.
- Do as much research and hands on learning as you can. There are a variety of resources – engage with them (The Business Link, YFC Growers, Momentum Calgary, SPP Farming Forums, Permaculture Groups, Community Garden Resource Network, Alberta Agriculture, Seedy Saturday talks and vendors, REAP Calgary, Calgarian Food Committee, John Jeavon’s and Elisa Coleman’s Books, WWOOFing etc) Don’t be afraid to experiment and ask questions.

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Jonathan Wright – Thompson Small Farm (Biologist)
- My path toward Thompson and began Thompson Small Farm eight years ago out of a desire to pursue “right livelihood.” To see a child cultivate a lifestyle that not only reflected our own values but would work towards achieving a larger good. In the end, we wanted to be involved in a process that reflected the distance our planet has come and needs to go in order to sustain life both human and wild.
- We wanted to strike at the root of the issue of right livelihood, get out of the realization that humanity is not going to find salvation applying band aids to symptoms.
- It is about life, it is life, right down at the core. There are very interesting careers, this is the only one that is truly three dimensional, that is the distillation of life itself.
- I value the soil and am convinced that healing the soil one yard at a time is going to eventually heal the globe. I like that.
- Farming is never done. It is not important because it is a trend, it is not important because people say it is in the media, it is not important because it is a job, it is not important because it is a job. It is not important because people say it is in the media, it is not important because it is a trend, it is not important because it is a job. What makes it is the fact that it is life. It is life down at the core. Farming is not a job, it is life itself.

Part 3 – Recognizing the Covenant with Creation
- abed, shamar, (Gen. 2:15) and ecological hermeneutics – a motivating and sustaining factor in the Clyde’s adoption of agrarianism
- Dealing with Christian legacy of “stewardship” and Genesis 1:28, the mandate to dominate. Difficulty between grey and green texts.
- Grey texts – anthropocentric, used to justify harm
- Green texts – affirming Earth, creation having a covenant with God, separate from humans, Earth community having intrinsic value
- Earth voices – reject dualism, creation has agency in scripture, groaning of nature (Rom 8:22-27)
- Justice and the environment, PWRDF, A Rocha
- Farming and agrarianism as participation in creation

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- Thank you for your time.
- Questions?
- For further questions, comments, and opportunities to get your hands dirty and eat real food e mail me at:
  jgreenes@gmail.com OR jshamar@ucalgary.ca

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