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April 29, 2009

Spread the Garden: From My Land To Your Land

From Butte County to cities around the world people are eating locally and are making a difference. In Butte County agriculture is the number one corporation in the county; and yet you still go to the grocery store, and see food from around the United States and even around the world. Grub is working hard to provide an environment and movement for local food in our area. Within the last month our student body came together and voted on what we think is important. Proposition 19 was a call for our Chico State Campus to use one third of Local Food on campus, which will save money and transportation costs. Cities are even stepping up to the plate and creating green roofs. Green Roofs are quite complex but when set into gear the roofs are able to grow fruits and vegetable. These sustainable roofs are turning unused space for production.

Butte County has an amazing yield per year of local crops that benefit our County's and towns economy. In 2008 alone Butte County Agriculture made a total of 507,253,000 dollars(Khan). When I saw this figure I was amazed; although if I do look around the area there are lots of farms. I was curious to see how much land was actually used and I found out that 463,125 acres was used for farming in Butte County(Khan). To get a good picture of an acre it is close to one football field. What really brings in the money for our country is Rice, Walnuts, and Almonds.

While reading the farm report I was amazed to see how much we exported and where. Butte County exports to fifty different countries that include Chili, France, South Africa, Nepal,

and China just to name a few. We export many things like rice which probably grows in the areas we export to, also figs, walnuts, plums, and many crops.

A Farm that is just contributing it's yields to Butte County is Grub where I have decided to spend my past few Tuesday's working as a volunteer. All the harvest they collect is used to live off of and to support their members who hold shares in the farm. It is so wonderful to be out there because everyone works together to produce an amazing organic farm. I plan to volunteer every Tuesday as much as I can and maybe in the future become more involved. The last few weeks that I have volunteered I have planted seeds, transplanted plants, and weeded and I have enjoyed it more than I though possible. When I leave I feel great and like I have contributed to something bigger than myself. and last week they gave me lettuce to have a wonderfully fresh salad.

Like Grub we have other local farmers who bring their harvest to the farmers market. The stuff available is so plentiful during the spring, summer, and fall months because our County really does produce a variety of different fruits, vegetable, dairy products, meats. Even though we do export a lot of goods we manage to keep some of it in our community. In the late spring, summer, and early fall months Butte County's people could be satisfied with only eating local fruits and vegetables seeing the variety that is grown in the area. Our local food produces an array that you could find at the grocery store berries, nuts, avocados, melons, oranges, squash, kiwis, eggs, meats, herbs, honey, wheat, and rice, pretty much any thing you could ask for (Khan).

With all the yield in Butte County, Chico State students have decided to incorporate it into our own eating system around campus. Proposition 19 was designed by students in

Geography 440 right on campus (Stemen). Every year Mark Stemen has his students pick a pressing issue for our campus and promote a change. This year as a class they picked local food around campus. After the decision is made the students worked together with our AS lawyer to make a legally formatted proposition (Stemen). It includes that for every dollar spent on food one third of that will be local food. It will not be by pounds of food but by cost over the year (Stemen). It was put on the voting ballot for our students to vote for. Our student body loved the idea, and eighty three percent of the student body voted yes on prop 19.

Proposition nineteen is a great idea but it will not happen without student work and determination. Also there is a problem that most of the food grown in the area is prevalent during the summer months when school is not in session. Thankfully we have Robin Defalco head of the Sustainability program on Chico State. She has started a new program for interns to work on making one third of the food on campus local. When I was talking to Mark Stemen he reassured me that Proposition 19 was going to come into affect, because the year before Take Back The Tap was the pressing issue, and that has definitely spread around campus. So I have tremendous hope and I'm going to get involved.

I talked to Robin Defalco today and I'm extremely excited. I have decided to join the task force on proposition 19 with six other CSU Chico students who care about locally grown food for our campus. What we will mainly be doing is researching where our food comes from at the market place and Whitney dining hall, and then trying to find the food locally. We will be comparing prices, and figuring out transportation, and searching for local farms that we can buy from. We may not meet the quota of one third local food all year but it is a goal that we will strive for.

Stuff is already getting moving at Chico State that isn't directly correlated with Proposition nineteen. Every Wednesday there is a market on campus where the vegetable come right from the Chico State Farm. This program involves students taking care of the fruit and vegetables to be picked and picking the amount needed for orders or the market. I talked to one of the girls that helps with the booth on campus and she said "students and faculty are really enjoying and benefiting from it." They sell about 30 pounds of fresh produce just from one Wednesday a week. The Chico State Farm also does catering that can be up to 150 pounds of food for events. Like proposition 19 the Chico State farm is getting to sell its produce to the market place at the organic salad bar. Also in the past Whitney hall has placed orders through the farm giving all the freshman who eat at the Dining hall daily fresh organic produce.

Then there are places like cities where I would think local food was non existant. However there are people working for a goal of green roofs. I was strolling through my national geographic when I saw an article that grabbed my interest. In cities they are starting to have garden or plant roofs. It does more for our ecosystem that just growing food, it is actually quite complex. Having gardens on the roof decreases temperatures in the cities which is usually higher than surrounding areas(Greenroofs). It also deals the massive water runoff that cities deal with. For just one quarter inch of rain per hour makes water treatment plants overflow creating untreated water to flow into rivers and streams (Greenroofs). With Green Roofs the soil filters, absorbs and delays the process of water flow so that water treatment plants do not overflow (Greenroofs). These perks of Green Roofs are astounding in themselves not to mention you could skip going to the grocery store by collecting food from your very own roof.

What an idea to bring the wild life to the city. With biodiversity of plants, birds may find the city a comfortable place to live as well as insects. It may sound strange to consider the

insects, but without them our ecosystem would fail. Cities are a big chunk of cement and tall buildings have been pushing out wildlife that used to thrive in the area. There is no way to get rid of the structure of the city but to have a sky scraper office or apartment building with a park like garden would be pretty cool. Fairmont Waterfront Hotel located in Vancouver, Canada writes that the garden produces fruits, vegetables, herbs, and honey on the terrace of their hotel in a 2,100 square foot perimeter (Klinkenborg). They also save 16,000 dollars annually just by using their own produce.(Klinkenborg). This is an amazing figure to me, and I bet the restaurant is a hub of excitement. To be eating fresh grown food in a city that was picked especially for you is pretty astounding.

What an invention! But with any new technology there is defiantly a price to pay, and some serious work that is involved. Green Roofs are not cheap, but as you can see if you own a restaurant your roof will be paying for itself in no time. Green Roofs are estimated to cost about fifteen to twenty dollars per square foot (Urban Design Tools). This is just in the United States, outside the US in countries that have been practicing Green Roofing the price can be as low as eight dollars per square foot (Urban Design Tools). This shows that with time green roofing will become cheaper as more information is out in the open.

These roofs are very complex and require a lot of knowledge in order to make one. To start the base can include as little as a structural deck of a roof. Then comes insulation and a waterproof membrane to keep the water out of the house like a normal roof (Klinkenborg). Then there is a root barrier mat so the roots do not dig their way into the house and on top of that is storage cups for water to collect and store for plants. The storage only occurs if the water is not absorbed completely by the plants. If the storage overflows it goes into the gutters, but the perk of the filter fabric above the storage cups is that the water going into the drain and to our rivers is

clear of toxins from normal roofs and pebbles that cause clogging drains and overflow (Klinkenberg). On top of the filter fabric is the growing medium which is specially composed because natural soil weighs too much when saturated, so they green roof architects use a soil composite (Klinkenberg). In the soil composite there are living plants on the roofs which can differ to what you live or what you want your roof to look like. Some have scrubs or grass like roofs while others have tomato plants, and flowers just to name a few.

I'm also becoming involved with Grub. This last week I volunteered for several hours and absolutely enjoyed it. Everyone is part of a whole that works at the farm and they welcomed me with an open hand. I plan to volunteer every Tuesday as much as I can and maybe in the future become more involved. The last few weeks that I have volunteered I have planted seeds, transplanted plants, and weeded and I have enjoyed it more than I thought possible. When I leave I feel great and last week they gave me lettuce to have a wonderfully fresh salad.

Through doing this project I have learned so much about myself, and what I'm passionate about. I'm excited that everything flowed so nicely together and I get the chance to make a difference on our campus. Hopefully I can take my knowledge out into the world and piece what I know into something bigger than just eating locally, I think it's a state of mind

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