

October 26, 2008  
Sunday, 12pm in Room 1  
Youth Agriculture Discussion

Started out with around twenty people, splitting into two groups

- How to find Apprenticeships, Internships, Jobs
  - led by Mike Calesh
- How to Acquire Land
  - led by Greg Boulos from Pennsylvania
  - I listened in on the Land Acquisition discussion.

How to Acquire Land

- Greg obtained his farm from farmers who wanted to find someone to succeed them
  - Jen, wife, had experience in farming
  - Greg, expertise in writing and lending
  - Both got Masters in sustainable systems
- the veteran farmers had existing CSA, and didn't want to pass land to anyone except young organic CSA farmers
- Greg helping them to find those young farmers, it ended up being them Greg+Jen
- took 18 mo. to negotiate and write the business plan
  - talked to 6 different banks, state agency, and federal farm agency
  - because doing CSA, which is a different model from traditional farm business, needed to spend time in a teaching process to banks about the why / what / how of what CSA farming is
- Discussion moved around circle to people who already have access to land
  - Laura from Minnesota
    - Incubator Land
      - veteran farmer with 100 acres
      - rented her 2 acres at low cost
      - after 4 years purchased old farm, hadn't thought they'd be able to buy farm in 4 years
      - because of Incubator Land, could live cheaply, didn't have mortgage, used farm's equipment, get mentoring from veteran farmer, also work part-time for veteran farmer for some outside income
      - veteran farmer was farming 60 / 100 acre for large-scale, organic vegetable
      - but others have worked at small CSA farms and rented from them in similar situations
  - woman used to be with (Maine Sustainable Agriculture?), now farming in New Zealand
    - Evern since graduating, people have been begging her to grown on their land
    - knowledge is empowering
      - so best thing to do is go work / intern / read about farming
    - in New Zealand, cultivates on 12 different sites
      - because she's a breeder / seed saver, provides isolation distances
      - has set up leases for the land
    - company: WAIRARAPA Company
      - [www.simplygoodfood.co.nz](http://www.simplygoodfood.co.nz)
    - maintaining heritage seed variety, sell veggies, sell seed
    - really encourage, if want land to work on, farm and it'll come to you as long as you're serious about it
  - Julien from Australia
    - bought land 11 years ago, 79 acres
    - started one of few CSA in Australia
    - Biodynamic fruit and veggie
    - is offering to serious people the opportunity to farm his land, Incubator Land
    - anyone interested in this and coming to Australia, go to [www.imagoforest.com.au](http://www.imagoforest.com.au)
    - thinks a need to turn internship/apprenticeship programs to something that continues into land acquisition
  - Severine
    - went on craigslist, searched for farm + hudson valley
    - found a listing, talked, great they love young farmers
    - got access to 300 ft greenhouse, some land on 95 acres, equipment
      - 5 miles down road, family heard of activism and offered 1.5 acres for veggie growing in middle of their large organic dairy farm
      - written up in newspaper for activism and work, now lots of offer from people around
    - relate this to campesino to campesino model
    - friend has foundation money to create database of available land, in the works
    - think about union of young farmers, so don't get exploited in this relationship of working other people's land
- Back to Greg
  - Farm-link, a matchmaker that lists farms that want to pass on land and new farmers seeking land, describing what kind of farming they want to do
    - (someone else stated 17 other organizations like that in America)
    - (couldn't catch the rest of this section and write down quickly enough)
  - question about what writing his business plan involved
    - financial statements, taking predicted income sources and projection, taking expenses (mortgage, cost of living) and presenting it
    - set up bank account for farm (escrow)
    - had to convince banks of CSA model
  - Small Business Development Centers will show how to write business plans and tailor to your location
- another woman
  - Project with Iowa State
  - talking with starting farmers
    - make case study of start-up costs
- organic farmer from Ireland
  - don't need necessarily scare new farmers with numbers like 100 Euros per Acre to rent
  - can start with very little land and make a living, don't need to pour a lot of money in beginning
    - started with 1/4 acre, now has 2, goal of 5 acres
    - probably wouldn't have been as good starting with 40 acres
- Julien
  - an issue to keep in mind, when in the temporary land situation

- don't want to be kicked off land after spent some years building up soil quality and just when soil quality is starting to get good
- question: Anyone had experience obtaining seed from another country and growing it in own country?
  - woman from New Zealand responded
  - grows quinoa, amaranth, etc... which are not native to Australia
  - not just idea of seed-saving and adapting / strengthening seeds and genes to your particular soil
    - but also, taking seeds / genes out of original place can strengthen the genes, shake it up
    - advantageous to grow things from different climate, out of their climate
  - is a breeder, teacher Kate Baxter
    - link to Kate's publications from the young farmer's site [www.simplygoodfood.co.nz](http://www.simplygoodfood.co.nz)
- man from Niger
  - have land in Niger, but problems in how to improve, the financial means not there, even if want to plant and use land doesn't rain much, have rich under earch land
  - interested in conversation about use of ground water, improving soil, financial means
- question: Resource for people really new and want to learn about farming?
  - talk to local old-timers
  - seed catalogs
  - smaller seed companies
  - cooperative seed companies
  - cooperative extension for each state
  - local non-profits really know farmers in area
  - ATTRA, amazing resource
  - Rodale Institute