The Real Food Campaign

# Return of Nutrition

## New farming methods bring about more nutritious food

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Did you ever wonder why today's supermarket-purchased fruits taste like mostly water? Why vegetables have more of a feel in your mouth than a flavor? And why, in order to remain healthy, we need to keep taking increasing amounts of vitamin and mineral supplements? Nutritionists have stated for years that a proper diet will keep us healthy, yet our society keeps turning up with increasing sickness, even when proper quantities of fruits and vegetables are consumed.

Now a group of cutting-edge researchers, farmers and scientists have thrown aside "conventional wisdom" and have isolated the truth behind our poor produce. These discoveries have led to farming methods that are now turning out grains, fruits and vegetables that are dense with nutrients, bursting with flavor, and even have longer shelf life. This is produce that tastes, feels and provides nutrition like it did in your great-grandmother's day.

The reader's response upon learning all this might be, "That's fantastic! Where can I get it?" And therein lies the problem. For while there are hundreds of farmers growing such produce, there are currently no clear channels for it to reach the average consumer.

Enter ***The Real Food Campaign***. Spearheaded by director Dan Kittredge, farmer and expert in sustainable agriculture, the Campaign has as its end the common availability of truly nutritious foods. It is a project of non-profit ***Remineralize the Earth***, of which Kittredge is the former executive director.

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"What the Real Food Campaign is doing is to document, coordinate and organize farmers who are producing nutrientdense foods and making those resources available to consumers," Kittredge said.

"Working through existing consumer organizations that understand the need for such foods, we're trying to kick-start a whole food-supply process to create a nutrient-dense food standard. The organic standard took a dozen to twenty years to evolve, but in a sort of haphazard way. We're trying to coordinate, in a more intelligent fashion, the nutrient-dense food standard, having learned lessons in the organic movement.

### The Status Quo

Thanks to a long-established status quo of farming, plummeting nutritional standards and lack of public education, the campaign is an uphill battle. For over 60 years, improper farming practices have resulted in crops that suffer horribly from diseases, fungi and insects, and that have virtually lost their nutritional value to consumers and even animals. Instead of correcting the agricultural errors, millions if not billions of dollars were spent to kill off fungi and insects, and methods were implemented to produce high yields of crops with no attention whatsoever to nutrition. These "solutions" have not only produced nutritionally void crops, they introduced poisons from pesticides and herbicides into our food chain, toxins from fertilizer runoff into our rivers, lakes and oceans, and even harmful produce in the form of genetically-engineered foods.

The problem goes back to management of the soil in which crops are grown.

"When we look back, we see that agriculture has really dropped the ball relative to nutrition in the soil, and then obviously getting that nutrition into the plant, which is into the food that we eat," explained Dr. Arden Andersen, medical doctor and world-renowned consultant in sustainable agriculture. This long-term malnutrition of crops has also led to disease—just as malnutrition in a human would do—as well as invasion of pests.

In fact, an invasion of insects is a scientific index of unhealthy plants. "Insects are like nature's garbage crew," said Kittredge. "They come in and say, 'This plant isn't sufficient for reproduction. I'll go ahead and finish it off.' It's just a biological management system. So you know you've got unhealthy crops when you have insects."

In addition to pesticides and herbicides, there are even more recent—and damaging—"efforts" by defenders of the status quo to solve the continuous problems of insects and invasive bacteria. One of these is the advent of crops that have been genetically-engineered to resist weeds and pests.

"In my opinion, genetic engineering of crops is the worst evil to have ever been visited upon humankind," Dr. Andersen said. "We don't have a genetic problem in our food; *we have a nutritional problem*.

"Conventional farmers say they need genetically engineered crops because they have weed, insect and disease problems they can't control with standard chemical weapon applications. Additionally, they contend they will feed the world and save impoverished Africa from ravages of malnutrition by genetically engineered nutrient-enhanced crops.

"Every one of these issues is already solved 100 percent by

appropriate nutritional management of the soil and crop. The problems of disease, weeds, insect pests and crop nutritional value are not genetic deficiencies, nor deficiencies of chemical weapons genetically engineered into the crop. Rather, *they are nutritional deficiencies or imbalances."*

Why does Dr. Andersen claim genetic engineering is so evil? "If we look at every human study and every animal study that has been truly independent, they show that genetically engineered crops cause a significant inflammatory reaction in every organism that consumes them, whether an insect, an animal or a human being," Dr. Andersen said.

"There are no exceptions to this inflammatory reaction. Anyone with a hint of understanding of immunology understands that genetically engineered crops are foreign amino acid and peptide [a compound of two or more amino acids linked in a chain] materials that the immune system sees as non-food and invasive, needing to be eliminated—thus the inflammatory response. Read Jeffrey Smith's books *Seeds of Deception* and *Genetic Roulette."*

Dr. Andersen has observed evidence of this problem right in his own medical practice. "In my practice in southern Michigan and northern Indiana, I see a tremendous number of allergies, increasingly so every year, as well as a weakening of the immune systems of the people and animals, new viruses and multiple chemical sensitivities," he said.

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"Why? I believe it is because this area is the haven for genetically engineered corn and soybeans. Elsewhere, the British found a 50 percent increase in soy allergies in their general population the year following the introduction of genetically engineered soybeans into the UK."

## What about Organic Food?

We have all been educated into the belief that food labeled *organic* is better than run-of-the-mill supermarket food. But according to the specialists involved in the Real Food Campaign, this turns out to be only partially correct.

"There have been a lot of studies around the world, and unfortunately, they have been on both sides of the equation," Dr. Andersen told ***Organic Connections***. "We had some out of Germany and Europe maybe three years ago that said, 'Oh, there's no difference between organic and conventional.' And then there have been a few studies out of this country as well as out of Europe saying just the opposite. *Why the dichotomy?*

"What has to be understood is, number one, what sorts of crops did they evaluate. And number two, from which country and from what kinds of soils did they take the food that they evaluated? Because if they happened to get organics from better quality soil, and from farmers that were doing a better job of nutrition, then those are the studies that find that organic is better than conventional.

"If, however, they took the food out of soils that are marginal, then they find 1 no difference. *It all has to do with the nutritional management from which it came."*

"Organic certification simply means that you have not used synthetic substances," explained Dan Kittredge. "There is no quality standard of what the food is as far as nutritional substance. Organic agriculture practices, just like conventional agriculture practices, do not focus on maximizing the biological vitality of the soil life."

But according to Dr. Andersen, there is a reason to purchase organic: "You should buy organic, simply to keep out the pesticides, herbicides and, most importantly, to avoid genetically engineered crops."

## Reversing the Trend

So, how exactly can such a severe situation be turned around?

"Ultimately, in order to change crop health, we have to go back and change the soil, because that's where it comes from," Dr. Andersen stated. "And that's really where preventative medicine begins—right in the soil."

Dr. Andersen's method—called **Biological Farm Management**—is not an overnight process, and it must be done farm by farm to be truly successful. Dr. Andersen explained that it is a three- to five-year program as a rule, and it begins as a doctor would handle an ill patient.

"We go back to some basic thing—like learning how to do a history and physical exam, because 90 percent of everything that really is going to go on has to do with history and physical exam. We have to learn to read the deficiencies in that soil. If we understand really how to read them—we go out and walk the field, doing various precision instrument readings—all of those things tell us what's actually going on with that plant, with that soil, and so on. When we accumulate those readings, they tell us what needs to be done nutrient-wise in order to change that environment."

"The technology to produce such crops is basically an intelligent use of soil science knowledge," agreed Dan Kittredge. "The root of the whole process is getting the soil to be a biologically vital, synergistic organism. People take acidophilus—biological cultures for the intestinal tract to promote health—because they understand that they need to have healthy biology in their gut. In that same fashion, the soil needs to have healthy biology."

Not only are the resultant crops far more nutritious and tasteful, they are also far more resistive to pests and disease—in the same way a human body would be if it were receiving proper nutrition.

## Real Food!

What exactly is real food? Some years ago, Dr. Arden Andersen introduced the term *nutrient dense* to describe it.

"Nutrient density means the quantity of nutrient per quantity of food," he said. "Typically, the USDA analyzes how many milligrams, or how many micrograms, of nutrient there are per 100 grams of food. If you take an apple, and you weigh it, then take 100 grams of that apple, how many milligrams, and how many micrograms of various different nutrients do you find in those 100 grams of apple?

"With nutrient density, we want to *increase* the amount of nutrients—calcium, magnesium, selenium, chromium, iodine,

whatever there might be—per 100 grams of that apple. If you eat an apple, and it is highly nutritious, highly nutrient dense, you get a lot more nutrients out of that single apple than if you pick up another apple which has half that nutrient density."

"You're aiming for a higher percent of dissolved solids in the plant," added Kittredge, "a higher percentage of complex carbohydrates, sugars and proteins. These are the elements that correlate directly with increased flavor, increased nutrition, increased shelf life, and increased pest and disease resistance."

Mark Nakata manages several farms in northern California, including Nakata Farms and California Tree Life Limited. Crops include grapes for raisins, several varieties of stone fruit, citrus, berries, tomatoes, melons and avocados. Nakata adheres strictly to Dr. Andersen's methods and swears by them.

"The difference between our crops and standard farm produce is very evident," he said. "They're really not on the same planet, honestly. What we find is the better we get at doing farming, the higher the nutrient density level goes, and the better the fruit tastes. When you bring soil in balance, and really work on providing great nutrition for the plants and what they need, you find the fruit is firmer, usually larger, a higher percentage of number one quality, and a lot better flavor. Ultimately, you have much happier customers."

Kittredge finds the same with his vegetables. "My crops have this incredible sheen," he remarked. "The flavor is far, far better, and they last longer. For a couple of years, we were harvesting broccoli all the way into December, which is pretty amazing, especially for Massachusetts."

How do Nakata and Kittredge find such plants resist pests? Nakata tells the story of a particular breed of peach he has grown for some years. "We have this variety of peaches that is called White Lady, an older variety now. We've been farming those for 20 years. When we were farming chemically, we sprayed for glucose-consuming insects, such as aphids, 12 times a year. Applying nutritious farming methods increases the amount of sugar in the leaf, and by doing so, we found that the insects can no longer process that glucose, and they either die or go away."

"Insects can basically sense the electromagnetic frequency of each plant," Dan Kittredge further explained. "They know what is digestible and what is not. Insects have a simple digestive system, so they can digest simple sugars, but they can't digest the complex sugars of healthy crops. Our crops are now growing virtually insect-free."

## The Real Food Campaign

Now, it falls upon someone to begin the substantial amount of coordination needed to get the news out, and find ways to move this spectacular produce into the general marketplace. Dan Kittredge has elected to be the catalyst, and as Lao-tzu said, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

"The first thing is to identify the farmers producing these crops and put them up online," said Kittredge. "Who are the farmers? What crops are they producing?

"The second step is to coordinate closely with consumer organizations that already have active constituencies looking for high-quality produce, and start writing articles for those organizations' journals."

Of course, a website is a key to the entire strategy, and a new website—www.realfoodcampaign.org—is now up. As active farmers are identified, they're added to the website.

"Then, it's just basically a push and pull, back and forth," continued Kittredge. "First, you need to get the food available. Then, you get consumers asking for the food. And then we identify consultants who can work with farmers, so that farmers then hear about it, inquire about it. Then, in addition, we begin reaching out to retailers. Whole Foods stores I work with here in Massachusetts are very interested, and Mark Nakata works with Trader Joe's and other stores in the West and Midwest.

"Basically, the model is symbiotic," Kittredge concluded. "We're trying to work on mutual empowerment principles, so that it's in the interest of farmers to produce better yields and higher quality crops that they get a higher price for. It's in the interest of consumers to eat tastier food that actually helps their bodies fight diseases, if not just make them feel better. And it's in the interest of retailers to have premium-quality products they can draw consumers in with. So, we're trying to find how it's in the interest of various constituencies, and to kick-start a complete vertical integrated food supply chain. You need farmers; you need consumers; you need consultants who educate the farmers; you need labs with soil test analyses; you need wholesalers and retailers to move the food. And so we're basically trying to coordinate these different groups."

## Find Out More

Of course, consumers are the final beneficiaries and end-users of the entire nutrient-dense system, and there is much you can do as end-user to create demand to eventually pull real food through the supply chain to your local outlet.

*To find out what you can do, including how you can contribute to the **Real Food Campaign**, please visit:*
www.realfoodcampaign.org.

*To buy Dr. Arden Andersen's book*
Real Medicine, Real Health
www.organicconnectmag.com