

The Myth of Vegetarianism

Many people can live on a macrobiotic diet which consists mostly of grain. I appreciate the concern for wise agricultural resource use that lies behind this statement. Frances Moore Lappe got us all thinking along these lines with DIET FOR A SMALL PLANET--"ten pounds of grain for one pound of flesh" and all that. But Lappe isn't a farmer and is completely blind to some fundamental facts of resource use. There are real-world situations in which eschewing meat as "wasteful" and growing for a diet "which consists mostly of grain" either ignores potential resources or is a disaster in practice.

Examples:

*You have a sloped field you want to produce food on. Plow it to grow those oh-so-efficient grains to feed people, and it will erode disastrously. OTOH, you can plant fruit trees on that slope, and graze sheep on the mixed-pasture groundcover. Oh, and let's throw in some geese--both they and the sheep are grazers, but select different plant species by preference, hence more efficiently utilize the resource.

*You have an existing forest. The "efficient grains" point of view dictates cutting it down and plowing. But getting rid of forest has serious cascading consequences. Maybe smarter to turn in pigs and turkeys to forage and fatten on the abundant acorns, leaving

in place a diverse and valuable ecology? Which can also be used to grow medicinal and culinary herbs, edible and medicinal mushrooms, nuts and berries, on and on.

***You have areas in shrubby growth. You can plow them all--to grow grains--and destroy habitat for countless species essential for ecological balance. [This is not hypothetical fancy--I'm simply talking about "conventional" agriculture here.] Or you can leave that habitat in place, and browse goats there. As long as you don't over-browse, you keep ecological diversity in being while using the space as a food-producing resource (milk and meat).**

I could multiply examples all day, if it would help change the >persistent mantra that grain production is ***always*** more "efficient," less "wasteful." Wise land use always fits the production model to the existing round/climate/other conditions--never the reverse.

>Harvey in northern Va

>www.themodernhomestead.us

Vegetarianism

The vegetarian myth is disproved. It is often stated that meat produces one-fourth to one-tenth the food that using that same land for a vegetarian diet would produce. That is

not the whole picture. Animals who transform one-fourth of their food into meat transform three-quarters of their food into manures (high value fertilizer if properly managed and used) which is transformed into humus which is transformed into crops for both livestock and people. Organic agriculture recycles everything and transforms inert minerals, air, water and sunshine into increased biota through feeding the microherd a full diet including animal wastes. There is more life created into existence out of the dead planetary chemistry than vegetarians are able to account for with their tired false myth. [Lion Kuntz]

Much of the land in many countries is suitable only for pasture which can be used only to produce meat.