

The Eye of the Storm by Mary Jo Forbord

The Sustainable Farming Association has declared a state of peace. We are taking back our food, celebrating its whole, fresh integrity, and actively sharing it with our friends and neighbors.

In a world of food turmoil, sustainable farmers exist in the eye of a hurricane. The furiously fast and unsettling news about mad cow disease, hormone implants, coast-to-coast obesity, nutrition-related diseases of epidemic proportions, fast food lawsuits, the vast Gulf of Mexico dead zone (we cringe at the cause--our Mississippi's effluent), "troublesome, backward thinking" Europeans that resist our exports and our American appetite for genetically modified foods, "low cost" high mileage food with a staggering environmental price tag, hunger in our land of plenty, and a rapid consolidation and integration of our food supply to ownership by a very few and powerful multi-national corporations. Americans are plagued by overwhelming food dis-ease. With all of our vast knowledge, technology and resources, it is increasingly difficult to feed ourselves well.

Riding out the storm is what sustainable farmers are best at. With a compass trained toward an unshakable set of values, we have survived incredible odds to be 1% of the 1% of our population caring for the land. By finding our place in our food-producing ecosystem, we have sustained ourselves with much less economic reward and a lot more work than most of society would tolerate. We are rich with healthy soil, good food, water, innovation, resiliency, experience and contentment. We are especially wealthy in our relationships, not only with animals, plants and wildlife, but with family, community and Creator. We see and live the connections.

With slick ads and snappy sound bites, we might lure more people to our peaceful oasis. Marketing is often tricky, costly and time consuming for sustainable farmers. Power and money reside elsewhere, and our primary focus must be growing food. It's what we do best and love best, yet we need sustainable food consumers as much as we need the spring rain. Sustainable consumers go beyond the ease and convenience that American consumers have come to expect to find real food, grown sustainably.

We welcome sustainable food consumers to a peaceful and satisfying relationship with food and the people who grow it. Join us this growing season at field days and farmers markets, online and at your co-op. Join the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota. Join us in this growing eye of peace until the storm is quelled. Food—it's in our hands, and we offer it to you. Eat and be satisfied, healthy and strong.

