

John Erdevig's notes from Ethical Eating Team's February 1, 2010 Panel Discussion
Jennifer Kangas and Dan Bair: Perspectives of a Local Farmer

1. How can UUA support local farmers, our "Ethical Producers"?

A. Political

Municipal ordinance changes to allow practical farming

Tax policy to foster start-up & operations

Development rights restrictions to bring taxable land value into line with agricultural income

Government subsidies to local and organic farming

Pro-organic, pro-local, pro-sustainable USDA & state regulation

B. Economic

CSA shares, subshares, work shares

Calculate how to equalize with Kroger offerings, and publicize cost parity where it exists

Educate on "true cost," health cost, paybacks

Consumer subsidy, use WIC coupons, buy local

Adjust expectations – seasonal, aesthetic, taste and texture; promote use of local variety

Private grants and fundraising e.g. SELMA's Repasts, Present & Future

Offer land for crops or goats e.g.

Offer new market area, e.g. push carts outside Social Hall on Sundays?

C. Spiritual?

Say an appropriate grace, thank them.

2. Interesting Facts on How Local Agriculture is Improving, IPM, Organic

One acre supports 30 families. 30 x 96' standard unheated greenhouse, \$10,000, provides year-round greens. An advantage equal to one USDA-horticultural climate zone for each plastic layer e.g. like going from Michigan to south of Columbus, Ohio. A fan-inflated airspace between two sheets of plastic is very effective. Integrated Pest Management, or IPM techniques abound. E.g. Put a cucurbit "trap" row 6' wide between food cucumbers, and only spray the trap row. Certifying organic would be nice, but when grossing only \$5000 per year, it is not cost-effective. Organic certification permits botanical pesticides such as pyrethrins, but those kill beneficial, can be abused, toxic of course. USDA seal 100% organic is optimal. Talking to the farmer is better. Westin-Price Foundation publishes a reliable website on organic farming, history.