

----- Original Message -----

**Subject:**Recipes from a Local Landscape

**Date:**Thu, 17 Jul 2008 09:31:43 -0400

**From:**E. F. Schumacher Society <efssociety@smallisbeautiful.org>

**To:**<theo.ferguson@sustainableventures.us>

Dear Theodosia Ferguson

Local economies purposefully restrict the region from which we source the goods we need. Instead of relying on cheap transportation to import the skills of others--in the form of products--we are required to cultivate and nurture the necessary skills in our neighbors. Nothing illustrates this point more poignantly than a local food system.

The one hundred mile diet is a useful way of defining an economic region. If no one within a hundred mile radius grows cantaloupe it is likely that we will not be eating cantaloupe this year. However, we need not accept this absence as a perennial condition. Chances are that one of our neighbors knows a farmer or a local gardener who would be willing to plant a few cantaloupes next year. Local knowledge of human skills and ecological capacity enables us to recruit others to fill gaps in the local economy

Dan Barber has taken this approach in creating menus for the Blue Hill Restaurant (<http://www.bluehillnyc.com>) in New York City and Blue Hill at Stone Barns (<http://www.bluehillstonebarns.com>) in Pocantico Hills, New York. Both restaurants seek to use the bounty of the local landscape in their recipes. The restaurant's menus read like a list of seasonally available products. Blue Hill at Stone Barns links the restaurant directly with a working farm. The menu is not just dictated by seasonal production, but by the choices made on the farm. If this year the Tuscan Black Kale is a hit in the restaurant, next spring there will be more coming up in the garden. The connection between the farm and the consumer, in this case the restaurant, means a responsive organism that can change and adapt to new demands.

How, if we are to return to a locally based food system, would it be possible to supply the needs of the entire population? Currently, a significant portion of our food comes from a few very productive places. These epicenters of food production arose from our collective decision to base our diets on crops that grow only under certain conditions. Returning to a more locally based diet, such as is offered by Dan Barber and Blue Hill Restaurant, will require shifting our preferences to those crops that traditionally sustained the inhabitants of our home places. Yes, this means no more avocados on our New England table.

Sally Fallon Morell, founding president of the Weston A. Price Foundation (<http://www.westonaprice.org>) argues that traditional diets, including pasture-fed meat and animal fat, are basis of a local food economy. Moving forward with a more localized diet would require reevaluating our food choices to include more products that can be produced locally from available

resources. Along with food choices, a local food system also has to evaluate the source of farm inputs. Fallon Morell's diet considers animals a valuable source of fats and proteins and the basis of fertilization for other crops. The diet she expounds develops both the health of individuals and the ability of the community to sustain itself.

These traditional diets create the framework for what Anna Lappé, a founding principal of the Small Planet Institute (<http://www.smallplanet.org>), calls food democracy. With food prices spiking on the back of rising oil costs and unsustainable agricultural choices, her new book, "Grub: Ideas for an Urban Organic Kitchen," argues that we must return to a more sustainable, locally-based, and organic food system in order to feed ourselves. It is access to the land and the means of producing healthy food people that are the basis of democracy in any society. Reclaiming our health and our voice is ultimately tied to a regional food system. In addition to outlining the advantages of an organic food system, "Grub" is a cookbook of traditional recipes that rely on seasonal and local foods. Scrumptious!

The E. F. Schumacher Society will be hosting Dan Barber, Sally Fallon Morell, and Anna Lappé for the 28th Annual E. F. Schumacher Lectures on Saturday, October 25, 2008 at the First Congregational Church of Stockbridge, MA. Tickets are 25 BerkShares/Dollars and 15 BerkShares/Dollars for members of the E. F. Schumacher Society, seniors, and students. For more information on the event or to pre-register please visit <http://www.smallisbeautiful.org>, email [efssociety@smallisbeautiful.org](mailto:efssociety@smallisbeautiful.org) or call (413) 528-1737. The annual lectures are sponsored by the Gardener's Supply Company (<http://www.gardeners.org>)

Sincerely,

Michael Gordon for the  
E. F. Schumacher Society  
140 Jug End Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
[efssociety@smallisbeautiful.org](mailto:efssociety@smallisbeautiful.org)  
<http://www.smallisbeautiful.org>

Board of Directors: Jessica Brackman, Starling Childs, Merrian Fuller, Hildegarde Hannum, Eric Harris-Braun, Constance Packard, Joseph Stanislaw, Nancy Jack Todd, and Charles Turner.

Board of Founders: Ian Baldwin, David Ehrenfeld, Satish Kumar, John McClaughry, and Kirkpatrick Sale.

Advisory Board: Tanya Berry, Thomas Berry, Wendell Berry, Lisa Byers, Olivia Dreier, Hazel Henderson, Wes Jackson, Amory Lovins, John McKnight, David Orr, Michael Shuman, Cathrine Sneed, Lewis Solomon, John Todd, Greg Watson, Barbara Wood, and Arthur Zajonc.