AGRICULTURAL REFORMATION: A NECESSITY FOR STABILITY IN POST-MODERN URBAN LIFE

In the post-modern world, every year is unprecedented in global population size. This allows us to advance technologically and culturally, as more bright minds enter the world stage. However, as we take leaps and bounds away from the hunter-gatherer tribes we evolved from, we encounter problems. As creative and intuitive beings, it is indeed all of our responsibilities to take action against climate change in every manner available. Focusing on American food production and consumption, we find not only a significant source of direct pollution in the air and water supply, but a mechanized industrial system that has become outdated, unsafe for consumption, and requires long distance transportation to arrive in the average household for consumption. I propose that we can reform our nationally adopted method for agricultural production.

There are four main keys to this reformation. The first, is to make legislation to strictly limit or ban harmful chemicals used to repel insects and disease, as well as strict monitoring of water waste and usage. Emissions from agriculture and raising livestock accounts for 10% of the emissions from the United States. In the words of Joni Mitchell in “Big Yellow Taxi”:

“Put away that DDT now, give me spots on my apples, but leave me the birds and the bees!”

Feedlots are a method of raising livestock that allow for a higher supply of meat products, lowering the cost and giving more families high protein meals. While this advancement may seem positive for the average consumer, however the risks are alarming. The living conditions for these animals is cruel and indecent, and leads to disease spreading. Beyond this, the emissions and runoff from the waste of these animals is astronomical, and poses a massive threat to ecosystems as well as the global air supply. The methane and other fumes released into the atmosphere are exponentially more detrimental to the global temperature than carbon dioxide.

American farms are so remote and estranged from the people it needs to get to, that we ship our food for hundreds of miles in trucks to reach the average consumer. This middleman
step produces unnecessary emissions from the transportation, and results in food that is a day or more old. I propose that (especially in highly dense and populated cities) we employ locals to create urban gardens and small plots to farm in empty lots, on balconies, and even on top of buildings. This eliminates the cost (monetary and environmental) of shipping food across the nation. This also creates more jobs, as people in the cities who otherwise could not work on a farm, have this option. On top of all of this, the air quality of cities would improve with a large number of gardens and greenscaping present. These changes may go against big agricultural conglomerates and lobbies, but now is the time to bust these monopolies in order to adopt more environmentally conscious methods of agriculture.