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# America's Resurgent Food Culture : Facets of a Nascent Relocalization Movement

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# **America's Resurgent Food Culture: Facets of a Nascent Relocalization Movement**

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## **Abstract**

*This paper explores various elements of the food localization movement currently underway in the United States. First, a background of the movement as a whole is provided, and then a brief look at the current state of America's food culture from a Japanese perspective is offered. Then, explanations of developments involving small-scale farms, Community Supported Agriculture, home gardening and community gardening, and urban renewal as each relates to the general movement are provided in turn. The paper concludes by suggesting that, far from being simply an elitist trend among a handful of gourmards, efforts to relocalize America's food culture tend to be grounded in grassroots movements for greater food security brought about by increasing uneasiness concerning the nation's social and economic prospects.*

## **Introduction**

Positive changes are afoot these days in America's food scene. Admittedly, on a surface level, the situation still looks dire. The shift in American eating habits over the past few decades appears to have been astoundingly misguided: skyrocketing rates of obesity and diabetes, ubiquitous fast food outlets and "mega-sizing" of portions, and supermarkets offering more and more products that offer processed convenience as opposed to natural wholesomeness. In farming, the trend ever since World War II came to a close has been toward increasingly mechanized, industrial-scale food production based on fossil-fuel inputs, at the expense of diversified family farms reliant on traditional husbandry techniques and local ecosystem management. As a result, the once thriving food culture of a young nation has suffered greatly over the previous half-century or so.

However, there is now increasing evidence of a backlash. A variety of originally under-the-radar movements in response to America's food culture crisis have matured in recent years, and awareness of them is finally breaking through to the

mainstream (Katz, 2006; Kingsolver, 2007). With a topic as broad and elemental as our eating habits, it is not easy to cover the diversity of the movements in a single term that encapsulates them all. But the term *localization* does seem to capture at least some aspects of nearly all of them. *Relocalization* is often used as well and refers to essentially the same phenomenon, although this term more strongly connotes a return to something that has been lost. Regardless of whatever term is preferred, a multifaceted movement appears to be underway, and some of its main strands are introduced and explored below.

### Into the Mainstream

Evidence of relocalization in America's food culture can be seen in the popularity of 100-mile diets (see, for example, Smith & MacKinnon, 2007; Kingsolver, 2007), in which people challenge themselves to eat only foods grown or raised within a 100-mile radius of their home. It can also be witnessed in a renewed interest in seasonal eating and regional specialties (Nabhan, 2009; Prentice, 2006). The dramatic increase in farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) schemes, and even the home gardening boom further point to this localizing trend. People actively engaged in this movement are often referred to as *locavores*. The fact that this term was chosen as the "Word of the Year" in 2007 by the New Oxford English Dictionary shows that awareness of the movement has clearly spread to the culture at large. More recently, the term *foodies* seems to be gaining currency. This particular term echoes previously coined words for cultural movements such as *hippies* and *yuppies* in the sense that it appears to be the latest in a recognizable trend in American nomenclature: a short two-syllable word with the *-ies* suffix used to denote a cultural subgroup that yields an inordinate amount of influence on the mainstream since it is taken to be a clear manifestation of the contemporary zeitgeist.

Voices of the localization movement now find a ready audience in the mainstream, as is evidenced by popular recent documentary films such as *Fast Food Nation* (2006), *Food, Inc.* (2008), and the breakthrough *Supersize Me* (2004) which is the twelfth highest-grossing documentary of all time. And books with a food localization theme are now prominently displayed at the entrances of bookstores, led by extremely popular choices such as Michael Pollan's *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (named one of the ten best books of 2006 by *The New York Times*) and Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (which made it to

*Time* magazine's list of top 10 nonfiction titles for 2007).

Besides these authors, other locavore heroes who are increasingly seen and heard in the mainstream media include Alice Waters, Gene Logsdon, Joel Salatin, and Michelle Obama. Waters, owner and chef of the world-renowned Chez Panisse restaurant in California that uses only locally grown organic food, has more recently launched the Edible Schoolyard Project that brings food production into the school curriculum and local food onto the lunchroom menu (Flammang, 2009). Logsdon and Salatin are both farmer-authors. They wittily chronicle the struggles of small-scale farmers who resist the trend towards corporate-run, industrial-scale tracts of monoculture crops with titles such as *Everything I Want to Do Is Illegal: War Stories from the Local Food Front* (Salatin, 2005) and *The Contrary Farmer's Invitation to Gardening* (Logsdon, 2008). Unlike the others, Michelle Obama's celebrity status is not primarily due to her efforts to relocalize American food. Nevertheless, as wife to President Obama, she dramatically added her clout to the localization movement in 2009 by tearing up part of the White House lawn with her daughters to start a functional vegetable garden.

### The View from Japan

It is difficult from a Japanese perspective to gauge just how deep and broad this movement is becoming in America. This is basically due to the fact that, while traditional food culture is certainly under threat in Japan, it has never teetered on the brink of obliteration to the degree that it has in America. In other words, when compared to the situation in the U.S., Japan has less damage to recover from and so whatever recovery efforts that occur are not as pronounced.

As in America, the experience of shopping for food continues to evolve in Japan, but the direction of the evolution is far from the same. Food markets in the U.S. have, until recently, experienced a dramatic inflation in scale: Locally owned and operated markets that were squeezed into neighborhood plots have mostly been replaced by massive supermarkets<sup>1</sup> sprawled out on flattened swathes of suburban land. These shops are sometimes called "big box marts"<sup>2</sup> by their detractors, not only because the items in the aisles are frequently displayed in the shipping boxes they arrived in as a cost-saving measure, but also because the warehouse-like buildings themselves resemble giant featureless boxes plopped down from the sky.

In contrast, the most noticeable food shopping trend in Japan over the last

few decades has been towards convenience stores. The processed and packaged foods sold in these stores may differ radically from what is on offer at a Japanese produce stand or a locally owned neighborhood market, but the size is roughly the same. That is to say, from a spatial perspective, the shopping experience in Japan is still mostly human-scaled. Most Japanese consumers have not had the experience of feeling dwarfed amid the endless aisles of a windowless supermarket the size of a football field. And it is this dehumanizing sensation of shopping at these big box marts that American “foodies” often cite as a pivotal factor in their conversion to more conscientious consumption.

A look at the role of food in mass media provides another telling indication of the difference between the two countries. Food in Japan enjoys a prominent position in pop culture, especially on television. Flip through Japanese television channels at any time of day and one’s eyes are likely to land on a number of programs centered on the eating experience. Not only cooking shows, but quiz formats, endurance contests, and journeys of gastronomic discovery are all common. And nearly all such shows involve celebrities in the studio tasting foods on camera. This programming formula based on vicarious eating experiences is clearly successful in Japan, suggesting that the general Japanese population does not wish to take food for granted. So, while evidence of a slide toward westernized ingredients and convenience in Japanese eating habits is undeniable, it is also true that diversity, quality, craft, and traditions in food culture have never been ignored in Japan to the degree that they have been until recently in the U.S.

### **Bypassing the Corporate Behemoths**

In the early 1970s, Earl Butz was the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture in the Nixon Administration. His infamous mantra that he declared repeatedly to farmers was “get big or get out.” By that, he meant the era of the small family farm was over, and that the only way to survive as a farmer (and to reap government subsidies) would from then on be to expand acreage, mechanize, switch to monoculture commodity crops like corn and soybean, and contract with corporate agribusiness conglomerates for distribution. Government policy shifts did indeed make life very difficult for small-scale independent farmers, and the “get big or get out” trend continued unabated until recently. Roughly two million family farms still managed to exist in the U.S. in 2002, down from approximately seven million during World War II.

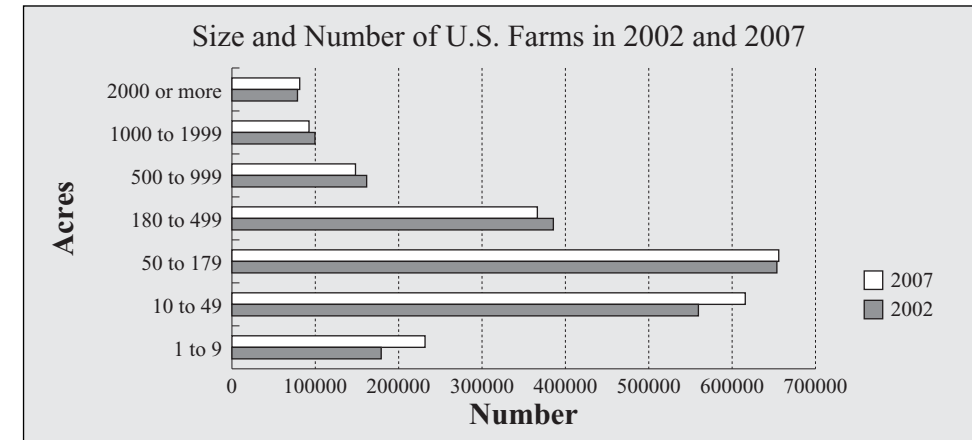


Figure 1: Increase or decrease in U.S. farms according to acreage size

Yet recently the trend has begun to see a rather dramatic reversal (USDA, 2009). As Figure I indicates, the small farm sector (under 50 acres) is now seeing significant growth. Between 2002 and 2007, a total of just over 75,000 new farms were started in the U.S. However, more than 110,000 small farms were added. Mid-size (50 to 500 acres) and large farms (500 to 2000 acres) experienced a decrease of roughly 35,000 farms. The other growth sector is “mega-farms” (those over 2000 acres). They added nearly 2,500 farms – far less than the number of new small farms, but on a wholly different scale in terms of acreage. Thus, U.S. agriculture appears to be headed toward a bifurcated production system: huge farms on one end supplying massive amounts of commodities for the global industrial food system, and small diversified farms on the other end establishing new routes of distribution and using new models (or newly rediscovered traditions) of sustainable production practices to supply the growing numbers of food-savvy locavores in their region.

### **Community Supported Agriculture**

Some of the most dramatic evidence for renewed interest in locally-sourced food is provided by the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) movement. In essence, a CSA scheme involves a long-term agreement between a particular farmer and a group of loyal customers to share the risks and benefits of food production. For a set fee, CSA subscribers receive fresh farm produce on a regular basis (usually weekly) during the growing season. Most CSAs are limited to vegetables and fruit, but a growing number of them now involve meat and dairy

products as well.

Generally, farmers in CSAs are relatively small-scale producers and most of them use organic or biodynamic techniques. For them, the advantages of a CSA include the ability to secure buyers and payment before the growing season begins so that the busiest months on the farm can be devoted to actual farming. Also, because most CSA farmers use natural methods and take pride in what they produce, they tend to appreciate the opportunities to interact with consumers that is an essential part of the CSA concept. Advantages for the subscribers in CSA schemes involve a regular supply of fresh produce with less time expended on shopping, and chances to visit “their” farm in order to get to know the producer and experience food production firsthand. “What seems to count most is not the size or miles but the vividness of the shared experience” (Henderson and Van En, 2007, p. 143).

CSAs are now experiencing the explosive growth and innovation that is characteristic of successful grassroots movements. Because of its grassroots nature, however, there is no central authority to determine the typical traits of a “proper” CSA, nor an official history of the movement. The first two American CSAs seem to have been established in 1984, and they had predecessors in similar schemes that were set up in Germany and Switzerland in the 1960s as well as in Japan in the 1970s. Those early movements were mostly a response to concerns about food safety and attempts to preserve nearby agricultural land from sprawling urbanization. Such concerns are still very much a part of modern CSAs in the U.S., but it's reasonable to assume that the locavore boom is providing a significant boost to the movement as well.

Because of the informal arrangements and small scale of many CSAs, and the fact that the U.S. government does not officially track them, reliable data about their growth is not easy to come by. In 1999, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program attempted the first comprehensive report of this new phenomenon in U.S. farming, it was able to identify 368 CSA farms (Adam, 2006). This number climbed to 761 in 2001, and, according to data compiled by Iowa State University's Leopold Center, CSAs had risen to 1,034 in 2004. *LocalHarvest*, an Internet directory of CSA farms that matches local producers with local consumers and that first went online in 2008, now lists over 3,000 CSA farms in its database offering just shy of 400,000 farm shares to subscribing customers (Barnett, 2010). Whatever the exact figures, it's clear that CSA growth has been booming during

the last decade.

The perseverance of existing CSAs and growth in the number of CSAs is not easily explained when viewed from the standpoint of conventional economics. After all, profitability is usually unimpressive<sup>3</sup> (Henderson and Van En, 2007), the typically small-scale yet diverse operations do not align well with modern notions of streamlined and hyper-scaled efficiency, and the customers of CSAs are obliged to take on greater responsibility in comparison to shoppers in the industrial agricultural model. Nevertheless, the CSA model not only endures, it spreads and matures. This is because CSA growth is indicative of a lifestyle change involving shifting food ethics that runs deeper than the profitability motive. Many CSA producers have willingly dropped out or bypassed more lucrative careers (Ableman, 2005), and many of their customers willingly pay more for their products.

The rapid spread of the CSA model in the U.S. is paralleled by the skyrocketing popularity of local farmers markets. Ever since the USDA began keeping statistics on the number of farmers markets across the nation in 1994, the total has increased every year. 1,755 such markets were counted in 1994, and 5,274 was the reported total in 2009. The recently released 2010 figure, 6,132 farmers markets, is a 16% increase over the previous year (USDA, 2010) and demonstrates that the robust growth in this sector still shows no signs of slowing.

The locavore boom within the overall relocalization movement is likely the biggest catalyst in the growth of CSAs and farmers markets, but it also seems to be the driving force behind an even more fundamental shift in Americans' relationship with their food: namely, the urge to grow your own.

## Home Gardening and Victory Gardens

While direct farm sales and CSAs are attractive to the growing number of consumers who wish to localize their food supplies, many appear to be taking an extra step to the most local of all options: home gardening. It is difficult to get reliable statistics regarding the amount of food being grown in private gardens since such activity occurs outside of the consumer economy, and so typical economic measurements pay no attention to it directly. Nevertheless, there are plenty of indications that gardening in the U.S. is booming. For instance, based on seed sales data, the National Gardening Association predicted a 19% annual increase in home gardening in 2009 alone. All of this growth is apparently

happening in the vegetable seed sector; ornamental flower seed sales are flat or decreasing (Flaccus, 2009).

One intriguing aspect of the home gardening boom is a revival of the Victory Garden motif. Traditionally, the term *Victory Gardens* refers to home gardens planted and expanded during wartime in order to contribute to a nation's self-sufficiency. Not only do they provide a measure of security against the threat of food scarcity, but they also cut down on resource usage such as transportation fuel that can then be diverted to the war effort. The U.S. government first adopted this concept as it watched its European allies, especially Britain, successfully establish Victory Garden campaigns during World War I in order to combat food shortages.

The U.S. government's effort during World War II was more widespread and involved collaboration with the private sector and civic organizations. It is estimated that it led to the establishment of 20 million home gardens, and these gardens provided 40% of America's domestically consumed produce during the latter years of the war (Pollan, 2008). Memorable slogans such as *Grow More in '44* and *Can All You Can* were repeated on radio broadcasts and billboards, and a distinctive form of poster art propaganda that made a patriotic appeal by promoting gardening as a civic virtue was engendered (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Victory Garden poster art. The two posters on the left are from the 1940s, and the two on the right are contemporary.<sup>4</sup>

Also shown in Figure 2 are newer posters created for the contemporary gardening movement. The imagery deliberately echoes the bold artistic style developed for the World War II movement, and thereby appropriates a sense of urgency, official sanction, and civic virtue. The most critical difference is that, this time around, it is grassroots organizations and individuals rather than governments who are at the vanguard of reviving the Victory Garden movement. Online

communication tools that previous generations did not have access to now allow grassroots organizers to effectively disseminate ideas and images. As Price (2009) points out, “new media has empowered citizens to seed the notion in a way that mirrors the government's earlier propaganda efforts.”

During World War II, the movement was a coordinated top-down effort. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt dramatically planted a Victory Garden on the White House lawn in a concerted government campaign to model patriotic self-sufficiency. Subsequent White House occupants, however, brought back the manicured lawn, and the grass remained until the spring of 2009 when the Obamas moved in and the locavore movement turned up the pressure on the new First Family. A non-profit organization called *Kitchen Gardeners* organized a petition and delivered 110,000 signatures calling for the reestablishment of a White House Victory Garden. Shortly before that, Michael Pollan, arguably the most widely recognized leader of the local food movement, had written a much discussed open letter to the new president that was published by *The New York Times*. In it, Pollan exhorted the Obamas to tear up five acres of the White House lawn and revive the Victory Garden tradition:

*Victory Gardens offer a way to enlist Americans, in body as well as mind, in the work of feeding themselves and changing the food system — something more ennobling, surely, than merely asking them to shop a little differently. I don't need to tell you that ripping out even a section of the White House lawn will be controversial: Americans love their lawns, and the South Lawn is one of the most beautiful in the country. But imagine all the energy, water and petrochemicals it takes to make it that way... Yet as deeply as Americans feel about their lawns, the agrarian ideal runs deeper still, and making this particular plot of American land productive, especially if the First Family gets out there and pulls weeds now and again, will provide an image even more stirring than that of a pretty lawn: the image of stewardship of the land, of self-reliance and of making the most of local sunlight to feed one's family and community. (Pollan, 2008)*

So, in February 2009, First Lady Michelle Obama and her daughters emulated Mrs. Roosevelt by again breaking ground at the White House for a vegetable garden. Unlike the Roosevelt Victory Garden, however, the Obama garden is not the product of a highly directed government campaign but rather evidence that a

bottom-up movement effectively reached upwards, and that savvy politicians such as the Obamas are aware of the nation's current zeitgeist and are acting upon it.

Another major difference between today's Victory Garden movement and its predecessors is that it is not so clear this time who or what the enemy is. Is it the giant corporations who are monopolizing food distribution? Or the threats posed by climate change to the nation's food security? Or the unsustainability of fossil fuel-based industrial agriculture in this age of energy depletion? Or the spreading blight felt in communities that are having their local economic vitality gutted by the winding down of the industrial age and the rise of so-called "free trade" policies in this era of economic globalization? Or the "high food prices, poor diets, and sedentary population" that Pollan (2008) referred to in his open letter?

Whatever the answer, the enemy this time is more multifaceted, amorphous, and diffuse than, say, Nazi Germany. Nevertheless, the new gardening movement is tapping into a powerful sense of foreboding among citizens that is akin to its wartime predecessors. And in an American context, framing small-scale, home-based food production as a civic act of patriotism is an effective strategy that hardly needs justification. It is steeped in Emersonian self-sufficiency and the Jeffersonian ideal of agrarian citizenship. As Jefferson himself stated in 1785, "Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country and wedded to its liberty and interests by the most lasting bonds" (cited in Pretty, 2007, p. 114).

### **Community Gardens and Urban Renewal**

Not everyone has the luxury of owning a patch a land suitable for digging a garden. So, not surprisingly, community gardens at which individuals can rent a small allotment of land are also experiencing a surge in interest, with some of them reporting waiting lists that have quadrupled in length over the last few years (Flaccus, 2009). It is estimated that there are now between 18,000 to 20,000 of these community gardens in the U.S. (Kirby and Peters, 2008).

As the name suggests, community gardens offer a more communal experience than private gardens. Evidence suggests, however, that it is the opportunity to garden rather than the chance to spend time with neighbors that initially draws urban dwellers to these gardens.

When Armstrong (2000) asked community garden participants about their

reasons for joining, the most common answers were access to fresh vegetables, enjoyment of nature, and health benefits. Yet while many of the participants may not be focused on improving their communities upon joining, this is indeed what eventually happens when neighbors gather in their shared garden. It leads to improved attitudes about their neighborhood and organizing to take action on other issues in the community. Projects such as initiatives for improving maintenance of other neighborhood properties, tree planting in public spaces, anti-littering campaigns, and neighborhood crime-watch efforts sprouted from discussions at community gardens in Armstrong's (2000) study, and community gardeners in low-income neighborhoods were found to be four times more likely to take this extra step into community improvement. Thus, these gardens have the potential to not only provide food, but also serve as a base for organizing repairs to the frayed social fabric in communities that need them most. Ever since community gardens first appeared in the U.S. in the 1890s, their popularity has tended to peak during times of social or economic crisis because they are essentially a coping strategy for beleaguered citizens as they try to keep their local culture intact (Hou, Johnson, and Lawson, 2009).

A number of visionary leaders of urban communities are currently moving beyond the typical models of community gardening and breathing new life into their cities through innovative approaches to food production and distribution. Among the most well known is Will Allen, a former professional basketball player and the son of former South Carolina sharecroppers. In the 1990s he established *Growing Power*, a two-acre intensive urban farm on the grounds of a derelict greenhouse in a low-income district of Milwaukee. At the time it was the last piece of farmland remaining within the city limits, and Allen's goal was simple: He aimed to provide healthy produce to his low-income neighbors through his roadside food stand. The stand was phenomenally successful, and he now oversees an expanding network of urban farms in Milwaukee and Chicago while training young people from blighted communities to be the next generation of urban farmers. Allen hopes to "inspire communities to build sustainable food systems that are equitable and ecologically sound, creating a just world, one food-secure community at a time" (cited in Shiffler, Sheets, and Tylander, 2008, p. 30). The MacArthur Foundation, upon granting his organization \$500,000 for its transformative vision, called Allen "an urban farmer who is transforming the cultivation, production, and delivery of healthy foods to underserved, urban populations" (MacArthur Foundation, 2008). Likewise, *The New York Times* says

that Allen these days “is the go-to expert on urban farming, and there is a hunger for his knowledge” (Royte, 2009).

Ladonna Redmond is another food activist who is busy transforming impoverished urban communities from the inside. Her activism began more than ten years ago when her young son developed food allergies. She was told she needed to feed him more healthy and wholesome foods, and it was then that she realized just how hard it was to find these supplies in her west Chicago neighborhood. She lives in what is now called a “food desert.” Food deserts are regions, most often located in poor urban areas, where residents have little or no convenient access to affordable unprocessed foods. Typically, food deserts are areas that have been abandoned by mainstream supermarkets, and instead are saturated with fast food chains, convenience stores, and gasoline station marts that generally only offer processed foods with heavy salt, fat, and sugar concentrations. Thus, rates of diet-related health problems like obesity and diabetes are markedly higher in poor communities and among the minorities who live in them than compared to affluent whites (Winne, 2009).

Redmond and her husband first tore up their own backyard and started producing their own vegetables. They then established a non-profit organization for converting vacant city lots into urban farms and setting up farmers markets, and in 2009 Redmond opened a grocery store called *Graffiti and Grub* that features wholesome, locally-grown produce. The shop is staffed by youths from the neighborhood and is designed to appeal especially to the “hip-hop generation” of 18 to 35-year-olds as these young people begin to raise their own families. Redmond disputes the notion that healthy food necessitates higher expense, and suggests that that claim is essentially a marketing ploy of upscale natural food chains trying to attract wealthy customers to pay for overpriced goods. The mission of *Graffiti and Grub* is to disabuse the younger generation of the idea that healthy eating habits are only for the affluent (Doss, 2009).

Thus, it is important to remember that not all of the relocalizing activity in America’s shifting food culture originates with the tastes of the leisure class. While detractors try to pin an “elitist” label on the locavore movement (which, at times, is perhaps accurate), in actuality a good part of the movement is being caused by necessity (Winne, 2009). More and more Americans are living near or below the poverty line, and the number of households depending on food stamps is now higher than ever -- one in four U.S. children now needs them.<sup>5</sup>

For those sliding into poverty as well as those who are already there, localizing

one’s food source, especially by means of tending one’s own garden when possible, can dramatically reduce grocery expenses and provide a critical measure of security. Sharon Astyk, a leading author and practitioner in the food localization movement, sums up the case for the movement’s potential to help alleviate poverty:

*We know that small-scale gardening can make a critical difference for the poor -- both the chronically poor and the newly-becoming poor. The difference is not that it magically provides all food, but that it provides access to high value, high protein and high nutrition food stuffs that are expensive or hard to access in rural and urban food deserts. It allows poor people to turn low-cost resources like seeds into high cost items like healthy food. It also allows people to turn food wastes into high quality protein if combined with small-scale animal husbandry. Because gardening can often be done almost entirely outside the cash economy, it is particularly valuable for those with minimal or tied up cash incomes, who have little leeway. (Astyk, 2010)*

## Conclusion

A sense that the future will not be bright is almost palpably evident in today’s America.<sup>6</sup> This uptick in pessimism is no doubt due to a combination of factors: a deteriorating economic outlook, a growing awareness of the consequences of climate change and energy depletion, a loss of trust in the national government, and the alienation brought about by an increasingly discordant public discourse are likely among the more prominent causes. But regardless of what is causing the uneasiness about future prospects, the effect is a heightened sense of foreboding on both the left and right sides of the political spectrum. Seen in this light, the movement to relocalize food in America is at least in part a food security movement. When people feel threatened by forces beyond their direct control, a healthy response is to try to shore up one’s self sufficiency, while simultaneously working to fortify the resilience of one’s local community.

It is often said that eating is the most political act we engage in because we vote for the type of world we want to live in with our mouths three times every day. The relocalization boom outlined in this paper suggests that more and more Americans are voting for personal involvement in strong and sustainable local communities that might have a fighting chance to withstand the storms that they perceive to be gathering on the horizon.



## Notes

1. Recently one notable grocery chain, Trader Joe's, has achieved phenomenal success by bucking the general trend and scaling downwards. Trader Joe's tries to offer an old-fashioned shopping experience by stocking fewer products, using less floor space, and training employees to be knowledgeable and friendly. This has turned it into "one of the hottest retailers in the U.S." (Kowitt, 2010).
2. The term *big box mart* was repeatedly and memorably employed by Annie Leonard in her 20-minute animated documentary video about consumerist society titled *The Story of Stuff*. The video, freely available on the Internet, has gone viral with over 12 million viewers and has been translated into over fifteen languages (Roosevelt, 2010).
3. Profits are unimpressive when compared to non-farming careers as well as to industrial mega-farms, but in fact CSA farms perform quite well when compared to U.S. farms as a whole. For example, SARE's 2001 CSA survey showed that 60% of CSAs farms grossed over \$20,000. That same year, the USDA's farm census showed that only 30% of U.S. farms were grossing over \$25,000 (Henderson and Van En, 2007, p. 114).
4. Many images of posters from previous Victory Garden campaigns, as well as ones for today's Victory Garden movement, can be easily accessed via the Internet. The two contemporary posters included in Figure 2 were designed by artist Joe Wirtheim and are available at <http://victorygardenoftomorrow.com>
5. Although polls can be said to only offer ephemeral snapshots of national mood, ones that attempt to measure Americans' attitudes about the future have been trending toward increased pessimism over the past few years. For example, a poll sponsored by CBS News in May, 2010 found that 50% of Americans believe that life for the next generation will be worse than it is now, up from 32% just a year before. Of the remaining 50%, 30% are neutral and only 20% think life will be better (Montopoli, 2010).
6. In the U.S., one in seven people live in poverty according to the latest (2009) available government statistics. The 2009 poverty rate of 14.3% is up from 13.2% in 2008, and represents the highest number of Americans living in poverty in 51 years (Scherer, 2010). Meanwhile, there was an 11.6% increase in multi-family homes in which poverty-stricken families abandon their own homes to move back in with their parents or other relatives, and poverty experts say that we can expect 2010 poverty figures to be even higher (Eckholm, 2010).

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