- COMMUNITY SUPPORTED FOOD SYSTEMS -

STEPS

1. CORE GROUP

-Inner Relationships

-'Outside' Relationships

-Clarification of Agricultural Principles (1)

2. CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPT NEEDS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

-People

-Land

3. CONCRETE (2)(3)

-Existing Model

4. INTRODUCTION TO GENERAL PUBLIC (4)

(1) A list- Separate paper.
(2) Existing variations- Separate paper.
(3) Specific Recommendations- Varying according to community.
(4) Experiences with presentation- Separate paper.

1. CORE GROUP

An individual or individuals will introduce a plan for an association to provide for the food needs of their community. This particular way of working with food will be presented and examined. The experiences and variations of existing groups will be made available.

The first step for this core group is to define relationships. This means both within the group and with the existing community.

Within

-review the possible forms of communication, specifically as regards meetings.

-discuss the subject of initiative and the introduction/ reception of ideas

-clarify the 'work' relationship (coop, job-sharing,etc.)

Existing community

-will the group operate on different economic, legal, social , and spiritual principles(ie., regional currenies, land trusts, inclusion of minority groups, agriculture as stewardship or art form, ...) ?

-can this group be independant/ non-aligned while also strong and fully integrated within the community?

The individuals within this core group should then clarify their agricultural principles. Perhaps this list should then be compared to the food systems they participate in at this time.(one of the most difficult aspects to

implementing this concept is the feeling that existing food infrastructures are hopelessly entangled in the societal/ cultural systems, especially the 'free' market. Unfortunately, these groups with this concept in Switzerland have found it neccesary to start independant rather than wait or become burdened by certain mistakes of past agricultural planners. We can learn and benefit from what exists but if the compromises are toe great we must go on without them. We shouldn't forget them and must be open to them.)

2. CONCEPT NEEDS AND AVAILABLE RESOURCES

People

The group must clarify the needed expertise and abilities and compare these to the group's potential. Our cultural distinction between 'worker' and 'expert' (specifically 'farmer'), should be addressed. Specialization and the diffusion of knowledge should also be discussed. Generally, groups will need the following expertise(presently over specialized):

*organizational- the roles of coordinator, facilitator, mediator

*legal- persons able to interact with existing infrastructures(lawyers, land trust experts, etc.)

*financial- bookkeepers, accountants, barter and regional currency initiators

*producers- persons able to plan the production, to estimate the economic ramifications, and to actually produce

*packers/distributors- experienced with the movement of goods(sorting, packing, methods of distribution, logistics)

Obviously the needs may extend farther. We must bring forth the potential of different people and also realize limits. A balanced, mixed culture is as healthy for a community as it is for the land.

The real issue in this culture (USA) is not so much expertise as it is desire and the wisdom to use it correctly.

Land

The 'experts' must analyze the land needs relating to the group's food needs.(production potential, accessibility to people, possibilities for structures, etc. A history of the potential land would be helpful)

There are the normal 'property' arrangements such as rental, leasing, buyer/ownership. However, the existing concept of community influenced land stewardship in the form of a 'Community Land Trust', seems applicable and desirable.

Potential methods of financing should be prioritized. As in all investment emphasis should be on equal use/equal share.

3. CONCRETE

The best way to begin is to explain an existing model from Zurich Switzerland. This group's concepts emerged from an examination of three other existing groups in the country. The core group consisted of about five concerned consumers and frustrated food workers. This group was interested in suppling various foods but began with a garden concept to supply mainly vegetables.(this concept exists for animals, milk and milk

products, and baked goods presently) This group found a gardener, rented five acres(because of the Swiss land situation) and decided to produce for 76 shares. The second year there were 125 shares. The following information applies for the second year , 1984.

Product Organization

It was estimated that the average non-vegetarian consumes about 160-200 pounds of vegetables per year. A share was figured according to the normal house size or 2-3 individuals. Therefore one share will consume about 400-600 pounds per year(or an average of 10 pounds per week). The production was planned according to these figures while also using averages of consumption for 40-50 kinds of vegetables and herbs.(also flowers and mushrooms) The total harvest was then divided into equal shares on each delivery date.

Finance

The gardener, the packers, the distributors, and the organizers then put together a two part budget.

Investment- this included money(or the barter equivalent?) needed for tools, greenhouses, sheds, water, roto-tiller, bicycles, carts, etc. An entry fee was used to cover this though in the Zurich group it was relatively low since the gardener had many of his own tools and another member leased a truck to the cooperative. Many costs were amortized. The Zurich group had an insecure land rental , therefore supporting land ownership. This was a real compromise. Ideally the cost

of the land would be divided equally(or by sliding scale). If the cost was too high perhaps the group should clarify their investment principles and prioritize.

Operation- hours were estimated. All operating costs including materials were estimated. All the labor estimated for the year's production/distribution were figured at $6.50 per hour(the average wage of worker in region-not banker unfortunately).

Total Estimated Budget (1984)

Production	42,000
Packing/distribution	14,000
Organization	5,000
	61,000

The total estimated budget was divided by 125 shares making approximately $490.- per year, per share. This could be paid in three parts or by a flexible arrangement. However, many in the core group felt that the once a year payment was an important feature because it showed committment.

At the end of the year this budget was balanced with the actual costs. 12% overrun would be paid for by consumers and if there was 'profit' it would be returned up to 12%. If more than 12% either way then a special meeting would be called.

The emphasis in all economic thinking was not to work on the maximum profit principle but on the need/cost coverage principle. This meant more trust and more participation.

Labor

Volunteers were welcome. Consumers were asked to work 2 free days per year, primarily to increase awareness and involvment. More input than that could possibly be paid. All workers

had the same wage except for those with children who recieved an automatic amount per child. Emphasis was on need. There was no distinction made between a worker and an 'apprentice'.

Production

The garden was certified organic and included techniques from other forms of gardening. Machines were not desired but some compromises were made.(roto-tiller) The majority of seedlings were started on the farm and plastic 'tunnels' (despite hesitancy) were used for some crops climatically impossible otherwise. Intensive companion planting was practised. Other gardening concepts were being continually examined.(growing/ exchanging of seeds, permaculture, etc.)

Packing/distribution

Two times a week from May to November, consumers recieved equal, returnable bags packed at the farm.(One of the primary reactions to this concept concerns the question of consumptive freedom. Obviously consumers could trade amongst themselves or request variations. All the meetings were open, as was planning and the actual operation. Most consumers still purchased some vegetables from the market system. Often the restrictions of the earth itself and of human existence are difficult to find answers to. However, there must be a sustainable balance between our desires and our realities.)

The rest of the year consumers recieved one delivery per week from a cold storage. Bulk shares, such as with restaurants and group houses, were packed loosely in crates.

An independant project had been set up to create a transport method more in keeping with the group's principles than the auto. The mountain-bike and a trailer designed to carry 280 pounds of food were the result.(5 of each) TRUST YOUR MUSCLES!

Depots

Each depot location was determined by distribution ease and the neighborhood. They were located in garages, hallways or other suitable 'free' places. Each depot had a coordinator. There were 10, the farthest being 6 miles from the farm. Each depot had a container to collect organic garbage which was then composted at the garden.

Communication/Info/ Celebration

Once a year there was a general meeting to bring people together to present info from the core group and to hear opinions. Twice a year there were open days to explain the garden, concepts, and to party.(summer and harvest) A newsletter was organized by two consumers and appeared monthly in season. A primary emphasis in the information sharing was the connection between "third world' situations and our culture's lack of critical consumption.

4. INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The core group should examine the possibilities. A priority list might be applicable here. First might be a 'direct to potential consumer' approach. Individuals or groups with paralell concerns would be the first to contact with this method.

If the prefered cultural medium, 'the media', is chosen to communicate this concept, perhaps the group can question media

workers regarding their principles. We can ask for their involvement, not just their viewpoint.

Conclusion

Food is one of the 'basics' we can all relate to. Yet despite that it is often relegated to a position hardly in comparison to our physical and spiritual need of it. These groups are trying to see these needs not as dependencies so much as realities that can bring us joy and an appreciation of life.

Jan Vander Tuin

Jan. 28, 1985

A list of agricultural principles

EARTH

-awareness of cycles of nature

-awarenesss of environmental limits

-concern and respect for 'wild' animals,plants and trees

-concern for domesticated animals(plants and trees, ie., genetics)

-minimal usuage of raw stuffs(ie., minerals)

-recycling, ecological cycles

-building up of soil, erosion control

-organic/biodynamic methods

-mixed planting

-self grown seeds and seedlings and local exchange

-limits on 'field' production

-continual coverage of soil

-energy concious production and distribution

-short distance to consumer

-community decisions regarding land use, development

-no 'speculation'