

# AGRICULTURE, BEST QUOTES ON

If you ate today, thank a farmer.

—*fastline.com*

Soil is the basis of everything.

--Michael Lee West

Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful and most noble employment of man. I had rather be on my own farm, than be emperor of the world.

—George Washington

The sun, with all those planets revolving around it and dependent upon it, can still ripen a bunch of grapes as if it had nothing else in the universe to do.

--Galileo Galilei

Sun, soil and rain come together in Iowa as in no other state. Poet Robert Frost, who lived on New England's rocky slopes, once looked at Iowa's thick, black soil and said, 'It looks good enough to eat without putting it through vegetables.'

—Unknown

Out of the thirty thousand types of edible plants thought to exist on Earth, just eleven – corn, rice, wheat, potatoes, cassava, sorghum, millet, beans, barley, rye, and oats – account for 93 percent of all that humans eat, and every one of them was first cultivated by our Neolithic ancestors.

—Bill Bryson

Agriculture is not crop production as popular belief holds—it's the production of food and fiber from the world's land and waters. Without agriculture it is not possible to have a city, stock market, banks, university, church or army. Agriculture is the foundation of civilization and any stable economy.

—Allan Savory

Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get tomatoes.

—Poster Slogan

The land is a mother that never dies.

—Maori

Man—despite his artistic pretensions, his sophistication, and his many accomplishments—owes his existence to a six inch layer of topsoil and the fact that it rains.

—Unknown

And on the eighth day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, ‘I need a caretaker.’ So God made a farmer.

God said, ‘I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the field, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.’ So God made a farmer.

God said, ‘I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, ‘Maybe next year.’ I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from an ash tree, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make a harness out of hay wire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. Who, during planting time and harvest season will finish his 40-hour week by Tuesday noon and then, paining from tractor back, put in another 72 hours.’ So God made the farmer.

God said, ‘I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bales, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-comb pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the leg of a meadowlark.’

It had to be somebody who’d plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed, and brake, and disk, and plow, and plant, and tie the fleece and strain the milk. Somebody who’d bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh and then reply with smiling eyes when his son says that he wants to spend his life doing what Dad does. ‘So God made a farmer.’

--Paul Harvey

Daylight savings time is a practice of adjusting the clock by one hour in order to make it easier for people in 1918 to tend their crops.

—*TL;DR Wikipedia*

Look at those cows and remember that the greatest scientists have never discovered how to turn grass into milk.

--Michael I. Pupin

Think of the fierce energy concentrated in an acorn! You bury it in the ground, and it explodes into a giant oak! Bury a sheep, and nothing happens but decay!

--George Bernard Shaw

A farmer is a magician who produces money from the mud.

--Amit Kalantri

Keeping a vegetable garden is worth a medicine cabinet full of pills.

—*seniorresource.com*

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

—Miles Kingston

Corn can add inches in a single day; if you listened, you could hear it grow.

--Laura Ruby

Inside a barn is a whole universe, with its own time zone and climate and ecosystem, a shadowy world of swirling dust illuminated in tiger stripes by light shining through the cracks between the boards. Old leather tack, lengths of chain, rope, and baling twine dangled from nails and rafters and draped over stall railings. Generations of pocketknives lay lost in the layers of detritus on the floor.

--Carolyn Jourdan

When wheat is ripening properly, when the wind is blowing across the field, you can hear the beards of the wheat rubbing together. They sound like the pine needles in a forest. It is a sweet, whispering music that once you hear, you never forget.

—Norman Borlaug

We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot.

—Leonardo da Vinci

Tomatoes and squash never fail to reach maturity. You can spray them with acid, beat them with sticks and burn them; they love it.

—S. J. Perelman

Gardening is growing things.... You start in the front with parsley, and lettuce, and onions, and radishes.... Then comes the beets, and the carrots, and the peas, and the bunch beans. The potatoes are over in a field by themselves. Then comes the asparagus, and the celery, and last of all the pole beans, and the butter beans, and the sweet corn. Then you bound your garden on the north and the east with cantaloupes and on the south and the west with watermelons. Then you plant sunflowers and hollyhocks in the back corners. Then you pray for the rain to come and if too much comes, you pray for it to stop. It keeps you busy all summer praying and hoeing.

—Virginia Cary Hudson

The hum of bees is the voice of the garden.

—Elizabeth Lawrence

## THE ORIGINS OF AGRICULTURE

Recent archaeological finds place the beginning of agriculture before 7000 B.C. and animal domestication (mostly dogs used as hunting aids) thousands of years before that. There is some evidence that the people of Shanidar, in Kurdistan, were domesticating sheep and planting wheat as long ago as 9800 B.C.

Intensive food gathering, in which the local inhabitants of a region set up permanent residences and made extensive use of already present plants, seems to have started in the Near East around 9000 - 7000 B.C.

Barring the use of time machines, there is no way to know for sure how planting really got started. But archaeologists have lots of theories. One theory suggests that some seeds were spilled in a memorable manner during a migration. When the tribe next passed the same place, they might have correlated the spill of seeds with the sudden abundance of the plant. They could then have realized that they could store seeds and plant them, and be assured of having a food supply. Later they began selecting and planting the seeds from plants with the highest yield. In this way, plants were domesticated, changed and controlled to benefit man rather than just exist in the wild.

—*cdagro.com*

The leaves of the world comprise countless billion elaborations of a single, simple machine designed for one job only – a job upon which hinges humankind. Leaves make sugar. Plants are the only things in the universe that can make sugar out of nonliving inorganic matter. All the sugar that you have ever eaten was first made within a leaf.

--Hope Jahren

The rich, sweet smell of the hay-ricks rose to his chamber window; the hundred perfumes of the little flower-garden beneath scented the air around; the deep green meadows shone in the morning dew that glistened on every leaf as it trembled in the gentle air; and the birds sang as if every sparkling drop were a fountain of inspiration to them.

--Charles Dickens

What is paradise, but, a garden, an orchard of trees and herbs, full of pleasure and nothing there but delights.

--William Lawson

If a farmer fills his barn with grain, he gets mice. If he leaves it empty, he gets actors.

—Sir Walter Scott

### **A BARN IS A MIRACLE**

Here is a miracle painted red,  
A weather vane upon its head  
With sliding panels in the walls,  
The hidden doors and secret stalls.  
The wheat upon this threshing floor  
Once stood in acres, score on score;  
And all of June stacked in this pile  
Was hay and clover by the mile.  
With summer high up in the mows  
Above the sheep, above the cows,  
The small teeth nibbling in the bin . . .  
So winter's barn takes all things in.  
Here, in this small and magic box,  
The farmer crowds his fields and flocks;  
Arithmetic can never tell  
How one barn holds the farm so well.

—Ralph W. Seager

There is virtue in country houses, in gardens and orchards, in fields, streams, and groves, in rustic recreations and plain manners, that neither cities nor universities enjoy.

—Amos Bronson Alcott

Country life has its advantages....You sit on the veranda drinking tea and your ducklings swim on the pond, and everything smells good. . . and there are gooseberries.

--Anton Chekhov

The milking machines sounded tranquilizing, and there was the collegiality of seventy animal spirits thriving, warming the barn with cud-chewing, nose-snuffing, and sisterly mammalhood.

--Edward Hoagland

Bank robbing is more of a sure thing than farming.

--Allan Dare Pearce

A farmer's work in many ways is like setting a stage. In theater, stage managers lay out furniture and props, set up lights, and clean to get a set ready for actors to take over and create a show. Farmers plow, fertilize, set up irrigation systems and fences, and otherwise prep the stage of their farms for the real actors—the sun and the life within the seeds and animals—to create the show.

--Ben Hartman

When I offered to either stay and help or go bake a pie, it was the pie that was most needed. It took six pies to finish the roof. I had not known that pies were such an important part of construction.

--Sue Hubbell

This land pulses with life. It breathes in me; it breathes around me; it breathes in spite of me. When I walk on this land, I am walking on the heartbeat of the past and the future. And that's only one of the reasons I am a farmer.

--Brenda Sutton Rose

A farm is a manipulative creature. There is no such thing as finished. Work comes in a stream and has no end. There are only the things that must be done now and things that can be done later. The threat the farm has got on you, the one that keeps you running from can until can't, is this: do it now, or some living thing will wilt or suffer or die. Its blackmail, really.

--Kristin Kimball

A farm includes the passion of the farmer's heart, the interest of the farm's customers, the biological activity in the soil, the pleasantness of the air about the farm -- it's everything touching, emanating from, and supplying that piece of landscape. A farm is virtually a living organism. The tragedy of our time is that cultural philosophies and market realities are squeezing life's vitality out of most farms. And that is why the average farmer is now 60 years old. Serfdom just doesn't attract the best and brightest.

— Joel Salatin

Farming was independently invented at least seven times—in China, the Middle East, New Guinea, the Andes, the Amazon basin, Mexico, and West Africa.

—Bill Bryson

Advances in medicine and agriculture have saved vastly more lives than have been lost in all the wars in history.

--Carl Sagan

Choosing leaf or flesh, factory farm or family farm, does not in itself change the world, but teaching ourselves, our children, our local communities, and our nation to choose conscience over ease can.

—Jonathan Safran Foer

In Spain, hilly terrain and antiquated planting and harvest practices keep farmers from retrieving more than about 100 pounds [of almonds] per acre. Growers in the Central Valley, by contrast can expect up to 3000 pounds an acre. But for all their sophisticated strategies to increase yield and profitability, almond growers still have one major problem - pollination. Unless a bird or insect brings the pollen from flower to flower, even the most state-of-the-art orchard won't grow enough nuts. An almond grower who depends on wind and a few volunteer pollinators in this desert of cultivation can expect only 40 pounds of almonds per acre. If he imports honey bees, the average yield is 2,400 pounds per acre, as much as 3,000 in more densely planted orchards. To build an almond, it takes a bee.

--Hannah Nordhaus

I'm more alive and engaged with the edible landscape. For example, when the strawberries, cherries, or black raspberries ripen, it is an exciting moment! Nothing about a lawn is that exciting.

--Amy Stross

Here are two facts that should not both be true:

- There is sufficient food produced in the world every year to feed every human being on the planet.
- Nearly 800 million people literally go hungry every day, with more than a third of the earth's population—2 billion men and women—malnourished one way or another, according to the *United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization*.

--Michael Dorris

My grandfather used to say, 'Once in your life you'll need a doctor, a lawyer, a policeman and a preacher, but three times a day you need a farmer.'

—Brenda Schoepp

Agriculture is our wisest pursuit, because it will in the end contribute most to real wealth, good morals & happiness.

—Thomas Jefferson

To most people, this is just dirt. To a farmer, it is potential.

—Unknown

Growing up on an animal farm and growing popcorn, my family has never been well off. As some of you may know that animals drain your wallet and most of the time do not fill it back up. I am also one of eight children, so my parents' main goal was to provide their kids with what they need and not what they want. My farm is not the ideal farm to live on. We have old machinery, broken fences, and not enough land. My family works harder than anyone I know, and we are very close. We do not have nice things or everything that we need but we make do. I feel that this has brought my family closer, just because we do what we can with what we have and we enjoy it. I wouldn't have it any other way and I love who I am because of it!

—Mallory Blunier

This special feeling towards fruit, its glory and abundance, is I would say universal.... We respond to strawberry fields or cherry orchards with a delight that a cabbage patch or even an elegant vegetable garden cannot provoke.

—Jane Grigson

I think it has to do with more than the beauty of flowers. I grew up on a farm, you know—rough, rough. Manure and cattle and horses. And I promise you, when I first saw primroses sprouting up out of a bit of mound of earth, all sorts of debris and mud, these primroses were like...you know the color of primroses? They're a pale yellow flower. When I saw these primroses, it was as if life itself was going to change. Not be as hard, and not be as frightening, and not be as dreary. So flowers are connected with emotion for me.

—Edna O'Brien

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows.

--Doug Larson

An apple tree in bloom puts to shame all the men and women that have attempted to dress since the world began.

--Henry Ward Beecher

When I reach the end of one row, I continue straight on away from the barn and the farm and the road. I walk until I come to a pile of hay bales and plop myself down. The sun is bright and the air is sharp. In the distance I hear the lowing of cows. It's so peaceful here.

— Lisa Ann Sandell



One of the first buildings a pioneer family constructed was a good, weathertight, substantial barn. Sometimes, barns went up even before a farmer's house because the barn was absolutely vital to the farming operations of that era. Barns housed hay crops necessary for animal feed and bedding during the winter months. They were also the places where livestock was housed, fed, and cared for. Barns were also where the economically vital small grain crops of oats, wheat, rye and barley were threshed. In fact, the earliest barns had special wooden threshing floors where grain was removed from the stalks by beating it with flails for having oxen or horses walk over it. The grain was later winnowed to remove chaff from the kernels while the straw was stored in the haymow for use as animal bedding and food.

—Roger Matile

Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle ... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream.

—Barbara Winkler

When the snow is still blowing against the window-pane in January and February and the wild winds are howling without, what pleasure it is to plan for summer that is to be!

—Celia Thaxter

It's exciting to see things coming up again, plants that you've had twenty or thirty years. It's like seeing an old friend.

--Tasha Tudor

All through the winter I dream of my garden. On the first warm day of spring I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.

--Helen Hayes

No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

--Booker T. Washington  
(1856-1915)

If you stand in a wheat field at this time of year, a few weeks from harvest, it's not hard to imagine you're looking at something out of mythology: all this golden sunlight brought down to earth, captured in kernels of gold, and rendered fit for mortals to eat. But of course this is no myth at all, just the plain miraculous fact.

—Michael Pollan

Every living thing depends for its existence upon some other form of life — or death. Were it not for the pale, underground flowers of the soil, the bacteria, the grass could not live. If it were not for the grass, the browsing beasts of the field could not live. If it were not for the beasts of the field and the ripened seeds or roots of the grass, man could not live.

—Woods Hutchinson

The corn is planted first, followed by beans, then squash between the rows. They are called the Three Sisters. They sustain each other, the earth, and us.

—Elizabeth Haydon

Roughly 800 million people do not have enough to eat. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in four people is undernourished. Agricultural yields in the region are dismal, less than half the global average. Climate change has made the continent's weather more erratic, and droughts are more severe and more frequent than ever.

—Warren Buffett

No city can offer any excitement comparable to what happens when there is a new pure-bred calf.

--Louis Bromfield

When most people hear the phrase 'family farm,' the barn and the homestead are what come to mind. But in reality, the isolated glow of an onboard computer screen is likely to be more representative of the operation of a late 20th-century farm.

--Dan Guillory

Losing a farmer is like losing a trained musician. Another one can't just be picked up on the street.

--Wendell Berry

One American farmer now feeds and clothes himself and 32 others besides—an achievement unmatched anywhere on earth. One man on the farm today does all the work that was performed by four in 1939.

--Lyndon B. Johnson

Whoever makes two ears of corn, or two blades of grass to grow where only one grew before, deserves better of mankind, and does more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together.

--Jonathan Swift

There seem to be but three ways for a nation to acquire wealth: the first is by war, as the Romans did, in plundering their conquered neighbors--this is robbery; the second by commerce, which is generally cheating; the third by agriculture, the only honest way, wherein man receives a real increase of the seed thrown into the ground, in a kind of continual miracle, wrought by the hand of God in his favor, as a reward for his innocent life and his virtuous industry.

--Benjamin Franklin

The first and most respectable of all the arts is agriculture.

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau

The glory of the farmer is that, in the division of labors, it is his part to create. All trade rests at last on his primitive activity. He stands close to Nature; he obtains from the earth the bread and the meat. The food which was not, he causes to be.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

I'm one of nine sisters. My parents were dairy farmers in Wisconsin. My father didn't believe in girls doing farm work. Girls did housework, and he hired young men to do farm work. I would have preferred to be outside.

—Diane Hendricks

I'd consider being a farmer. As long as I could live on the Pepperidge Farm. And raise Milanos.

—Internet Meme

If you tickle the earth with a hoe, she laughs with a harvest.

--Douglas Jerrold

To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch their renewal of life—this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do.

--Charles Dudley Warner

There is life in the ground: it goes into the seeds; and it also, when it is stirred up, goes into the man who stirs it.

--Charles Dudley Warner

The cultivation of the earth is the most important labor of man. When tillage begins, other arts will follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of civilization.

—Daniel Webster

Farmers are simply the most integrated and intelligent people there are. They have to be if they are going to handle all the work on the farm. It helps to be an intellectual, generally, but also an economist, machinist, repairman, meteorologist—you name it.

--Hal Smith

### **YOU MIGHT BE A FARMER IF...**

Your dog rides in the truck more than your wife.

You have driven off the road while examining your neighbor's crops.

You have used a chainsaw to remodel your house.

You have buried a dog and cried like a baby.

You have borrowed gravel from the county road to fill potholes in your driveway.

You always look when a vehicle passes your house, even at night.

You have used something other than paper as toilet paper.

You have animals living in buildings more expensive than your house.

Your family instantly becomes silent when the weather comes on the news.

You don't bother to clean up the dog's mess because it's just fertilizer, and the dog knows to stay out of your way.

Your husband drives a friend home from the bar when he only lives 3 houses away.

You'll skip your own cousin's funeral for the first day of deer season (and you know he would approve and would do the same if you died).

You have enough ball caps to match every shirt you own, but you only wear one so you don't get the others dirty.

You convince your wife that an overnight, out of State trip for parts is a vacation.

You've never thrown away a 5 gallon bucket.

You have ever had to wash off in the backyard with a garden hose before your wife would let you in the house.

You have used baling wire to attach a license plate.

You can remember the fertilizer rate, seed population, herbicide rate, and yields on a farm you rented 10 years ago, but cannot recall your wife's birthday.

You have used a tractor with a loader as scaffolding for painting or roof repairs.

You have fibbed to a mechanic about how often you greased a piece of equipment.

You've used the same knife to make bull calves into steers and peel apples.

You wave at every vehicle whether you know them or not.

Your wife agrees to observe Mother's Day after the beans are planted.

Over 50% of your clothing came from feed or seed dealers.

You give directions to your farm by using area landmarks, not road names or number.

You refer to farms by who owned them 50 or more years ago.

You've been stopped by the deputy sheriff for a cluttered dashboard.  
Family weddings and special events are planned around spring planting and fall harvest.  
You know that checkoff is not a Russian diplomat.  
The rusted out areas of your truck are sealed off with old tee-shirts or duck tape.  
You can eat an ear of sweet corn with no utensils in under 20 seconds.  
You pick up all the free stuff at the State Fair.  
It takes 30 seconds to reach your destination, and it's clear across town.  
You can tell the difference between the smell of a skunk and the smell of a feedlot.  
The meaning of true love is that you'll pose for a picture with both him and his favorite tractor.  
The meaning of true love is that you'll ride in the tractor with him.  
You consider a building a mall if it's bigger than the local Wal-Mart.  
You know you should listen to the weather forecast before picking out an outfit.  
You know cow pies aren't made of beef.  
Your excuse for getting out of school is that the cows got out.  
Your early morning prayer covers rain, cattle, and pigs.  
You consider a romantic evening driving through Hardees and renting a hunting instructional video.  
You can tell it's a farmer working late in the field, know who it is, what they're doing, and not think it's a UFO.  
You listen to 'Paul Harvey' every day at noon and never get tired of him saying, 'Gooooood day'.  
Your nearest neighbor is in the next section, and you know what a section is.  
You actually understand the geographical necessity of correction lines.  
When you were little, you 'beat-up' another kid on the school bus arguing over the color of tractors.  
Your other vehicle is a tractor.

*—steerplanet.com*

Stop killing and start creating. Stop cutting and start planting. Stop wasting and start saving. Stop hating and start loving. These are the ten commandments of conservation for each of us within his own dooryard and neighborhood, over his own ranch and farm; a sower of seed, a planter of trees, a nourisher of life, where heretofore we have each plucked and burned and slaughtered.

--Dallas Lore Sharp

Life on the farm is a school of patience: you can't hurry the crops or make an ox in two days.

--Henri Fournier Alain

A farm is a hunk of land on which, if you get up early enough mornings and work late enough nights, you'll make a fortune—if you strike oil on it.

—'Fibber' McGee

I have found beauty in the dust of life,  
In men who work in grime of shop and field.

--Paul Engle

We stand today in danger of forgetting the use of our hands. To forget how to dig the earth and tend the soil is to forget ourselves.

--Mohandas K. Gandhi

When the farmer comes to town, with his wagon broken down,  
Oh, the farmer is the man who feeds them all!  
If you'll only look and see, I'm sure you will agree  
That the farmer is the man who feeds them all!  
The farmer is the man, the farmer is the man,  
Lives on credit 'till the fall;  
Then they take him by the hand, and they lead him from the land,  
And the merchant is the man who gets it all.

--American Folk Song

On the farm the weather was the great fact and men's affairs went on underneath it, as the streams creep under the ice.

--Willa Cather

Perhaps at bottom I'm...a country man. The warm earth feeling gets me hardest. It's land love, ground love.

--Sherwood Anderson

I sometimes fancy that I enjoy ploughing and mowing more when other people are engaged in them than if I were working myself. Sweat away, my hearties, I say; I am in the shade of this tree watching you, and enjoying the scene amazingly.

--Henry Ward Beecher

The wisest men, in the bulk, are the men who have tilled the earth and whose fathers have tilled it before them, and the least wise, without a doubt, are those who miss the meaning of that august sequence in human affairs.

--Hilaire Belloc

Husbandry has in our time been glorified in eloquence which for the most part is vain, endeavouring as it does, to prove a falsity—that the agricultural life, is, in itself, favourable to gentle emotions, to sweet thoughtfulness, and to all the human virtues. Agriculture is one of the most exhausting forms of toil, and, in itself, by no means conducive to spiritual development.

--George Gissing

We are so often ashamed of the Earth—the soil of it, the sweat of it, the good common coarseness of it. To us in our fine raiment and soft manners, it seems indelicate.

--David Grayson

When you're working on the farm, you're in touch with reality. You live on this earth. You don't live within boxes within cubes within a university.

--Hal Smith

The earth's a living thing that has a lot of history, and the more you're in touch with it, the more you learn about the larger things. The larger things are life and death.

--Hal Smith

Every man should be a farmer or he is not going to appreciate his country.

--Thomas Jefferson

Working with my hands, working on the farm, working on the land—besides all that it teaches me—frees my mind....if I can just walk outside, get on the tractor or step over to the garden or walk around a bit on the land, see how the crop is coming or how an animal is doing, my mind is suddenly freed. I'm a part again of the real world.

--Hal Smith

The control of agriculture is shifting away from farmers to scientists, and to those who own science.

--Jack Doyle

We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.

--Aldo Leopold

Burn down your cities and leave our farms, and your cities will spring up again as if by magic; but destroy our farms and the grass will grow in the streets of every city in the country.

--William Jennings Bryan

Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil, and you're a thousand miles from the corn field.

--Dwight D. Eisenhower

Remote though your farm may be,  
It's something to be the lord of one green lizard—and free.

--Juvenal

The farmer is the only man in our economy who buys everything he buys at retail, sells everything he sells at wholesale, and pays the freight both ways.

--John F. Kennedy

A good farmer is nothing more nor less than a handy man with a sense of humor.

--E. B. White

Farming is not really a business; it is an occupation.

--William E. Woodward

Only he can understand what a farm is, what a country is, who shall have sacrificed part of himself to his farm or country.

--Saint-Exupery

There is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem.

--Booker T. Washington

A farmer is always going to be rich next year.

--Philemon

Some people tell us that there ain't no Hell,  
But they never farmed, so how can they tell?

—Unknown

Even after a bad harvest there must be sowing.

—Seneca



Love is the thing that enables a woman to sing while she mops up the floor after her husband has walked across it in his barn boots.

—*Hoosier Farmer*

Our farmers and ranchers have never faced as many problems as they do today with drought, range fires, high gas prices and an ever tightening budget on agriculture subsidies.

—Michael McCaul

The future belongs to the few of us still willing to get our hands dirty.

—NSLF Poster

There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners...they hold up Adam's profession.

--William Shakespeare

What a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it.

--Charles Dudley Warner

The agricultural population produces the bravest men, the most valiant soldiers, and a class of citizens the least given of all to evil designs.

--Cato

Of all occupations from which gain is secured, there is none better than agriculture, nothing more productive, nothing sweeter, nothing more worthy of a free man.

--Cicero

The first farmer was the first man, and all historic nobility rests on possession and use of land.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

A Plowman on his legs is higher than a Gentleman on his Knees.

--Benjamin Franklin

The earth is given as a common stock for men to labor and live on....The small landowners are the most precious part of the State.

--Thomas Jefferson

There is nothing grateful but the earth; you cannot do too much for it: it will continue to repay tenfold the pains and labour bestowed upon it.

--Lord Ravensworth

Husbandry is not governed by judgment and labor, but by the most uncertain of things, winds and tempests.

--Cicero

All taxes must, at last, fall upon agriculture.

--Edward Gibbon

No one hates his job so heartily as a farmer.

--H. L. Mencken

Farming is a most senseless pursuit, a mere laboring in a circle.  
You sow that you may reap, and then you reap that you may sow.  
Nothing ever comes of it.

--Joannes Stobaeus

A lucky farmer is one who has raised a bumper crop of good boys.

--Unknown

There is no better demonstration of faith than a man planting seed in a field.

--Proverb

A wise farmer puts as much thought to sowing as he does to reaping.

--Unknown

About the only farm movement which will benefit the farmers are those that start about daybreak and end at sunset.

--Unknown

The farmer doesn't go to work. He wakes up every morning surrounded by it.

--Unknown

No farmer ever plowed a field by turning it over in his mind.

--George E. Woodbury

American farmers don't need protection from competition to survive. They need protection from their own government.

--Unknown

Any girl who wants to be sure she will never be unemployed should marry a farmer.

--Unknown

Our politicians have thought of just about everything to help the farmer but to leave him alone so he can operate his own business.

--Unknown

I had heard my father say that he never knew a piece of land (to) run away or break.

--John Adams

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

--Aldo Leopold

We shall never understand the natural environment until we see it as a living organism. Land can be healthy or sick, fertile or barren, rich or poor, lovingly nurtured or bled white. Our present attitudes and laws governing the ownership and use of land represent an abuse of the concept of private property...In America today you can murder land for private profit. You can leave the corpse for all to see, and nobody calls the cops.

--Paul Brooks

Land is immortal, for it harbors the mysteries of creation.

--Anwar al-Sadat

Worm or beetle—drought or tempest—on a farmer's land may fall,  
Each is loaded full o'ruin, but a mortgage beats 'em all.

--William McKendree  
Carleton

Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face,  
And on his back the burden of the world.

--Edwin Markham

Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation, but the only riches she can call her own.

--Samuel Johnson

Let the farmer forevermore be honored in his calling, for they who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God.

--Thomas Jefferson

Trade increases the wealth and glory of a country; but its real strength and stamina are to be looked for among the cultivators of the land.

--Lord Chatham

In a moral point of view, the life of the agriculturist is the most pure and holy of any class of men; pure, because it is the most healthful, and vice can hardly find time to contaminate it; and holy, because it brings the Deity perpetually before his view, giving him thereby the most exalted notions of supreme power, and the most endearing view of the divine benignity.

--Lord John Russell

The farther we get away from the land, the greater our insecurity.

--Henry Ford

There is enough for all. The earth is a generous mother; she will provide in plentiful abundance food for all her children if they will but cultivate her soil in justice and in peace.

--Bourke Coekran

The green earth sends her incense up.

From many a mountain shrine;  
From folded leaf and dewey cup  
She pours her sacred wine.

--John Greenleaf Whittier

Farmers worry only during the growing season, but town people worry all the time.

--Edgar Watson Howe

A land too poor for any other crop, is best for raising men.

--Reginald Innes Pocock

If farmers do not cultivate their fields, the people in the town will die of hunger.

--Guinean Proverb

Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.

--Thomas Jefferson

The chicken is the country's, but the city eats it.

--George Herbert

I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country, than by improving its agriculture—its breed of useful animals—and other branches of a husbandman's cares.

--George Washington

A person's time would be as well spent raising food as raising money to buy food.

--Frank A. Clark

It was very, very hard in those years, at the end of the war. It was all axe-work in those days, no bulldozers. I used to work with the axe until I couldn't do it any longer. I'd go out every day, even when I was pregnant. Women worked very hard, of course, then. When I look around now and see women who've got every convenience of every kind and think of the way women used to work hard on the farm, I often think what they owe to those women.

--Charlotte Perkins  
Gilman

I enjoy farming. I enjoy the outdoors. I enjoy that sort of thing. Not a lot of people do. It's hard to get people to do that kind of work. But we bought some land, cleared some land off. You get out and start straightening it up and spend a lot of time out in the middle of a 100-acre field. The sun is just beating down on you. Some people call that more than work.

--Jerry Sloan

Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of these men's farms, yet to this their warranty-deeds give no title.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

In 1960, there were 100,000 African-American farmers, working 6 million acres of land; in 1997, that number has dropped to 18,000 farmers, working 2 million acres.

--*National Farmers  
Union*

In the shift to 'precision farming,' producers are winning higher yields for their crops. But they're losing a rural culture.

--Dan Guillory

One of the more obvious differences between the contemporary farmer and his grandfather in straw hat and bib overalls is the immense amount of information to be processed on a daily basis. Like everyone else in the 1990's, the farmer is surrounded and bombarded by data.

--Dan Guillory

A self-righteous preacher reprimanded a farmer because he cussed and drank, 'I'm over 60 years old and I've never cussed or drunk.'

Farmer: 'Yeah, and you've never farmed either.'

--Unknown

It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility.

--Rachel Carson

With hand on the spade and heart in the sky  
Dress the ground and till it;  
Turn in the little seed, brown and dry,  
Turn out the golden millet.  
Work, and your house shall be duly fed:  
Work, and rest shall be won;  
I hold that a man had better be dead  
Than alive when his work is done.

--Alice Cary

The soft surface of the earth is no more than the thickness of a tarnish on a metal ball.

--Robert Frost

Black Africa is caught in the vicious circle of an unproductive agriculture carried on by undernourished people on unfertilized land.

--René Dumont

Earth is here (Australia) so kind, that just tickle her with a hoe and she laughs with a harvest.

--Douglas Jerrold

The soil will produce abundantly when fertilized well with elbow grease and good sense.

--Jacob Kindleberger

To cultivate a garden is to walk with God.

--Christian Nestell Bovée

The hardest crop to raise on a farm are the boys of the family.

--Unknown

The advantage of living on a farm is that cows and chickens don't come in and urge you to play bridge when you'd rather read.

—Evan Esar

A farmer is always raising things, but never as much as the middleman.

—Evan Esar

A garden is a thing of beauty and a job forever.

--Richard Briers

Why is it that, as farmers are constantly producing more with less labor, the price of food keeps going up?

—Evan Esar

Italians go to ruin usually in three ways: women, gambling and farming—my family chose the slowest one.

--Pope John XXIII

In the good old days, you needed less machinery to run a large farm than you need today to run a small farmhouse.

--Unknown

The working farmer is usually lean; it's the middleman who develops the middle.

—Evan Esar

A gardener raises a few things, a farmer raises many things, and the middleman raises everything.

—Evan Esar

A gentleman farmer is one who has more stock in the bank than in the barn.

—Evan Esar

Many a farmer wakes up one morning and finds himself in the suburbs.

--Unknown

A beautiful garden requires a lot of water, much of it in the form of perspiration.

--Lou Erickson

The gardening tool still unmatched is a simple spade with wife attached.

--Unknown

In the United States, the farmer is the backbone, the reformer is the wishbone, and the politician is the jawbone.

--Unknown

For of all gainful professions, nothing is better, nothing more pleasing, nothing more delightful, nothing better becomes a well-bred man than agriculture.

--Marcus Tullius Cicero

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 bands. As long therefore as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or any thing else. But our citizens will find employment in this line till their numbers and of course their productions, become too great for the demand both internal and foreign.

--Thomas Jefferson

Man has only a thin layer of soil between himself and starvation.

--Bard of Cincinnati

I think our governments will remain virtuous for many centuries; as long as they are chiefly agricultural; and this will be as long as there shall be vacant lands in any part of America. When they get piled upon one another in large cities, as in Europe, they will become corrupt as in Europe.

--Thomas Jefferson

Were we directed from Washington when to sow, & when to reap, we should soon want bread.

--Thomas Jefferson

There be three things which make a nation great and prosperous: a fertile soil, busy workshops, easy conveyance for men and goods from place to place.

--Sir Francis Bacon



God has lent us the earth for our life; it is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who are to come after us, and whose names are already written in the book of creation, as to us; and we have no right, by anything that we do or neglect, to involve them in unnecessary penalties, or deprive them of benefits which it was in our power to bequeath.

--John Ruskin

My life on the farm during the Great Depression more nearly resembled farm life of fully 2,000 years ago than farm life today.

--Jimmy Carter

We plant millions of acres and gather only 0.1 per cent of the energy of the sun. What is a farm? It's really an incredibly inefficient light trap.

--Arthur C. Clarke

I've seen farmers who can't read and farmers who can't write, but I've never seen a farmer who can't figure.

--Forrest Hill

Some say you shouldn't prune except at the right time of the year. I generally do it when the saw is sharp.

--George Aiken

My grandpa raised a family off 110 acres. Now it takes more than that. I don't think we'll see the family farm disappear, it will just become more profit-oriented, as it is now. If you're not business-oriented, you probably won't be in business very long.

--Scott Brummel

Farming's a piece of fun for you. It's a life sentence for me.

--Nina Bawden

There's no higher calling than animal husbandry, and making things live and grow. We farmers are stewards. Our lot is to tend all of God's good living things, and I say there's nothing finer.

--Robert Newton Peck

When you kill pigs for a living, you can't always smell like Sunday morning. You just smell like hard work.

--Robert Newton Peck

Farm women have always been wage earners and partners in their husband's businesses, but no one ever noticed.

--Laura Ingalls Wilder

When the sun rises, I go to work,  
When the sun goes down, I take my rest  
I dig the well from which I drink  
I farm the soil that yields my food  
I share creation. Kings can do no more.

--Ancient Chinese Saying

To dig one's own spade into one's own earth! Has life anything better to offer than this?

--Beverley Nichols

Given a little patch of ground, with time to take care of it, with tools to work it and seeds to plant in it, he has all he needs, and nature with her dews and suns and showers and sweet airs gives him her aid.

—Celia Thaxter

The very act of planting a seed in the earth has in it to me something beautiful. I always do it with a joy that is largely mixed with awe.

—Celia Thaxter

Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof.

—Celia Thaxter

When I go into my garden...All the cares, perplexities, and griefs of existence, all the burdens of life slip from my shoulders and leave me with the heart of a little child that asks nothing beyond its present moment of innocent bliss.

—Celia Thaxter

That every plant should select only its own colors and forms from the great laboratory of Nature has always seemed to me a very wonderful thing. Each plant takes from its surroundings just those qualities which will produce its own special characteristics.

—Celia Thaxter

Prior to World War II, it took 100 hours of labor to produce 100 bushels of corn. Today, it takes less than two hours.

--Jason Henderson

Since 1980, agriculture has been the second-most-productive aspect of our economy...I'm 61 years old, and in my lifetime, corn production has increased 400 percent, soybeans 1,000 percent, and wheat 100 percent.

--Tom Vilsack

Ever since people first domesticated cereal crops in the Fertile Crescent 11,000 years ago, farming has followed a seemingly immutable pattern—plow your field, seed your field, harvest your field, repeat. But today, farmers can skip the plowing step. This historic shift is known as the no-till revolution.

--Chrystia Freeland

There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.

--Aldo Leopold

'Agritopia' is the leafiest, farmiest of all the nascent trends in real estate, in which agrarian-focused housing schemes are anchored by farmland rather than, say, greenswards, man-made lakes or golf courses. Ranches, gardens and vineyards are major selling points. There are already dozens of agritopian developments and, fueled by the local-food movement, emerging widespread environmental consciousness, Perelmanesque romanticism and good old American marketing chutzpah, more are in the works—enough to qualify as a trend in America's preeminent rural community paper, the *New York Times*.

—Franz Lidz

For many centuries, people created technologies that made the horse more productive and more valuable—like plows for agriculture and swords for battle. One might have assumed that the continuing advance of complementary technologies would make the animal ever more essential to farming and fighting, historically perhaps the two most consequential human activities. Instead came inventions that made the horse obsolete—the tractor, the car, and the tank. After tractors rolled onto American farms in the early 20th century, the population of horses and mules began to decline steeply, falling nearly 50 percent by the 1930s and 90 percent by the 1950s.

—Derek Thompson

The farm was an irregular patch of nettles bounded by short-term notes containing a fool and his wife who didn't know enough to stay in the city.

—S.J. Perelman

I went out to the country so I could examine the simple things in life.

—Henry Thoreau

The big donors working on agriculture in Africa—among them USAID and the Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation—share a widely held faith in the power of science and technology to improve productivity. In large part, they have modeled their efforts in Africa on the triumph of the so-called green revolution in the 1960s, when the Indian subcontinent was saved from starvation by the introduction of modern agronomy: high-yield and disease-resistant wheat seeds, irrigation, and heavy doses of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

—Nina Munk

There is no gilding of setting sun or glamor of poetry to light up the ferocious and endless toil of the farmers' wives.

—Hamlin Garland

I've had lengthy discussions with European farm leaders. It is clear they have an agricultural strategy to support their producers and gain dominance in world agricultural trade. They're gaining markets the old-fashioned way—they're buying them.

—Kent Conrad

In cities no one is quiet but many are lonely; in the country, people are quiet but few are lonely.

—Geoffrey Francis Fisher

Farmers base their livelihoods on raising crops. But farmers do not make plants grow. They don't attach the roots, glue on the petals, or color the fruit. The plant grows itself. Farmers and gardeners provide the conditions for growth. Good farmers know what those conditions are, and bad ones don't.

—Ken Robinson

People in the city are poor because they are oppressed, discriminated against and alienated; people in the country are poor because they're too stupid to realize they ought to be living in the city.

—Garret Keize

Dear Ma and Pa:

I am well. Hope you are. Tell Brother Walt and Brother Elmer the Marine Corps beats working for old man Minch by a mile. Tell them to join up quick before all of the places are filled.

I was restless at first because you get to stay in bed till nearly 6 a.m. But I am getting used to it, so I like to sleep late. Tell Walt and Elmer all you do before breakfast is smooth your cot, and shine some things. No hogs to slop, feed to pitch, mash to mix, wood to split, fire to lay. Practically nothing.

Men got to shave but it is not so bad, there's warm water. Breakfast is strong on trimmings like fruit juice, cereal, eggs, bacon, etc., but kind of weak on chops, potatoes, ham, steak, fried eggplant, pie and other regular food, but tell Walt and Elmer you can always sit by the two city boys that live on coffee. Their food, plus yours, holds you until noon when you get fed again. It's no wonder these city boys can't walk much.

We go on 'route marches,' which the platoon sergeant says are long walks to harden us. If he thinks so, it's not my place to tell him different. A 'route march' is about as far as to our mailbox at home. Then the city guys get sore feet and we all ride back in trucks.

The sergeant is like a school teacher. He nags a lot. The Captain is like the school board. Majors and colonels just ride around and frown. They don't bother you none.

This next will kill Walt and Elmer with laughing. I keep getting medals for shooting. I don't know why. The bulls-eye is near as big as a chipmunk head and don't move, and it ain't shooting at you like the Higgett boys at home. All you got to do is lie there all comfortable and hit it. You don't even load your own cartridges. They come in boxes.

Then we have what they call hand-to-hand combat training. You get to wrestle with them city boys. I have to be real careful though, they break real easy. It ain't like fighting with that ole bull at home. I'm about the best they got in this except for that Tug Jordan from over in Silver Lake. I only beat him once. He joined up the same time as me, but I'm only 5'6" and 130 pounds and he's 6'8" and near 300 pounds dry.

Be sure to tell Walt and Elmer to hurry and join before other fellers get onto this setup and come stampeding in.

Your loving daughter,

Alice

—Carla Grace

The farm is a piece of the world.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

If you grew up in a rural area, you have seen how farmhouses come and go, but the dent left by cellars is permanent. There is something unbreakable in that hand-dug foundational gouge into the earth.

—Paul Collins

Ants are so much like human beings as to be an embarrassment. They farm fungi, raise aphids as livestock, launch armies into war, use chemical sprays to alarm and confuse enemies, capture slaves, engage in child labor, exchange information ceaselessly. They do everything but watch television.

—Lewis Thomas

It is one of the paradoxes of American literature that our writers are forever looking back with love and nostalgia at lives they couldn't wait to leave. The feeling seems to be strongest in those who grew up in neighborhoods, small towns or on farms.

--Anatole Broyard

About eighty percent of the food on shelves of supermarkets today didn't exist 100 years ago.

—Larry McCleary

At least half the illnesses of mankind will disappear once our food supplies are raised from fertile soil and consumed in a fresh condition.

—Albert Howard

The practices we now call conservation are, to a large extent, local alleviations of biotic pain. They are necessary, but they must not be confused with cures. The art of land doctoring is being practiced with vigor, but the science of land health is yet to be born.

—Aldo Leopold

Many Detroiters, for example, are beginning to see urban agriculture as a real part of the solution; to grow things right where people live, where they work, and definitely need healthier food on the table. Green city gardens are scattered throughout Detroit now, from the schoolyard at *Catherine Ferguson Academy* for pregnant teens and teen moms, to reclaimed land owned by a local order of Catholic friars (*Earthworks*), to a seven-acre organic farm in Rouge Park. Together, city gardeners, nonprofit organizations, and the *Greening of Detroit* resource agency are writing a new local-food story of urban Michigan.

—Jaye Beeler

Nobody who has read of crime in the streets and decaying of inner cities can want to live in the large cities. Or would opt to work in the city and spend a large portion of his life commuting to and from his suburban home as they do in Chicago and New York.

It isn't my kind of life and the people who live it are not my kind of people. I love Wisconsin's small towns, the air of the bucolic that exists just outside of Milwaukee....I worship the splendor of her lakes, the green of her trees and the purity of her northern waters.

Wisconsin of the small town halls, the shuttered country churches, steeples rising on prairie horizons and barns and silos looming in the Kettle Moraine country. I visited New York City once and thought I was in a foreign country.

--Larry van Goethem

God made the country, and man made the town.

--William Cowper

In the country you live longer than in the city—or does it just seem longer?

—Unknown

I have no relish for the country; it is a kind of healthy grave.

--Sydney Smith

Life in the country teaches one that the really stimulating things are the quiet, natural things, and the really wearisome things are the noisy, unnatural things. It is more exciting to stand still than to dance. Silence is more eloquent than speech. Water is more stimulating than wine. Fresh air is more intoxicating than cigarette smoke. Sunlight is more subtle than electric light. The scent of grass is more luxurious than the most expensive perfume. The slow, simple observations of the peasant are more wise than the most sparkling epigrams of the latest wit.

--Beverley Nichols

Most of the people living in New York have come here from the farm to try to make enough money to go back to the farm.

--Don Marquis

The shrinkage in the flora is due to a combination of clean-farming, woodlot grazing, and good roads. Each of these necessary changes, of course, requires a larger reduction in the acreage available for wild plants, but none of them requires, or benefits by, the erasure of species from whole farms, townships, or counties. There are idle spots on every farm, and every highway is bordered by an idle strip as long as it is; keep cow, plow, and mower out of these idle spots, and the full native flora, plus dozens of interesting stowaways from foreign parts, could be part of the normal environment of every citizen.

—Aldo Leopold

When we were on the farm, we were isolated, not just by geography but by the primitive living conditions: no electricity, no running water and, of course, no computer, no phone.

—Sally Mann

Throughout history, our greatest resource has been our land—forests and plains, mountains and marshlands, rivers and lakes. Our land has sustained us. It has given us a love of freedom, a sense of security, and courage to test the unknown.

--Richard Nixon

The land is like poetry: It is inextricably coherent, it is transcendent in its meaning, and it has the power to elevate a consideration of human life.

--Barry Lopez

We have probed the earth, excavated it, burned it, ripped things from it, buried things in it....That does not fit my definition of a good tenant. If we were here on a month-to-month basis, we would have been evicted long ago.

--Rose Elizabeth Bird

We are living beyond our means. We have developed a lifestyle that is draining the earth of its priceless and irreplaceable resources.

--Margaret Mead

By sustainable development I mean the rational use of resources to meet all basic human needs. To be sustainable, development cannot ignore long-term costs for short-term gains. Concern for the environment is not a luxury that only richer nations can afford. If some development project is damaging forests or soil or water or clean air, then it is not true development.

--William Clark



As soils are depleted, human health, vitality and intelligence go with them.  
--Louis Bromfield

The Lord grant we may all be tillers of the soil.  
—Nikolai Gogol

I live in the country. I have no other home. I am impressed with certain things about farmers. One of them is their destructiveness. One of them is their total lack of the appreciation of the beautiful—in the main. There are exceptions. Some of them have an exquisite, sensitive perception of the beautiful which they did not learn in school.

--Dr. Karl Menninger

Even if a farmer intends to loaf, he gets up in time to get an early start.  
—Edward W. Howe

Alas! my child, where is the Pen  
That can do justice to the Hen?  
Like Royalty, she goes her way,  
Laying foundations every day,  
Though not for Public Buildings, yet  
For Custard, Cake and Omelette....  
No wonder, Child, we prize the Hen,  
Whose Egg is Mightier than the Pen.

—Oliver Herford

There's something about getting up at 5 a.m., feeding the stock and chickens, and milking a couple of cows before breakfast that gives you a lifelong respect for the price of butter and eggs.

—Bill Vaughan

Condensed milk is wonderful. I don't see how they can get a cow to sit down on those little cans.

—Fred Allen

Whoever needs milk, bows to the animal.

—Yiddish Saying

If organic farming is the natural way, shouldn't organic produce just be called 'produce' and make the pesticide-laden stuff take the burden of an adjective?

—Terri Guillemets

Coexistence: what the farmer does with the turkey—until Thanksgiving.

—Mike Connolly

It's more than just high quality food for the family table; it's growing the food in a way that does not harm the environment. That gives me emotional well-being that is important to me.

—Robert Patterson

In the past, when people killed too many animals or over-harvested plants, they saw the impact on the world. But today, living apart from nature, we do not see the results of our food and energy choices.

—Richard Schiffman

Organic food production has existed for thousands of years (since the beginning of agriculture) and it will continue as long as humans live on the planet.

—David Wolfe

Both the human immune system and the plant immune system are fundamentally interdependent on the quality and fertility of the soil. Our immune system, and even our physical structure, are a reflection of the foods we have eaten from either toxic and nutrient depleted soils, or wonderfully fertile soils.

—Eryn Paige

You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind.

—Gordon B. Hinckley

Plough deep while sluggards sleep.

--Benjamin Franklin

Work and thou canst not escape the rewards whether thy work be fine or coarse, planting corn or writing epics, so only if it be honest work, done to thine own approbation, it shall earn a reward to the senses as well as to the thought. No matter how often defeated, you are born to victory. The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

All work, even cotton spinning, is noble; work is alone noble....A life of ease is not for any man.

--Thomas Carlyle

The planter, the farmer, the mechanic, and the laborer... form the great body of the people of the United States, they are the bone and sinew of the country men who love liberty and desire nothing but equal rights and equal laws.

—Andrew Jackson

## **OLD TRACTOR MECHANIC**

Old tin roof, plastered adobe walls that were melting  
Two big Cottonwood trees, junk cars in the back  
Cracked concrete floor, covered with oil and grease  
Mexican kids running in and out, playing and screaming  
Couple of water jugs, covered with gunny sack  
In all of this was some sort of peace

Joes Montes was the owner, we just called him Joe  
Joe spoke good broken English, had a little accent  
Talked a lot with his hands, pointing at this and that  
Did not advertise, everyone knew Old Joe  
Been there for years, did not pay any rent  
Always wore a greasy cap, never wore a hat

Farmers up and down the valley swore by Joe  
When a tractor was down, they knew who to call  
Jump in his old truck and he was there  
Been known to use bailing wire, he would make them go  
Cotton pickers to a hale bailer, he worked on them all  
Never charged much, was always fair

Adobe wall have melted, Joe has passed away  
In that old shop where a lot of memories were made  
No telling how many tractors Joe made run  
Tractors now have computers, not in Joe's day  
The Cottonwood trees make no more shade  
Joe was a tractor fixing son of a gun.

—Danny Nunn

If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles, or church organs, than anybody else, you will find a broad, hard-beaten road to his house, tho it be in the woods.

--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Browsing our local farmer's market is one of my family's favorite weekend activities. Make it a relaxing, healthful habit for your family, and you'll reap the nutritional rewards.

—Suzanne Somers

I didn't know why dessert was invented or what function it was meant to perform. Raising livestock and the harvesting of grains are ancient activities, but when did humankind decide it also needed creme brulee?

—Bill Buford

Though his health and family had been broken in the process, he'd found his purpose in life — to share the ancient key discovered anew in the garden: if we feed the earth, it will feed us.

—Melissa Coleman

Before green apples blush,  
Before green nuts embrown,  
Why, one day in the country  
Is worth a month in town.

--Christina G. Rossetti

A majority of these FFA members do not live on a farm. Students have found the subjects interesting because of the hands-on learning and the ability to participate in an extracurricular area where they can meet students from other schools and also attend conferences where they learn about leadership and current technology used to produce their food.

—Beau Buchs

FFA no longer is only about production agriculture. In fact, most of the students live in town and have never set foot on a farm. It's not so much about teaching people how to farm; it's about teaching awareness of the world around them. It's learning how to choose a cut of meat at the grocery store or applying lawn chemical to your front yard, growing flowers, not to mention life skills. FFA students might talk about agriculture to local elementary students, keep records, and identify safety hazards in their jobs at McDonald's or on the family farm, or participate in contests on parliamentary procedure, public speaking, job interviewing, or dairy and livestock judging.

—Jenn Scott

The farmer has to be an optimist, or he wouldn't still be a farmer.

—Will Rogers

How lucky country children are in these natural delights that lie ready to their hand! Every season and every plant offers changing joys. As they meander along the lane that leads to our school all kinds of natural toys present themselves for their diversion. The seedpods of stitchwort hang ready for delightful popping between thumb and finger, and later the bladder campion offers a larger, if less crisp, globe to burst. In the autumn, acorns, beechnuts, and conkers bedizen their path, with all their manifold possibilities of fun. In the summer, there is an assortment of honeys to be sucked from bindweed flowers, held fragile and fragrant to hungry lips, and the tiny funnels of honeysuckle and clover blossoms to taste.

—Miss Read

Spring has sprung. We're free at last, people. Free at last. Thank you mother nature, we're free. Time to toss open that metaphysical window and check out that psychic landscape. See lots of possibilities budding out there. Time to hoe those rows, feed that seed. Pretty soon you get a garden.

—Robin Green

The bud itself is the miracle. To watch the upthrust of a daffodil, to see it take form as a flower-to-be, to see the bud grow and take on the warmth of color—there is the very synthesis of spring.

—Unknown

Through all the frozen winter  
My nose has grown most lonely  
For lovely, lovely colored smells  
That come in springtime only.

--Kathryn Worth

There is no time like Spring,  
When life's alive in every thing.

--Christina Rossetti

When the woods and groves are covered with green, and grass and flowers appear in the orchards and meadows, and the birds who were sad are now gay among the foliage, then I also sing and exult, I bloom again and flourish, as is my wont.

--Bernard de Ventadour

Spring is sooner recognized by plants than by men.

--Chinese Proverb

I think that no matter how old or infirm I may become, I will always plant a large garden in the spring. Who can resist the feelings of hope and joy that one gets from participating in nature's rebirth?

—Edward Giobbi

And Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

—Margaret Atwood

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden.

—Ruth Stout

Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colors, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night.

—Rainer Maria Rilke

Springtime is the land awakening.  
The March winds are the morning yawn.

—Lewis Grizzard

May and June. Soft syllables, gentle names for the two best months in the garden year: cool, misty mornings gently burned away with a warming spring sun, followed by breezy afternoons and chilly nights. The discussion of philosophy is over; it's time for work to begin.

—Peter Loewer

There is a cleansing from winter darkness the moment we sink our fingers into spring's fresh earth.

--Toni Sorenson

Spring shows the power and love of the earth; she can grow magnificent flowers from the dirt.

--Debasish Mridha

Agatha surveys the garden, its rows of crinkled spring cabbages and beanstalks entwining bowers of hawthorn and hazel. The rosemary is dotted with pale blue stars of blossom and chives nod heads of tousled purple. New sage leaves sprout silver green among the brittle, frost-browned remains of last year's growth. Lily of the valley, she thinks, that will be out in the cloister garden at Saint Justina's by now.

—Sarah Bower

The spring rains woke the dormant tillers, and bright green shoots sprang from the moist earth and rose like sleepers stretching after a long nap. As spring gave way to summer, the bright green stalks darkened, became tan, turned golden brown. The days grew long and hot. Thick towers of swirling black clouds brought rain, and the brown stems glistened in the perpetual twilight that dwelled beneath the canopy. The wheat rose and the ripening heads bent in the prairie wind, a rippling curtain, an endless, undulating sea that stretched to the horizon.

—Rick Yancey

Autumn begins with a subtle change in the light, with skies a deeper blue, and nights that become suddenly clear and chilled. The season comes full with the first frost, the disappearance of migrant birds, and the harvesting of the season's last crops.

—Glenn Wolff and Jerry  
Dennis

Autumn, gorgeous in yellow and red,  
Is the harvest time, when man is led  
To garner the fruits of sweat and toil  
From dear Mother Earth, the deep rich soil...

—Gertrude Tooley  
Buckingham

Essentially, autumn is the quiet completion of spring and summer. Spring was all eagerness and beginnings, summer was growth and flowering. Autumn is the achievement summarized, the harvested grain, the ripened apple, the grape in the wine press. Autumn is the bright leaf in the woodland, the opened husk on the bittersweet berry, the fruit of asters at the roadside.

—Hal Borland

Autumn, the bringer of fruit, has poured out her riches, and soon sluggish winter returns.

--Horace

Autumn in the country advances in a predictable path, taking its place among the unyielding rhythms of the passing seasons. It follows the summer harvest, ushering in cooler nights, and shorter days, enveloping all of Lanark County in a spectacular riot of colour. Brilliant hues of yellow, orange and red exclaim, in no uncertain terms, that these are the trees where maple syrup legends are born.

— Arlene Stafford-Wilson

Give me juicy autumnal fruit, ripe and red from the orchard.

—Walt Whitman

The leaves fall, the wind blows, and the farm country slowly changes from the summer cottons into its winter wools.

—Henry Beston

In the spring and summer I watched my plants flower, but it was, perhaps, in winter that I loved them best, when their skeletons were exposed. Then I felt they had more to say to me, were not simply dressing themselves for the crowds. Stripped of their leaves, their identities showed forth stark, essential.

--Pamela Erens

Anyone who thinks gardening begins in the spring and ends in the fall is missing the best part of the year...for gardening begins in January, with the dream.

—Josephine Nuese

Plow, naked man! Sow, naked man! Winter is farmer's lazy time.

In cold weather the farmers enjoy their gain for the most part  
and they happily prepare feasts for each other.

Friendly winter is inviting and lightens their cares,  
as when loaded boats at last reach port

and the happy sailors place crowns upon the sterns.

Still, then is the time to pick the oaken acorns,  
the laurel's berries, the olive and the blood-red myrtle;

the time to set traps for cranes and nets for stags;

the time to chase the long-eared rabbits, to smite the does

as you whirl the thongs of a Balearic sling,

when the snow lies deep and the rivers push ice.

—Publius Vergilius Maro



There are two seasonal diversions that can ease the bite of any winter. One is the January thaw. The other is the seed catalogues.

—Hal Borland

My father believed you could learn from a farm worker or a president—and you should respect both equally.

--Blandina Cardenas  
Ramirez

Nearly 99 percent of U.S. farms are family-owned. The vast majority of these are small family farms, but the bulk of our food comes from large family farms.

—Jenna Gallegos

Self-driving cars are still out of reach for consumers, but tractors have been driving themselves around farms for years. And driving tractors isn't the only role GPS plays on a farm. Farmers collect geospatial data to monitor variations across a field in soil type, water and nutrient use, temperature, crop yield and more.

The average farmer on *Farmer's Business Network*, a social media-like platform for farm analytics, collects about 4 million data points every year. Artificial intelligence helps sort through all this data and maximize performance within a field down to the square meter.

—Jenna Gallegos

The seeds farmers plant are carefully crafted by years of state-of-the-art research to maximize yield and efficiency. Gene sequencing and molecular markers help track the best traits when breeding new crops. Chemical mutagens and radiation speed up evolution by introducing new mutations. And genetic engineering enables scientists to move genes between species or turn off genes for undesirable characteristics. Organic farms are not necessarily any less high-tech. Except of genetic engineering, all the above technologies improve yields on many USDA-certified organic farms.

—Jenna Gallegos

The demand for skilled workers in the agriculture sector is...rising. In 2015, the United States Department of Agriculture reported that jobs in food and agriculture outnumber degrees granted in those fields nearly two to one.

—Jenna Gallegos

From the standpoint of what eternity is it better to have read a thousand books than to have ploughed a million furrows?

—W. Somerset Maugham

Many people seem eager to extend the circle of our moral consideration to animals, in our factory farms and laboratories we are inflicting more suffering on more animals than at any time in history.

—Michael Pollan

Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get.

—H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

When the farmer can sell directly to the consumer, it is a more active process. There's more contact. The consumer can know, who am I buying this from? What's their name? Do they have a face? Is the food they are selling coming out of Mexico with pesticides?

—Jerry Brown

I believe that the great Creator has put ores and oil on this earth to give us a breathing spell. As we exhaust them, we must be prepared to fall back on our farms, which is God's true storehouse and can never be exhausted. We can learn to synthesize material for every human need from things that grow.

—George Washington  
Carver

A happy life consists of retirement, rural quiet, friendship, books.

--James Thomson

A little farm well tilled,  
A little barn well filled,  
A little wife well willed—  
Give me, give me.

—James Hook

The most important difference between these early American families and our own is that early families constituted economic units in which all members, from young children on up, played important productive roles within the household. The prosperity of the whole family depended on how well husband, wife, and children could manage and cultivate the land. Children were essential to this family enterprise from age six or so until their twenties, when they left home.

--Kenneth Keniston

He who plants an oak looks forward to future ages, and plants for posterity. Nothing can be less selfish than this. He cannot expect to sit in its shade nor enjoy its shelter; but he exults in the idea that the acorn which he has buried in the earth shall grow up into a lofty pile, and shall keep on flourishing and increasing, and benefiting mankind long after he shall have ceased to tread his paternal fields.

--Washington Irving

In the country sometimes I go about looking at horses and cattle. They eat grass, make love, work when they have to, bear their young. I am sick with envy of them.

--Sherwood Anderson

He who plants trees loves others beside himself.

--Thomas Fuller

Man masters nature not by force but by understanding.

--Jacob Bronowski

To waste, to destroy, our natural resources, to skin and exhaust the land instead of using it so as to increase its usefulness, will result in undermining in the days of our children the very prosperity which we ought by right to hand down to them amplified and developed.

--Theodore Roosevelt

The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value.

--Theodore Roosevelt

It seems to me that the earth may be borrowed but not bought. It may be used, but not owned. It gives itself in response to love and tending, offers its seasonal flowering and fruiting. But we are tenants and not possessors, lovers and not masters.

--Marjorie Kinnan  
Rawlings

The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

--Gandhi

Grass is the forgiveness of nature—her constant benediction. Forests decay, harvests perish, flowers vanish, but grass is immortal.

--Brian Ingalls

Nature does not complete things. She is chaotic. Man must finish, and he does so by making a garden and building a wall.

--Robert Frost

It is a wholesome and necessary thing for us to turn again to the earth and in the contemplation of her beauties to know the sense of wonder and humility.

--Rachel Carson

The insufferable arrogance of human beings to think that Nature was made solely for their benefit, as if it was conceivable that the sun had been set afire merely to ripen men's apples and head their cabbages.

--Cyrano de Bergerac

The planting of trees is the least self-centered of all that we do. It is a purer act of faith than the procreation of children.

--Thornton Wilder

We have not inherited the Earth from our fathers—we are borrowing it from our children.

--Chief Seattle

There are times when minds need to turn to simple things....We might do well to stay home a few days and walk over the fields, or to stand in the shelter of the barn door and reflect upon the relentless and yet benevolent forces of Mother Nature. The laws of nature are relentless. They can never be disobeyed without exacting a penalty. Yet they are benevolent, for when they are understood and obeyed, nature yields up the abundance that blesses those who understand and obey.

--Wheeler McMillen

We call them dumb animals, and so they are, for they cannot tell us how they feel, but they do not suffer less because they have no words.

--Anna Sewell

One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides.

--W. E. Johns

Each spring...a gardening instinct, sure as the sap rising in the trees, stirs within us. We look about and decide to tame another little bit of ground.

--Lewis Gannett

Gardens are our link with the divine.

--William Howard Adams

Last night, there came a frost, which has done great damage to my garden....It is sad that Nature will play such tricks with us poor mortals, inviting us with sunny smiles to confide in her, and then, when we are entirely within her power, striking us to the heart.

--Nathaniel Hawthorne

Is there a joy except gardening that asks so much, and gives so much? I know of no other except, perhaps, the writing of a poem. They are much alike, even in the amount of waste that has to be accepted for the sake of the rare, chancy joy when all goes well.

--May Saxton

I am fully and intensely aware that plants are conscious of love and respond to it as they do to nothing else.

—Celia Thaxter

To analyze the charms of flowers is like dissecting music; it is one of those things which it is better to enjoy than to attempt to understand.

—Henry Tuckerman

Show me your garden, provided it be your own, and I will tell you what you are like. It is in middle life that the finishing touches should be put to it; and then, after that, it should remain more or less in the same condition, like oneself, growing more deep of shade, and more protected from the winds.

—Alfred Austin

Wonder springs from tiny seeds,  
Beauty from the thorn.  
So many lovely mysteries  
are in a garden born.

--Unknown

Go outside, to the fields, enjoy nature and the sunshine,  
go out and try to recapture happiness in yourself and in God.  
Think of all the beauty that's still left in and around you and be happy!

--Anne Frank

If you would be happy all your life, plant a garden.

--Chinese Proverb

More things grow in the garden than the gardener sows.

--Spanish Proverb

After a few hours of sweating with dirt all over me and insects buzzing around the upper half of my body, I may begin to get a sense of being in tune with nature. It's at these moments where I take note of a worm that is maneuvering its way out of the dirt or a butterfly that silently lands on a bush next to me. With subtlety and a total lack of self consciousness, I come out of myself, look around, marvel at the majesty of what I am experiencing and begin to take note that I have entered some type of altered state of consciousness.

--Fran Sorin

The land is like poetry. It is inextricably coherent, it is transcendent in its meaning, and has the power to elevate a consideration of human life.

--Barry Lopez

Throughout history, our greatest resource has been our land—forests and plains, mountains and marshlands, rivers and lakes. Our land has sustained us. It has given us a love of freedom, a sense of security, and courage to test the unknown.

--Richard Nixon

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

--Aldo Leopold

It is safe to say that the prosperity of our people depends directly on the energy and intelligence with which our natural resources are used. It is equally clear that these resources are the final basis of national power and perpetuity. Finally, it is ominously evident that these resources are in the course of rapid exhaustion.

--Theodore Roosevelt

I hope that while so many people are out smelling the flowers, someone is taking the time to plant some.

--Herbert Rappaport

God sleeps in the minerals, awakens in plants, walks in animals, and thinks in man.

--Arthur Young

A gardener is inevitably someone with humility, who sees that these trees will eventually outlive him; the gardener is generous, optimistic, nurturing, taking pleasure in the planting but also making something beautiful for others.

--Paul Theroux

Calculating how much carbon is absorbed by which forests and farms is a tricky task, especially when politicians do it.

--Donella Meadows

It is a golden maxim to cultivate the garden for the nose, and the eyes will take care of themselves.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious.

--Tom Robbins

I remember walking into the garden, and I immediately felt better. I just saw wealth and abundance. There was food growing, and flowers. It really helped to shift my thinking.

—J. Phoenix Smith

If you hold moist soil for 20 minutes, the soil bacteria begin elevating your mood. You have all the anti-depressant you need in the ground.

—Craig Chalquist

Seattle's vision of an urban food oasis is going forward. A seven-acre plot of land in the city's Beacon Hill neighborhood will be planted with hundreds of different kinds of edibles: walnut and chestnut trees; blueberry and raspberry bushes; fruit trees, including apples and pears; exotics like pineapple, yuzu citrus, guava, persimmons, honeyberries, and lingonberries; herbs; and more. All will be available for public plucking to anyone who wanders into the city's first food forest.

—Clare Leschin-Hoar

The very act of planting a seed in the earth has in it to me something beautiful. I always do it with a joy that is largely mixed with awe.

—Celia Thaxter

Of all the wonderful things in the wonderful universe of God, nothing seems to me more surprising than the planting of a seed in the blank earth and the result thereof.

—Celia Thaxter

The goldenrod is yellow;  
The corn is turning brown;  
The trees in apple orchards  
With fruit are bending down.

—Helen Hunt  
Jackson

That a slender wooden tree twig can give birth to luscious pears, apples, peaches remains an extraordinary feat.

—Dr. SunWolf

If you don't know what's meant by God, watch a forsythia branch or a lettuce leaf sprout.

—Martin H. Fischer

In the past, when people killed too many animals or over-harvested plants, they saw the impact on the world. But today, living apart from nature, we do not see the results of our food and energy choices.

—Richard Schiffman

When you go to work, you work from 8am to 5pm and then you go home and take the night off. Well, a farmer does not have a day off. If you are a farmer, you punch in at 5 and never punch out. They never leave the farm or take a break because there is always something to do and people to feed.

—Mallory Blunier

Agriculture is the largest industry in the world, but if you are not willing to work for it, it will fail. My dad also told me 'you have to work hard for what you want.' I have lived by his words for many years. My family farm lives by this quote every day, as my dad pushes us to work every day on the farm, whether it's cleaning out the barns, picking corn, or even just mowing the grass. All of those things play into the agriculture industry.

—Mallory Blunier



Living on a regular farm or even just a hobby farm is never easy. Not everything will go your way, especially the weather. You can't just sit in the house and wish you had the perfect field or the perfect yield. You have to go out into the field and work with it. My dad always told me, 'you get out of it what you put into it.' If you are not willing to put the time and money into your crop, when fall comes around and it's time to harvest, you are not going to have the bumper crop that you wished for. Farmers work harder than anybody I know because they take pride in the land that they have and the people that they are going to feed from their bushels of corn or soybeans.

—Mallory Blunier

I grew up with an older brother, so those of you who have an older brother know what that's like. I never got to play with babies or Barbies. I was always playing farm with him. We would play farm everywhere, in the sandbox, on our living room floor, in the barn, and on our cement pad. We had more farm toys than you could imagine. As I got older farming got more exciting because I didn't have to play with the fake farm toys anymore. I was able to drive the real things. I would be the one driving the tractor down the field as my dad and brother picked the corn, or I would be the one driving the truck hauling whatever out to my dad. It was way more exciting than just driving little toys around on the living room floor. If you grew up playing with farm toys, then it was inevitable that you still play with tractors, and trucks—just at a larger scale.

—Mallory Blunier

What was paradise but a garden, an orchard of trees and herbs, full of pleasure, and nothing there but delights.

—William Lawson

A good farm is recognized as good partly by its beauty. A good farmer is a craftsman of the highest order, a kind of artist.

—Wendell Berry

Farming is a profession of hope.

—Brian Brett

When you concentrate on agriculture and are frugal in expenditures, heaven cannot impoverish your state.

—Xun Zi

The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings.

--Masanobu Fukuoka

Agriculture is more than dirt, plows, and tractors. Agriculture is the largest industry in the world and employs the majority of the workers in the United States. Where I'm from, the soil is what keeps my family alive. We not only grow popcorn, but produce—which we eat and sell. Most people just think that fields are just 'dirt,' which isn't even the right term. Do you know the difference between dirt and soil? Soil is what farmers grow their crops in; dirt is what you sweep up off your kitchen floor. There are many uses for soil in growing the crops that produce your food. Soil provides the nutrients, holds the water that keep the crops alive, provides aeration for the crops, and provides that minerals that the crops need to grow. When my dad looks across his field of soil, he dreams about what he can do to make his crop bigger and more profitable for the next year. Many farmers look at it this way too. The soil in the fields is what makes the crops prosperous or not; so the next time you look at a field, think about the potential that it might hold for the next year.

—Mallory Blunier

Living on a farm, you know that not everything happens all at once. My family farm has baby piglets born in the winter, we planted our gardens and popcorn fields in the spring, we harvest our garden throughout the summer, and we harvest our popcorn in the fall. When you live on a farm, you realize that there is a time and a place for everything, and during every season there is something different going on.

—Mallory Blunier

The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it, we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.

--Wendell Berry

The word agriculture, after all, does not mean 'agriscience,' much less 'agribusiness.' It means 'cultivation of land.' And cultivation is at the root of the sense both of culture and of cult. The ideas of tillage and worship are thus joined in culture. And these words all come from an Indo-European root meaning both 'to revolve' and 'to dwell.' 'To live, to survive on the earth, to care for the soil, and to worship, all are bound at the root to the idea of a cycle. It is only by understanding the cultural complexity and largeness of the concept of agriculture that we can see the threatening diminishments implied by the term 'agribusiness.'

— Wendell Berry

All the human and animal manure which the world wastes, if returned to the land, instead of being thrown into the sea, would suffice to nourish the world.

--Victor Hugo

To husband is to use with care, to keep, to save, to make last, to conserve. Old usage tells us that there is a husbandry also of the land, of the soil, of the domestic plants and animals—obviously because of the importance of these things to the household. And there have been times, one of which is now, when some people have tried to practice a proper human husbandry of the nondomestic creatures in recognition of the dependence of our households and domestic life upon the wild world. Husbandry is the name of all practices that sustain life by connecting us conservingly to our places and our world; it is the art of keeping tied all the strands in the living network that sustains us.

And so it appears that most and perhaps all of industrial agriculture's manifest failures are the result of an attempt to make the land produce without husbandry.

--Wendell Berry

Agriculture must mediate between nature and the human community, with ties and obligations in both directions. To farm well requires an elaborate courtesy toward all creatures, animate and inanimate. It is sympathy that most appropriately enlarges the context of human work. Contexts become wrong by being too small — too small, that is, to contain the scientist or the farmer or the farm family or the local ecosystem or the local community—and this is crucial.

--Wendell Berry

This is considered almost holy work by farmers and ranchers. Kill off everything you can't eat. Kill off anything that eats what you eat. Kill off anything that doesn't feed what you eat.

It IS holy work, in Taker culture. The more competitors you destroy, the more humans you can bring into the world, and that makes it just about the holiest work there is. Once you exempt yourself from the law of limited competition, everything in the world except your food and the food of your food becomes an enemy to be exterminated.

--Daniel Quinn

The longer I think about a food industry organized around an animal that cannot reproduce itself without technical assistance, the more I mistrust it. Poultry, a significant part of the modern diet, is emblematic of the whole dirty deal. Having no self-sustaining bloodlines to back up the industry is like having no gold standard to underpin paper currency. Maintaining a natural breeding poultry flock is a rebellion, at the most basic level, against the wholly artificial nature of how foods are produced.

--Barbara Kingsolver

In our day, there are stresses and fractures of the human-animal bond, and some forces at work would sever it once and for all. They pull us in the wrong direction and away from the decent and honorable code that makes us care for creatures who are entirely at our mercy. Especially within the last two hundred years, we've come to apply an industrial mind-set to the use of animals, too often viewing them as if they were nothing but articles of commerce and the raw material of science, agriculture, and wildlife management. Here, as in other pursuits, human ingenuity has a way of outrunning human conscience, and some things we do only because we can—forgetting to ask whether we should.

--Wayne Pacelle

Commercial agriculture can survive within pluralistic American society, as we know it—if the farm is rebuilt on some of the values with which it is popularly associated: conservation, independence, self-reliance, family, and community. To sustain itself, commercial agriculture will have to reorganize its social and economic structure as well as its technological base and production methods in a way that reinforces these values.

--Marty Strange

What we must think about is an agriculture with a human face. We must give standing to the new pioneers, the homecomers bent on the most important work for the next century—a massive salvage operation to save the vulnerable but necessary pieces of nature and culture and to keep the good and artful examples before us. It is time for a new breed of artists to enter front and center, for the point of art, after all, is to connect. This is the homecomer I have in mind: the scientist, the accountant who converses with nature, a true artist devoted to the building of agriculture and culture to match the scenery presented to those first European eyes.

--Wes Jackson

No matter how rhapsodic one waxes about the process of wresting edible plants and tamed animals from the sprawling vagaries of nature, there's a timeless, unwavering truth espoused by those who worked the land for ages: no matter how responsible agriculture is, it is essentially about achieving the lesser of evils. To work the land is to change the land, to shape it to benefit one species over another, and thus necessarily to tame what is wild. Our task should be to deliver our blows gently.

--James McWilliams

It is impossible to have a healthy and sound society without a proper respect for the soil.

--Peter Maurin

If the farmer is rich, then so is the nation.

--Amit Kalantri

To a farmer dirt is not a waste, it is wealth.

--Amit Kalantri

The fallow land, the untilled farm  
Produces only weeds at best.

—Henry Wadsworth  
Longfellow

The purpose of agriculture is quite different from that of a factory. It has to provide food in order that the race may flourish and persist. The best results are obtained if the food is fresh and the soil is fertile. Quality is more important than weight of produce. Farming is therefore a vital matter for the population and ranks with the supply of drinking water, fresh air, and protection from the weather. Our water supplies do not always pay their way; the provision of green belts and open spaces does not yield a profit; our housing schemes are frequently uneconomic. Why, then, should the quality of the food on which still more depends than water, oxygen, or warmth be looked at in a different way? The people must be fed whatever happens. Why not, then, make a supreme effort to see that they are properly fed? [...] The financial system, after all, is but a secondary matter. Economics therefore, in failing to insist on these elementary truths, has been guilty of a grave error of judgement.

--Albert Howard

The conventional method would be to stimulate the crop by the addition of factory-made and imported fertilizers such as sulphate of ammonia. There are weighty objections to such a course. [...] Increased crops would indeed be obtained for a few years, but at what a cost -- lowered soil fertility, lowered production, inferior quality, diseases of crops, of animals, and of the population, and finally diseases of the soil itself, such as soil erosion and a desert of alkali land! To place in the hands of the cultivator such a means of temporarily increasing his crops would be more than a mere error of judgement: it would be a crime.

--Albert Howard

Beer culture is a part of the world of food and drink. It's not just a commodity in cans and bottles, but has a value as an agricultural product with good ingredients.

--Michael Jackson

Our cities thrive at the expense of our villages; that our industries exploit agriculture.

--Verghese Kurien

How Does What We Eat Affect the Planet? The things you put on your fork have the power to affect not only your health, but also agricultural practices, climate change, and even our economy. One church member told us about Nigerian farmers he met who were given seed by a large agricultural company at a cheaper price than their regular seed, but then the seeds from that crop couldn't be replanted. (They are designed that way.) The farmers then were forced to buy the seed from the same company at a higher price the next year and eventually couldn't afford to farm. This pattern of industrial agricultural practices not only has impacted the quality of the food you eat, but also creates hunger in little children in Africa. When you stop buying industrial food, it has an enormous ripple effect. The power of your fork can change the world. When it comes to our health and the health of the planet, we have a lot more to learn and study, but we don't need all the answers in order to take action. We can each make choices to buy more whole foods, sustainably raised animals, locally grown produce, and more. Just as we've learned that certain fats are good for us and others are destructive, we can learn what agricultural and food practices are best for us too.

--Rick Warren

Embedded in every conversation about feeding people, conserving natural resources and ensuring a healthy diet, both now and in the future, is the threat of the loss of agricultural biodiversity—the reduction of diversity in everything that makes food and agriculture possible, a shift that is the direct result of our relationship with the world around us.

--Preeti Simran Sethi

In a country where less than 1% of the population farms, increasing food production in suburban landscapes would increase national food security.

--Amy Stross

By erecting thirty thousand dams of significant size across the American West, they dewatered countless rivers, wiped out millions of acres of riparian habitat, shut off many thousands of river miles of salmon habitat, silted over spawning beds, poisoned return flows with agricultural chemicals, set the plague of livestock loose on the arid land--in a nutshell they made it close to impossible for numerous native species to survive.

--Marc Reisner

Only a very foolish person would think that specialized knowledge is important in everything apart from agriculture and farming.

--Sunday Adelaja

We only invented the word organic because we made things inorganic.  
We only invented the word natural because we made things unnatural.  
We only invented the word permaculture because we made agriculture.

--Khang Kijarro Nguyen

The discovery of Agriculture was the first step toward a civilized life, but the discovery of chemical fertilizers are become the first step towards an uncivilized life.

--Biju Karakkonam

Life cannot be without food; when we destroy the lands that give food, we destroy the foods that give life!

—Ernest Agyemang  
Yeboah

Someday we shall look back on this dark era of agriculture and shake our heads. How could we have ever believed that it was a good idea to grow our food with poisons?

--Jane Goodall

How could a large land empire thrive and dominate in the modern world without reliable access to world markets and without much recourse to naval power? Stalin and Hitler had arrived at the same basic answer to this fundamental question. The state must be large in territory and self-sufficient in economics, with a balance between industry and agriculture that supported a hardily conformist and ideologically motivated citizenry capable of fulfilling historical prophecies—either Stalinist internal industrialization or Nazi colonial agrarianism. Both Hitler and Stalin aimed at imperial autarky, within a large land empire well supplied in food, raw materials, and mineral resources. Both understood the flash appeal of modern materials: Stalin had named himself after steel, and Hitler paid special attention to its production. Yet both Stalin and Hitler understood agriculture as a key element in the completion of their revolutions. Both believed that their systems would prove their superiority to decadent capitalism, and guarantee independence from the rest of the world, by the production of food.

— Timothy Snyder

The most exemplary nature is that of the topsoil. It is very Christ-like in its passivity and beneficence, and in the penetrating energy that issues out of its peaceableness. It increases by experience, by the passage of seasons over it, growth rising out of it and returning to it, not by ambition or aggressiveness. It is enriched by all things that die and enter into it. It keeps the past, not as history or as memory, but as richness, new possibility. Its fertility is always building up out of death into promise. Death is the bridge or the tunnel by which its past enters its future.

--Wendell Berry

In olden times there were warriors, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. Agriculture was said to be closer to the source of things than trade or manufacturing, and the farmer was said to be 'the cupbearer of the gods.' He was always able to get by somehow or other and have enough to eat.

--Masanobu Fukuoka

When humans began cultivating the land, they thought that the extra work this required will pay off. 'Yes, we will have to work harder. But the harvest will be so bountiful! We won't have to worry any more about lean years. Our children will never go to sleep hungry.' It made sense.

If you worked harder, you would have a better life. That was the plan.

The first part of the plan went smoothly. People indeed worked harder. But people did not foresee that the number of children would increase, meaning that the extra wheat would have to be shared between more children.

Neither did the early farmers understand that feeding children with more porridge and less breast milk would weaken their immune system, and that permanent settlements would be hotbeds for infectious diseases.

They did not foresee that by increasing their dependence on a single source of food, they were actually exposing themselves even more to the depredations of drought. Nor did the farmers foresee that in good years their bulging granaries would tempt thieves and enemies, compelling them to start building walls and doing guard duty.

--Yuval Noah Harari

Husbandry is the foundation of civilization—all sustenance derives from it, as well as the principal benefits and blessings that civilization brings.

--Ibn 'Abdun



The exchange between plants and people has shaped the evolutionary history of both. Farms, orchards, and vineyards are stocked with species we have domesticated. Our appetite for their fruits leads us to till, prune, irrigate, fertilize, and weed on their behalf. Perhaps they have domesticated us. Wild plants have changed to stand in well-behaved rows and wild humans have changed to settle alongside the fields and care for the plants—a kind of mutual taming.

--Robin Wall Kimmerer

We must farm or die. In undertaking farming we undertake a responsibility covering the whole life cycle. We can break it or keep it whole. We have broken it, but there is yet time to mend it; perhaps only just time.

—Walter Ernest  
Christopher James

If 22 bushels (1,300 pounds) of rice and 22 bushels of winter grain are harvested from a quarter acre field, then the field will support five to ten people each investing an average of less than one hour of labour per day. But if the field were turned over to pasturage, or if the grain were fed to cattle, only one person could be supported per quarter acre. Meat becomes a luxury food when its production requires land which could provide food directly for human consumption. This has been shown clearly and definitely. Each person should ponder seriously how much hardship he is causing by indulging in food so expensively produced.

--Masanobu Fukuoka

Nobody is qualified to become a statesman who is entirely ignorant of the problem of wheat.

--Socrates

Organic is something we can all partake of and benefit from. When we demand organic, we are demanding poison-free food. We are demanding clean air. We are demanding pure, fresh water. We are demanding soil that is free to do its job and seeds that are free of toxins. We are demanding that our children be protected from harm. We all need to bite the bullet and do what needs to be done—buy organic whenever we can, insist on organic, fight for organic and work to make it the norm. We must make organic the conventional choice and not the exception available only to the rich and educated.

--Maria Rodale

Switching to all organic food production is the single most critical (and most doable) action we can take right now to stop our climate crisis.

--Maria Rodale

You shall see rude and sturdy, experienced and wise men, keeping their castles, or teaming up their summer's wood, or chopping alone in the woods, men fuller of talk and rare adventure in the sun and wind and rain, than a chestnut is of meat; who were out not only in '75 and 1812, but have been out every day of their lives; greater men than Homer, or Chaucer, or Shakespeare, only they never got time to say so; they never took to the way of writing. Look at their fields, and imagine what they might write, if ever they should put pen to paper. Or what have they not written on the face of the earth already, clearing, and burning, and scratching, and harrowing, and plowing, and subsoiling, in and in, and out and out, and over and over, again and again, erasing what they had already written for want of parchment.

--Henry David Thoreau

According to analyses conducted by the *U.S. Department of Agriculture*, 100 grams of fresh tomato today has 30 percent less vitamin C, 30 percent less thiamin, 19 percent less niacin, and 62 percent less calcium than it did in the 1960s. But the modern tomato does shame it's counterpart in one area: It contains fourteen times as much sodium.

--Barry Estabrook

If you do just one thing—make one conscious choice—that can change the world, go organic. Buy organic food. Stop using chemicals and start supporting organic farmers. No other single choice you can make to improve the health of your family and the planet will have greater positive repercussions for our future.

--Maria Rodale

I'm not interested in sustaining a planet on life support. My goal is to use agriculture to regenerate the planet.

--Harry Stoddart

'See,' said (Liberty Hyde) Bailey, 'how the leaves of this small plant stand forth extended to bathe themselves in the light. ... These leaves will die. They will rot. They will disappear into the universal mold. The energy that is in them will be released to reappear, the ions to act again, perhaps in the corn on the plain, perhaps in the body of a bird. The atoms and the ions remain or resurrect; the forms change and flux. We see the forms and mourn the change. We think all is lost; yet nothing is lost. The harmony of life is never ending.' The economy of nature provides that nothing be lost.

--Russell Lord

To think of food as a weapon, or of a weapon as food, may give an illusory security and wealth to a few, but it strikes directly at the life of all.

The concept of food-as-weapon is not surprisingly the doctrine of a *Department of Agriculture* that is being used as an instrument of foreign political and economic speculation. This militarizing of food is the greatest threat so far raised against the farmland and the farm communities of this country. If present attitudes continue, we may expect government policies that will encourage the destruction, by overuse, of farmland. This, of course, has already begun. To answer the official call for more production -- evidently to be used to bait or bribe foreign countries -- farmers are plowing their waterways and permanent pastures; lands that ought to remain in grass are being planted in row crops. Contour plowing, crop rotation, and other conservation measures seem to have gone out of favor or fashion in official circles and are practices less and less on the farm. This exclusive emphasis on production will accelerate the mechanization and chemicalization of farming, increase the price of land, increase overhead and operating costs, and thereby further diminish the farm population. Thus the tendency, if not the intention, of Mr. Butz confusion of farming and war, is to complete the deliverance of American agriculture into the hands of corporations.

--Wendell Berry

What was shocking were the rewards my father's cousins had gathered in the intervening couple of decades. They farmed now on thousands of acres, not hundreds. They drove fancy pickup trucks, owned lakefront property and second homes. A simple Internet search offered the truth of where their riches had come from: good ol' Uncle Sam. Recently I clicked again on a database of farm subsidy payments, and found that five of my father's first cousins had been paid, all told, \$3 million between 1995 and 2005—and that on top of whatever they'd earned outright for the sale of their corn and soybeans. They worked hard, certainly. They'd saved and scrimped through the lean years. They were good and honorable yeoman, and now they'd come through to their great reward: a prime place at the trough of the welfare state. All that corn syrup guzzled down the gullets of America's overweight children, all that beef inefficiently fattened on cheap feed, all that ethanol being distilled in heartland refineries: all of it underwritten by as wasteful a government program as now exists this side of the defense industry. In the last ten years, the federal government has paid \$131 million in subsidies and disaster insurance in just the county [in Minnesota] where I grew up. Corn is subsidized to keep it cheap, and the subsidies encourage overproduction, which encourages a scramble for ever more ways to use corn, and thus bigger subsidies—the perfect feedback loop of government welfare.

--Philip Connors

Today, if you pay a[n US] dollar for a pound of apples in the supermarket only about six cents covers the farmwork used to get it there.

--Tracie McMillan

That one American farmer can now feed himself and fifty-six other people may be, within the narrow view of the specialist, a triumph of technology; by no stretch of reason can it be considered a triumph of agriculture or of culture. It has been made possible by the substitution of energy for knowledge, of methodology for care, of technology for morality.

--Wendell Berry

If [the loss of fertility of the soil and the loss of soil as a renewable resource] does happen, we are familiar enough with the nature of American salesmanship to know that it will be done in the name of the starving millions, in the name of liberty, justice, democracy, and brotherhood, and to free the world from communism. We must, I think, be prepared to see, and to stand by, the truth: that the land should not be destroyed for any reason, not even for any apparently good reason. We must be prepared to say that enough food, year after year, is possible only for a limited number of people, and that this possibility can be preserved only by the steadfast, knowledgeable care of those people.

--Wendell Berry

A plant is like a self-willed man, out of whom we can obtain all which we desire, if we will only treat him his own way.

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

A reasonable agriculture would do its best to emulate nature. Rather than change the earth to suit a crop it would diversify its crops to suit the earth.

—Verlyn Klinkenborg

A root, a stem, a leaf, some means of capturing sunlight and air and making food – in sum, a plant. The green substance of this earth, the chlorophyll, is all summed up in the plants. Without them we perish, all of us who are flesh and blood.

—Hal Borland

Agriculture for an honorable and high-minded man, is the best of all occupations or arts by which men procure the means of living.

—Xenophon

Agriculture is the noblest of all alchemy; for it turns earth, and even manure, into gold, conferring upon its cultivator the additional reward of health.

—Paul Chatfield

Agriculture was the first manufacturing industry in America and represents the best of all of us.

—Zack Wamp

Agriculture, manufactures, commerce and navigation, the four pillars of our prosperity, are the most thriving when left most free to individual enterprise.

—Thomas Jefferson

Agricultural life is one eminently calculated for human happiness and human virtue.

—Josiah Quincy

As is the gardener, such is the garden.

—Hebrew Proverb

Because of technological limits, there is a certain amount of food that we can produce per acre. If we were to have intensive greenhouse agriculture, we could have much higher production.

—Ralph Merkle

Before most people had ever tasted a potato, the Royal Society debated the practicality of making it a staple crop in Ireland (ironically, as a hedge against famine).

—Bill Bryson

Bring diversity back to agriculture. That's what made it work in the first place.

—David R. Brower

By increasing the use of renewable fuels such as ethanol and bio-diesel, and providing the *Department of Energy* with a budget to create more energy efficiency options, agriculture can be the backbone of our energy supply as well.

—John Salazar

Every blade of grass has its Angel that bends over it and whispers, 'Grow — grow!'

—*The Talmud*

I have always said there is only one thing that can bring our nation down—our dependence on foreign countries for food and energy. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy.

—John Salazar

If we estimate dignity by immediate usefulness, agriculture is undoubtedly the first and noblest science.

—Samuel Johnson

Imagine Italian food without tomatoes, Greek food without eggplant, Thai and Indonesian foods without peanut sauce, curries without chilies, hamburgers without French fries or ketchup, African food without cassava.

—Bill Bryson

In Old Europe and Ancient Crete, women were respected for their roles in the discovery of agriculture and for inventing the arts of weaving and pottery making.

—Carol P. Christ

It is now 14 years since I first suggested that organic farming might have some benefits and ought to be taken seriously. I shall never forget the vehemence of the reaction.. much of it coming from the sort of people who regard agriculture as an industrial process, with production as the sole yardstick of success.

—Prince Charles

It is vitally important that we can continue to say, with absolute conviction, that organic farming delivers the highest quality, best-tasting food, produced without artificial chemicals or genetic modification, and with respect for animal welfare and the environment, while helping to maintain the landscape and rural communities.

—Prince Charles

Man's survival, from the time of Adam and Eve until the invention of agriculture, must have been precarious because of his inability to ensure his food supply.

—Norman Borlaug

Organic farming has been shown to provide major benefits for wildlife and the wider environment. The best that can be said about genetically engineered crops is that they will now be monitored to see how much damage they cause.

—Prince Charles

Pray for miracles, but plant cabbages.

—Ken Follett

Imagine a world 6 degrees warmer. It's not going to recognize geographical boundaries. It's not going to recognize anything. So agriculture regions today will be wiped out.

—Steven Chu

Take rest; a field that has rested gives a beautiful crop.

—Ovid

The diligent farmer plants trees, of which he himself will never see the fruit.

—Cicero

The discovery of agriculture was the first big step toward a civilized life.

—Arthur Keith

The farmer works the soil. The agriculturist works the farmer.

—Eugene F. Ware

The farmers are the founders of civilization.

—Daniel Webster

The first and last profession: Agriculture!

—Minkukel

The greatest advances of civilization, whether in architecture or painting, in science and literature, in industry or agriculture, have never come from centralized government.

—Milton Friedman

The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add a useful plant to its agriculture.

—Thomas Jefferson

The impact of climate change on agriculture could result in problems with food security and may threaten livelihood activities upon which much of the population depends.

—Ian Pearson

The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

The way of cultivation is not easy. He who plants a garden plants happiness.  
—Chinese Proverb

Time spent in the cultivation of the fields passes very pleasantly.  
—Ovid

Water is a finite resource that is essential in the advancement of agriculture, and is vital to human life.  
—Jim Costa

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.  
—Native American  
Saying

We used to be a nation of farmers, but now it's less than two percent of the population in the United States. So a lot of us don't know a lot about what it takes to grow food.  
—Judith Redmond

With the advent of industrial farming and the green revolution, organic farming was relegated to the status of 'quaint' or 'old-fashioned'.. something practiced by hippies on communes, certainly not by serious farmers.  
—David Suzuki

You can make a small fortune in farming – provided you start with a large one.  
—Unknown

Everything we think about regarding sustainability —from energy to agriculture to manufacturing to population—has a water footprint. Almost all of the water on Earth is salt water, and the remaining freshwater supplies are split between agricultural use and human use—as well as maintaining the existing natural environment.  
—Jamais Cascio

Agriculture changes the landscape more than anything else we do. It alters the composition of species. We don't realize it when we sit down to eat, but that is our most profound engagement with the rest of nature.  
—Michael Pollan

Before agriculture was invented, land was not a resource.  
— Robert Zubrin



If you ask what you are going to do about global warming, the only rational answer is to change the way in which we do transportation, energy production, agriculture and a good deal of manufacturing. The problem originates in human activity in the form of the production of goods.

—Barry Commoner

Agriculture looks different today—our farmers are using GPS, and you can monitor your irrigation systems over the Internet.

—Debbie Stabenow

Growing up in Georgia, my dad was a farmer and we worked in agriculture, so we were always looking up at the sky, checking if rain was in the forecast. That always set the tone for the mood in my household, whether we had rain coming in or not—we knew the crops would be good and it was going to be a good week around the Bryan household.

—Luke Bryan

The history of agriculture is the history of humans breeding seeds and animals to produce traits we want in our crops and livestock.

—Michael Specter

Our farmers and ranchers have never faced as many problems as they do today with drought, range fires, high gas prices and an ever-tightening budget on agriculture subsidies.

—Michael McCaul

Agriculture is a business that has been up to its bib overalls in politics since the first Thanksgiving dinner kickback to the Indians for subsidizing Pilgrim maize production with fish head fertilizer grants.

—P. J. O'Rourke

If we moved from industrialized agriculture to re-localized organic agriculture, we could sequester about one quarter of the carbon moving into the air and destroying our glaciers, oceans, forests and lands.

—Winona LaDuke

Each of us has about 40 chances to accomplish our goals in life. I learned this first through agriculture, because all farmers can expect to have about 40 growing seasons, giving them just 40 chances to improve on every harvest.

—Howard Graham  
Buffett

With the introduction of agriculture mankind entered upon a long period of meanness, misery, and madness, from which they are only now being freed by the beneficent operation of the machine.

—Bertrand Russell  
(1930)

Commodity prices are at a record high. In 1933, the world's population was just over 2 billion people. Today, there are 7 billion mouths to feed—many of them depending on American agriculture.

—Debbie Stabenow

There is also a marked global trend towards sustainable agriculture, building on traditional methods which use fewer chemical inputs, carefully manage soil and water resources, and work hand-in-hand with nature.

—Helen Clark

The experience of ages has shown that a man who works on the land is purer, nobler, higher, and more moral... Agriculture should be at the basis of everything. That's my idea.

—Nikolai Gogol

The production of natural resources in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, stable natural hydrological cycles, fertile soils, a balanced climate and numerous other vital ecosystem services can only be permanently secured through the protection and sustainable use of biological diversity.

—Sigmar Gabriel

High tech companies that focus on research, development and production will learn that they can be the perfect complement to our world-renowned agriculture heritage.

—Alan Autry

To a very great extent, it's the fast-food industry that really industrialized our agriculture—that drove the system to one variety of chicken grown very quickly in confinement, to the feedlot system for beef, to giant monocultures to grow potatoes. All of those things flow from the desire of fast-food companies for a perfectly consistent product.

—Michael Pollan

Agriculture is the most destructive industry that we have. More than coal mining and other extractive industries.

—Allan Savory

While man's attempt to wring value from the earth, including the raising and running of livestock, have left scars on the landscape, if done well it can be a source of healing....When, say, cattle are moved in a planned way, their behaviour kick-starts key biological processes that might have stalled, a situation that could lead to desertification. Specifically, their nibbling exposes the plant's growth points to sunlight, their hooves break apart capped earth and aerate the soil, their trampling presses seeds into the soil profile (enhancing plant diversity) and decaying grasses into the ground (enabling them to be turned into organic matter by soil microorganisms), and their waste adds nutrients to the soil. All of which builds soil carbon, and with that the land's water-holding capacity. The result is greater biodiversity below and above ground, improved fertility, and a boost in ecological resilience – as holistic planned grazing practitioners proudly demonstrate through multiple before-and-after shots and fence-line comparisons. And it's all done with cows.

—Judith D Schwartz

True contentment is a thing as active as agriculture. It is the power of getting out of any situation all that there is in it. It is arduous and it is rare.

—Gilbert K. Chesterton

A program to make municipal composting of food and yard waste mandatory and then distributing the compost free to area farmers would shrink America's garbage heap, cut the need for irrigation and fossil-fuel fertilizers in agriculture, and improve the nutritional quality of the American diet.

—Michael Pollan

With agriculture came the first big civilizations, the first cities built of mud and brick, the first empires. And it was the administrators of these empires who began hiring people to keep track of the wheat and sheep and wine that was owed and the taxes that was owed on them by making marks; marks on clay in that time.

—Howard Rheingold

In agriculture, whatever you plan and execute takes 2-3 years to have an impact.

—Sharad Pawar

The lack of roads in Africa greatly hinders agriculture, education, and development.

—Norman Borlaug

If we're eating industrially, if we're letting large corporations, fast food chains, cook our food, we're going to have a huge, industrialized, monoculture agriculture because big likes to buy from big. So I realized, wow, how we cook or whether we cook has a huge bearing on what kind of agriculture we're going to have.

—Michael Pollan

Like its agriculture, Africa's markets are highly under-capitalized and inefficient. We know from our work around the continent that transaction costs of reaching the market, and the risks of transacting in rural, agriculture markets, are extremely high. In fact, only one third of agricultural output produced in Africa even reaches the market.

—Eleni Zaude  
Gabre-Madhin

Hemp has the potential to be a major boon to Colorado agriculture, giving farmers another viable and profitable option for their fields.

—Cory Gardner

Contrasting sharply, in the developing countries represented by India, Pakistan, and most of the countries in Asia and Africa, seventy to eighty percent of the population is engaged in agriculture, mostly at the subsistence level.

—Norman Borlaug

Most of the people in the world are poor, so if we knew the economics of being poor, we would know much of the economics that really matters. Most of the world's poor people earn their living from agriculture, so if we knew the economics of agriculture, we would know much of the economics of being poor.

—Theodore Schultz

If you're using first-class land for biofuels, then you're competing with the growing of food. And so you're actually spiking food prices by moving energy production into agriculture.

—Bill Gates

When the Nobel Peace Prize Committee designated me the recipient of the 1970 award for my contribution to the 'green revolution,' they were in effect, I believe, selecting an individual to symbolize the vital role of agriculture and food production in a world that is hungry, both for bread and for peace.

—Norman Borlaug

Women in Africa are really the pillar of the society, are the most productive segment of society, actually. They do agriculture.

—Mo Ibrahim

The one thing about agriculture is we've lost our manufacturing, we've lost a great deal of jobs overseas, lots of our industry. The last thing in the world we need to do is lose the ability to produce our food.

—John Boozman

Starting as a few bands of hunter-gatherers, humanity expanded the food resources afforded by the land a thousandfold through the development of agriculture.

—Robert Zubrin

The levels of poverty in 1933's rural America were unimaginable to us now. The 1933 Farm Bill, which introduced unprecedented government control over agriculture, was a reaction to the specific problems facing producers at that time.

—Debbie Stabenow

It is clear that agriculture as we know it has experienced major changes within the life expectancy of most of us, and these changes have caused a major further deterioration of worldwide levels of nutrition.

—Richard Lamm

Industrial agriculture freed many people to pursue lives their parents and grandparents could never have. It made America modern.

—Michael Specter

China's use of 'night soil,' as the Chinese rightly call a manure that is collected after dark, is probably the reason that its soils are still healthy after four millennia of intensive agriculture, while other great civilizations—the Maya, for one—floundered when their soils turned to dust.

—Rose George

Agriculture subsidies are far too generous. They need to be reined in because they cater to special interests while distorting free market competition. Yes, the farm laws are an anachronistic mess.

—Juan Williams

Farming, if you do one thing late, you will be late in all your work.

--Cato the Elder

To see rich land eaten away by erosion, to stand by as continual cultivation on sloping fields wears away the best soil, is enough to make a good farmer sick at heart.

--Henry A. Wallace

Here is my Farm Relief bill: Every time a Southerner plants nothing on his farm but cotton year after year, and the Northerner nothing but wheat or corn, why, take a hammer and hit him twice right between the eyes. You may dent your hammer, but it will do more real good than all the bills you can pass in a year.

--Will Rogers

A barn is a sanctuary in an unsettled world, a sheltered place where life's true priorities are clear. When you take a step back. It's not just about horses. It's about love, life and learning.

—Lauren Davis Barker

A field becomes exhausted by constant tillage.

--Ovid

I was a typical farm boy. I liked the farm. I enjoyed the things that you do on a farm, go down to the drainage ditch and fish, and look at the crawfish and pick a little cotton.

--Sam Donaldson

There's nothing like castrating 20 pigs before lunch. I did that during school whenever the need arose. They'd call out the agricultural class and put us in trucks to go help the local farmers.

--Fred Ward

The science and art of agriculture depend upon chemistry and botany.

--Edward Thorndike

The same teen who can't legally operate a four-wheeler, or [ATV]...in a farm lane workplace environment can operate a jacked-up F-250 pickup on a crowded urban expressway. By denying these [farm work] opportunities to bring value to their own lives and the community around them, we've relegated our young adults to teenage foolishness. Then as a culture we walk around shaking our heads in bewilderment at these young people with retarded maturity. Never in life do people have as much energy as in their teens, and to criminalize leveraging it is certainly one of our nation's greatest resource blunders.

--Joel Salatin

The soil is the great connector of lives, the source and destination of all. It is the healer and restorer and resurrector, by which disease passes into health, age into youth, death into life. Without proper care for it we can have no community, because without proper care for it we can have no life.

--Wendell Berry

The small family farm is one of the last places —they are getting rarer every day— where men and women (and girls and boys, too) can answer that call to be an artist, to learn to give love to the work of their hands. It is one of the last places where the maker—and some farmers still do talk about ‘making the crops’—is responsible, from start to finish, for the thing made. This certainly is a spiritual value, but it is not for that reason an impractical or uneconomic one. In fact, from the exercise of this responsibility, this giving of love to the work of the hands, the farmer, the farm, the consumer, and the nation all stand to gain in the most practical ways: They gain the means of life, the goodness of food, and the longevity and dependability of the sources of food, both natural and cultural. The proper answer to the spiritual calling becomes, in turn, the proper fulfillment of physical need.

--Wendell Berry

Over a long time, the coming and passing of several generations, the old farm had settled into its patterns and cycles of work—its annual plowing moving from field to field; its animals arriving by birth or purchase, feeding and growing, thriving and departing. Its patterns and cycles were virtually the farm’s own understanding of what it was doing, of what it could do without diminishment. This order was not unintelligent or rigid. It tightened and slackened, shifted and changed in response to the markets and the weather. The Depression had changed it somewhat, and so had the war. But through all changes so far, the farm had endured. Its cycles of cropping and grazing, thought and work, were articulations of its wish to cohere and to last. The farm, so to speak, desired all of its lives to flourish.

At they was not exactly, or not only, what is called a ‘landowner.’ He was the farm’s farmer, but also its creature and belonging. He lived its life, and it lived his; he knew that, of the two lives, his was meant to be the smaller and the shorter.

--Wendell Berry

The corn is planted first, followed by beans, then squash between the rows. They are called the Three Sisters. They sustain each other, the earth, and us. But the Big Ones do not know that. They do not care for the earth, and its children, properly.

--Elizabeth Haydon

To a farmer dirt is not a waste, it is wealth.

--Amit Kalantri

The fields are black and ploughed, and they lie like a great fan before us, with their furrows gathered in some hand beyond the sky, spreading forth from that hand, opening wide apart as they come toward us, like black pleats that sparkle with thin, green spangles.

--Ayn Rand

A farmer friend of mine told me recently about a busload of middle school children who came to his farm for a tour. The first two boys off the bus asked, 'Where is the salsa tree?' They thought they could go pick salsa, like apples and peaches. Oh my. What do they put on SAT tests to measure this? Does anybody care? How little can a person know about food and still make educated decisions about it? Is this knowledge going to change before they enter the voting booth? Now that's a scary thought.

--Joel Salatin

Before researchers become researchers they should become philosophers. They should consider what the human goal is, what it is that humanity should create. Doctors should first determine at the fundamental level what it is that human beings depend on for life...

Modern scientific agriculture, on the other hand, has no such vision. Research wanders about aimlessly, each researcher seeing just one part of the infinite array of natural factors which affect harvest yields.

Even though it is the same quarter acre, the farmer must grow his crops differently each year in accordance with variations in weather, insect populations, the condition of the soil, and many other natural factors. Nature is everywhere in perpetual motion; conditions are never exactly the same in any two years.

Modern research divides nature into tiny pieces and conducts tests that conform neither with natural law nor with practical experiences. The results are arranged for the convenience of research, not according to the needs of the farmer.

--Masanobu Fukuoka

So even though Grandpa's life has closed its final chapter, the story that he embodied continues each time we take a handful of dirt to check moisture levels or turn our head at the sound of the wind shifting directions before a storm. It lives on as we give thanks for the abundance that we have, whatever it looks like. It lives on in every decision we make that puts someone else first.

--Heidi Barr

A swift rhythm is played out by my hands, a cadence known only to those who have strung tobacco. To many, the meter and rhythm of stringing is the only poetry they've ever known.

--Brenda Sutton Rose



My father worked on a farm—and his father. They both got very near to ninety, I believe. They were hardy old sorts. They never had a thing amiss with them. They worked and lived, and then kind of toppled over at the end. I should have been like them but my accident made the difference to me. The horses ran away with me on the farm. It was only two fields away from this house. It was a terrible accident; it jagged me all to pieces. The horses bolted in the field and ruined me. We were using the self-binder at the time. It was the second year I was in this village and thirty-eight year ago or more. I was at the top of the field whole and then at the bottom of the field, broken, and all in minutes. I should not have come here.

—Ronald Blythe

For about 48 weeks of the year an asparagus plant is unrecognizable to anyone except an asparagus grower. Plenty of summer visitors to our garden have stood in the middle of the bed and asked, ‘What is this stuff? It’s beautiful!’ We tell them its the asparagus patch, and they reply, ‘No this, these feathery little trees.’ An asparagus spear only looks like its picture for one day of its life, usually in April, give or take a month as you travel from the Mason-Dixon Line. The shoot emerges from the ground like a snub nose green snake headed for sunshine, rising so rapidly you can just about see it grow. If it doesn’t get its neck cut off at ground level as it emerges, it will keep growing. Each triangular scale on the spear rolls out into a branch until the snake becomes a four foot tree with delicate needles. Contrary to lore, fat spears are no more tender or mature than thin ones. Each shoot begins life with its own particular girth. In the hours after emergence, it lengthens but does not appreciably fatten. To step into another raging asparagus controversy, white spears are botanically no different from their green colleagues. White shoots have been deprived of sunlight by a heavy mulch pulled up over the plant’s crown. European growers go to this trouble for consumers who prefer the stalks before they’ve had their first blush of photosynthesis. Most Americans prefer the more developed taste of green. Uncharacteristically, we’re opting for the better nutritional deal here also. The same plant could produce white or green spears in alternate years, depending on how it is treated. If the spears are allowed to proceed beyond their first exploratory six inches, they’ll green out and grow tall and feathery like the house plant known as asparagus fern, which is the next of kin. Older, healthier asparagus plants produce chunkier, more multiple shoots. Underneath lies an octopus-shaped affair of chubby roots called a crown that stores enough starch through the winter to arrange the phallic send-up when winter starts to break. The effect is rather sexy, if you’re the type to see things that way. Europeans of the Renaissance swore by it as an aphrodisiac and the church banned it from nunneries.

--Barbara Kingsolver

Raw ingredients trump recipes every time; farmers and ranchers who coax the best from the earth can make any of us appear to be a great cook.

--Judy Rodgers

A type of humility marks a real farmer. Those of us who battle nature all year must ultimately accept the hand we're dealt.

--David Mas Masumoto

The free market has never worked in agriculture and it never will. The economics of a family farm are very different from a firm's... the demand for food isn't elastic; people don't eat more just because food is cheap. Even if I go out of business this land will keep producing corn.

--Michael Pollan

A new planting is like having another child, requiring patience and sacrifice and a resounding optimism for the future.

--David Mas Masumoto

Farmers facing lower prices have only one option if they want to be able to maintain their standard of living, pay their bills, and service their debt, and that is to produce more [corn].

--Michael Pollan

A farmer's work is more like that of a horse trainer than a mechanic, more like that of a healer than a computer repairperson. It is not really accurate to say that farmers grow food or raise animals. Farmers alter environmental conditions in such a way as to maximize a plant's or an animal's innate ability to do its own growing—in the same way that the best horse trainers seek to draw out abilities already within their horses or in the way the best healers know when to stand back and let their patients' bodies do the work. There is mystery in farming.

--Ben Hartman

When a livestock farmer is willing to 'practice complexity'—to choreograph the symbiosis of several different animals, each of which has been allowed to behave and eat as it evolved to—he will find he has little need for machinery, fertilizer, and, most strikingly, chemicals. He finds he has no sanitation problem or any of the diseases that result from raising a single animal in a crowded monoculture and then feeding it things it wasn't designed to eat. This is perhaps the greatest efficiency of a farm treated as a biological system: health.

--Michael Pollan

The perfect weather that had allowed us to get the oats and corn in ahead of time probably also contributed to the dearth of migrating warblers. With no storms to force the birds down, they overflowed this area on their northward journey. At least I hope that is the reason. I fear, though, that the cutting down of the tropical rain forests (the winter home for many warblers) to create ranches that will provide cheap beef for fast-food restaurants in the United States may also be partly responsible for the dearth.

--David Kline

Today, it is the scent of honeysuckle that takes me back in time and lays me down near a barn. I pick a honeysuckle blossom, touch the trumpet to my nose and inhale. With sticky filthy fingers, I pinch the base of its delicate well then lick the drop of nectar. The sweet liquid makes me thirst for more, and I reach for another and another, the same hands that reach again and again for tobacco as I string. I separate honeysuckle blossoms and taste.

--Brenda Sutton Rose

Men are not so much the keepers of herds as herds are the keepers of men.

--Henry David Thoreau

A robust regional food system that benefits eaters and farmers cannot be achieved in a marketplace that is controlled, top to bottom, by a few firms and that rewards only scale, not innovation, quality, or sustainability.

--Wenonah Hauter

In my opinion, if 100% of the people were farming it would be ideal. If each person were given one quarter-acre, that is 1 1/4 acres to a family of five, that would be more than enough land to support the family for the whole year. If natural farming were practiced, a farmer would also have plenty of time for leisure and social activities within the village community. I think this is the most direct path toward making this country a happy, pleasant land.

--Masanobu Fukuoka

Responsible, stylish, adventuresome, sometimes silly, comfortable, and difficult subsistence. That's what milking the cow's all about!

--Lynn Miller

Why does no one speak of the cultural advantages of the country? For example, is a well groomed, ecologically kept, sustainably fertile farm any less cultural, any less artful, than paintings of fat angels on church ceilings?

--Gene Logsdon

It is not as if farming brought a great improvement in living standards either. A typical hunter-gatherer enjoyed a more varied diet and consumed more protein and calories than settled people, and took in five times as much vitamin C as the average person today.

--Bill Bryson

I should understand the land, not as a commodity, an inert fact to be taken for granted, but as an ultimate value, enduring and alive, useful and beautiful and mysterious and formidable and comforting, beneficent and terribly demanding, worthy of the best of man's attention and care... [My father] insisted that I learn to do the hand labor that the land required, knowing—and saying again and again—that the ability to do such work is the source of a confidence and an independence of character that can come no other way, not by money, not by education.

--Wendell Berry

He was born to be a farmer. It was something that he was good at, something he knew well. He was a giver of life, an alchemist that worked in dirt, seed, and manure.

--Tracy Winegar

'Ellis,' he said. 'You're watchin' a miracle right under your nose.' He gave a few of the seeds to Ellis and let him drop them into the hole he had already made. 'In each of them little things, God put life. Now you take care with it, and you feed it with water and sunlight. And, most important of all of 'em, put it in good ground, and that life is gonna sprout right out.'

--Tracy Winegar

There are only three things that can kill a farmer: lightning, rolling over in a tractor, and old age.

--Bill Bryson

The kind of soil in your area determines the type of crop you will plant to harvest; The kind of potentials in you will decide the type of success you will celebrate.

--Israelmore Ayivor

It is sad, no doubt, to exhaust one's strength and one's days in cleaving the bosom of this jealous earth, which compels us to wring from it the treasures of its fertility, when a bit of the blackest and coarsest bread is, at the end of the day's work, the sole recompense and the sole profit attaching to so arduous a toil.

—George Sand

Caring for the garden became a kind of spiritual calling—a pursuit for which I had no aptitude or experience, but a steady surplus of time. My life disappeared into days, then years, that by any appraisal did not amount to much. And the thing is, you couldn't pay me to do anything else. (Not that anyone offered.) The benefits, like the hours, were immeasurable. So now I glory in my second act as groundskeeper. I live on garden time, which stretches out forever. Weeds summon me to my ponds and pathways in spring and summer, while fallen leaves beckon me in the autumn. For my efforts, I get nothing but a pile of rubbish. Still, the garden is an ideal workplace: quiet, patient, trusting and wildly creative. My mistakes go unremarked; given enough time, they self-correct. I have endless second chances. The hours are flexible. With no agenda or five-year plan in sight, I attend to things that lie right beneath my feet.

—Karen Maezen Miller

Even with all my inadequacies, I am indispensable. No one is plotting to replace me. Of course, every thing I do comes undone, but that's the blessing of garden time: the perennial promise of starting over. The simple labor of my days gets me going. Garden work gives me power and purpose, direction and momentum. It's a fulfillment that could never come from dreaming about what I might be doing instead.

—Karen Maezen Miller

I see a time when the farmer will not need to live in a lonely cabin on a lonely farm. I see the farmers coming together in groups. I see them with time to read, and time to visit with their fellows. I see them enjoying lectures in beautiful halls, erected in every village. I see them gather like the Saxons of old upon the green at evening to sing and dance. I see cities rising near them with schools, and churches, and concert halls, and theaters. I see a day when the farmer will no longer be a drudge and his wife a bond slave, but happy men and women who will go singing to their pleasant tasks upon their fruitful farms. When the boys and girls will not go west nor to the city; when life will be worth living. In that day the moon will be brighter and the stars more glad, and pleasure and poetry and love of life come back to the man who tills the soil.

--Hamlin Garland  
(1860-1940)

The master's eye is the best fertilizer.

—Pliny the Elder

Eighty per cent of global warming comes from livestock and deforestation.

—Heather Mills

In Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, the government in a matter of years has put a lot of energy behind recycling food waste as livestock feed. It's environmentally friendly, it provides cheap livestock feed for the farmers in those parts of the world, and it avoids sending the food waste to landfill.

—Tristram Stuart

I'm a huge supporter of animal rights—and I've been an outspoken critic of the cruelties routinely inflicted on livestock at factory farms. But it really bothers me that the mistreatment of pigs and chickens and cows seems to attract a lot more attention and spark a lot more outrage than the abuse of immigrant workers.

—Eric Schlosser

We're going to move from a commodity economy where you basically grow the same kind of crops —where a kernel of corn is a kernel of corn is a kernel of corn—to an ingredient economy where there will be a kernel of corn that will be designed for fuel, there will be a kernel of corn designed for livestock.

—Tom Vilsack

Federal policy tells us to fill 50 percent of our plates with fruits and vegetables. At the same time, federal farm subsidies focus on financing the production of corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, sorghum, dairy and livestock.

—Chuck Norris

As a population, if a large number of people make even small moves to eat less meat and more plant-based foods, the livestock industry will shrink. Over time, farmers will find other crops to support their livelihoods. Through such collective awakening we can make a difference in our world.

--Nhat Hanh

The fact is that there is enough food in the world for everyone. But, tragically, much of the world's food and land resources are tied-up in producing beef and livestock-food for the well-off, while millions of children and adults suffer from malnutrition and starvation.

—Dr. Walden Bello

Being vegan or vegetarian isn't just about compassion for animals. Most of the destruction of the planet is the result of all the clear-cutting, groundwater contamination, grain production, fuel consumption, greenhouse gas, viral proliferation—the direct result of livestock production.

--William McNamara

Today's fishing industry supplies land farms with fish as well. Over fifty percent of the fish caught is fed to livestock on factory farms and 'regular' farms. It is an ingredient in the enriched 'feed meal' fed to livestock. Farm animals, like dairy cows—who by nature are vegans—are routinely force-fed fish to increase their weight and milk production. It may take sixteen pounds of grain to make one pound of beef, but it also takes one hundred pounds of fish to make that one pound of beef!

--Sharon Gannon

Most of the food crops raised in the world today are fed to livestock destined for slaughter for us to eat, and most of the water used is used to raise the food crops that are fed to those animals. It has been estimated that, because of the extraordinary amount of grain it takes to raise food animals, if we reduced the amount of meat we eat by only ten percent, that would free up enough grain to feed all the starving humans in the world. So when we choose to eat meat instead of vegetables, we are choosing to take food away from others who are hungry.

--Sharon Gannon

A report from the United Nations has revealed that the livestock industry is the number-one contributor to global warming gasses—higher than even the transport industry. Plus, the effect of the livestock industry on our waterways and oceans is disastrous.

--Karen Dawn

One of the greatest animal-welfare problems is the physical abuse of livestock during transportation... Typical abuses I have witnessed with alarming frequency are; hitting, beating, use of badly maintained trucks, jabbing of short objects into animals, and deliberate cruelty.

--Temple Grandin

The history of agriculture is the history of humans breeding seeds and animals to produce traits we want in our crops and livestock.

—Michael Specter

Carbon 13 [the carbon from corn] doesn't lie, and researchers who have compared the isotopes in the flesh or hair of Americans to those in the same tissues of Mexicans report that it is now we in the North who are the true people of corn.... Compared to us, Mexicans today consume a far more varied carbon diet: the animals they eat still eat grass (until recently, Mexicans regarded feeding corn to livestock as a sacrilege); much of their protein comes from legumes; and they still sweeten their beverages with cane sugar. So that's us: processed corn, walking.

--Michael Pollan

Because nitrous oxide [released by nitrate-fertilised soil] is 296 times stronger than CO<sub>2</sub> at global warming and methane [cow farts] is about 26 times as potent as CO<sub>2</sub>, the combined greenhouse effect of our livestock worldwide is greater than the sum total of all the cars, trains, busses, trucks, ships, airplanes and jets.

--Thom Hartmann

When I travel around the world, I see that poor countries sell their grain to the West while their own children starve in their arms. And we feed it to livestock. So we can eat a steak? Am I the only one who sees this as a crime? Every morsel of meat we eat is slapping the tear-stained face of a starving child. When I look into her eyes, should I be silent? The Earth can produce enough for everyone's need. But not enough for everyone's greed.

--Philip Wollen

Ninety-eight percent of all the soy that's raised goes to livestock. So people make fun of vegetarians for being tofu eaters, but no one eats tofu like steak eaters, by a long shot. It's also funny that tofu is held up as what a vegetarian eats. I mean maybe I eat tofu once a month, but other than that, never. All of it, statistically speaking, is going to livestock.

--Jonathan Safran Foer

Let me say it openly: we are surrounded by an enterprise of degradation, cruelty, and killing which rivals anything the Third Reich was capable of, indeed dwarfs it, in that ours is an enterprise without end, self-regenerating, bringing rabbits, rats, poultry, livestock ceaselessly into the world for the purpose of killing them.

--J. M. Coetzee

Usually, the first thing a country does in the course of economic development is to introduce a lot of livestock. Our data are showing that this is not a very smart move and the Chinese are listening. They are realizing that animal-based agriculture is not the way to go.... We are basically a vegetarian species and should be eating a wide variety of plant food and minimizing our intake of animal foods...

--T. Colin Campbell

Go into the largest livestock operation, search out the darkest and tiniest stall or pen, single out the filthiest, most forlorn little lamb or pig or calf, and that is one of God's creatures you're looking at, morally indistinguishable from your beloved Fluffy or Frisky.

--Matthew Scully



The city, no matter how small, is corrupt and unrepentant, while the sun shines brighter in the country, making people more wholesome.

--Lori Lansens

The air was fresh and crisp and had a distinct smell which was a mixture of the dried leaves on the ground and the smoke from the chimneys and the sweet ripe apples that were still clinging onto the branches in the orchard behind the house.

--Arlene Stafford-Wilson

We accept as due and right—as very meet, right, and our bounden duty—the downs and their orchids and butterflies, the woods and coppices, ash, beech, oak, and field maple, rowan, wild cherry, holly, and hazel, bluebells in their season and willow, alder, and poplar in the wetter ground. We accept as proper and unremarkable the badger and the squirrel, the roe deer and the rabbit, the fox and the pheasant, as the companions of our walks and days. We remark with pleasure, yet take as granted, the hedgerow and the garden, the riot of snowdrops, primroses, and cowslips, the bright flash of kingfishers, the dart of swallows and the peaceful homeliness of house martins, the soft nocturnal glimmer of glow worm and the silent nocturnal swoop of owl.

--G. M. W. Wemyss

Cow dung and horse dung, as muck goes, are relatively agreeable. You can even become nostalgic about them. They smell of fermented grain, and on the far side of their smell there is hay and grass.

—John Berger

What I like best's the lay of different farms,  
Coming out on them from a stretch of woods,  
Or over a hill or round a sudden corner.  
I like to find folks getting out in spring,  
Raking the dooryard, working near the house.

—Robert Frost

He who marries a wife reared on the land marries strength and purity and compassion.

—Henry Ward Beecher

Ironically, rural America has become viewed by a growing number of Americans as having a higher quality of life not because of what it has, but rather because of what it does not have!

—Don A. Dillman

O Lord, please bless this land we farm,  
our buildings, home and all the rest.  
Protect the seed we plant in spring,  
and send the rain to do its best.  
Give us the wisdom to tend your land,  
and do our best and what we know.  
Please help the seeds we planted,  
to multiply and grow.  
Command your elements to be kind,  
and guard our crops out in the field.  
Bless our farm at harvest time,  
and fill our bins with a grateful yield.  
We thank you for these special gifts,  
you've granted through the year.  
But most of all, we thank you, Lord,  
for our family close and dear.

—Edward C. Schaefer

To live happily in the country one must have the soul of a poet, the mind of a philosopher, the simple needs of a hermit--and a good station wagon.

—Unknown

Wife to farmer as they return home at sunset:  
'Thanks for a wonderful vacation, I enjoyed the whole day.'

—Unknown

Farming has always brought me peace,  
It's a partnership with God—  
I plant the seeds, He makes them grow  
Where before there was only sod.  
Through hot summer days I cultivate,  
He sends sun and rain—  
Then when autumn cools the air  
There's harvest of golden grain.

—Rea Williams

It is a rule of nature that taking a day off on a farm sets a person back at least a week.

—Jane Hamilton

## THE FARMER

He has been a farmer all of his life,  
long before he took a wife,  
he knew he was meant to work the soil.  
His days on this earth would be spent in toil,  
planting the crops and clearing the land.  
This was all part of the Master's Plan  
As in his father's and grandfather's days.  
For generations this had been the ways  
in which they would work the land and the sod,  
drawing nearer to nature and communing with God.  
To each of his neighbors he lent a hand  
They worked together to farm the land,  
in autumn when the harvest came,  
each one in turn did the same.  
All through the week they labored each day,  
but on the Sabbath they gathered to pray.  
To thank Him for His blessings and love,  
what they gathered on earth had come from above . . .  
When his children were born he watched them grow.  
He taught them the lessons so they would know,  
and learn the ways of country and farm,  
of love, truth, respect and to do no harm  
to creature on land or those in the air,  
and to be good stewards of the land in their care.  
He watched them ride horses and float down the stream,  
but he knew that their future could not be his dream.  
This farmer he realizes that he has wealth beyond measure,  
because here on this farm he has found all his treasure.  
With his family around him, for wealth there's no need.  
With all of His blessings he's a rich man indeed.  
His breed is a rare one, it's becoming extinct,  
with this world's busy lifestyle, there's no time to think.  
Life's becoming too hectic and people miss out,  
on all of the beauty that lies roundabout.  
This farmer can see it as he goes through his days,  
From bird's nests to sunsets, each free for the gaze.  
The path that he's taken is different than most.  
He's content in his heart and has no need to boast.

His drumbeat is different but he follows its sounds,  
with his dog by his side he walks over this ground,  
of the land that he loves, he will do it no harm,  
The place of his birth, the old family farm.

—Sue Ikerd

## **HARVEST**

Buckin' bales,  
Whackin' wheat . . .  
Oh, my achin' back and feet!  
Fannin' flies,  
Wipin' sweat,  
Dreadin' rain we're bound to get.  
Cut'n dump,  
Haul'n scoop,  
Watery tea and lukewarm soup.  
Foggin' dirt,  
Rig broke down,  
Run to pick up parts in town.  
Done at last!  
Crops all in . . .  
Time to plow and plant again.

—Mary Hollingsworth

## **TO MAKE A PRAIRIE**

To make a prairie it takes clover and one bee;  
One clover and a bee,  
And reverie  
The reverie alone will do  
If bees are few.

—Emily Dickinson

There is always a different, more kindly look in the eyes of women who live on the land.

—Unknown

I am not bound for any public place, but for ground of my own where I have planted vines and orchard trees, and in the heat of the day climbed up into the healing shadow of the woods.

—Wendell Berry

## **DUST-BOWL FARMER**

A two-weeks' stubble was on his chin,  
His overalls were worn and old  
His hands were hands of toil.  
He had seen the scourging dust  
Destroy his greening wheat, and now  
His fields stretch to the sky,  
A barren waste.  
But in his veins the blood of sturdy pioneers  
Ran cool,  
And he, seasoned by the endless wind,  
The blazing sun, the drought, the lonely plains,  
Looked at the ground and said,  
'I aim to try again.'

—Edna Becker

## **AH, WILDERNESS!**

People who have never made hay think of it as a simple process. A machine shaped like a flattened dinosaur is pulled behind a tractor. From the end of this fearsome machine-monster, bales are belched at regular intervals.

Later, another tractor appears, pulling a wagon with some people standing on it. Beside the wagon walk other people, who pause to fetch these bales, turning them over to the people on the wagon who cheerfully stack them in neat rows.

The reason everyone is so cheerful is obvious--they are communing with nature. No doubt they will soon be served one of those famous farm-style meals in the shade of a huge tree.

I have made hay when it almost turned out like this. But I do see two things wrong with the vision. First, something usually takes place to make haymaking less than perfect; and second, there are as many ways to make hay as there are people doing it.

You can blow it, pile it, compress it, or tie it--with twine or wire. It can be shaped into rectangles and cubes, or be made to look like shredded wheat, or loaves or bread, or giant mushrooms, or the dash marks a writer uses in his copy - - -.

What does it all mean? Well, for one thing, it means there is more to this haymaking than meets the eye. It is not all beer and skittles, as the urban transcendentalist would assume.

Say, for example, you are to load 60-pound bales into a flatbed truck. The field is three-quarters of a mile long, so you take the job in the back of the truck.

What you discover soon enough is that each time, as regular as clockwork, you stack the bales up to the fifth row, it is necessary to reach over your head to do so. Each

time you swing a bale to that height it pinches the muscles in your shoulders, and your legs begin to shudder, and your stomach tightens.

Sound terrible? But that is a piece of cake compared to the loading of round bales, and you must use a hook to hoist them aboard. Most round bales weigh seventy to eighty pounds, and the ones I worked with were wrapped in wire.

Wire can cut the palm of your hand to shreds. It can leave your fingers numb for days. Even with a very sharp hook the haymaker must be careful to aim the hook at a precise angle when sticking the bale, because it will careen off the tightly packed bale and complete its arc in the meat of your leg.

Once you have sunk into the bale, then it is snapped off the ground quickly, swung on board with a twist of the wrist, caught on the hip, swung, and dropped on the pile.

At the speed you must go, a person soon begins taking shortcuts. You catch the bales on the thigh, and instead of using your arms and shoulders, you use your wrists. By the end of the day your legs are trembling so badly you can barely stand. But the wrists take the worst beating. The constant strain of the bales makes every tendon ache. After it is over, you can barely hold a cup of water to your lips.

Many times, everything about the haymaking has been good except for a single detail. Perhaps the dust is so thick around stacked hay that you cannot breathe, or the heat in the loft makes your body slick with sweat, which mixes with straw to run into your eyes, but there is no dry spot to wipe your eyes clear, so you work on—half blind.

Or perhaps you are stacking round bales in long rows and the bottom row gives way, sending them collapsing down around your legs and knocking you over. Or maybe it is the wire that has worked through your gloves, or one muscle you pull early in the day.

But I have to admit there are many good things about haymaking. The smell of fresh-cut hay is an aroma a person recognizes for the rest of his life. He sucks it eagerly into his lungs no matter what he has gone on to be.

And there are things about a hay-making day that can only be felt after you have lived through it--the way the sun looks going down with the last load, the sound the tractor makes opening up on the road with your last trip to the barn.

And there is the way people can come together in haymaking and reach a point where no one needs to speak to be understood. It is an exhausted, peaceful, accomplished time.

It is the sort of time we could use always.

—William Mueller

Nothing ages a woman like living in the country.

—Sidonie-Gabrielle  
Colette

My father asserted that there was no better place to bring up a family than in a rural environment... There's something about getting up at 5 a.m., feeding the stock and chickens, and milking a couple of cows before breakfast that gives you a lifelong respect for the price of butter and eggs.

—Bill Vaughan

My father kept me busy from dawn to dusk when I was a kid. When I wasn't pitching hay, hauling corn or running a tractor, I was heaving a baseball into his mitt behind the barn... If all the parents in the country followed his rule, juvenile delinquency would be cut in half in a year's time.

—Bob Feller

I always sort of swooned at the sight of the classic barn structures in central and northern Minnesota, where everything seemed rustic and weathered and made to age gracefully.

—Richard Dean  
Anderson

When I was so fatigued that I couldn't move, the excitement of going to the barn and getting my foot in the stirrup would make me crawl out of bed.

—Ann Romney

You got barn cats and you want to make them tamed, you need to get them as kittens.

--Temple Grandin

A barn with cattle and horses is the place to begin Christmas; after all, that's where the original event happened, and that same smell was the first air that the Christ Child breathed.

--Paul Engle

In my family we got up in the mornings around three o'clock and went out to the barns to bring the cows in and milk. In high school I milked about twenty cows every morning and about twenty in the afternoon when I got home. I have wonderful memories from those early days when my parent's influence was so strong.

--Billy Graham

When you are new at sheep-raising and your ewe has a lamb, your impulse is to stay there and help it nurse and see to it and all. After a while you know that the best thing you can do is walk out of the barn.

--Wendell Berry

There I was out in the barn playing midwife to a pregnant mare. I remember sitting there, spinning yarn in the light of a little oil lamp, a city girl who knew nothing about farming, sitting on the deef beside that mother in pain, already beginning the birthing process. All around me there was darkness and perfect silence, except for the mother's pain.

--Diet Eman

How would you like to have a thousand brilliantly colored cliff swallows keeping house in the eaves of your barn, and gobbling up insects over your farm at the rate of 100,000 per day? There are many Wisconsin farmsteads where such a swallow-show is a distinct possibility.

--Aldo Leopold

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, that they might have seen with clearer eyes what field they were called to labor in. Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres, when man is condemned to eat only his peck of dirt? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born?

--Henry David Thoreau

All the food we eat—every grain of rice and kernel of corn—has been genetically modified. None of it was here before mankind learned to cultivate crops. The question isn't whether our food has been modified, but how.

—Michael Specter

Meat production is one of the leading causes of climate change because of the destruction of the rainforest for grazing lands, the massive amounts of methane produced by farm animals and the huge amounts of water, grain and other resources required to feed animals.

—Jane Velez-Mitchell

We got a saying around here about our corn, 'It grows knee-high by the Fourth of July.'

--Richard Puz

Corn is what feeds the steer that becomes the steak. Corn feeds the chicken and the pig, the turkey, and the lamb, the catfish and the tilapia and, increasingly, even the salmon, a carnivore by nature that the fish farmers are reengineering to tolerate corn. The eggs are made of corn. The milk and cheese and yogurt, which once came



from dairy cows that grazed on grass, now typically comes from Holsteins that spend their working lives indoors tethered to machines, eating corn.

Head over to the processed foods and you find ever more intricate manifestations of corn. A chicken nugget, for example, piles up corn upon corn: what chicken it contains consists of corn, of course, but so do most of a nugget's other constituents, including the modified corn starch that glues the things together, the corn flour in the batter that coats it, and the corn oil in which it gets fried. Much less obviously, the leavenings and lecithin, the mono-, di-, and triglycerides, the attractive gold coloring, and even the citric acid that keeps the nugget 'fresh' can all be derived from corn.

To wash down your chicken nuggets with virtually any soft drink in the supermarket is to have some corn with your corn. Since the 1980s virtually all the sodas and most of the fruit drinks sold in the supermarket have been sweetened with high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS)—after water, corn sweetener is their principal ingredient. Grab a beer for you beverage instead and you'd still be drinking corn, in the form of alcohol fermented from glucose refined from corn. Read the ingredients on the label of any processed food and, provided you know the chemical names it travels under, corn is what you will find. For modified or unmodified starch, for glucose syrup and maltodextrin, for crystalline fructose and ascorbic acid, for lecithin and dextrose, lactic acid and lysine, for maltose and HFCS, for MSG and polyols, for the caramel color and xanthan gum, read: corn. Corn is in the coffee whitener and Cheez Whiz, the frozen yogurt and TV dinner, the canned fruit and ketchup and candies, the soups and snacks and cake mixes, the frosting and candies, the soups and snacks and cake mixes, the frosting and gravy and frozen waffles, the syrups and hot sauces, the mayonnaise and mustard, the hot dogs and the bologna, the margarine and shortening, the salad dressings and the relishes and even the vitamins. (Yes, it's in the Twinkie, too.)

There are some forty-five thousand items in the average American supermarket and more than a quarter of them now contain corn. This goes for the nonfood items as well: Everything from the toothpaste and cosmetics to the disposable diapers, trash bags, cleansers, charcoal briquettes, matches, and batteries, right down to the shine on the cover of the magazine that catches your eye by the checkout: corn. Even in Produce on a day when there's ostensibly no corn for sale, you'll nevertheless find plenty of corn: in the vegetable wax that gives the cucumbers their sheen, in the pesticide responsible for the produce's perfection, even in the coating on the cardboard it was shipped in. Indeed, the supermarket itself—the wallboard and joint compound, the linoleum and fiberglass and adhesives out of which the building itself has been built—is in no small measure a manifestation of corn.

--Michael Pollan

Try as we might, each of us can eat only about 1500 pounds of food a year. What this means for the food industry is that its natural rate of growth is somewhere around 1% every year (growth of American population).

--Michael Pollan

While the train flashed through never-ending miles of ripe wheat, by country towns and bright-flowered pastures and oak groves wilting in the sun, we sat in the observation car, where the woodwork was hot to the touch and red dust lay deep over everything. The dust and heat, the burning wind, reminded us of many things. We were talking about what it is like to spend one's childhood in little towns like these, buried in wheat and corn, under stimulating extremes of climate: burning summers when the world lies green and billowy beneath a brilliant sky, when one is fairly stifled in vegetation, in the color and smell of strong weeds and heavy harvests; blustery winters with little snow, when the whole country is stripped bare and gray as sheet-iron. We agreed that no one who had not grown up in a little prairie town could know anything about it. It was a kind of freemasonry, we said.

--Willa Cather

Planted, a single corn seed yielded more than 150 fat kernels, often as many as 300, while the return on a seed of wheat was something less than 50:1

--Michael Pollan

Everywhere the grain stood ripe and the hot afternoon was full of the smell of the ripe wheat, like the smell of bread baking in an oven. The breath of the wheat and the sweet clover passed him like pleasant things in a dream.

--Willa Cather

The popular media and conventional wisdom, including the medical profession's traditional approach to nutrition, have created and continue to perpetuate this problem through inadequate, outdated dietary counseling. Attempts to universalize dietary therapies so that one-diet-fits-all influences the flawed claims against meats and fats, thereby encouraging overconsumption of grains. Government-sponsored guides to healthy eating, such as the USDA's food pyramid, which advocates six to eleven servings of grains daily for everyone, lag far behind current research and continue to preach dangerously old-fashioned ideas. Because the USDA's function is largely the promotion of agriculture and agricultural products, there is a clear conflict of interest inherent in any USDA claim of healthful benefits arising from any agricultural product. Popular beliefs and politically motivated promotion, not science, continue to dictate dietary recommendations, leading to debilitating and deadly diseases that are wholly or partly preventable.

--Ron Hoggan

The kernels of wheat entered the aperture virtually in single file, as if passing between a thumb and an index finger. To mill any faster risked overheating the stone, which in turn risked damaging the flour. In this fact, Dave explained, lies the origin of the phrase ‘nose to the grindstone’: a scrupulous miller leans in frequently to smell his grindstone for signs of flour beginning to overheat. (So the saying does not signify hard work as much as attentiveness.) A wooden spout at the bottom of the mill emitted a gentle breeze of warm, tan flour that slowly accumulated in a white cloth bag. I leaned in close for a whiff. Freshly milled whole-grain flour is powerfully fragrant, redolent of hazelnuts and flowers. For the first time I appreciated what I’d read about the etymology of the word ‘flour’—that it is the flower, or best part, of the wheat seed. Indeed. White flour has little aroma to speak of; this flour smelled delicious.

--Michael Pollan

If you stand in a wheat field at this time of year, a few weeks from harvest, it’s not hard to imagine you’re looking at something out of mythology: all this golden sunlight brought down to earth, captured in kernels of gold, and rendered fit for mortals to eat. But of course this is no myth at all, just the plain miraculous fact.

--Michael Pollan

Shucked and boiled in water, sweet corn is edible and nutritious; roasted in the husk in the hottest possible oven for forty minutes, shucked at the table, and buttered and salted, nothing else, it is ambrosia. No chef’s ingenuity and imagination have ever created a finer dish.

--Rex Stout

Civilization was built around wheat, around people settling down and not being nomadic. Baking is one of the oldest professions.

—Paul Hollywood

We are not encouraged, on a daily basis, to pay careful attention to the animals we eat. On the contrary, the meat, dairy, and egg industries all actively encourage us to give thought to our own immediate interest (taste, for example, or cheap food) but not to the real suffering involved. They do so by deliberately withholding information and by cynically presenting us with idealized images of happy animals in beautiful landscapes, scenes of bucolic happiness that do not correspond to anything in the real world. The animals involved suffer agony because of our ignorance. The least we owe them is to lessen that ignorance.

—Jeffrey Moussaieff  
Masson

The cotton was open and spilling into the fields; the very air smelled of it. In field after field as he passed along the pickers, arrested in stooping attitudes, seemed fixed amid the constant surf of bursting bolls like piles in surf, the long, partly-filled sacks streaming away behind them like rigid frozen flags. The air was hot, vivid and breathless—a final fierce concentration of the doomed and dying summer.

--William Faulkner

What makes good bread? It is a question of good flour and slow fermentation. In the old days we used to leave the dough to ferment for at least three or four hours, and it wasn't necessary to put chemicals into the dough. Today the farmers get much bigger crops from the same piece of ground, but the wheat has lost its taste. And to make it look nice and white—*comme un cadavre*—the millers grind it up fine and sift it, so you are left with very little except starch.

--John Hillaby

Advocacy of leaf protein as a human food is based on the undisputed fact that forage crops (such as lucerne) give a greater yield of protein than other types of crops. Even with conventional food crops there is more protein in the leafy parts than in the seeds or tubs that are usually harvested.

--Norman Pirie

It'll be spring soon. And the orchards will be in blossom. And the birds will be nesting in the hazel thicket. And they'll be sowing the summer barley in the lower fields... and eating the first of the strawberries with cream.

—J. R. R. Tolkien

A cold wind raced across the surrounding fields of wild grass, turning the land into a heaving dark-green ocean. It sighed up through the branches of cherry trees and rattled the thick leaves. Sometimes a cherry would break loose, tumble in the gale, fall and split, filling the night with its fragrance. The air was iron and loam and growth.

— Charles Beaumont

Anyone who has a garden, park or orchard tree has an opportunity to ensure that it offers protection, brings beauty and bears fruit for future generations. In short, every one of us should aspire to be a forester.

--Gabriel Hemery

Dull indeed would be the man that did not feel the thrill awakened by the first glimpse of brilliant color in the orchard, and the cheery warbling notes borne to our ears on the first gentle breath of spring!

--Arthur Cleveland Bent

Brambles, in particular, protect and nourish young fruit trees, and on farms bramble clumps (blackberry or one of its related cultivars) can be used to exclude deer and cattle from newly set trees. As the trees (apple, quince, plum, citrus, fig) age, and the brambles are shaded out, hooved animals come to eat fallen fruit, and the mature trees (7 plus years old) are sufficiently hardy to withstand browsing. Our forest ancestors may well have followed some such sequences for orchard evolution, assisted by indigenous birds and mammals.

--Bill Mollison

Five girls sat beside, and upon the branches of, the oldest apple tree in the orchard, its huge trunk making a fine seat and support; and whenever the May breeze blew, the pink blossoms tumbled down like snow, coming to rest in their hair and on their skirts. The afternoon sunlight dappled green and silver and gold through the leaves in the apple orchard.

--Neil Gaiman

No one lives on the top of the mountain. It's fine to go there occasionally—for inspiration, for new perspectives. But you have to come down. Life is lived in the valleys. That's where the farms and gardens and orchards are, and where the plowing and the work is done. That's where you apply the visions you may have glimpsed from the peaks.

--Arthur Gordon Webster

In every forest, on every farm, in every orchard on earth, it's what's under the ground that creates what's above the ground. That's why placing your attention on the fruits that you have already grown is futile. You cannot change the fruits that are already hanging on the tree. You can, however, change tomorrow's fruits. But to do so, you will have to dig below the ground and strengthen the roots.

--T. Harv Eker

It's better to live in the country, to live on a prairie by a drawing of rivers, in Iowa or Illinois or Indiana, say, than in any city, in any stinking fog of human beings, in any blooming orchard of machines....The cities are swollen and poisonous with people.

--William H. Gass

She had only to stand in the orchard, to put her hand on a little crab tree and look up at the apples, to make you feel the goodness of planting and tending and harvesting at last.

--Willa Cather

He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sunburnt to wheat-colour, his eyes blue as cornflowers, his sleeves and leggings dyed with fruit-stains, his hands clammy with the sweet juice of apples, his hat sprinkled with pips, and everywhere about him the sweet atmosphere of cider which at its first return each season has such an indescribable fascination for those who have been born and bred among the orchards.

--Thomas Hardy

Botany I rank with the most valuable sciences, whether we consider it's subjects as furnishing the principal subsistence of life to man & beast, delicious varieties for our tables, refreshments from our orchards, the adornments of our flower-borders, shade and perfume of our groves, materials for our buildings, or medicaments for our bodies.

--Thomas Jefferson

The great and amorous sky curved over the earth, and lay upon her as a pure lover. The rain, the humid flux descending from heaven for both man and animal, for both thick and strong, germinated the wheat, swelled the furrows with fecund mud and brought forth the buds in the orchards. And it is I who empowered these moist espousals, I the great Aphrodite.

--Aeschylus

A Georgia peach, a real Georgia peach, a backyard great-grandmother's-orchard peach, is as thickly furred as a sweater, and so fluent and sweet that once you bite through the flannel, it brings tears to your eyes.

--Melissa Fay Greene

Two years ago, the 32-year-old [Liz] Whitehurst — who graduated from a liberal arts college and grew up in the Chicago suburbs — abandoned Washington for this three-acre farm in Upper Marlboro, Md.

She joined a growing movement of highly educated, ex-urban, first-time farmers who are capitalizing on booming consumer demand for local and sustainable foods and who, experts say, could have a broad impact on the food system.

For only the second time in the last century, the number of farmers under 35 years old is increasing, according to the *U.S. Department of Agriculture's* latest *Census of Agriculture*. Sixty-nine percent of the surveyed young farmers had college degrees — significantly higher than the general population.

—Caitlin Dewey

Some keep the Sabbath going to church, I keep it staying at home, with a bobolink for a chorister, and an orchard for a dome.

--Emily Dickinson

The number of farmers age 25 to 34 grew 2.2 percent between 2007 and 2012, according to the 2014 USDA census, a period when other groups of farmers — save the oldest — shrunk by double digits. In some states, such as California, Nebraska and South Dakota, the number of beginning farmers has grown by 20 percent or more....They are also far more likely than the general farming population to grow organically, limit pesticide and fertilizer use, diversify their crops or animals, and be deeply involved in their local food systems via community supported agriculture (CSA) programs and farmers markets.

—Caitlin Dewey

THE golden-rod is yellow;  
The corn is turning brown;  
The trees in apple orchards  
With fruit are bending down.

--Helen Hunt Jackson

[Liz] Whitehurst bought her farm, Owl's Nest, from a retiring farmer in 2015. The farm sits at the end of a gravel road, a series of vegetable fields unfurling from a steep hill capped by her tiny white house. Like the farmer who worked this land before her, she leases the house and the fields from a neighboring couple in their 70s.

She grows organically certified peppers, cabbages, tomatoes and salad greens from baby kale to arugula, rotating her fields to enrich the soil and planting cover crops in the offseason.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, she and two longtime friends from Washington wake up in semidarkness to harvest by hand, kneeling in the mud to cut handfuls of greens before the sun can wilt them. All three young women, who also live on the farm, make their living off the produce Whitehurst sells, whether to restaurants, through CSA shares or at a D.C. farmers market.

—Caitlin Dewey

While it is relatively easy to recognize the perennial grasses and seed-eating sparrows as characteristic of meadows, the ecosystems exist in their fullest sense underground. What we see aboveground is only the outer margin of an ecosystem that explodes in intricacy and life below.

--Amy Seidl

We saw men haying far off in the meadow, their heads waving like the grass which they cut. In the distance the wind seemed to bend all alike.

--Henry David Thoreau

Buckwheat may be planted later than any similar crop, and often does well on old meadows or waste land that can be broken after the more exacting crops are planted.

--David F. Houston

I would not have every man nor every part of a man cultivated, any more than I would have every acre of earth cultivated: part will be tillage, but the greater part will be meadow and forest, not only serving an immediate use, but preparing a mould against a distant future, by the annual decay of the vegetation which it supports.

--Henry David Thoreau

August is ripening grain in the fields blowing hot and sunny, the scent of tree-ripened peaches, of hot buttered sweet corn on the cob. Vivid dahlias fling huge tousled blossoms through gardens and joe-pye-weed dusts the meadow purple.

--Jean Hersey

It was a silver cow. But when I say 'cow', don't go running away with the idea of some decent, self-respecting cudster such as you may observe loading grass into itself in the nearest meadow. This was a sinister, leering, Underworld sort of animal, the kind that would spit out of the side of its mouth for twopence.

--P. G. Wodehouse

The era of wild apples will soon be over. I wander through old orchards of great extent, now all gone to decay, all of native fruit which for the most part went to the cider mill. But since the temperance reform and the general introduction of grafted fruit, no wild apples, such as I see everywhere in deserted pastures, and where the woods have grown up among them, are set out. I fear that he who walks over these hills a century hence will not know the pleasure of knocking off wild apples.

--Henry David Thoreau

Programs that pay farmers not to farm often devastate rural areas. The reductions hurt everyone from fertilizer companies to tractor salesmen.

--Dick Armey

How much courage does it take to fire up your tractor and plow under a crop you spent six or seven years growing? How much courage to go on and do that after you've spent all that time finding out how to prepare the soil and when to plant and how much to water and when to reap? How much to just say, 'I have to quit these peas, peas are no good for me, I better try corn or beans.'

--Stephen King



I bought an ant farm. I don't know where I am going to get a tractor that small!  
--Steven Wright

I don't know of a better argument in favor of farming with horses than trying to start an old tractor in the winter time.

--Gene Logsdon

I buy a tractor two years ago, and four-fifths of the tractor manual is about not tipping over, not raising the bucket high enough to hit high-tension wire... not killing yourself, basically. The tractor itself is covered with stickers: Don't put your hand in here. Don't put your dick in there. And in that manual, I found out and it cost me a thousand dollars that when the tractor is new, 10 hours into use of the tractor, you have to re-torque the lug nuts. If you don't, you will oval the holes. This is buried between the moron warnings. I never found it. I take the tractor in for its regular servicing, and they say my wheels are gone. A thousand dollars worth of wheels have to be replaced because I didn't re-torque after 10 hours. How am I supposed to know that? 'It's in the manual.' You fucking read that manual! You go through 40 pages of how not to tip over! Anyway, that's the world that we seem to be moving into. And just because a society has absorbed these ideas and pays them lip service, anyone who's talking about libertarian ideas and certain basic conservative principles will get people who nod politely and say, 'Oh, yeah, we knew that already.' It's a pain in the ass.

--P. J. O'Rourke

I used to help my grandfather on the farm, driving tractors, raising crops and animals. I used to feed some of the baby cows and pigs, and I had to be no older than 7 or 8. Then at about 9 or 10 I started driving tractors. It showed me at an early age what hard work was all about and how dedicated you have to be, no matter what you do.

--Tyson Chandler

Cows provide approx 100 million tonnes of dry dung a year costing Rs 5000 crores which saves 50 million tonnes of firewood which again means that many trees saved and more environmental damage prevented. It is calculated that if these 73 million animals were to be replaced, we would need 7.3 million tractors at the cost of 2.5 lac each which would amount to an investment of 180,000 crores. In addition 2 crore, 37 lakh and 50 thousand tonnes of diesel which would mean another 57,000 crore rupees. This is how much we owe these animals, and this is what we stand to lose by killing them.

--Maneka Gandhi

In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.

—Margaret Atwood

Biological evidence indicates that man, evolving with his food plants, developed horticulture and agriculture in both hemispheres at a time which may well have reached far back into the Pleistocene.

--Russell Lord

Why try to explain miracles to your kids when you can just have them plant a garden?

—Robert Brault

Note what the catalogue says about colour and height and time of flowering, choose the appropriate shade of crayon and mark position of plant on plan. You will soon see what would make good neighbours and what would be fatal. Last year I dumped a lot of seeds haphazardly in a hurry and got mesembryanthemums and a new 'electric orange' calendula mingled with a scarlet eschscholtzia, and even the thought of it makes me shudder yet. The conjunction of paralytic pink, blinding blood-orange and genuine clear scarlet was practically un-lookable at. I expected it to blow up at any moment.

--Ethelind Fearon

We never look at the grass, though it is ubiquitous. If it's left alone to shake its hair loose it will produce tiny tassels and flowers, miniature and beautiful, that I'd never noticed before. Beauty is so often size and commotion for us, and fancy labels, that the subterfuge of loveliness all around us goes unseen.

--Keith Miller

Many things grow in the garden that were never sown there.

—Thomas Fuller

How dare you treat your soil like dirt!

—Joel Salatin

The best fertilizer is the gardener's shadow.

—Chinese Proverb

Today I had set aside for spading. Now there is nothing pleasanter than spading when the ground is soft and damp. You turn a spade full and then carefully knock all the lumps to pieces and you go on for hours without thinking about anything.

—John Steinbeck

I have always liked horticulturists, people who make their living from orchards and gardens, whose hands are familiar with the feel of the bark, whose eyes are trained to distinguish the different varieties, who have a form memory. Their brains are not forever dealing with vague abstractions; they are satisfied with the romance which the seasons bring with them, and have the patience and fortitude to gamble their lives and fortunes in an industry which requires infinite patience, which raise hopes each spring and too often dashes them to pieces in fall. They are always conscious of sun and wind and rain; must always be alert lest they lose the chance of ploughing at the right moment, pruning at the right time, circumventing the attacks of insects and fungus diseases by quick decision and prompt action. They are manufacturers of a high order, whose business requires not only intelligence of a practical character, but necessitates an instinct for industry which is different from that required by the city dweller always within sight of other people and the sound of their voices. The successful horticulturist spends much time alone among his trees, away from the constant chatter of human beings.

—David Fairchild

I think this is what hooks one to gardening: it is the closest one can come to being present at creation.

—Phyllis Theroux

Weather means more when you have a garden. There's nothing like listening to a shower and thinking how it is soaking in around your green beans.

—Marcelene Cox

It was such a pleasure to sink one's hands into the warm earth, to feel at one's fingertips the possibilities of the new season.

—Kate Morton

The greatest fine art of the future will be the making of a comfortable living from a small piece of land.

—Abraham Lincoln

Creating your own urban farm is as simple as planting your flowerbeds with edibles.

—Greg Peterson

No matter where you are you can grow something to eat. Shift your thinking and you'd be surprised at the places your food can be grown! Window sill, fire escape and rooftop gardens have the same potential to provide impressive harvests as backyard gardens, greenhouses and community spaces.

—Greg Peterson

The love of dirt is among the earliest of passions, as it is the latest. Mud-pies gratify one of our first and best instincts. So long as we are dirty, we are pure. Fondness for the ground comes back to a man after he has run the round of pleasure and business, eaten dirt, and sown wild-oats.... To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch their renewal of life—this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do.... Let us celebrate the soil. Most men toil that they may own a piece of it; they measure their success in life by their ability to buy it.... Broad acres are a patent of nobility; and no man but feels more of a man in the world if he have a bit of ground that he can call his own. However small it is on the surface, it is four thousand miles deep; and that is a very handsome property.

—Charles Dudley  
Warner

The greatest gift of the garden is the restoration of the five senses.

—Hanna Rion

The man who has planted a garden feels that he has done something for the good of the world.... It is a pleasure to eat of the fruit of one's toil, if it be nothing more than a head of lettuce or an ear of corn. One cultivates a lawn even with great satisfaction; for there is nothing more beautiful than grass and turf in our latitude.... the world without turf is a dreary desert.... To dig in the mellow soil... is a great thing. One gets strength out of the ground.... There is life in the ground; it goes into the seeds; and it also, when it is stirred up, goes into the man who stirs it. The hot sun on his back as he bends to shovel and hoe, or contemplatively rakes the warm and fragrant loam, is better than much medicine.

—Charles Dudley  
Warner

I believe that virtually everyone has the ability to either grow some food at home, or to find an appropriate location to start a garden. I may sound like a kook who plants my landscape with cucumbers instead of carnations, peppers instead of petunias, and fruit trees rather than ficus, but I am convinced that wherever you go, you can grow food! Now is the time for us to join together and plant the seeds that will transform the places in which we live.

—Greg Peterson

My rule of green thumb for mulch is to double my initial estimate of bags needed, and add three. Then I'll only be two bags short.

—Unknown

Why do farmers farm, given their economic adversities on top of the many frustrations and difficulties normal to farming? And always the answer is: 'Love. They must do it for love.' Farmers farm for the love of farming. They love to watch and nurture the growth of plants. They love to live in the presence of animals. They love to work outdoors. They love the weather, maybe even when it is making them miserable. They love to live where they work and to work where they live. If the scale of their farming is small enough, they like to work in the company of their children and with the help of their children. They love the measure of independence that farm life can still provide. I have an idea that a lot of farmers have gone to a lot of trouble merely to be self-employed to live at least a part of their lives without a boss.

--Wendell Berry

I saw all the people hustling early in the morning to go into the factories and the stores and the office buildings, to do their job, to get their checks. But ultimately, it's not office buildings or jobs that give us our checks. It's the soil. The soil is what gives us the real income that supports us all.

—Ed Begley, Jr.

I envision a day when every city and town has front and back yards, community gardens and growing spaces, nurtured into life by neighbors who are no longer strangers, but friends who delight in the edible rewards offered from a garden they discovered together. Imagine small strips of land between apartment buildings that have been turned into vegetable gardens, and urban orchards planted at schools and churches to grow food for our communities. The seeds of the urban farming movement already are growing within our reality.

—Greg Peterson

Often... visible outdoor areas are homogenous, cookie-cutter spaces, where neatly-trimmed grass or a few well-placed flower pots are admired and appreciated by the neighbors. But for some revolutionary gardeners, a feast for the eyes is not enough. They want something edible in return for the hard work, the water and the expense of tending a landscape. These food revolutionaries are maximizing their cultivation area by converting their landscapes, patios, and nearby vacant lots into productive edible gardens. In the quest for more space to grow food, even conventional front lawns are being transformed into maverick, and highly visible, vegetable plots.... the rise of modern vegetable gardeners who are cutting against the grain of current landscape fashion to grow food out in the open once again.

—Kari Spencer

Gardening is the slowest of the performing arts.

—Mac Griswold

It's September in my garden. Green beans abound. My mouth waters for the ripening sweet corn. Winter carrots slowly set down their tender roots. A breeze brings the smell of apples. Kale, collards and broccoli unfurl their leafy coats, getting ready for frost.

—Kristina Turner

Perennials are the ones that grow like weeds, biennials are the ones that die this year instead of next, and hardy annuals are the ones that never come up at all.

—Katherine Whitehorn

The ancient Hebrew association of man with soil is echoed in the Latin name for man, *homo*, derived from *humus*, the stuff of life in the soil. This powerful metaphor suggests an early realization of a profound truth that humanity has since disregarded to its own detriment. Since the words 'humility' and 'humble' also derive from *humus*, it is rather ironic that we should have assigned our species so arrogant a name as *Homo sapiens sapiens* ('wise wise man'). It occurs to me, as I ponder our past and future relation to the earth, that we might consider changing our name to a more modest *Homo sapiens curans*, with the word *curans* denoting caring or care-taking, as in 'curator.' ('Teach us to care' was T. S. Eliot's poetic plea.) Of course, we must work to deserve the new name, even as we have not deserved the old one.

—Daniel Hillel

I have never read of any Roman supper that seemed to me equal to a dinner of my own vegetables; when everything on the table is the product of my own labor.... It is strange what a taste you suddenly have for things you never liked before. The squash has always been to me a dish of contempt; but I eat it now as if it were my best friend. I never cared for the beet or the bean; but I fancy now that I could eat them all, tops and all, so completely have they been transformed by the soil in which they grew. I think the squash is less squashy, and the beet has a deeper hue of rose, for my care of them.

—Charles Dudley  
Warner

Gardeners learn by trowel and error.

—Gardening Saying

One of the worst mistakes you can make as a gardener is to think you're in charge.

—Janet Gillespie

The ancient Chinese regarded earthworms as 'angels of the earth.' Aristotle considered worms as 'intestines of the earth.'

—Lee Ann Gillen

Charles Robert Darwin, the great English scientist, after years of patient study, published a book of 236 pages dealing exclusively with earthworms. In this volume, *The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms*, he makes it clear that Nature apparently created the earthworm to be an improver of the soil and to aid the growth of plants. Indeed, he goes so far as to make this statement: 'Without the work of this humble creature, who knows nothing of the benefits he confers upon mankind, agriculture, as we know it, would be very difficult, if not wholly impossible.'

—John Edwin Hogg

The plough is one of the most ancient and most valuable of man's inventions; but long before he existed the land was in fact regularly ploughed, and still continues to be thus ploughed by earth-worms. It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world, as have these lowly organized creatures.

—Charles Darwin

For worms, is soil just another day at the office?

—Terri Guillemets

Whoever makes a garden  
Has never worked alone;  
The rain has always found it,  
The sun has always known;  
The wind has blown across it  
And helped to scatter seeds;  
Whoever makes a garden  
Has all the help he needs.

—Unknown

Whoever makes a garden  
Has oh so many friends:  
The glory of the morning,  
The dew when daylight ends,  
And rain and wind and sunshine  
And dew and fertile sod,  
For he who makes a garden  
Works hand in hand with God.

—Unknown

Be it deep or shallow, red or black, sand or clay, the soil is the link between the rock core of the earth and the living things on its surface. It is the foothold for the plants we grow. Therein lies the main reason for our interest in soils.

—Roy Simonson

George had one of the most productive dairy farms in the state of Wisconsin. Because of his success he was asked to appear on the local television farm report. Well, the big day came and the interviewer asked George why his milk production was so outstanding. The interviewer asked if it was because of the new milking machines. George said, 'No.' 'Well, was because of the feed?' The interviewer asked. Again, George said 'No.' 'Ok,' the interviewer said, 'how about the supplements and hormone shots?' Again, George just smiled and said, 'No, it wasn't any of that.' Frustrated, the interviewer finally asked, 'Well, what the heck was it?' George just smiled and said, 'You probably won't believe this, but I think the outstanding milk production was because every day, just before I milked my cows, I asked them just one question, 'What will it be today, Bessie, milk or hamburger?'

—Tony Jeary & John  
Davis

Nothing is more completely the child of Art than a Garden.

—Sir Walter Scott

Exclusiveness in a garden is a mistake as great as it is in society.

—Alfred Austin

[T]he final step in becoming an urban farmer is the naming of your farm, even if your name is simply for the few pots on your front porch. Creating your name helps to build a sense of place within your neighborhood as well as pride in your accomplishments. By naming your farm you give it a life of its own. Be creative and come up with a name that inspires and makes people smile, like my friend Laura's 'Wish We Had Acres,' the Fairy Tale inspired 'Jack's Bean Stalk' or my 'Urban Farm.'

—Greg Peterson

Good farmers, who take seriously their duties as stewards of Creation and of their land's inheritors, contribute to the welfare of society in more ways than society usually acknowledges, or even knows. These farmers produce valuable goods, of course; but they also conserve soil, they conserve water, they conserve wildlife, they conserve open space, they conserve scenery.

—Wendell Berry



An optimistic gardener is one who believes that whatever goes down must come up.  
—Leslie Hall

A farm includes the passion of the farmer's heart, the interest of the farm's customers, the biological activity in the soil, the pleasantness of the air about the farm — it's everything touching, emanating from, and supplying that piece of landscape. A farm is virtually a living organism. The tragedy of our time is that cultural philosophies and market realities are squeezing life's vitality out of most farms.

—Joel Salatin

The leaf that spreads in the light is the only holiness there is. I haven't found holiness in the faiths of mortals, or in their music, not in their dreams: it's out in the open field, with the green rows looking at the sky. I don't know what it is, this holiness: but it's there, and it looks at the sky.

--Kage Baker

Sometimes shows became almost obsessively obscure, as with the gooseberry (*Ribes uva-crispa*) shows of nineteenth-century Britain, when workingmen in the industrial counties of northern England and the Midlands formed themselves into societies, constituted with presidents, secretaries, and stewards, for the purpose of running gooseberry shows—weight being the decisive factor. Quite why this fruit, always something of a minority taste, should become the subject of what only could be described as a cult remains a mystery.

--Noël Kingsbury

Botany,—the science of the vegetable kingdom, is one of the most attractive, most useful, and most extensive departments of human knowledge. It is, above every other, the science of beauty.

—Sir Joseph Paxton

It's humbling to think that all animals, including human beings, are parasites of the plant world.

— Isaac Asimov

In the bad old days, there were three easy ways of losing money—racing being the quickest, women the pleasantest and farming the most certain.

—William Pitt Amherst

To any thinking person, it must be obvious that there is something badly wrong in relations between human beings and the animals that human beings rely on for food; and that in the past 100 or 150 years whatever is wrong has become wrong on a huge scale, as traditional animal husbandry has been turned into an industry using industrial methods of production. [...] It would be a mistake to idealize traditional animal husbandry as the standard by which the animal-products industry falls short: traditional animal husbandry is brutal enough, just on a smaller scale. A better standard by which to judge both practices would be the simple standard of humanity: is this truly the best that human beings are capable of?

—J. M. Coetzee

Let us suppose that, without forge or anvil, the instruments of husbandry had dropped from the heavens into the hands of savages, that these men had got the better of that mortal aversion they all have for constant labour; that they had learned to foretell their wants at so great a distance of time; that they had guessed exactly how they were to break the earth, commit their seed to it, and plant trees; that they had found out the art of grinding their corn, and improving by fermentation the juice of their grapes; all operations which we must allow them to have learned from the gods, since we cannot conceive how they should make such discoveries of themselves; after all these fine presents, what man would be mad enough to cultivate a field, that may be robbed by the first comer, man or beast, who takes a fancy to the produce of it. And would any man consent to spend his day in labour and fatigue, when the rewards of his labour and fatigue became more and more precarious in proportion to his want of them? In a word, how could this situation engage men to cultivate the earth, as long as it was not parcelled out among them, that is, as long as a state of nature subsisted.

--Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Ancient poetry and mythology suggest, at least, that husbandry was once a sacred art; but it is pursued with irreverent haste and heedlessness by us, our object being to have large farms and large crops merely. We have no festival, nor procession, nor ceremony, not excepting our cattle-shows and so-called Thanksgivings, by which the farmer expresses a sense of the sacredness of his calling, or is reminded of its sacred origin. It is the premium and the feast which tempt him. He sacrifices not to Ceres and the Terrestrial Jove, but to the infernal Plutus rather. By avarice and selfishness, and a grovelling habit, from which none of us is free, of regarding the soil as property, or the means of acquiring property chiefly, the landscape is deformed, husbandry is degraded with us, and the farmer leads the meanest of lives. He knows Nature but as a robber.

--Henry David Thoreau

The scale below provides an indication of how recent the phenomenon of farming is:

- The world was formed ca 4,600 million years ago.
- Eukaryotic life forms: ca. 1,000 million years ago.
- First hominid life forms 4 million years ago (hunter gatherers).
- First human farmers: about 12,000 years ago.
- Global Agricultural Evolution: 1650-1850 A.D.
- Modern Agricultural Evolution: 1950-present.

—*ecifm.rdg.ac.uk* /

The roots of farming began in the areas of present day Turkey and the Middle East about 10,000 years ago. Two of the earliest settlements are known as Catal Hüyük and Jericho. Catal Hüyük had, by 6000 B.C., more than 1000 houses. It is at this place that we have discovered evidence of people taking wild grasses and using the seeds for food and planting for the next years food. These seeds are now known as cereals and make up a large percentage of the worlds food supply.

Jericho, like many early cities, was located around a consistent water source, a spring which produced over 1000 gallons of water every minute. Jericho consisted of about eight to ten acres on which it is estimated that two to three thousand people lived. These people were supported by farming of wheat, barley, peas, and lentils. Archeologists believe the earliest settlers in this area were a small group of hunter-gathers. Hunter-gathers would live off the land forging berry and edible plants, as well as hunting wild animals. These types of people lived in smaller groups because they had to be mobile to find more food. It was not until man began to plant and harvest crops that large permanent settlements could be established, like at Jericho.

—*historylink101.com*

During the 18th century farming was gradually transformed by an agricultural revolution. Until 1701 seed was sown by hand. In that year Jethro Tull invented a seed drill, which sowed seed in straight lines. He also invented a horse drawn hoe which hoed the land and destroyed weed between rows of crops.

Furthermore until the 18th century most livestock was slaughtered at the beginning of winter because farmers could not grow enough food to feed their animals through the winter months.

Until the 18th century most land was divided into 3 fields. Each year 2 fields were sown with crops while the third was left fallow (unused). The Dutch began to grow swedes or turnips on land instead of leaving it fallow. (The turnips restored the soil's fertility). When they were harvested the turnips could be stored to provide food for livestock over the winter. The new methods were popularized in England by a man named Robert 'Turnip' Townsend (1674-1741).

Under the 3 field system, which still covered much of England, all the land around a village or small town, was divided into 3 huge fields. Each farmer owned some

strips of land in each field. During the 18th century land was enclosed. That means it was divided up so each farmer had all his land in one place instead of scattered across 3 fields. Enclosure allowed farmers to use their land more efficiently.

Also in the 18th century farmers like Robert Bakewell began scientific stock breeding (selective breeding). Farm animals grew much larger and they gave more meat, wool and milk.

However, despite the improvements in farming, food for ordinary people remained plain and monotonous. For them meat was a luxury. They lived mainly on bread, butter, potatoes and tea.

In the early and mid-19th century farming in Britain prospered. In the mid-19th century it was helped by the rapid growth of towns (providing a huge market) and by railways. (The railways made it easier to transport produce).

Farming was also helped by new technology. Justus von Liebig (1803-1873) and John Lawes (1814-1900) introduced new fertilizers. Farmers also began using clay pipes to drain their fields.

Meanwhile Cyrus McCormick (1809-1884) invented a reaping machine in 1834 and in 1837 John Deere (1804-1886) invented a steel plow. In 1856 John Fowler invented a steam plow.

However, the good times for British farmers ended in the 1870s. In the USA a network of railways had been built and steamships were sailing across the Atlantic. The result was that American farmers could now move their grain to ports and it could be shipped to Britain. Cheap American grain helped ordinary people in the towns but it meant a depression in British farming. Furthermore at the end of the 19th century the invention of refrigeration meant meat could be imported from Australia and New Zealand.

—Tim Lambert

**THE ANNUAL WORK CYCLE FOR MAINE FARMERS** – A month by month activity guide presented by David C. Smith of UM. This is based on a study of diaries from 1765 to 1930. (Note: this cycle represents all Maine and variations for local conditions are expected)

January – Cut wood for home and for sale.

February – Continue cutting wood and start hauling it.

March – Continue woods work and make maple syrup.

April – Plow and plant early crops, prune and graft orchards.

May – Plant, then shear the sheep.

June – Hoe and cultivate crops, cut posts and rails and erect fencing.

July – Hay.

August – Continue haying, harvest wheat and rye.

September – Harvest potatoes and apples, start making cider.

October – Harvest corn and corn stalks, turnips, pumpkins and cabbage.

November – Plow.

December – Cut wood, clear new land.

Year-round on rainy days – Walk fences and make needed repairs, work on the woodpile. (Homes used between 10 and 20 cords of wood annually. Manufacturing this wood was a huge task before crosscut saws and bucksaws were used.)

— David C. Smith

The roots of both no-till and tillage-based farming methods run deep, but eventually the latter approach predominated, thanks to the evolution of the plow. Over the past few decades, however, advances in herbicides and machinery have made no-till practical on a commercial scale.

8000 B.C.

Planting stick, the earliest version of no-till, enables the planting of seeds without cultivation.

Scratch plow, The earliest plow, clears a path through the ground cover and creates a furrow into which seeds can be placed.

6000 B.C.

Draft animals replace humans in powering the plow.

3500 B.C.

Plowshare, a wedge-shaped implement tipped with an iron blade, loosens the top layer of soil.

1100 A.D.?

Moldboard plow has a curved blade (the moldboard) that inverts the soil, burying weeds and residues.

Mid-1800s

Steel moldboard plow invented by John Deere in 1837, is able to break up prairie sod.

Early 1900s

Tractors can pull multiple plows at once.

1940s –1950s

Herbicides such as 2, 4-D, atrazine and paraquat enable farmers to manage weeds with less tillage.

1960s

No-till seeders slice open a small groove for seeds, keeping soil disturbance to a minimum.

—*scientificamerican.com*

Since 1928, millions of agriculture students have donned the official FFA jacket and championed the FFA Creed. All 50 states and two U.S. territories are currently chartered members of the national organization, representing 649,355 student members who belong to one of 7,859 local FFA chapters. It's a testament to the power of common goals and the strong ideals of the FFA founders.

Their mission was to prepare future generations for the challenges of feeding a growing population. They taught us that agriculture is more than planting and harvesting – it's a science, it's a business and it's an art.

Today, the National FFA Organization remains committed to the individual student, providing a path to achievement in premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

FFA continues to help the next generation rise up to meet those challenges by helping its members to develop their own unique talents and explore their interests in a broad range of agricultural career pathways. So today, we are still the Future Farmers of America. But, we are the Future Biologists, Future Chemists, Future Veterinarians, Future Engineers and Future Entrepreneurs of America, too.

—*ffa.org*

Animal agriculture takes far more from the global food supply than it provides. We currently grow crops to feed and slaughter 70 billion farmed animals per year, requiring orders of magnitude more land, water, energy and crops than would be needed to grow plant foods to feed 7 billion humans directly.

—*awfw.org*

In addition to contributing to erosion, pollution, food poisoning, and the dead zone, corn requires huge amounts of fossil fuel—it takes a half gallon of fossil fuel to produce a bushel of corn.

—Michael Pollan

**BREAKING NEWS:** There will be NO farms closed due to the upcoming blizzard!!! Each and every farmer will be out in the blistery, cold, blowing wind and heavy snow tending to their livestock. They will be praying for machinery to work and non-frozen water pipes.

—*West Cattle Co.*

The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies.

—Gertrude Jekyll

The technologies which have had the most profound effects on human life are usually simple. A good example of a simple technology with profound historical consequences is hay. Nobody knows who invented hay, the idea of cutting grass in the autumn and storing it in large enough quantities to keep horses and cows alive through the winter. All we know is that the technology of hay was unknown to the Roman Empire but was known to every village of medieval Europe. Like many other crucially important technologies, hay emerged anonymously during the so-called Dark Ages. According to the *Hay Theory of History*, the invention of hay was the decisive event which moved the center of gravity of urban civilization from the Mediterranean basin to Northern and Western Europe. The Roman Empire did not need hay because in a Mediterranean climate the grass grows well enough in winter for animals to graze. North of the Alps, great cities dependent on horses and oxen for motive power could not exist without hay. So it was hay that allowed populations to grow and civilizations to flourish among the forests of Northern Europe. Hay moved the greatness of Rome to Paris and London, and later to Berlin and Moscow and New York.

--Freeman Dyson

Farmers had freed themselves in part from the blind natural forces of storm and insects only to become increasingly the victims of the equally blind forces of market fluctuations.

--Grant McConnell

America's first adventurer-botanist and food spy was David Fairchild, who traveled the world over a century ago in search of exotic crops....His role, sanctioned by the president and the secretary of agriculture, was to find exotic crops and bring them back. Sometimes it was diplomatic. And sometimes he would steal things. He went to Bavaria to acquire better hops. German growers have the world's best hops and didn't want anyone to get them, so they hired young men to guard the fields at night. Fairchild befriended the growers. It was covert work, and he didn't outright steal the hops, but he did eventually acquire them and brought them back to the U.S.

If Fairchild hadn't traveled to expand the American diet, our supermarkets would look a lot different. You certainly wouldn't have kale, which he picked up in Austria-Hungary, to the extent that you do today. Or food like quinoa from Peru, which was introduced back then, but took off a century later. Anyone who's eaten an avocado from Central America or citrus from Asia can trace those foods back to his efforts. Those fruits hadn't permeated American agriculture until Fairchild and the USDA created a system to distribute seeds, cuttings and growing tips. Fairchild went to great lengths, at times risking his life, to find truly novel crops, like dates from Iraq and Egyptian cotton.

—Anna Diamond

Cows are exceptionally gentle, loving beings who form strong bonds with their family and friends. Separating any mother from her child, as is routine practice within the dairy industry, inflicts upon both a cruelty beyond words.

--Mango Wodzak

The ten billion animals that are killed every year for meat and the virulent consequences of contemporary animal agricultural practices remain conspicuously absent from public discourse. How often have you seen media exposés on the violent treatment of farm animals and the corrupt practices of carnistic industry? Compare this with the amount of coverage afforded fluctuating gas prices or Hollywood fashion blunders. Most of us are more outraged over having to pay five cents more for a gallon of gas than over the fact that billions of animals, millions of humans, and the entire ecosystem are systematically exploited by an industry that profits from such gratuitous violence. And most of us know more about what the stars wore to the Oscars than we do about the animals we eat.

--Melanie Joy

The greatest job I ever had was working on my family farm. Each morning my father would come into my bedroom around 4:30 am and command me to get up and work the fields. I would spend the next two hours before school slopping pigs and cropping tobacco.

—Armstrong Williams

When the last of the volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius settled over Pompeii in A.D. 79, it preserved a detailed portrait of life in the grand Roman city, from bristling military outposts to ingenious aqueducts. Now researchers say the eruption nearly 2,000 years ago also captured clues to one of today's most pressing social problems. Analyzing dwellings in Pompeii and 62 other archaeological sites dating back 11,200 years, a team of experts has ranked the distribution of wealth in those communities. Bottom line: economic disparities increased over the centuries and technology played a role. The findings add to our knowledge of history's haves and have-nots, an urgent concern as the gulf between the 1 percent of ultra-rich and the rest of us continues to grow....How do past societies stack up? Hunter gatherers, as scholars long hypothesized, tended to be the most equitable. But around 10,200 B.C., societies began to farm the land. Economic disparity edged up: farming enabled families to collect wealth and pass it on. In Europe and Asia, domestication of draft animals beginning around 10,000 years ago let some landowners cultivate ever larger areas, further concentrating wealth. That didn't happen in the Americas until after Europeans exported that agricultural innovation in the 16th century.

—Matthew Shaer



Famine has not been increasing but has become rarer. When *The Population Bomb* appeared [1968], according to the *U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization*, something like one out of four people in the world was hungry. Today the proportion of hungry is about one out of 10. Meanwhile, the world's population has more than doubled. People are surviving because they learned how to do things differently. They developed and adopted new agricultural techniques—improved seeds, high intensity fertilizers, drip irrigation.

—Charles C. Mann

[William] Vogt, born in 1902, laid out the basic ideas for the modern environmental movement. In particular, he founded what the Hampshire College population researcher Betsy Hartmann has called 'apocalyptic environmentalism'— the belief that unless humankind drastically reduces consumption and limits population, it will ravage global ecosystems. In best-selling books and powerful speeches, Vogt argued that affluence is not our greatest achievement but our biggest problem. If we continue taking more than the Earth can give, he said, the unavoidable result will be devastation on a global scale. Cut back! Cut back! was his mantra.

[Norman] Borlaug, born 12 years after Vogt, has become the emblem of 'techno-optimism'—the view that science and technology, properly applied, will let us produce a way out of our predicament. He was the best-known figure in the research that in the 1960s created the Green Revolution, the combination of high-yielding crop varieties and agronomic techniques that increased grain harvests around the world, helping to avert tens of millions of deaths from hunger. To Borlaug, affluence was not the problem but the solution. Only by getting richer and more knowledgeable can humankind create the science that will resolve our environmental dilemmas. Innovate! Innovate! was his cry.

—Charles C. Mann

[Norman Borlaug] succeeded by the mid-'50s in breeding wheat that was resistant to many strains of rust. Not only that, he then created wheat that was much shorter than usual—what became known as 'semi-dwarf' wheat. In the past, when wheat was heavily fertilized, it had grown so fast that its stalks became spindly and fell over in the wind. The plants, unable to pull themselves erect, had rotted and died. Borlaug's shorter, stouter wheat could absorb large doses of fertilizer and channel the extra growth into grain rather than roots or stalk. In early tests, farmers sometimes harvested literally 10 times as much grain from their fields. Yields climbed at such a rate that in 1968 a USAID official called the rise the Green Revolution, thus naming the phenomenon that would come to define the 20th century.

—Charles C. Mann

To Borlaugians [Norman Borlaug] farming is a kind of useful drudgery that should be eased and reduced as much as possible to maximize individual liberty.

—Charles C. Mann

To Vogtians [William Vogt], agriculture is about maintaining a set of communities, ecological and human, that have cradled life since the first agricultural revolution, 10,000-plus years ago. It can be drudgery, but it is also work that reinforces the human connection to the Earth.

—Charles C. Mann

Even though the global population in 2050 will be just 25 percent higher than it is now, typical projections claim that farmers will have to boost food output by 50 to 100 percent. The main reason is that increased affluence has always multiplied the demand for animal products such as cheese, dairy, fish, and especially meat—and growing feed for animals requires much more land, water, and energy than producing food simply by growing and eating plants. Exactly how much more meat tomorrow's billions will want to consume is unpredictable, but if they are anywhere near as carnivorous as today's Westerners, the task will be huge. And, Prophets warn, so will the planetary disasters that will come of trying to satisfy the world's desire for burgers and bacon: ravaged landscapes, struggles over water, and land grabs that leave millions of farmers in poor countries with no means of survival.

—Charles C. Mann

The rest of the country would subsidize the crops...., make possible the irrigation of millions of acres of essentially arid land, underwrite the rhythms of planting and not planting, and create, finally, a vast agricultural mechanism in a kind of market vacuum, quite remote from the normal necessity for measuring supply against demand and cost against return....eighty-two thousand acres in California were still planted in alfalfa, a low-value crop requiring more water than was...used in the households of all thirty million Californians. Almost a million and a half acres were planted in cotton, the state's second largest consumer of water, a crop subsidized directly by the federal government. Four hundred thousand acres were planted in rice, the cultivation of which involves submerging the fields under six inches of water from mid-April until the August harvest, months during which, in California, no rain falls. The 1.6 million acre feet of water this required (an acre foot is roughly 326,000 gallons) was made available, even in drought years, for what amounted to a nominal subsidized price by the California State Water Project and the Central Valley Project, an agency of the federal government, which...also subsidized the crop itself. Ninety percent of this California rice was glutinous but favored in both Japan and Korea, each of which banned the import of California rice. These are the kinds of contradictions on which Californians have tended to founder.

—Joan Didion

Consider cassava, a big tuber also known as manioc, mogo, and yuca. The 11th-most important crop in the world in terms of production, it is grown in wide swaths of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The edible part grows underground; no matter how big the tuber, the plant will never fall over. On a per acre basis, cassava harvests far outstrip those of wheat and other cereals. The comparison is unfair, because cassava tubers contain more water than wheat kernels. But even when this is taken into account, cassava produces many more calories per acre than wheat. (The potato is a northern equivalent. The average 2016 U.S. potato yield was 43,700 pounds per acre, more than 10 times the equivalent figure for wheat.) ‘I don’t know why this alternative is not considered,’ [Edwige] Botoni said. Although cassava is unfamiliar to many cultures, introducing it ‘seems easier than breeding entirely new species.’ Much the same is true for tree crops. A mature McIntosh apple tree might grow 350 to 550 pounds of apples a year. Orchard growers commonly plant 200 to 250 trees per acre. In good years this can work out to 35 to 65 tons of fruit per acre. The equivalent figure for wheat, by contrast, is about a ton and a half. As with cassava and potatoes, apples contain more water than wheat does—but the caloric yield per acre is still higher. Even papayas and bananas are more productive than wheat. So are some nuts, like chestnuts. Apples, chestnuts, and papayas cannot make crusty baguettes, crunchy tortillas, or cloud-light chiffon cakes, but most grain today is destined for highly processed substances like animal feed, breakfast cereal, sweet syrups, and ethanol—and tree and tuber crops can be readily deployed for those.

—Charles C. Mann

They are not attached to the soil. They worked their ranches as a quarter of a century before they had worked their mines....To get all there was out of the land, to squeeze it dry, to exhaust it, seemed their policy. When, at last, the land worn out, would refuse to yield, they would invest their money in something else; by then, they would all have made fortunes. They did not care.

—Frank Norris

There in my own small town we have torn up vineyards and now have planted the following crops: Wal-Mart, Burger King, Food-4-Less, Baskin-Robbins, Cinema 6, Denny’s, Wendy’s, Payless, Anderson’s Pea Soup, the Holiday Inn, McDonald’s, Carl’s Jr., Taco Bell, four gas stations, three shopping centers, two videotape stores, and a carwash.

—Victor Davis Hanson

The first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all mankind. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world.

—Norman Borlaug

Industrial hemp is a very useful plant. I challenged the attorney general to get rid of the criminal stigma associated with hemp so we can look at it in terms of how it might be useful.

—Jesse Ventura

Ever since Europeans arrived in North America, they've been enthusiastically trying to change it, to mold it into something they're convinced they'd like better. The first colonists noticed a lack of honeybees, and so they imported them. And there weren't any apple trees to speak of, either. Which was a serious lack for people who drank cider in lieu of water and preserved food in vinegar. So apple trees, too, soon were imported.

—Roger Matile

Our farmers and ranchers have never faced as many problems as they do today with drought, range fires, high gas prices and an ever tightening budget on agriculture subsidies.

—Michael McCaul (2005)

The bugs got my berries, a hail storm ruined my garden truck, and the drought spoiled my wheat, but I'm doing mighty good on the crops the government paid me not to plant.

—Bennett Cerf

A prankish youngster filled a chicken coop with eggs dyed every color of the rainbow. The rooster took one look at the dazzling display, ran straight out of the barn, and killed the peacock.

—Ida Kay

A little boy accompanied his father on an expedition to buy a new cow. The father gave his prospective purchase a going-over from head to foot, poking, probing, and pinching the animal very thoroughly. 'You see, son,' he explained, 'when you buy a cow you want to be sure it's a sound one.' The boy nodded approval. A week later the boy came running breathlessly to his father in a distant corner of the farm. 'Come quick, pa,' he entreated. 'A traveling salesman's pulled up behind the barn, and it looks like he's going to buy Sister.'

—H. W. Fowler

Millions must plough and forge and dig in order that a few thousand may write and paint and study.

—Heinrich Gotthard von  
Treitschke

The first American farmers...in the late 1820s and early 1830s relied on growing hay crops; small grains, such as oats, wheat and barley; and that American staple, corn.

Hay crops—often uncultivated prairie grasses in those early years—were harvested for use as animal fodder and bedding.

Small grains, too, were often used for animal feed. Horses consumed lots of calorie-rich oats, while humans needed wheat and barley for their own food as well as fermenting into whiskey and beer. Corn was the jack-of-all-trades grain, used for animal food, manufacturing whiskey, and a variety of traditional frontier foods from Johnnycake to mush and hominy.

Along with sorghum, which could be pressed to make a molasses substitute, those pretty much remained the crops of choice right through the first quarter of the 20th century.

—Roger Matile

U.S. farmers began experimenting with soybeans in the early 1800s as animal food and, eventually, to manufacture soy sauce. It wasn't until 1904 that the great George Washington Carver began studying soybeans at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Carver found soybeans were high in both protein and oil. By 1929, the U.S. was producing about 9 million bushels of soybeans, but farmers—perhaps the nations' most conservative business bloc—were suspicious of whether the new crop would be a money-maker.

Even in the 1930s, a farmer and his family could, if need be, largely live on what they grew. Corn and the small grains could be ground into flour to make bread and other food, and they could also be turned into beef, pork, eggs and fried chicken by feeding them to livestock.

Soybeans were another thing altogether, since they are solely a cash crop and cannot be eaten as they come from the field. Of course, corn can't either—it has to be ground into flour. But corn flour can be baked into...pioneer dishes....But not soybeans. Some of each soybean crop was indeed turned into food, but by processes the farmer couldn't duplicate. Instead, farm families bought soybean food products at the grocery store just like their city cousins.

—Roger Matile

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment opportunities in food, agriculture, renewable natural resources and environment occupations are expected to grow more than 5 percent between 2015 and 2020. Demand is highest for plant and food scientists, sustainable biomaterials specialists, water resources scientists and engineers, precision agriculture specialists, and farm-animal veterinarians.

—Madhu

Krishnamurthy  
(2018)

I don't trust farmers. I buy my produce from the grocery store.

—*www.myhomesteadlife.com*

Without farming you would be hungry, naked, and sober.

—Internet Meme

The wild, ancient ancestor of virtually all of today's apple varieties originally evolved in the mountains of Central Asia in the area today occupied by Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and the Xinjiang region of China. They appear to have been cultivated first in Turkey. Alexander the Great is generally given credit for introducing the fruit to Europe.

Apples were one of the first fruit crops brought to the New World by Europeans, who heavily relied on apples to produce cider for drinking and vinegar for food preservation, as well as a popular fruit. Pennsylvania's German settlers, called Pennsylvania Dutch by their English neighbors, used apples to make a wide variety of food, including apple pie and apple butter.

—Roger Matile

We tend to think of our 19th-century forefathers thriving on farm-fresh produce and pasture-raised livestock, happily unaffected by the deceptive food-manufacturing practices of today. In this we are wrong. Milk offers a stunning case in point. By mid-century, the standard, profit-maximizing recipe was a pint of lukewarm water for every quart of milk—after the cream and been skimmed off. To whiten the bluish liquid, dairymen added plaster of Paris and chalk, or a dollop of molasses for a creamy gold. To replace the skimmed-off layer of cream, they might add a final flourish of pureed calf brains.

Fakery and adulteration ran rampant in other products as well. 'Honey' in many cases proved to be thickened, colored corn syrup, and 'vanilla' extract a mixture of alcohol and brown food coloring. 'Coffee' might be largely sawdust, or wheat, beans, beets, peas, and dandelion seeds, scorched black and ground to resemble the genuine article. Containers of 'pepper,' 'cinnamon,' or 'nutmeg' were frequently laced with pulverized coconut shells, charred rope, or floor sweepings. 'Flour' routinely contained crushed stone or gypsum as a cheap extender. Ground insects could be mixed into brown sugar, often without detection; their use was linked to an unpleasant condition known as 'grocer's itch.'

—Deborah Blum

I have given up writing and married a farmer.... He has to hire 'a help,' and do the chores himself, while I, sure of food and shelter for the first time in my life, sit by the fire, and think.

—Malheureuse [1893]

There are more tons of potatoes produced in the world than any other crop, and potatoes furnish one-fourth of the food for the people of Europe.

—Roger Matile

Humans first cultivated cereal crops less for processing into food than for making beer, a beverage at once nutritious, intoxicating, and germ-free. DNA analysis shows that domesticated yeast strains are at least as old as domesticated grain, and agriculture may have been the only way to ensure a year-round supply for brewing.

—David T. Courtwright

The labour of the farmers, no doubt is of greater value than the financial capacity of the government and non-government institutions which can only play a supportive role.

—Girma Woldegiorgis

Indians were no slouches at agricultural genetics. Besides inventing corn, Indians also early on recognized the beneficial effects of planting beans. Beans fix nitrogen with their roots, and that helps corn—which depletes nitrogen in the soil—grow better. The Indians planted beans with their corn and squash, both for their food value and because of the help the rotation gave the soil.

—Roger Matile

One American farmer feeds 165 people a year worldwide. Raising beef cattle is the single largest segment of American agriculture. 99 percent of U.S. farms are operated by families. 2.1 million farms dot the American landscape. Yet, farmers & ranchers are only 2 percent of the U.S. population. Thank a farmer.

—<https://www.mo-kanlivestock.com>

The American vegetable landscape has shifted. Farmers are abandoning one-time basics such as sweet corn, green beans, peas and potatoes. In their place, they're planting sweet potatoes and leafy greens such as spinach, kale and romaine lettuce.... Why sweet potatoes? White flour, white potatoes and white rice have been vilified over the past decade for their easy digestion and high glycemic load. Sweet potatoes have fewer carbs and calories, as well as higher levels of vitamins A and C. They've been lauded by South Beach, Paleo and Atkins diet devotees. On upscale menus, they often replace the Idaho russet in fries or tots. North Carolina leads the nation in sweet potato acreage, while romaine and spinach are concentrated in California.

—Laura Reiley and  
Andrew Van Dam

I was down to the Los Angeles Live Stock Show, and I saw these hundreds of farmers boys, that had fattened and cared for a calf, or pig, or sheep, themselves. Its a thing called the 4 H Club. Somebody was inspired when they founded that, its all over the country, by golly they are a great bunch of kids, and don't they have some fine stock, look how young and he is starting in his business, we got the most thorough training in every line of business in this country.

—Will Rogers

Stores such as Walmart are putting family farms out of business not just by playing hardball on prices, but by demanding year-round contracts. If a family farmer wants a contract with a big supplier but doesn't produce corn all year long, they're responsible for buying another producer's corn to cover the grocery behemoth's supply chain during their off-season.

—Hank Scott

Scientists have resurrected a version of a tomato that mid-century America fell in love with and that has been haunting our taste buds ever since.

Introduced in 1934 by Lyman Schermerhorn, a plant scientist at Rutgers University in New Jersey, the Rutgers tomato was a cross between the sweet Marglobe tomato and the tart JDT. It was the perfect tomato for its time, when the fruit was still hand-harvested, fresh produce wasn't transported vast distances and consumers didn't expect picture-perfect tomatoes year-round. Farmers liked the plant because it produced consistent early-season fruit and resisted disease. Food companies liked the bright flavor and sparkling red color. It was the basis for Campbell's tomato soup and Heinz's ketchup. By 1947, two out of every three tomatoes grown across the United States was a Rutgers. The press dubbed it the 'super tomato.'

—April White

In the early years of the 19th century, when settlement was just beginning on the prairies of Illinois, a number of publishers produced guidebooks on how best to pioneer the western wilderness that was then Illinois.

Many area residents have wondered why so many Scots and English moved to Illinois in the 1850s. One reason may have been 'The Emigrant's Almanack,' sold throughout Great Britain in 1849 and 1850, during the era when so many of them decided to immigrate. The book fairly rang with praises of Illinois: 'The soil is so rich in Illinois that, though indifferently farmed, it will produce anything in the shape of vegetation in great abundance.' In other words, if a farmer planted seeds all he had to do was get out of the way to avoid being knocked over by plants surging out of the ground.

—Roger Matile



Native Americans had a planting technique where they would plant corn, bean, and squash crops close to each other. The corn provides a structure for the beans to climb, the beans give nitrogen to the soil, and the squash spreads on the ground to prevent weeds from growing. These companion crops were known as the ‘Three Sisters.’

—@soulscienceawakeningyou

Of all the sea’s possibilities for man’s future, the greatest may be its promise of a significant increase in the world’s food supply. Square mile for square mile, the sea is estimated to be potentially more productive than the land....to meet the vast needs of an exploding world population, man will have to start farming the sea as he has for so long farmed the land.

—Leonard Engel

For many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America with exploding birth rates, survival may hinge on the development of some sort of intensive underwater farming.

—Sir Alister Hardy

Bread: Some stale bread crumbs have changed history: It now appears that semi-nomadic Natufians made flatbread circa 12,000 B.C.—4,000 years before farmers in what is now Turkey.

Cheese: In 2018, researchers discovered 3,200-year-old cheese in an Egyptian tomb, but new molecular analysis of a pot dug up in Turkey reveals evidence of cheese-making circa 5,900 B.C.

Wine: The oldest known grape wine—and lots of it—was produced around 6,000 B.C., say scientists who studied residue in jars unearthed in Georgia. Previous chemical analysis dated wine to Iran circa 5,400 B.C.

Beer: Brewing came before agriculture, say researchers who learned that semi-nomadic Natufians quaffed wheat and barley beer circa 11,000 B.C., 7,000 years before farmers did in Central Asia.

—Mandy Tust,  
*Smithsonian.com*

Anything made from plastic can be made from hemp.

Hemp requires about half the amount of water that cotton needs.

1 acre of hemp produces the same amount of paper as 4.1 acres of trees.

1 acre of hemp produces more oxygen than 25 acres of forest.

—Internet Meme

To those that work in acres, not in hours. We thank you.

—Internet Meme

Happiness does have a smell...It's freshly cut hay, bonfires and crisp country air.

—Internet Meme

Cotton sowed with planters must be chopped—thinned and weeded manually with hoes—to produce orderly rows of fluffy bolls. The work is backbreaking, and the people who do it maintain that no other job on Earth is quite as demanding.

—Vann R. Newkirk II

The land was rested first from Native Americans, by force. It was then cleared, watered, and made productive for intensive agriculture by the labor of enslaved Africans, who after Emancipation would come to own a portion of it. Later, through a variety of means—sometimes legal, often coercive, in many cases legal and coercive, occasionally violent—farmland owned by black people came into the hands of white people. It was aggregated into larger holdings, then aggregated again, eventually attracting the interest of Wall Street....A war waged by deed of title has dispossessed 98 percent of black agricultural landowners in America. They have lost 12 million acres over the past century. But even that statement falsely consigns the losses to long-ago history. In fact, the losses mostly occurred within living memory, from the 1950s onward. Today, except for a handful of farmers...who have been able to keep or get back some land, black people in...the Deep South own almost nothing of the bounty under their feet.

—Vann R. Newkirk II

The telling factor, looking at it from the long view, is that at the time of World War I there were 1 million black farmers, and in 1992 there were 18,000.

—Phil Fraas

Land is never really lost, not in America. Twelve million acres of farmland in a country that has become a global breadbasket carries immense value, and the dispossessed land in the Delta is some of the most productive in America. The soil on the alluvial plain is rich. The region is warm and wet. Much of the land is perfect for industrialized agriculture....Nowadays, as fewer and fewer of the children of aging white landowners want to continue farming, more land has wound up in the hands of trusts and investors. Over the past 20 years, the real power brokers in the Delta are less likely to be good ol' boys and more likely to be suited venture capitalists, hedge-fund managers, and agribusiness consultants who run farms with the cold precision of giant circuit boards.

—Vann R. Newkirk II

In 1984 and 1985, at the height of the farm crisis, the USDA lent a total of \$1.3 billion to nearly 16,000 farmers to help them maintain their land. Only 209 of those farmers were black.

—*The Nation* (2005)

Why are barns red? Hundreds of years ago, farmers painted their barns with linseed oil to help seal the wood and keep it from rotting. Rust was mixed with the oil to keep fungi and moss from growing on the wood. This turned the oil red. Barns are still painted red in honor of that tradition.

—facebook.com/countrycommon

Steers are like a field of shoes.

—Annie Dillard

Democrats and Republicans now have a different experience of life in this country. Broadly speaking, the modern economy works well for cities and badly for the countryside. In recent years, growth has been hyper-concentrated in our cities, which are hubs of technology and finance. Meanwhile, the hinterlands, which rely on agriculture and manufacturing—what you might call the ‘old economy’—have sunk onto a deep decline. There are places in the United States where the recession never ended. For them, it has been 2009 for 10 years. That does something to people, psychologically.

—Tara Westover (2019)

One day a farmer wrote to his son in prison, ‘Son I won’t be able to plant my potatoes this year because I can’t dig the holes. I know if you were here, you’d help me.’ The son sent a reply, ‘Don’t even think about digging them holes pop, cuz that’s where I hid the money,’ The police read the letter, and went to the field and dug all over but never found any money. The next day the son sent another letter, ‘There pop, plant your seeds. That’s the best I can do without being there.’

—Internet Meme

Every loaf of bread is a tragic story of a group of grains that could have become whiskey but didn’t.

—Internet Meme

In 1800, three-quarters of American workers were farmers.

—David Brooks

You don’t know the meaning of hard work until you spend summer baling hay.

—Internet Meme

In the American imagination, at least, the family farm still exists as it does on holiday greeting cards: as a picturesque, modestly prosperous expanse that wholesomely fills the space between the urban centers where most of us live. But it has been declining for generations, and the closing days of 2019 find small farms pummeled from every side; a trade war, severe weather associated with climate change, tanking commodity prices related to globalization, political polarization, and corporate farming defined not by a silo and a red barn but technology and the efficiencies of scale. It is the worst crisis in decades. Chapter 12 farm bankruptcies were up 12 percent in the Midwest from July of 2018 to June of 2019; they're up 50 percent in the Northwest. Tens of thousands have simply stopped farming, knowing that reorganization through bankruptcy won't save them. The nation lost more than 100,000 farms between 2011 and 2018; 12,000 of those between 2017 and 2018 alone.

—Alana Semuels

As a farmer—I care for people, for animals and have a deep respect for the earth. I strive to understand the world in which I live, knowing that collectively, farmers are the foundation of every civilization and the weavers of economic prosperity.

—Brenda Schoepp

Though the mythology of the American rancher looms large in our national imagination, economic pressures and climate change have made small-scale ranching ever more precarious.

—Rachel Monroe

Four hundred years ago, *Coffea arabica*, a tropical shrub bearing glossy green leaves and bright-red berries, was virtually unknown outside of the Arab world and the corner of Ethiopia where it had been discovered in the ninth century—by a goatherd who, legend has it, noticed that his animals would get frisky and stay up all night after nibbling its berries. In the years since people figured out that coffee could affect us in similar ways, the plant has done a great deal for our species, and our species in turn has done a great deal for the plant. We have given it more than 27 million acres of new habitat all around the world, assigned 25 million farming families to its care and feeding, and bid up its price until it became one of the most valuable globally traded crops. Not bad for a shrub that is neither edible nor particularly beautiful or easy to grow.

—Michael Pollan

[Regarding Daylight Savings Time] I'm a farmer. Farmers don't care. The only impact clocks have on farmers is what time the markets open.

—Greg Brophy

Why is there a need for farmers growing corn and soybeans when most people go to Krogers or Albertsons to get groceries anyway?

—*americasbestpics.com*

As we entered World War II, almost a quarter of Americans were employed in farming. After the war ended and the Cold War began, our government decided that growing bigger, better and substantially more food than the Soviets did would be a great way to spread democracy. They began by converting into fertilizer the enormous stockpile of ammonium nitrate left over from the explosives program. The new nitrate-rich fertilizer dramatically increased productivity. Meanwhile, new labor-saving machines replaced inefficient horses, and progressive plant breeding improved yields. Scientific advances such as the use of antibiotics to make animals grow faster were also introduced. By 1960, our farms had become so efficient that fewer farmers were able to grow significantly more food, and farmers dwindled to 9 percent of the population. Small farms were gobbled up by bigger ones, and in suburban America, farms began to vanish.

—Ruth Reichl

Nixon's secretary of agriculture, Earl Butz, was determined to make food even cheaper for Americans. It was the Cold War on steroids, as he urged farmers to 'get big or get out.' The result was the demise of even more small farms and the rise of ever larger and more efficient factory farms. These advances all came at a cost, including to flavor. One day in the '70s, I boarded a plane while carrying a flat of heirloom strawberries from a small California farmer. The effect was electric. The perfume of those aromatic berries filled the plane and, one by one, people rose from their seats to beg for a taste.

—Ruth Reichl

It's funny how a farmer spends countless hours getting land ready, from disking all the way to planting. He spends \$1000's of dollars on fuel, equipment, and repair bills. He spends many nights laying in bed praying for rain or sunshine instead of sleeping. He sweats like no other job will make you. He works like most people wouldn't. He gets yelled at and cussed out by people that get caught behind the tractor traveling down the road, and he spends many minutes of the day wondering if it's worth it! And he does all of this for these tiny seeds! Ask yourself, 'Why would he do that?' The answers are all around you. The plate of food sitting in front of you, the clothes on your back, the shoes on your feet, and the last answer is the one that puzzles most people. It's the dust, love for agriculture, and the satisfaction knowing he done his part at the end of the day! I'd like to thank all the farmers out there that help make the world go round!

—Austin Arnett

For more than a century, farmers around the world have fired hail cannons at the sky to stave off icy precipitation that could destroy delicate crops. (The trend began in the 1890s, when one Austrian wine grower raised a small army to wage war on the clouds.) The tall conical devices are believed to disrupt the formation of hail by blasting shock waves every few seconds during a storm. While proof of their efficacy is anecdotal at best, hail cannons are still in use at vineyards from California to New Zealand.

—Amy Crawford (2020)

### **WISE ADVICE FROM A FARMER'S WIFE**

1. Whenever you return a borrowed pie pan, make sure it's got a warm pie in it.
2. Invite lots of folks to supper. You can always add more water to the soup.
3. There's no such thing as woman's work on a farm. There's just work.
4. Make home a happy place for the children. Everybody returns to their happy place.
5. Always keep a small light on in the kitchen window at night.
6. If your man gets his truck stuck in the field, don't go in after him. Throw him a rope and pull him out with the tractor.
7. Keep the kerosene lamp away from the milk cow's leg.
8. It's a whole lot easier to get breakfast from a chicken than a pig.
9. Always pat the chickens when you take their eggs.
10. It's easy to clean an empty house, but hard to live in one.
11. All children spill milk. Learn to smile and wipe it up.
12. Homemade's always better'n store bought.
13. A tongue's like a knife. The sharper it is the deeper it cuts.
14. A good neighbor always knows when to visit and when to leave.
15. A city dog wants to run out the door, but a country dog stays on the porch 'cause he's not fenced in.
16. Always light birthday candles from the middle outward.
17. Nothin' gets the frustrations out better 'n splittn' wood.
18. The longer dress hem, the more trusting the husband.
19. Enjoy doing your children's laundry. Some day they'll be gone.
20. You'll never catch a runnin' chicken but if you throw seed around the back door you'll have a skillet full by supper.
21. Biscuits brown better with a little butter brushed on 'em.
22. Check your shoelaces before runnin' to help somebody.
23. Visit old people who can't get out. Some day you'll be one.
24. The softer you talk, the closer folks'll listen.
25. The colder the outhouse, the warmer the bed.

—Internet Meme

During the Depression, Black Americans made up more than half of the country's tenant farmers, sharecroppers, and farmworkers in the South. In 1932, when a quarter of white Americans were unemployed, half of Black Americans were. 'In some Northern cities, whites called for African Americans to be fired from any jobs as long as there were whites out of work,' according to the Library of Congress's website for teachers. And Black sharecroppers were often forced out of work by white ones. 'No group was harder hit than African Americans.'

—Sarah Boxer

How to Stay on Top of the Laundry When You Live on a Farm:

- > You can't.
- > Find a new dream.

—Internet Meme

North Americans weren't the first to grind peanuts—the Inca beat us to it by a few thousand years—but peanut butter reappeared in the modern world because of an American, the doctor, nutritionist and cereal pioneer John Harvey Kellogg, who filed a patent for a proto-peanut butter in 1895. Kellogg's 'food compound' involved boiling nuts and grinding them into an easily digestible paste for patients at the Battle Creek Sanitarium, a spa for all kinds of ailments. The original patent didn't specify what type of nut to use, and Kellogg experimented with almonds as well as peanuts, which had the virtue of being cheaper.

—Kate Wheeling

No American is more closely associated with peanuts than George Washington Carver, who developed hundreds of uses for them, from Worcestershire sauce to shaving cream to paper. But our insatiable curiosity for peanuts, scholars say, has obscured Carver's greatest agricultural achievement: helping black farmers prosper, free of the tyranny of cotton.

—Emily Moon

We are shut up in schools and college recitation rooms for ten or fifteen years & come out at last with a bellyful of words & do not know a thing...The farm, the farm is the right school...The farm is a piece of the world, the School house is not.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

The greatest service which can be rendered any country is to add an useful plant to its culture; especially, a bread grain; next in value to bread is oil.

—Thomas Jefferson

There was a farmer who grew excellent quality corn. Every year, he won the award for the best grown corn. One year a newspaper reporter interviewed him and learned something interesting about how he grew it. The reporter discovered that the farmer shared his seed corn with his neighbors. ‘How can you afford to share your best seed corn with your neighbors when they are entering corn in competition with yours each year?’ the reporter asked.

‘Why sir,’ said the farmer, ‘Didn’t you know? The wind picks up pollen from the ripening corn and swirls it from field to field. If my neighbors grow inferior corn, cross-pollination will steadily degrade the quality of my corn. If I am to grow good corn, I must help my neighbors grow good corn.’

—Blogs @Oregon State  
University

One day a father and his rich family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family. When they got back from their trip the father asked his son, ‘How was the trip?’

‘Very good Dad.’

‘Did you see how poor people can be?’ the father asked.

‘Yeah.’

‘And what did you learn?’

The son answered. ‘I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden; they have creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden; they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard; they have a whole horizon.’

When the little boy was finishing, his father was speechless.

His son added, ‘Thanks Dad for showing me how poor we are.’

—Tony Jeary and John  
Davis

Life on America's farms in the 1920s and 1930s meant hard work and frugal habits. Farm families were used to ‘making do’ with what they had, wasting nothing that could be recycled or reused. With feed sacks and flour bags, farmwomen took thriftiness to new heights of creativity, transforming the humble bags into dresses, underwear, towels, curtains, quilts, and other household necessities.

By the 1940s the bag manufacturers were turning out bags in bright colors and printed designs. It was felt that these designs and colors would boost sales, because the woman of the house would always select the brand with the most attractive fabric.

—*National Museum of  
American History*



It is no coincidence that, on all four sides, in all four corners, the borders of the Roman Empire stopped where wine could no longer be made.

—Neel Burton

Cotton is a thirsty crop; according to Tatiana Schlossberg...producing a pound of it can require 100 times more water than producing a pound of tomatoes.

—Rachel Monroe

An astonishing amount of the public architecture of twenty-first-century America was laid down in a few Depression years in the 1930s, but the millions of people employed by the Works Progress Administration. The small airports we landed at were the result of midcentury defense-and-transportation building projects, as were the interstates we flew above. The libraries we found almost everywhere were the result of both public and private investment. The grid-pattern fields of the farmland Midwest had been laid out by the rules of settlement from the earliest days of the republic. The practices that made them the most productive farmland in the world were crucially spurred by land grant universities and agricultural-research schools. The wildlands and ecosystems that have escaped development did so because of their protection as national parks or monuments.

—James Fallows

Against this backdrop of diverse geography, farming and fishing still dominate the [Greek] economy. Many farmers rely on mule transportation and agricultural techniques that have persisted for generations. They tend citrus and olive groves planted by their forefathers, and cultivate grapes, figs, capers, olives, wheat, and tobacco. Family-run enterprises extract marble, pumice, and iron ore from local sources. The island of Halki derives its name from the Greek word for copper (*halkos*), a reminder of the copper mines that once covered it. Manufacturers on the island of Chios have long produced mastichochoria, an aromatic resin used to make cosmetics and employed in other industries as well.

—Laura Brooks

The physical-cultural (or holistic) environment is...the environment as one person sees it, as other people see it, and as it really is. The examples of differences of perception are legion. [For example]: The Mormons in the mid-nineteenth century perceived the land lying between the Great Salt Lake and the Wasatch Mountains as a good location for settlement and irrigation agriculture; other pioneers, emigrating from the forested and humid east of the United State or from Western Europe, passed through the same area and saw nothing but useless desert.

—Marvin Gordon

In reality, plants are actually farming us by giving us oxygen daily until we all eventually decompose so they can consume us.

—Internet Meme

Taking root around 12,000 years ago, agriculture triggered such a change in society and the way in which people lived that its development has been dubbed the ‘Neolithic Revolution.’ Traditional hunter-gatherer lifestyles, followed by humans since their evolution, were swept aside in favor of permanent settlements and a reliable food supply. Out of agriculture, cities and civilizations grew, and because crops and animals could now be farmed to meet demand, the global population rocketed — from some five million people 10,000 years ago, to more than seven billion today.

There was no single factor, or combination of factors, that led people to take up farming in different parts of the world. In the Near East, for example, it’s thought that climatic changes at the end of the last ice age brought seasonal conditions that favored annual plants like wild cereals. Elsewhere, such as in East Asia, increased pressure on natural food resources may have forced people to find homegrown solutions. But whatever the reasons for its independent origins, farming sowed the seeds for the modern age.

—*National Geographic Society*

Paleobotanists have enriched understanding of Greco-Roman society by revealing that ancient Neapolitan seafarers brought aboard their galleys dried fruits, walnuts and chestnuts, valued for their imperishability and high energy content. DNA research on 2.5 million-year-old peach stones in China suggests the fruit was a favorite of early Asian hominids.

—Joshua Hammer

In the 1840s, Europeans brought back a few varieties of potatoes from the Americas and based a huge part of their food economy on the tubers. Then a fungal-like parasite came along, and started rotting the roots. The entire crop was destroyed, and the Irish potato famine was the result. A deadly fungus that has decimated banana plantations in Southeast Asia for 30 years recently migrated to Latin America—the heart of the banana export market. A single strain of the fruit, known as the Cavendish banana, which can be shipped long distances and stay green, accounts for two-thirds of global exports, and has proven to be defenseless against the rot. Farmers have bred shorter wheat plants, with more grains and less chaff, so they can be easily threshed by a machine—but this has significantly reduced wheat varieties, and made the staple vulnerable as well.

—Joshua Hammer

Happiness does have a smell...It's freshly cut hay, bonfires, and crisp country air.  
—Internet Meme

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