



## Michael Pollan on the Importance of Food Systems

**An outline for hobby farmers to consider when reading his article about food policy, the current food system, how the food system should function and the American president**

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Michael Pollan, author of the "The Omnivore's Dilemma" and other popular food-related books, wrote an article for the New York Times Magazine titled "Farmer In Chief," which begins, "Dear Mr. President-Elect."

In it he makes the case that the current political environment is ready for "real reform of the food system."

We think the article is worth reading.

Here are some points we found most interesting: He says our current food system is "designed to produce cheap calories in great abundance." Besides higher food prices, this has resulted in crises of:

health care energy independence climate change

The system should, says Pollan:

provide a healthful diet for all people that focuses on quality and diversity of calories improve the resilience, safety and security of our food supplies reconceive agriculture as part of the solution to environment problems like climate change

The gist of Pollan's recommendations:

"Wean the American food system off its heavy 20th-century diet of fossil fuel and put it back on a diet of contemporary sunshine."

To do this, he describes changes needed to in the "many moving parts" of the food chain:

The farm field The way food is processed and sold Our kitchens and the American dinner table

He details three main goals extensively:

**Resolarizing the American Farm:** encourage the growth of more diverse crops (rather than just focusing mainly on a few key money-makers or commodity crops) and cover crops that promote fertile soil...and that's just a fraction of the definition.

**Reregionalizing the Food System:** Decentralize the food system by changing the infrastructure to one that can support diversified farming, which would shorten the food chain and reduce the amount of fossil fuel needed. A few tactics he mentions: Four-season farmers' markets, agricultural enterprise zones, local meat-inspection corps, strategic grain reserve, regionalized federal food procurement and a federal definition of food (to avoid things like junk food being considered real food).

**Rebuilding America's Food Culture:** Begin with our children and in their schools to understand the basics of growing and cooking food; also offer more toughness and clarity in how health-problems can be caused by the types and quantities of food we all eat.

He ends by asking the new president to set an example in the White House.

Read the entire article here (registration may be required)>>

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