



## Buzzword ... or Bible?

### A letter from the editor of Hobby Farms.

By Karen Keb Acevedo

A really important topic—and buzzword—these days is “sustainability.” Some people have come to hate the word, relegating it to an all-purpose catchphrase; others believe it to be quite simple and appropriate in context.

I was having lunch with HF’s vet columnist, Dr. Dianne Hellwig, recently and we discussed sustainability as it relates to food. We discussed local food, the book *Fast Food Nation* and our desire to support local food producers. But, we admitted, this isn’t always easy, as there are far more “quick service restaurants” (as they’re called now) than great local-food ones. She asked me if I cook much and I said yes, “almost every night.” She sighed and said she was so tired after a long day working with animals and students that she couldn’t imagine doing that. Most of us can’t either.

In “Up Your Sustainability” on page 54, contributing editor Carol Ekarius describes the various ways we can make our farms—and lives—more sustainable in the long run. From getting more land into native perennials (such as pastures, hay fields, windbreaks and riparian vegetation strips) to reducing your “phantom loads” at home, you’ll learn a lot of creative ways to reduce your footprint on the Earth and therefore increase your ... sustainability.

Dianne and I admitted that due to our jobs, we were never going to have the time to churn our own butter, but there is definitely something we can all do. Whether it’s simply replacing your incandescent bulbs with fluorescents, driving a little less or carpooling, at this stage of the game we should all be conscientious about the choices we make.

For me, I’ve been trying to avoid buying meat, vegetables and fruits that have been trucked in from far-off locations—grapes from Chile, lettuce from California (“Don’t we grow lettuce in Kentucky?” —easy to say in June!) and grassfed beef from Australia.

I thoroughly understand the reasons for these items being on my grocery store’s shelves, but I have decided to spend my food dollars on something I believe to be sustainable. Flying in sides of beef from Australia isn’t helping the environment, or American farmers. So I’ve bought a share in a local CSA farm, Terrapin Hill Farm in Harrodsburg, Ky., and I supplement that with my own homegrown vegetables. I hear they also offer fresh chicken when you order in advance and farm-fresh eggs (a dozen for \$2!), so those items are next on the list. The cardboard box that arrives every week—and has me up to my elbows in Swiss chard, kale and broccoli—is what compels me to cook “almost every night.” It’s like canning in the summer ... use it (now!) or lose it.

Evaluate your daily patterns and figure out what changes you can make to up your sustainability. Chances are, at least one thing will come to mind. So ... how many hobby farmers does it take to screw in a light bulb? E-mail your punchline to [hobbyfarms@bowtieinc.com](mailto:hobbyfarms@bowtieinc.com)