



# BAKIN' B BLACK

ON THE EDGE OF COMMON SENSE

## Sustainable Farming?

### Really?

Most of the agricultural community watches the pied pipers of "Sustainable Farming" the same way grandparents watch their grandkids play with toy trains. We humor them but don't try to explain how real trains work. Many "Sustainable Farming" proposals are the exact opposite of their name. "Model T Farm-

ing," or "Third World Farming" or "Farming to Feed the Few" would be more accurate. As a caveat, I must credit those scientists seeking realistic solutions to agriculture's booming production capabilities. However, the dream world lead by Luddites and New Age gurus are proposing a return to

farming methods used in the first half of the 20th century; a time they describe as "not relying on toxic chemicals, pesticides, synthetic fertilizer and genetically modified foods. A time when animals moved freely, consumed a natural diet, and were not confined."

I do offer a tip of the hat to hobby farmers with a nice garden, some chickens or 15 sheep as 4-H projects. Their contribution is appreciated, but they realize very quickly that they can't grow or raise enough to feed their families for a fortnight, much less fifty of their urban neighbors. Which, of course, is the elephant in the room. After World War II the

population of our country and our world began to explode! In the 1970's scientists were increasingly convinced a new "Ice Age" was coming and "Global Starvation" was imminent. But help was on the way. Monsanto, Dow, John Deere, Pfizer, Monsanto, Pioneer, plus a battalion of academic and privately funded scientists had seen it coming and were already root-deep into research. Their objective was to increase production of food and fiber from a decreasing number of acres (a result of urban encroach-

ment), AND keep it affordable for the masses. Look around you, my friends. They did it...and saved the world. Indulge me a few statistics:

In the last 50 years the United States and Canada have not only been able to keep up with the skyrocketing global demand for food, we have shared our research and taught the third World how to feed itself! THAT is what I call "Sustainable Farming." Agriculture, great grandpa's agriculture, before

I suggest we call the methods that the pied pipers promote something that more accurately describes their toy train idyllic vision. For the sake of clarity how 'bout "Subsistence Level Farming"?

"subsistence: syn. (poverty, insufficient, hand to mouth) Roget's Thesaurus

the advertisement, concentrated genetically was, and "tainable" by any definition.

1. U.S. wheat production (bu/acre)	1950s 25.4	2000s 33.5	2020	2024
2. Total wheat production (bil bu/year)	1.057	2.2		
3. Beef production (lbs/cow)	208	722		
4. Total beef slaughter (mil head/year)	69.5	110.8		
5. Population of United States (millions)	152.2	311.8		
6. Population of world (billions)	2.5	6.9	7.5	8.2

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Grass & Grain, February 5, 2013

House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee  
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