

Feeding the World: Sustainable Agriculture and Regional Self-Sufficiency

C. Beau

Geyser Corconne, France

Abstract

Is it possible for agriculture to be economically, ecologically, and socially sustainable while feeding the world? Currently, in some countries, macro-political interests are urgently promoting sustainable agriculture; while at the same time, local advocates, farmers, consumers, and cooperatives are seeking ways and means for achieving regional self-sufficiency. For example, expanding irrigation development may indeed increase the production of non-agricultural commodities, but it may contribute very little to agricultural sustainability.

Today, throughout the world, there is a new and growing alliance of consumers, producers, gardeners, and environmentalists that are developing truly sustainable agricultural production and marketing systems that are directed toward local and regional self-sufficiency. This movement has contributed to the emergence of different strategies for sustainability and self-sufficiency in agriculture. Each one is based on local and regional experiences which have established meaningful linkages between agricultural producers, consumers, environmentalists, and all levels of society. It is most important that the doctrines of this alliance be considered in developing future agricultural policy agendas.