

Eat-onomics: The Ten Most Inspiring People in Sustainable Food

BY STEPHANIE SCHOMER Fri Mar 5, 2010



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The way America eats has to change, that's no secret. Thanks to the efforts of these ten trailblazers, that change might be closer than we think.



Dan Barber, executive chef and co-owner of Blue Hill Farm

[Barber](#) is the brains behind the "Know thy Farmer" philosophy embraced at Blue Hill Farm. He was recently honored at the USA Network's Character Approved Awards for his achievements in "green" food cultivation and preparation. A passionate advocate for regional farm networks, Barber continues to practice what he preaches at his family owned farms, as well as with the nonprofit Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture.

Deborah Kane, Vice President of Food and Farms at Ecotrust

Last month, Ecotrust began allowing Northwest food producers and buyers to utilize FoodHub, an online resource aimed to simplify their connections with each other and increase food trade in the Pacific Northwest. Kane continues to expound Ecotrust's mission to inspire fresh thinking that promotes social equity, economic opportunity and environmental well-being.

Mike Yohay, CEO of Cityscape Farms

Yohay's [Cityscape Farms](#) continues to work to produce great-tasting fresh food for local buyers with its hydroponic greenhouses. "Hydroponic farming is incredibly innovative and resource economical compared to conventional farming. It's well-suited for cities because you can do it anywhere," says Yohay.





Gary Hirshberg, CEO, Stonyfield Farm

In the past 26 years, [Hirshberg](#) has taken his organic yogurt company and turned it into an organic yogurt empire worth \$340 million. Stonyfield Farm doesn't just deliver high-quality food to consumers, but pays farmers 60-100% more than conventional farmers, to ensure the use of sustainable farming practices. What does he ask of his customers? "When you shop, you're really voting for the kind of world you want. It is power," he says. "We should use that power for good."

Roger Doiron, founder, Kitchen Gardeners International

[Doiron](#) can proudly take credit for bringing a garden to the lawn of the White House with Eat the View, a campaign that rallied Americans' desire to see a healthier First Family. "I knew this garden had been proposed in the past, and it had its champions--Alice Waters, Michael Pollan," he says. "I wasn't a rock star like them, but thought I could play the role of a roadie, making sure the mics are on and the amps are cranked up to make sure other people's voices were heard."

Jamie Oliver, chef

[The Naked Chef](#) is on a mission to bring healthy food to every child in America. His campaign, Jamie's Food Revolution, aims to replace junk food and processed snacks with fresh and nutritious meals, in school and at home. ABC will air a six-part series tracking the campaign as Oliver heads to Huntington, West Virginia, which has been called the unhealthiest city in America. If Oliver can make Huntington healthy, he might be able to make America healthy.



Melanie Cheng, founder, FarmsReach

San Francisco-based [FarmsReach](#) pairs farmers up with buyers for sustainable local food systems, with plans to be nationwide by 2011. "If you look at statistics, farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture are awesome, growing distribution methods, but they still make up less than 1% of food volume sold in the country," she says. "That's why we're working with the wholesale channel, for distributors and bigger institutions."

Michael Pollan, author, *Food Rules*

Pollan's latest book, *Food Rules*, offers memorable tips on making wise eating choices. In his new book, Pollan (who has been described as the nation's most trusted resource for food-related issues) shows Americans that "eating doesn't have to be so complicated."



Dickson Despommier, Vertical Farms Project

The [Vertical Farms Project](#) is the brainchild of Despommier, a professor at Columbia, and his students. Envisioning a world of sustainable farms housed in urban skyscrapers, the project proposes paying traditional farmers to simply plant trees on their land, in an attempt to sequester carbon from the atmosphere. Crazy? Maybe. But it's inspiring more thought, more solutions.

Robert Kenner, director, *Food Inc.*

Kenner's documentary *Food Inc.* did its fair share of grossing viewers out by exposing the heinous slaughter practices (and eating habits) found across our country. More importantly, the film, which showcased leaders like Hirshberg, showed that it is possible to eat healthy and enjoy it.