

On World Food Day, Celebrating the Power of Regenerative Organic Farming

by Deirdre Fulton via stacey - Common Dreams *Saturday, Oct 17 2015, 9:07am*

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As environmentalists, humanitarians, and farmers from around the globe celebrate the 35th annual [World Food Day](#) on Friday, sustainability advocates are heralding the capacity of organic regenerative agriculture and agroecology to address wide-ranging challenges from climate change to public health to hunger.



"On this World Food Day we face two interlinked planetary challenges: to produce enough food for all people and to sequester enough carbon in the soil to reverse climate change," [said](#) Tom Newmark, co-founder of The Carbon Underground, on Friday.

Newmark made his statements at a Washington, D.C. press conference hosted by the nonprofit organization [Regeneration International](#) and featuring a panel of 10 international experts on organic agriculture, carbon sequestration, and world hunger.

"There is one solution for those challenges: regenerative organic agriculture," he continued. "We can no longer afford to rely on chemical farming, as the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides has destroyed soils worldwide and rendered them unable to rebuild soil organic matter."

What's more, as author, activist, and panel participant Vandana Shiva [wrote](#) in an op-ed on Friday, "For all the destruction it causes, the industrial food system produces only 30% of the food eaten by people. If we continue, we will soon have a dead planet and no food."

However, she pointed to "another road to food security. The road that was abandoned by research institutes and governments under the influence of giant chemical corporations (now seed and Biotechnology Corporations). This is the road of agroecology and small scale farming, which still produce 70% of the food."

Regenerative practices and land use, "scaled up globally on billions of acres of farmland, grassland and forests, can feed the world and reverse global warming and deteriorating public health," stated Ronnie Cummins, international director for the Organic Consumers Association.

"An international alliance of small farmers, ranchers and indigenous communities, allied with

conscious consumers, can literally cool the planet, restore soil health and biodiversity, and move us away from climate catastrophe and societal degeneration," Cummins said.

In an op-ed on Thursday, Marcia DeLonge of the Union of Concerned Scientists [outlined the top tenets](#) of agroecology, which include: animal-crop integration; use of locally adapted seeds and breeds; crop rotation; and agroforestry—the mixing of trees or shrubs into farm operations to provide additional income and to shade, shelter, and protect plants, animals, or water resources.

"Farming systems are only truly sustainable if the food they grow winds up on the forks of consumers," DeLonge noted. "This means that [transitioning to an agroecological farming system](#) at large scale means more than just picking and choosing from the practices listed above. Instead, thinking big about agroecology means developing the science, business models, and policies to support healthier relationships between agroecosystems, producers, and consumers, and building from there to produce real transformative change."

To that end, a report from small-scale food producers [publicized](#) by Friends of the Earth International was presented this week to the United Nations [Committee on World Food Security](#) in Rome, in hopes that policymakers will embrace agroecological processes "rather than support forces that destroy them."

"Agroecology practiced by small scale producers generates local knowledge, promotes social justice, nurtures identity and culture and strengthens the economic viability of rural areas," states [the report](#) (pdf), which was developed at the International Forum of Agroecology in Mali this year. "Agroecology is political; it requires us to challenge and transform structures of power in society. We need to put the control of seeds, biodiversity, land and territories, waters, knowledge, culture and the commons in the hands of the peoples who feed the world."

This 17-minute documentary below from the Fair World Project further delves into how small farmers are helping "cool the planet":

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