



Philosophical Ponderings of a Farmer

Farming and Anthropocentrism

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For all my raving about small farms in *SMALL FARMS ARE THE FUTURE*, I want to be clear that small farms are still very anthropocentric.

Since I can remember, I have always considered myself in tune with nature. And I would like to think that I consider all species just as important as humans, but when it comes down to it, like most people, I have a distinctly anthropocentric worldview. I would like to change that, to live as though all species are of equal importance, but I'm not exactly sure how to do that.

How do I reconcile planting food for humans with this ideal? I plant row crops, and no matter how much I work with the land to support biodiversity and ecological health, my farm is inherently separate from the natural world. My choice of row cropping goes back to that whole quasi-capitalist financial sustainability thing. While it sounds so nice to have a true regenerative permaculture farm, with food forests, plant guilds, and opportunities for foraging this here and that there, that system is - by design - diversified and inefficient. And therefore, in today's mainstream world, it isn't financially viable - at least not without a major, society-wide shift in mindset.

And then I think, but isn't it better to have more people growing like me than to have more of our country's food come from the industrial food system, which most certainly isn't in tune with nature at all? Yes, obviously. But what if I want to do more? Do I want to do more? I'm already dedicating most of my time to small-scale farming, is it also my responsibility to bring about social change? Probably not. And yet, I want to. But where to begin? I think that humans have so much incredible potential that many of us will never realize because of the capitalist-colonial worldview that is ingrained in us. I definitely don't have the answers, just so many more questions. I'll let you know if inspiration strikes next time I'm harvesting salad from that 50' row of mine.