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# Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture

Fall 2024 LD Debate Topic

**Resolved: In the United States,  
agroecology ought to be prioritized  
over industrial agriculture.**

This UIL Lincoln Douglas Debate topic will be debated September through December 2024.

Gregory Rehmke • [economicthinking.org/uil2024/](https://economicthinking.org/uil2024/) • [grehmke@gmail.com](mailto:grehmke@gmail.com)

# Exploring the connections between Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture

Agroecology builds on the ancestral practices, insights, and contributions of Indigenous food systems and studies whole agroecosystems – not only their biology and ecology but social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions as well.

Although agroecology can be traced back to agronomists and zoologists starting in the 1920s, it emerged strongly in Latin America in the 1970s, among both inter-disciplinary academics and NGOs concerned with the ecological and social impacts of industrialized agriculture.

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## Exploring the connections between Agroecology and Regenerative Agriculture

“NGOs felt the urgent need to combat rural poverty and to conserve and regenerate the deteriorated resource base of small farms, and saw in agroecology a new approach to agricultural research and resource management strategies that lent itself to a more participatory approach for technology development and dissemination.”

The “Green Revolution,” characterized by high-input agriculture – commercial seeds, fertilizers, and fossil fuel-based pesticides deployed on monoculture plantations – has led to massive small farm loss, farmer indebtedness, and shrinking biodiversity.



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### The Counter-Agricultural Revolution

Should we abolish farming? Not if we care about human well-being.

SALL ZINET — MAR 15, 2024



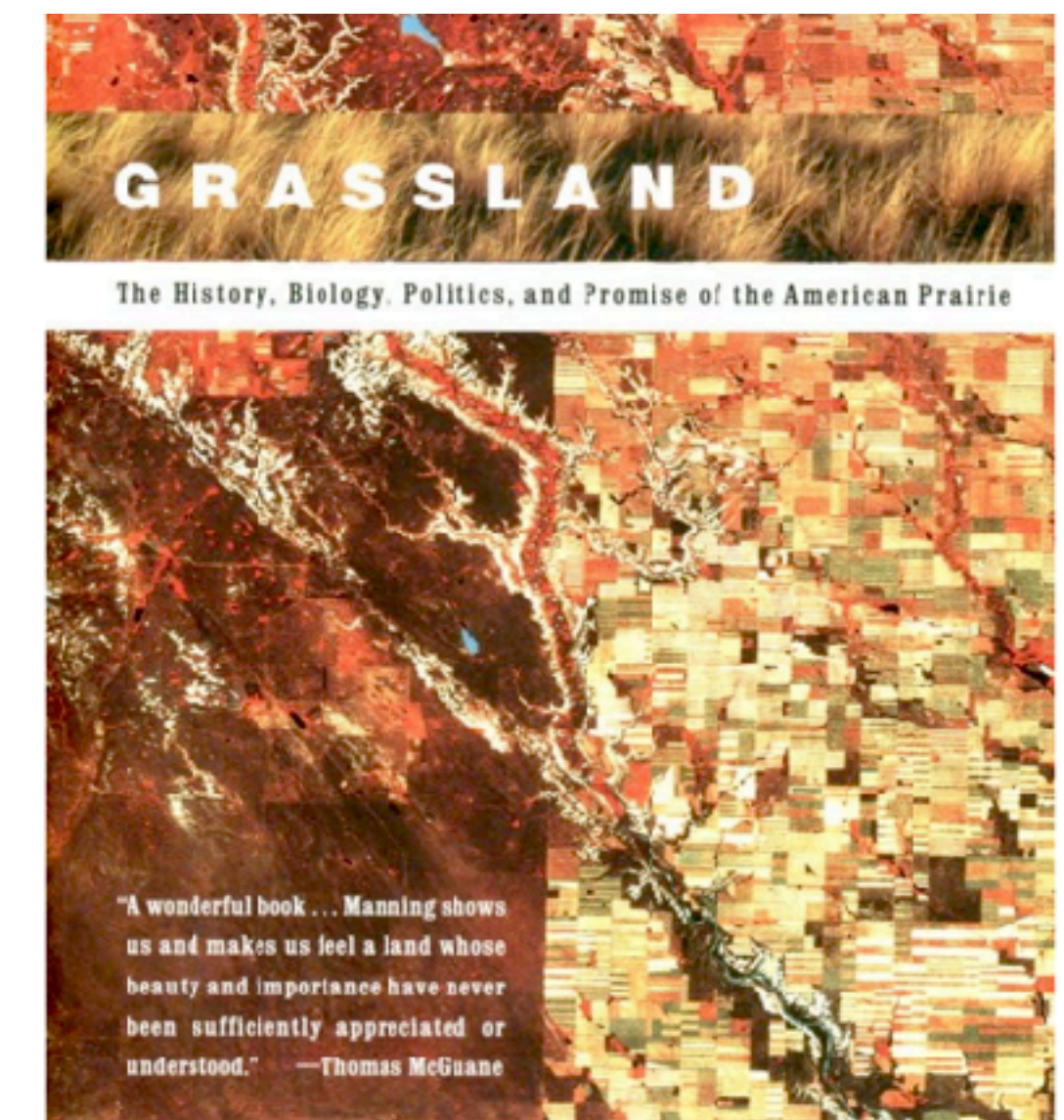
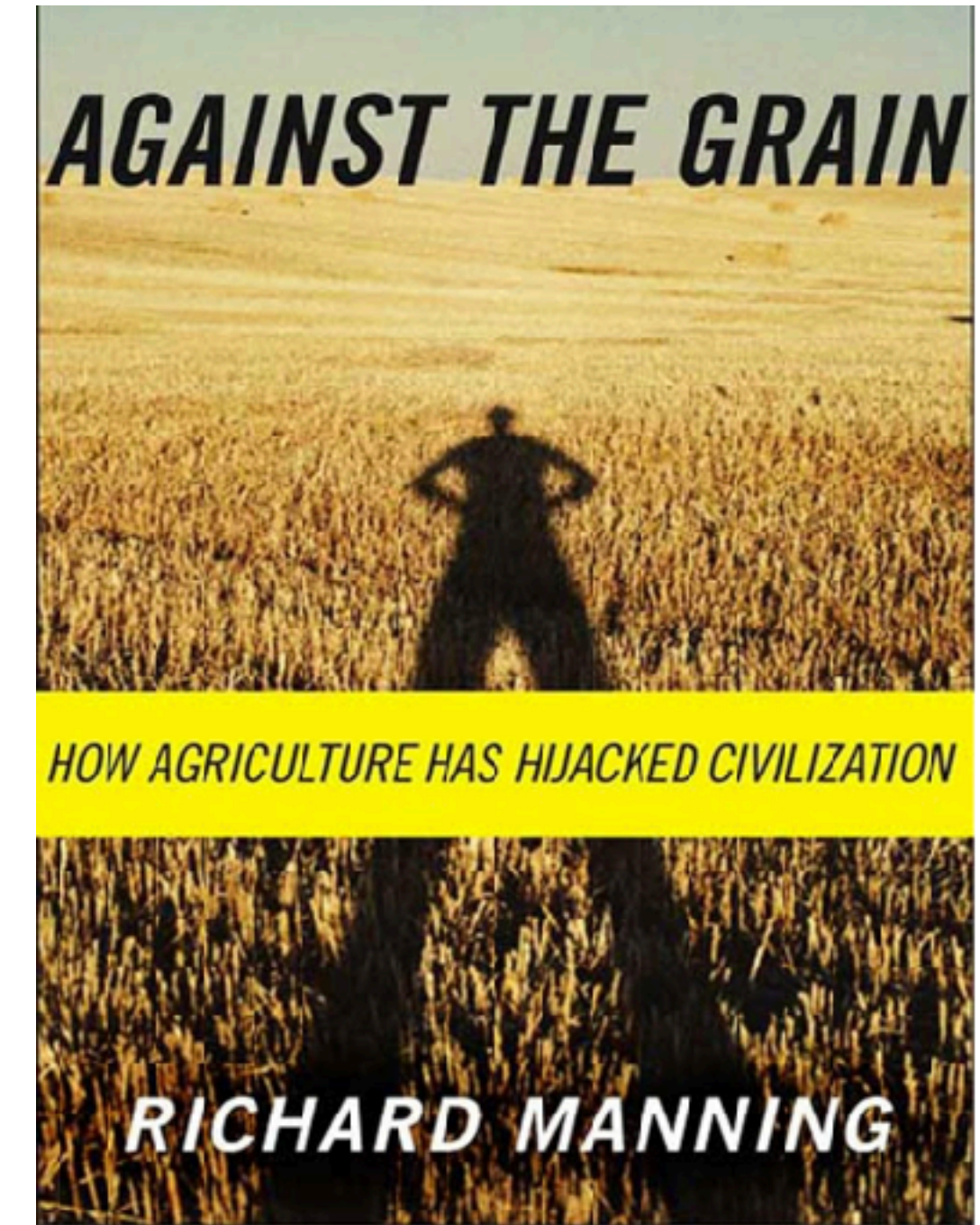
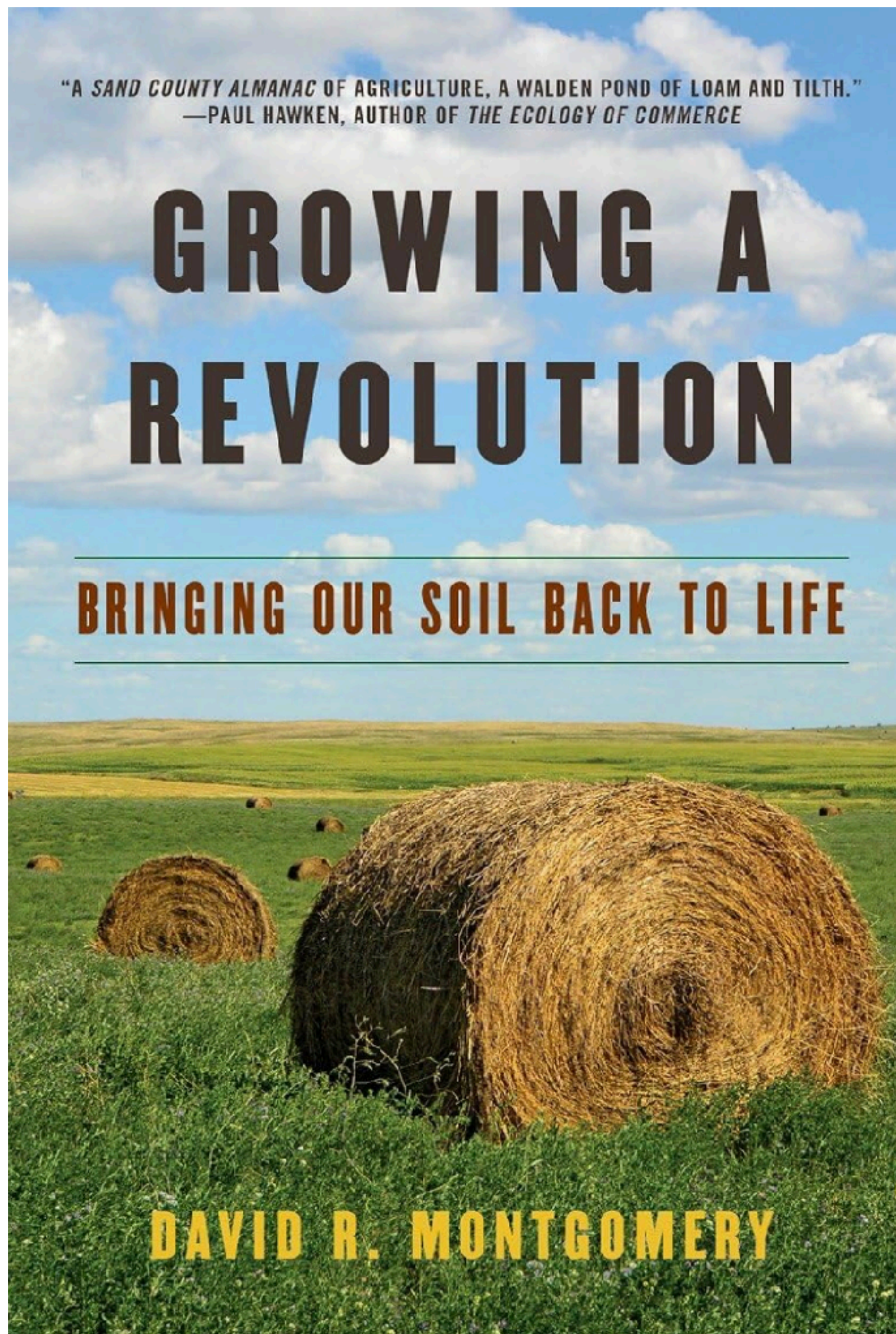
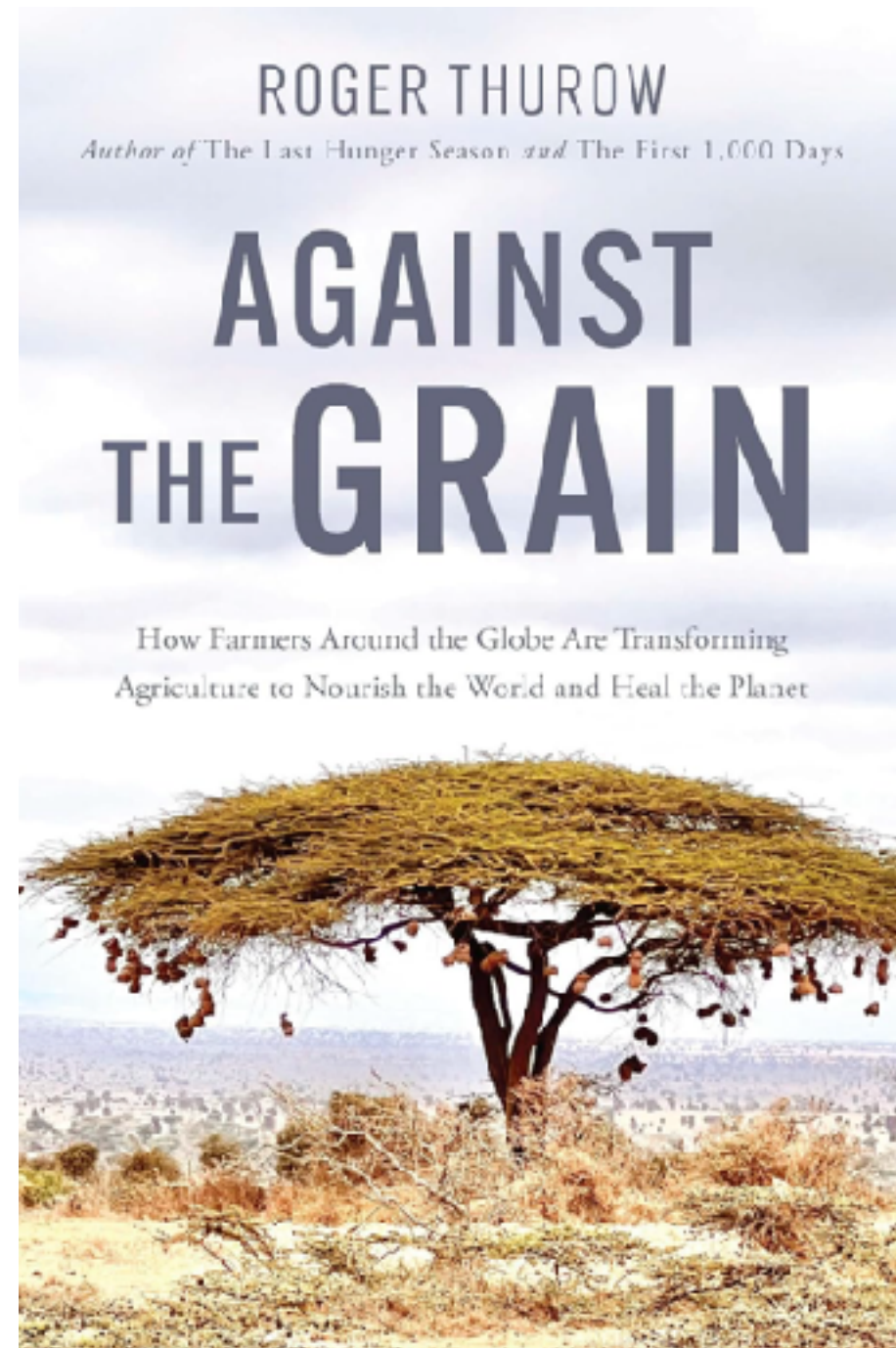
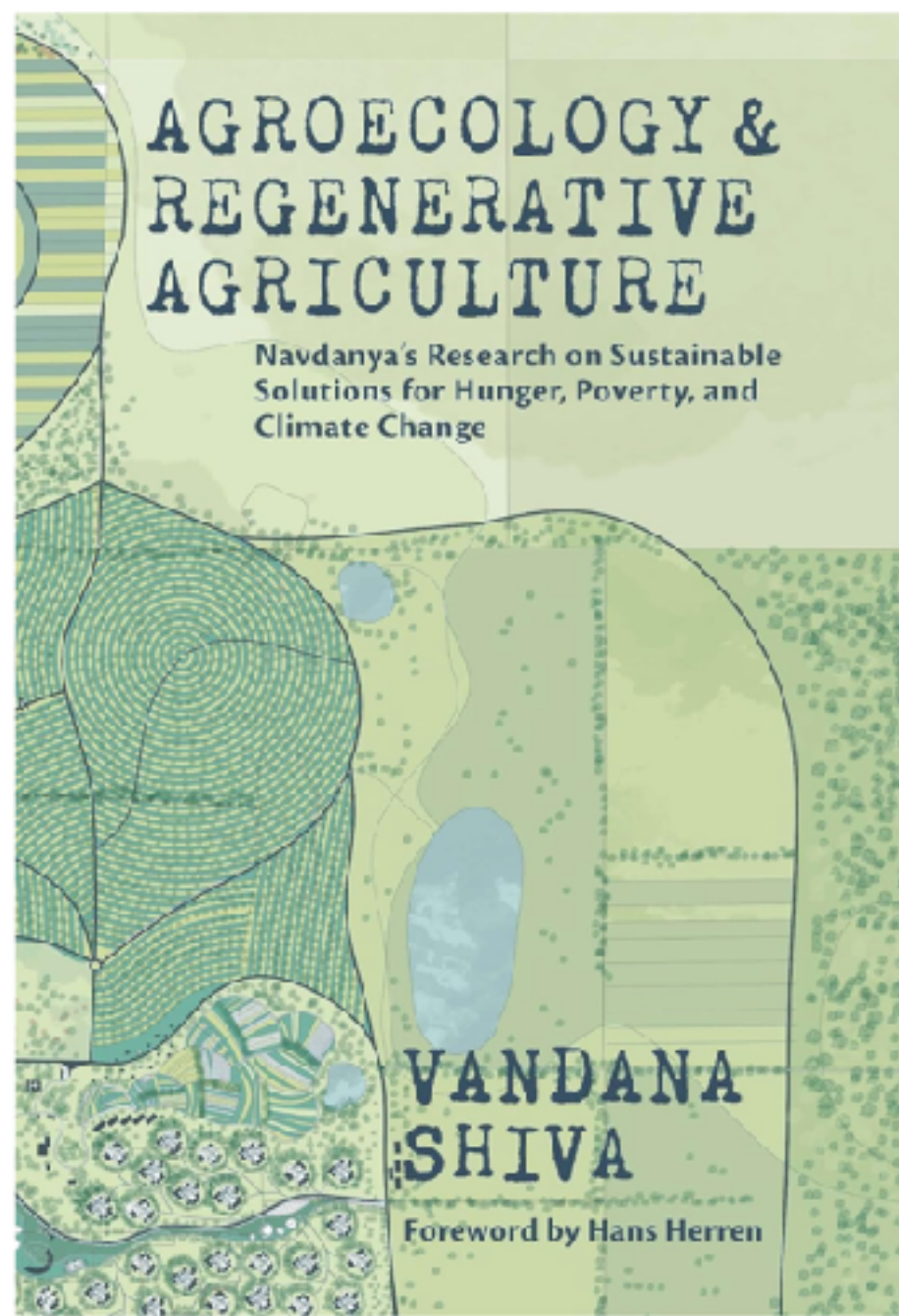


Explainer  
series:

# What is agroecology?



<https://youtu.be/ecq87jIItMo>



## A critical perspective on agroecology - In conversation with Nassib Mugwanya



the Netherlands - 24 May, 2022

Author: Koen Kusters

"I want to help smallholders like my grandmother to have access to innovations that can help to feed their families and communities," says Nassib Mugwanya. After years of working as an outreach officer with smallholders in Uganda, Mugwanya is now a doctoral student at North Carolina State University. Here he talks with Koen Kusters about the importance of innovations for smallholder farming, and the risks of romanticising traditional farming practices.

**You wrote an article in 'outlook on agriculture' criticizing agroecology. What is the essence of your criticism?**

*I tried to be open minded. I wanted to understand how agroecology could help to achieve change. But I realized that it is essentially arguing for a status quo. It is presented as a model to achieve transformation, but at the same time it limits access to options. It locks people out from advances in science, such as modern inputs, hybrids and genetically modified seeds. We are confronted with changing circumstances due to climate change, and I don't think that relying on only nature-based approaches gives enough headway to tackle the complex challenges that smallholders face.*

**Resolved: In the United States, agroecology ought to be prioritized over industrial agriculture.**



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The 7 largest wind farms in the world



### A Guide to Wind Farms in Australia

Posted by [Katrina Hasdell](#) 11/09/2023



### How Solar Farms Harvest the Sun's Energy - CNET

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## How Solar Farms Harvest the Sun's Energy

Amber waves of grain are being replaced by fields of solar panels. What to know about a fast-growing type of farm.



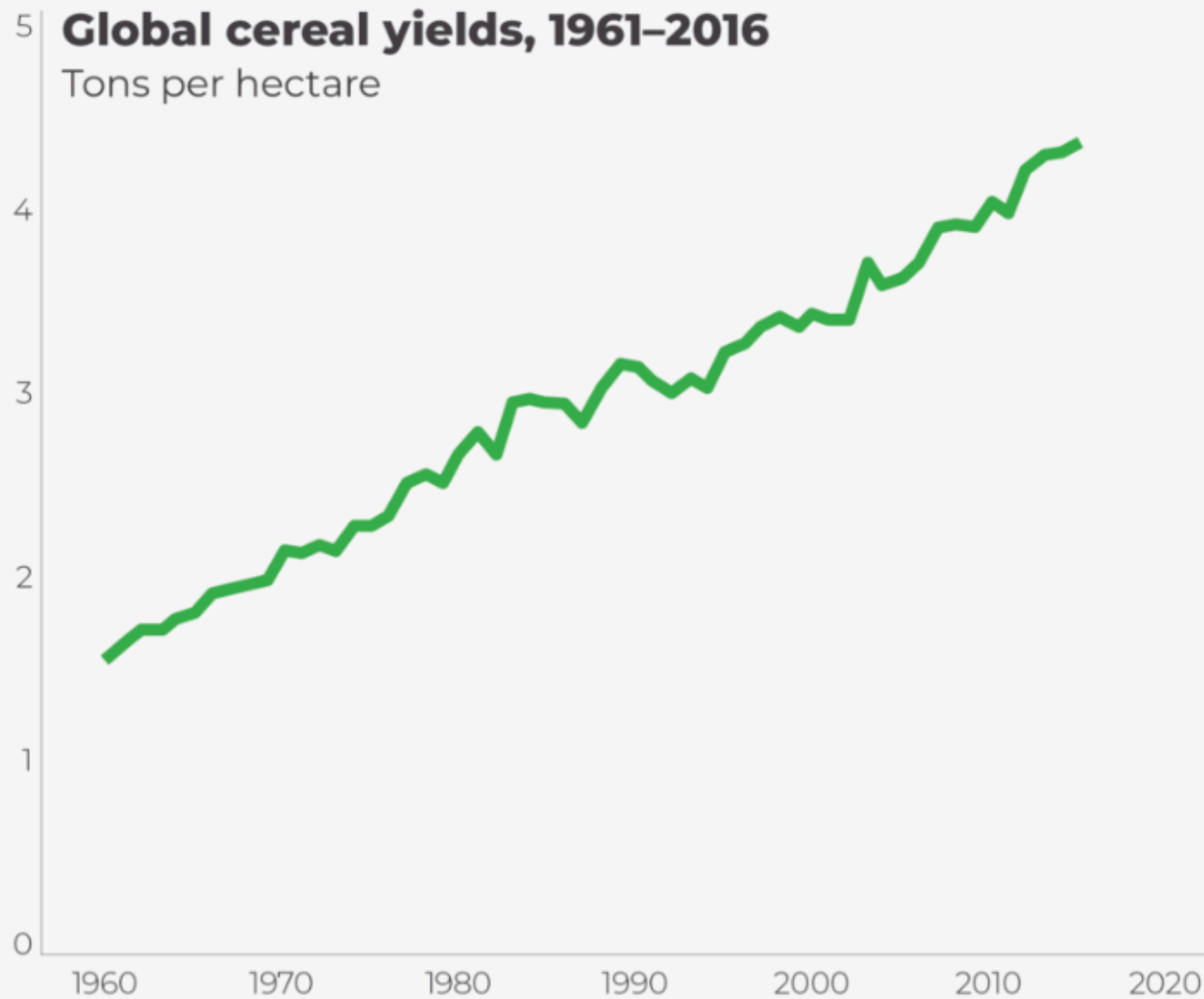
Farms aren't just for crops these days. Massive solar arrays are popping up on farmland, providing an growing portion of energy to the electric grid.

Bing Guan/Bloomberg via Getty Images

# Yields Increasing

Since the Green Revolution in the 1960s, global cereal yields have continued to increase, nourishing the growing population.

MARIAN L. TUPY, RONALD BAILEY — MAR 1, 2023



Source: World Bank, "Cereal Yield" chart.

Blog Post | Agriculture

# The Counter-Agricultural Revolution

Should we abolish farming? Not if we care about human well-being.

SAUL ZIMET — MAR 15, 2024

Listen to this article

▶ 0:00 / 9:52 1X





Many examples come to mind. Sri Lanka's government banned synthetic fertilizers for about six months in 2021, eventually rolling back the ban due to its exacerbation of mass food shortages and undernourishment across the country. In 2022 the Dutch government pushed unprecedented crackdowns on agriculture to reduce nitrogen emissions. ...

“We have to move away from the low- cost model of food production,” said the Dutch politician MP Tjeerd de Groot. Dutch News .nl reports that, “Dutch agriculture has to become a lot less efficient or the environment will suffer even more, say agro-environmental scientists.”

George Monbiot, award- winning environmental activist and columnist at The Guardian, takes this perspective to its logical conclusion in his Sunday Times (London) bestselling 2022 book *Regenesis: Feeding the World Without Devouring the Planet*, in which he advocates for government abolition of farming. “Campaigners, chef, and food writers rail against ‘intensive farming’ and the harm it does to us and our world,” he writes. “But the problem is not the adjective. It’s the noun.”

[humanprogress.org/the-counter-agricultural-revolution](https://humanprogress.org/the-counter-agricultural-revolution)

## The Counter-Agricultural Revolution

Should we abolish farming? Not if we care about human well-being.

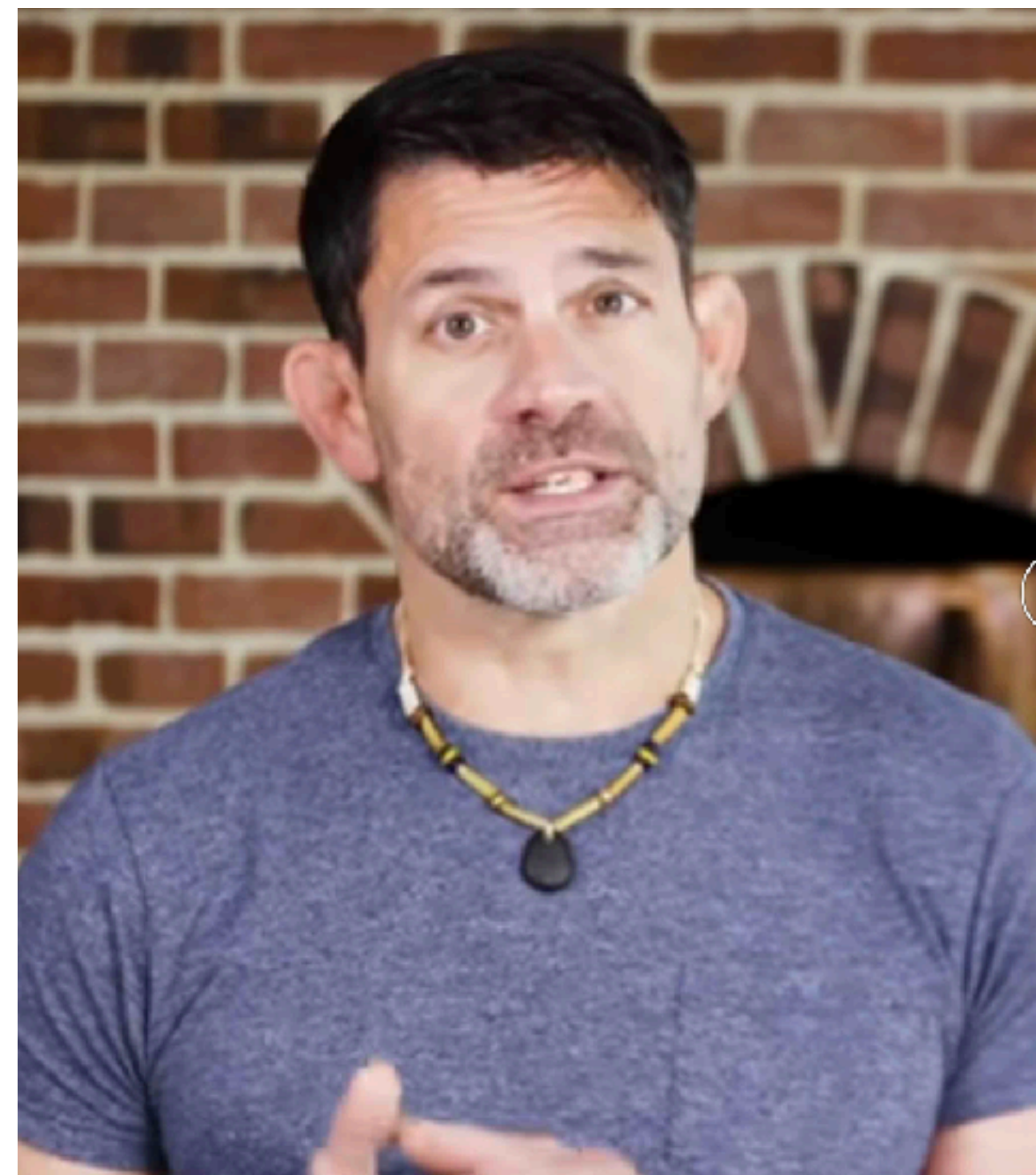
SAUL ZIMET — MAR 15, 2024





## What Ancient Farmers Had Right About Corn That We Ignore | WIRED

Maize is one of the most widely grown grains in the world. The way that much of it is processed has contributed to making millions of people sick over the past 500 years. Dr. Bill Schindler talks ...



## NIXTAMALIZATION

- DETOXIFIES
- NEUTRALIZES ANTI-NUTRIENTS
- RAISES CALCIUM CONTENT
- INCREASES PROTEIN QUALITY
- IMPROVES AMINO ACID BALANCE
- RELEASES NIACIN





📅 April 10, 2023

📌 Functional Nutritional Therapy

## Ancestral wisdom turns corn into a highly nutritious food

By Teresa Sandoval-Schaefer

SHARE THIS POST



*...most Americans don't know about the original corn processing method used by Mesoamericans called Nixtamalization [from the nahuatl "nextli" (ashes) and "tamalli" (cooked corn dough)].*

[radicalancestralhealth.com/ancestral-wisdom-turns-corn-into-a-highly-nutritious-food/](https://radicalancestralhealth.com/ancestral-wisdom-turns-corn-into-a-highly-nutritious-food/)

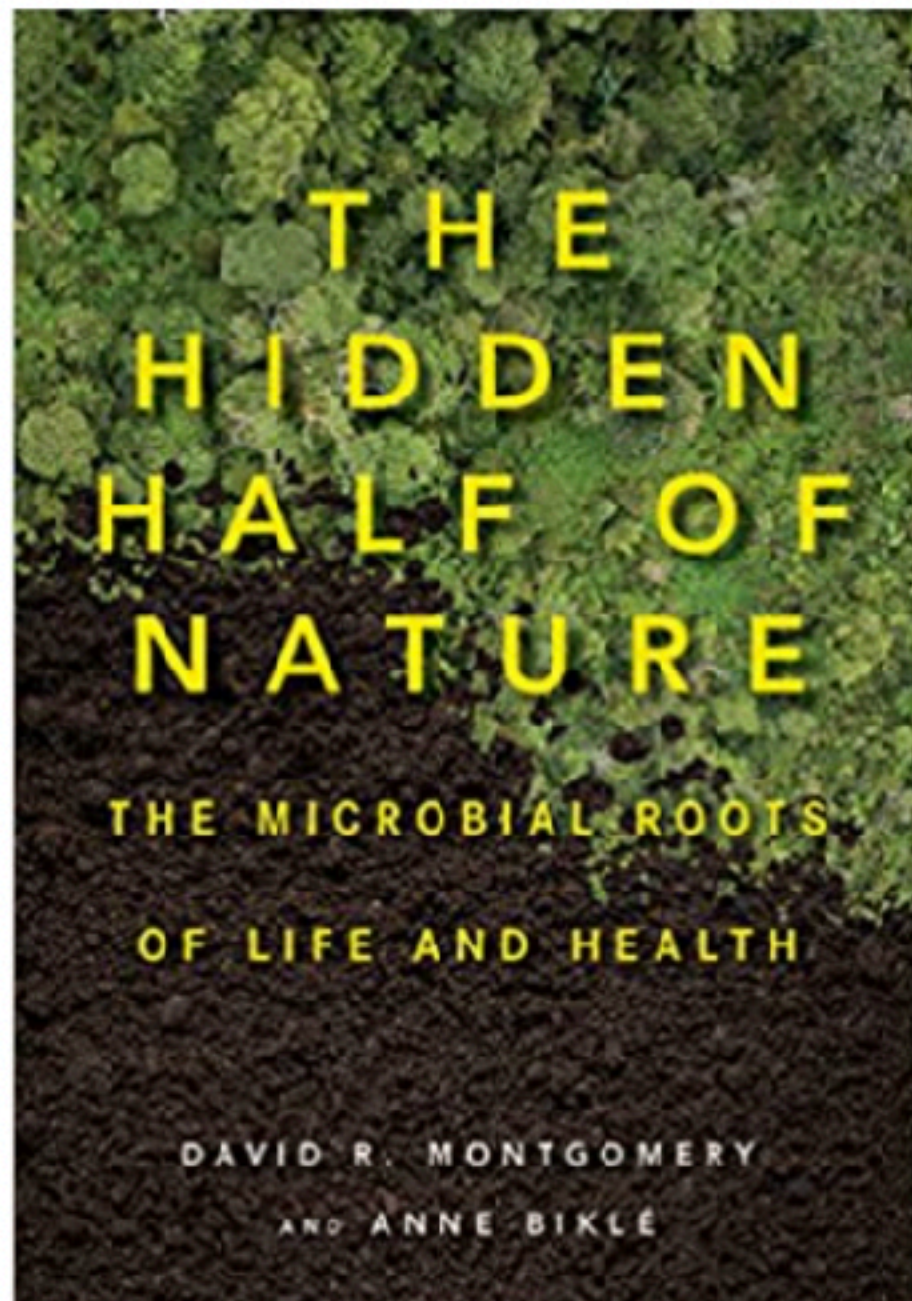


## Does healthy soil mean healthy humans?

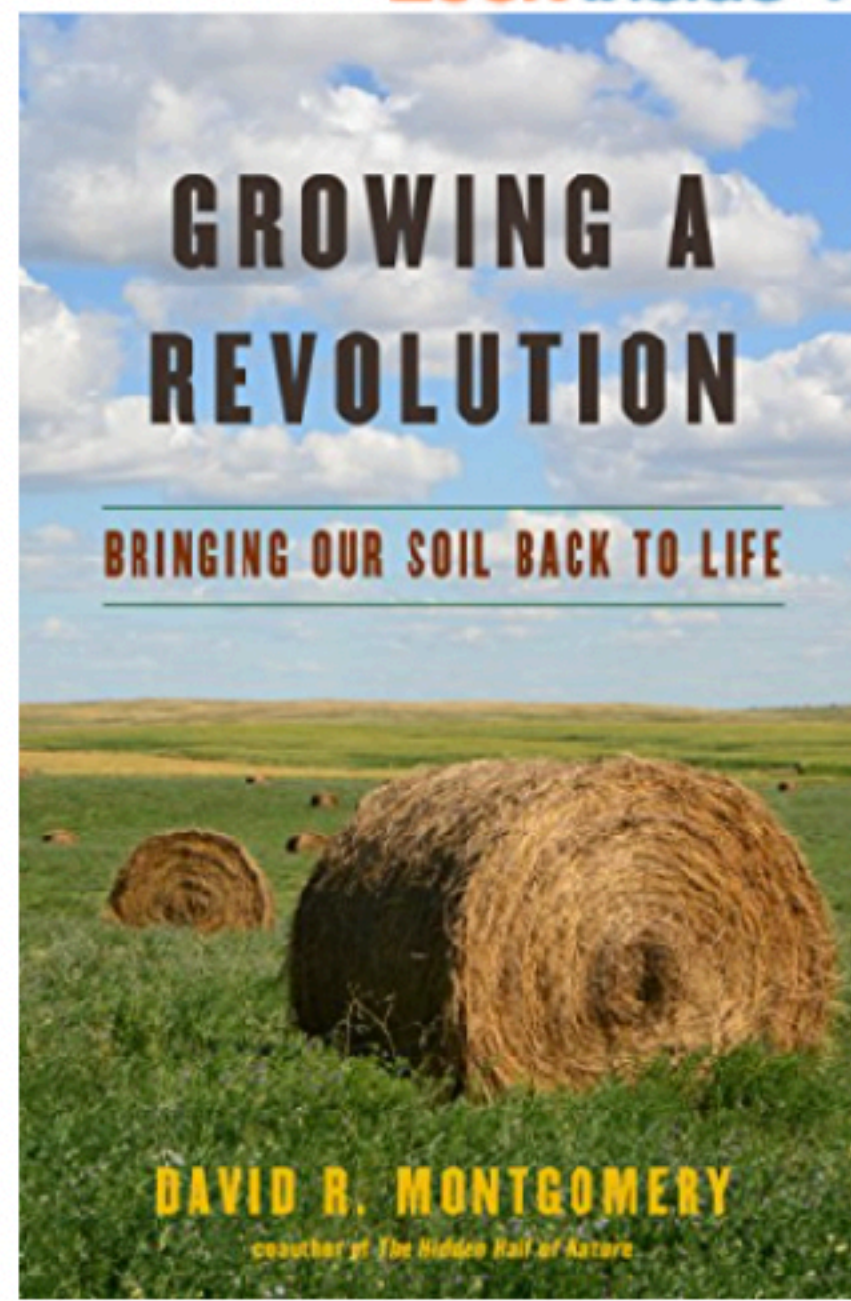


Can improving the health of our soil mean better health for people? David Montgomery, Anne Biklé, and Stephan Van Vilet discuss the connection between soil health and human health. YouTube · Diet Doctor · 2 weeks ago

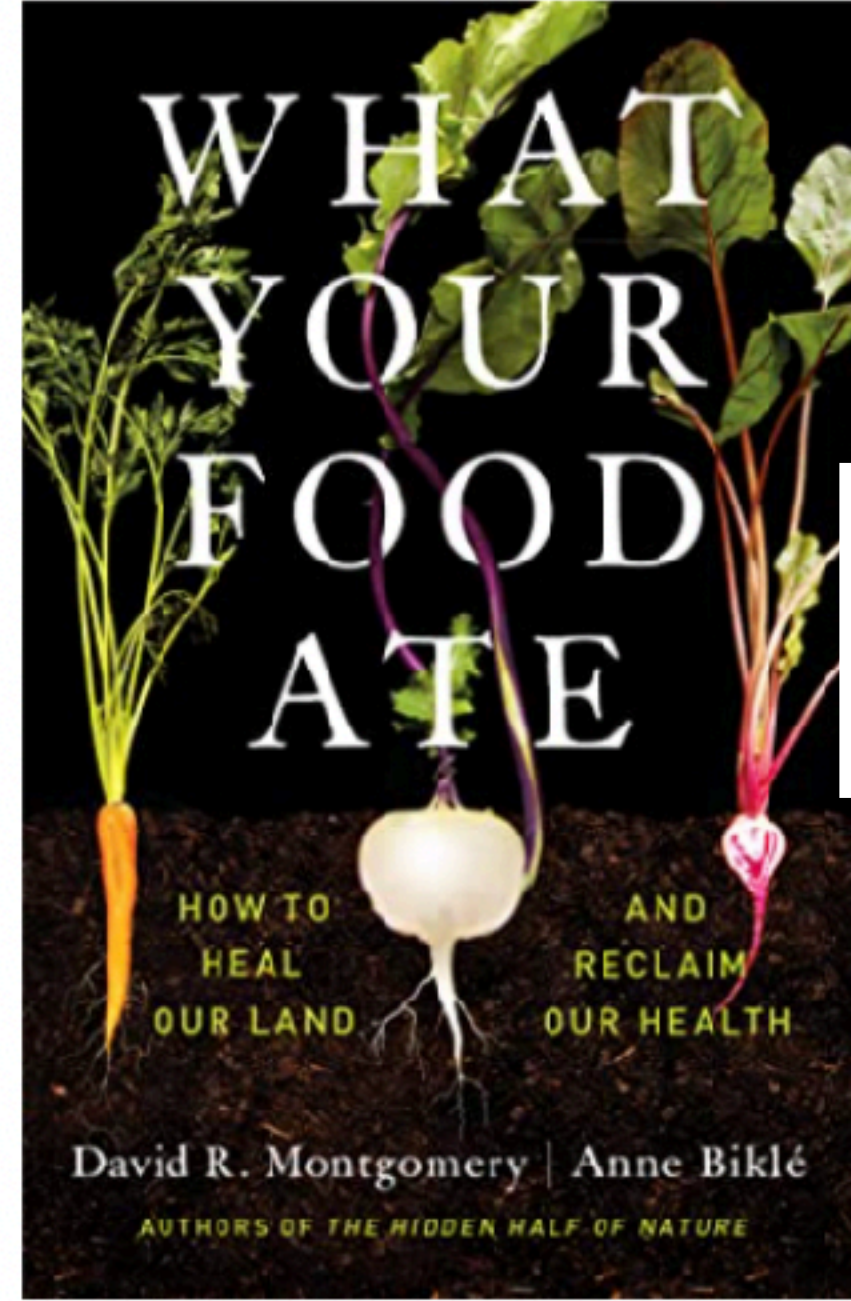
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Look inside ↓



Look inside ↓



**DIG2GROW**

David R. Montgomery & Anne Biklé

[www.dig2grow.com](http://www.dig2grow.com)

# What is Regenerative Agriculture?

Many farmers and ranchers recognize that regenerative agriculture may be the only long-term solution to these problems. Regenerative agriculture is a management philosophy that seeks to improve soil health.



**At its core, regenerative agriculture is the process of restoring degraded soils using practices (e.g., adaptive grazing, no-till planting, no or limited use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizer, etc.) based on ecological principles.**



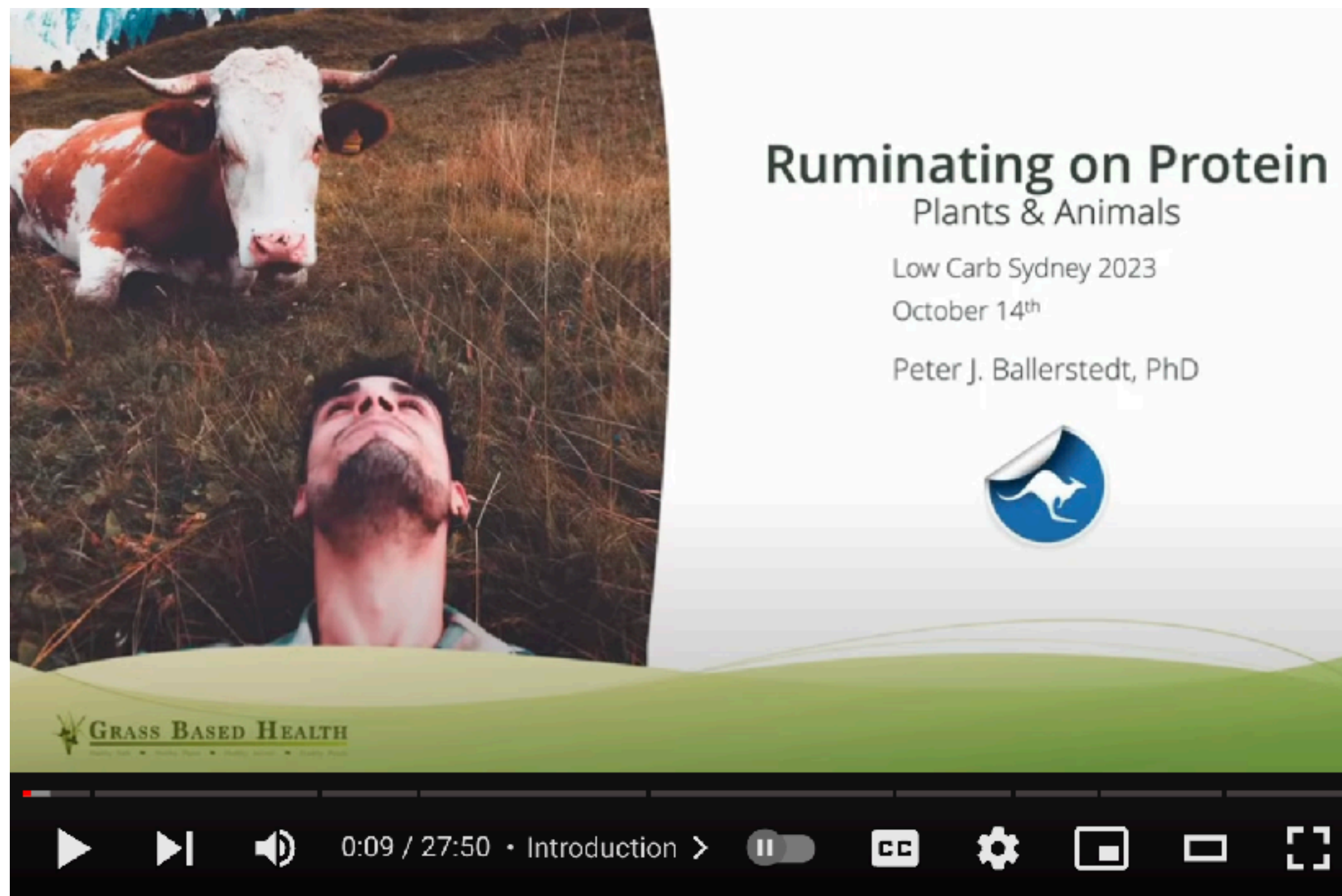
# REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

We support initiatives that recognize that the condition of our soil, the practices through which both animal and plant foods are grown, and the diet humans consume are intimately connected to our planet's future.



## OUR PARTNERS





### Dr. Peter Ballerstedt - 'Ruminating on Protein: Plants & Animals'



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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FWFNg89\\_VA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FWFNg89_VA)



**What your food ate with David R. Montgomery**

<https://youtu.be/jDoOv-eRIOg>



# Regenerative Agriculture vs Agroecology: What's the Difference & Which is Better?

AUTHOR

Inbound Pursuit

PUBLISHED

July 14, 2023

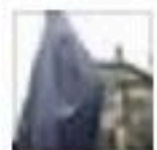


Regenerative agriculture is a system of farming principles that prioritizes the health and enrichment of the soil. It views farming as a holistic process, where everything from the microorganisms in the soil to the plants and animals above it form a synergistic system...

Agroecology encourages strategies like intercropping, traditional seed use, and natural pest management. It opposes industrial farming and monocultures, and it aims to promote resilience, sustainability, and autonomy in food systems.

Two approaches have risen to the forefront: *regenerative agriculture* vs *agroecology*. These paradigms may seem similar in their eco-centric visions, but they are distinct in their methodologies and objectives. So, how are they different? And, which is better - if either?

[carnivoresnax.com/blogs/articles/regenerative-agriculture-vs-agroecology](https://carnivoresnax.com/blogs/articles/regenerative-agriculture-vs-agroecology)



Vernon L. Smith

Yesterday at 9:37am · LA Times ·

"The truth is that from the 1950s onward, many scientists truly believed that saturated fat and cholesterol were the primary cause of heart disease. Nutritionis...

[See More](#)



Don't scapegoat Big Sugar. Lots of food producers profited from the demonization of fat

The recent revelation that Harvard scientists were paid off to downplay sugar's harms in the 1960s shows how the food industry shockingly manipulated nutrition science...

LATIMES.COM | BY LOS ANGELES TIMES

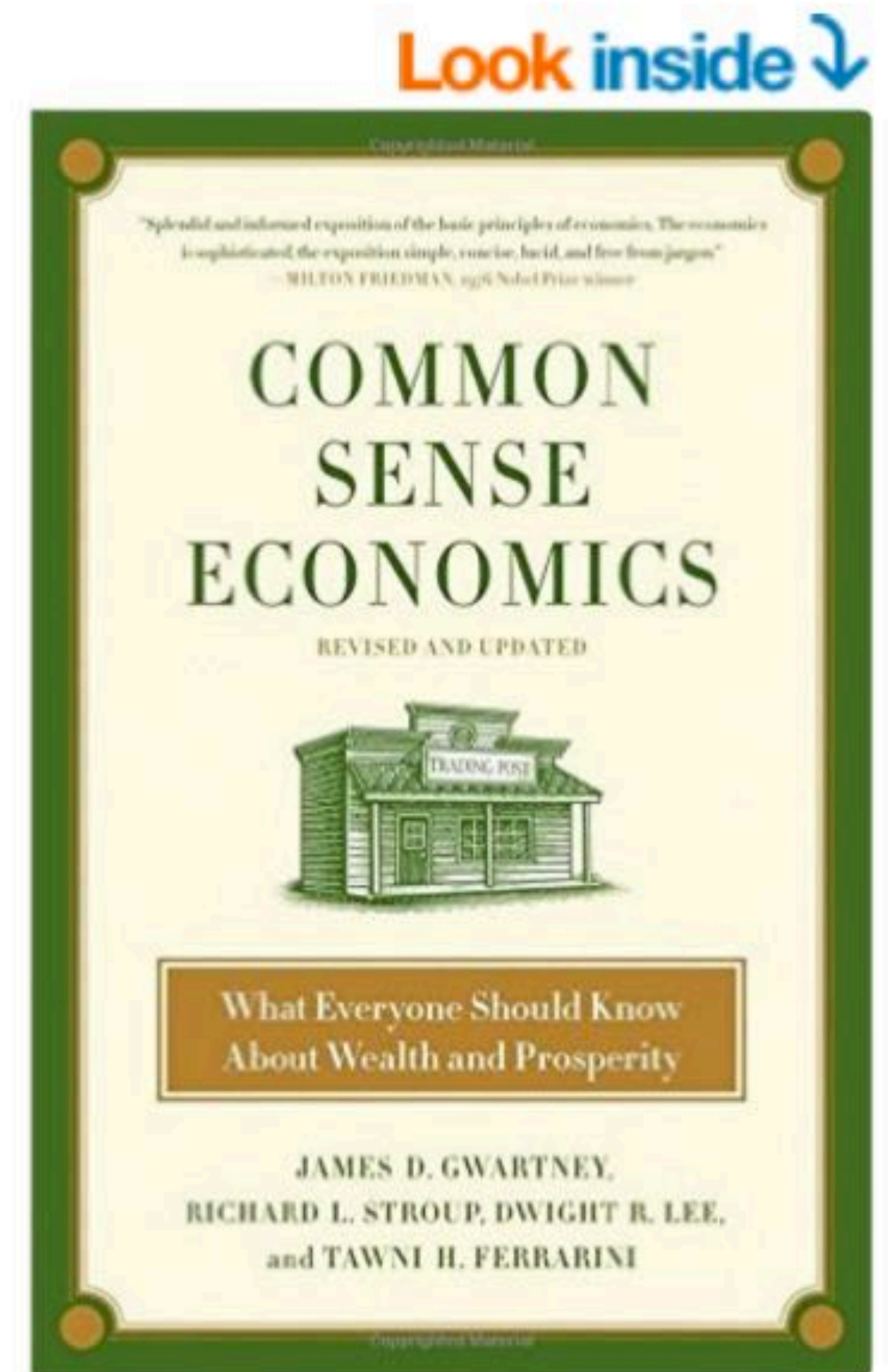
[http://www.latimes.com/  
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story.html](http://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-teicholz-big-sugar-saturated-fats-20160927-snap-story.html)

All the “carbohydrate industries” profited from the demonization of fat, exactly as anticipated. Consumption of flour and cereal products increased by 41%, including a 183% increase in products from corn.

Overall, as [Americans cut their consumption of fat by 25% from 1965 to 2011, they increased carbohydrate intake by more than 30%.](#)

# Public Choice and Federal Agriculture Programs

- Public Choice Theory... *how government programs come to life, grow, but rarely die.*
- Federal agriculture and food safety policy. Crisis serve to launch then ratchet up government interventions and subsidies.
- The Great Depression opened door for the *Agricultural Adjustment Act*.
- Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* opened door for the Food & Drug Administration (FDA).



Policy

New Zealand

Farming

Agriculture

Subsidies

Government Intervention

# New Zealand Farmers Break Free of Crippling Subsidies



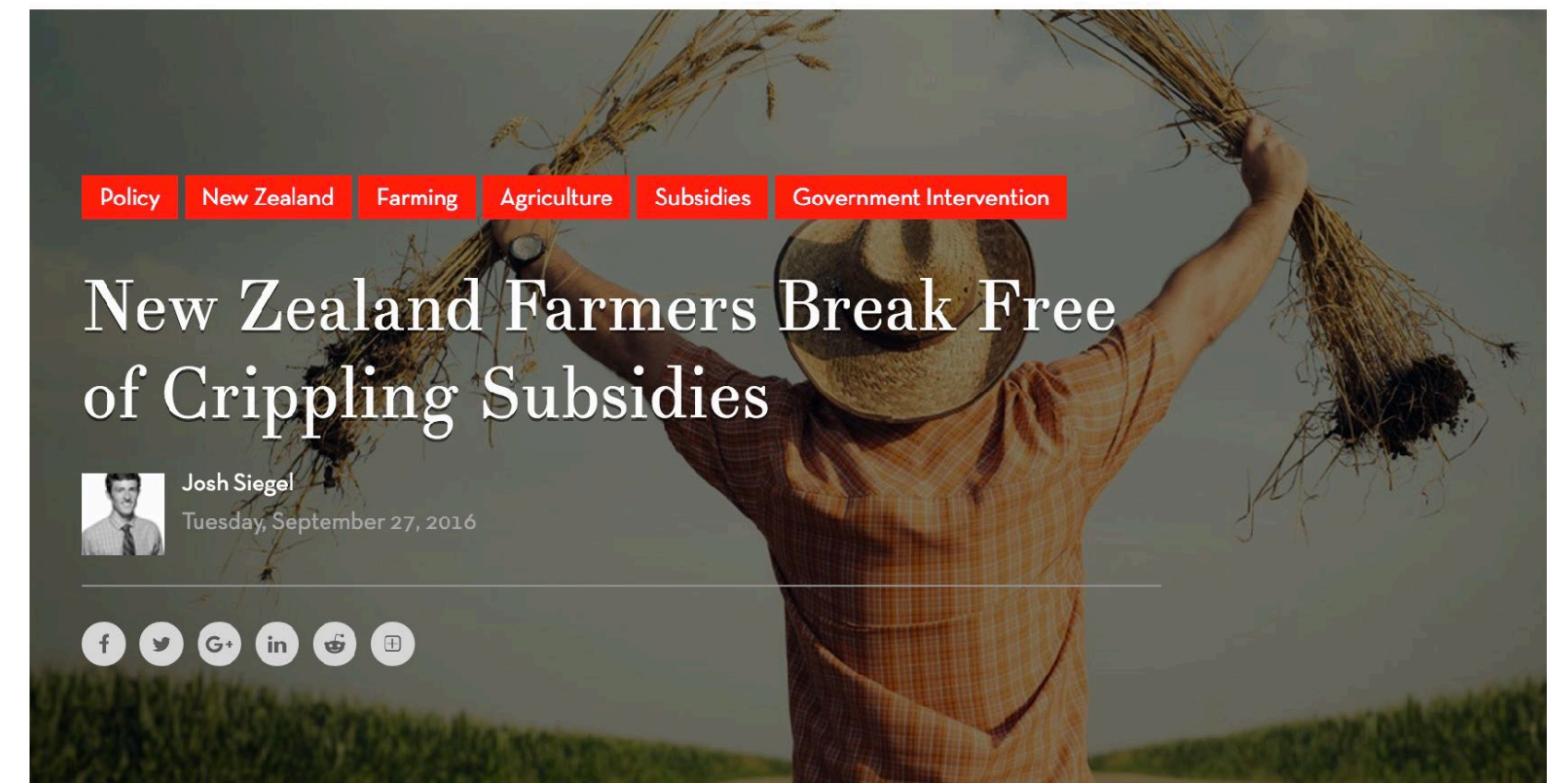
Josh Siegel

Tuesday, September 27, 2016



# New Zealand

- *“You had a system dictated by government programs that was thrown out the window overnight,”*
- *“But the farmers kind of reinvented themselves and now New Zealand is a powerhouse when it comes to agricultural production on the world stage.”*
- *Facing a budget crisis in 1984, the incoming Labour government took the first step in implementing a long list of market reforms when it eliminated about 30 different agricultural production subsidies and export incentives.*



# New Zealand, *continued*

- *Removing government assistance completely, New Zealand officials say, freed farmers to produce what people really want, and to do so in an efficient way that could turn a profit.*
- *Since the reforms, New Zealand farmers have cut costs, diversified their land use, and developed new products, Clark says.*
- *New Zealand's dairy farmers today produce 2,200 products from milk, compared to about 35 before the reforms...including antibody milk and chocolate cheese.*
- *The country also has a thriving wine industry that barely existed prior to the reforms. ...*

