

## Sourcing Local and Sustainable Food

Jon Ruel – Trefethen – Moderator

### Panelists:

Michael Fradelizio – Silverado Brewing Co. Owner/Chef

He meets local producers to see if they fit Silverado Brewing Company's interest in being as sustainable as possible and learns about new local products. Guards the gate - learns how to keep unhealthy products out of their restaurant (hydrogenated oils, HFCS, meat w/steroids, ask meat producers to have meat have a good healthy life, etc.). Produce is the hardest for them to get on a regular basis. He will support these kinds of gatherings to help us prevail, and is open to producers to contact him [michael@silveradobrewingcompany.com](mailto:michael@silveradobrewingcompany.com).

Seamus Feeley – Executive Chef, Farmstead

Raise their own grass-fed cattle, olive oil, wines and produce. Every day they learn something new. How to sustain a menu year-round given seasonal constraints? Opening in February was a challenge! Solution is to try to be as creative as possible. Their philosophy about their food is casual, approachable and through dialogue with clients they can discuss the various pieces.

Barbara Alexander – Head Instructor, Napa Valley Cooking School

NV Cooking School is yards ahead of CIA for sustainability. In 1980 she worked in restaurant in BC that was local within 100 miles. Got a tour from Ted & Laddie Hall – it surprised her that he said he was biodiverse for economic benefit. 20 students per class at the cooking school. Unusual - tend a flock of 30 chickens, have a 1/2 acre garden. "Rooted in technique, growing in sustainability" Teaches students that it is their responsibility to know about the foods grown in their area, how to cook them, prep them safely. Have to make chefs responsible for what they're serving. She's trying to teach students that it's not important to have strawberries in the middle of February. They have a "food enthusiasts" program - "affordable" programs for home chefs. "Home Farmsteading for the Foodie" is this Saturday. If you missed the open house, drop by campus and students will show you around.

Peter Pahk – Executive Chef, Silverado Resort

Worked with a hotel group and was exposed to cooking around the world, where things are grown. Parks company - Xanterra – has taught him about sustainable business practices in a park environment. Is involved in the composting program w/Napa Recycling. Resort can help sustain growers (they have \$10 million in food revenue, but they need quantity to be consistent). Situation at resort is such that they have to compromise - guests get mad if they can't get asparagus (out of season) on their eggs benedict. He has steered them toward sustainable seafood. Their catering people educate clients about seasonality and sustainability. He's happy this local food movement is finally coming to fruition.

Steve Lederer - Environmental Management

They make sure consumers are eating healthy products. Good news – have 20 different programs to regulate things (from storage tanks to restaurants). Napa's restaurateurs are the best group in the state: 97% get A or B. Need to get food from a good, "approved" source. Produce is considered low risk, but is not without risk - i.e. green onions, lettuce, spinach, jalapeno & serrano-borne illnesses from last few years. On a smaller plot of land you are able to be more aware of what's going on vs. on a factory farm. If someone gets sick you're only dealing with a small group of people. It's easier to track where the food came from. Problems are smaller and easier to identify more quickly.

Regulatory schemes exist for farmers' markets, ag commissioner regulates organic, pesticides, planning and zoning regulations, CA dept of Food and Ag has regulations. Cooperatives like community gardens have no regulations. For restaurant gardens there was a gap in regulations, but they have gotten over that; there's a process now. There's still a gap in regulations for food grown off-site and sold to restaurants. No approval process yet.

### **Questions:**

Volume: how do you find time to source?

Peter: work in progress. leave it up to producers to provide product he requests. Uses larger producers. Small distributors that are local, sustainable, organic - goes as far as Salinas and central coast. Have to go outside the valley to provide 100lbs of asparagus a day.

Cooking in winter:

Seamus: Have to be proactive - had to take advantage of summer and fall crops – i.e. tomato marmalade, fig jam, preserves, canning. He was raised in Arkansas with a root cellar – preserving was how he was raised, part of the culture. It's a challenge, but an opportunity to be creative. Have to use our American traditions.

Other challenges in sourcing locally?:

Michael: Food co-ops – he would like to have a farmer's market for restaurant owners. Distribution is a problem – it's hard for growers to bring restaurants what they need when they need it.

Barbara: does have people coming by selling her their products (she isn't selling food, so has different regulations). She only has 20 students and has more flexibility since she doesn't have a set menu like a restaurant. She would like to see food co-ops for restaurants and chefs.

Michael: On short notice, he will take whatever producers have that's otherwise going to spoil because they have daily specials, which gives the chef a chance to have fun.

What does "approved source" mean?:

Steve: Certified at retail level. Usually big producers, but can include a farm stand. Schemes are going to have to evolve to make sure you can properly protect food supply but allow restaurants to purchase what they need safely. There is retail food code.

There is no list of "approved sources"? Why?

Steve: There are diverse ways that products can become approved. Environmental Management has had discussions with Ag Department to get small local producers allowed.

Jon: We need a clearinghouse for local producers.

Barbara: NVCS is raising their own eggs, and give the eggs away. They have tried to work with health dept, who went through ag commissioner's office. Really are on the cusp of this new situation. It was easy to do – the school applied for certification and they came and inspected. The health dept is great at working with them.

Audience comment: (Shelley): Chefs and health dept have a responsibility to eco-literacy. They have to tell clients they can't have that, this is available instead. It's not sustainable to say that we can have whatever we want whenever we want it. Commends panelists for their work.

Is there a list of restaurants who are doing this kind of stuff? i.e. if I only want to go out to eat at places with sustainably raised food?:

Michael: Consumers need to ask questions at restaurants! It will make them think about it for the next time.

Seamus: Plus it fosters a sense of community.

Peter: Education is key. Silverado Country Club has a thick book – a “dictionary” of sources that waiters can look in to inform diners.

Audience member recently moved from Sonoma to Napa: Is there a farm trails for farm tours, etc. like there is in Sonoma?: [Note: there used to be.]

Seamus: Farmstead has a full-time forager. She doesn't literally forage, she's a "new age forager." Coordinates harvesting, has relationships with the farmers, find new sources or ways to deal with January, February, etc.

Founder of Bon Appetite's (who attended grape grower's talk): his interest in local foods started with flavor - organic apple from New Zealand vs. local conventional apple? No question, the local one will taste better. What motivates you for local?

Seamus: Same. The flavor idea and economic benefit - if you're providing truly what's in season, it's supply and demand – the price is lower if you're buying something in peak season.

Peter: It keeps the dollar here, and it recirculates in the economy.

Barbara: Has a strong belief that you can teach someone who's eaten food out of a can all their life to pull fresh onions because it tastes good. They have reduced their garbage by 8%. Some students pick the McDonald's meat vs. grass-fed in taste tests because that's what they've been used to all their lives