

FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL:

Is There A Regulatory War Against Family Farms?

CCC Friday Night Coffee House to feature exclusive screen of a film that looks at the threat to our right to raise and buy food from each other. The survival of rural communities depends on the health of the community's economy, which is tied up in the success of local farmers. Agribusiness and regulatory agencies have made it harder and harder for small, family farms, especially those who begin adding value to their crop, to stay afloat. In turn, our right to choose to buy food produced by our neighbors is threatened, thereby creating more hardship for the family farms and their communities. Slow Food Okanogan presents the film *Farmageddon*, which explores why this is happening, who benefits and what we can do about it.

Farmageddon tells the story of small, family farms that were providing safe, healthy foods to their communities and were forced by regulation and overzealous government agents, and then explores why. Filmmaker Kristin Canty's quest to find healthy food for her four children turned into an educational journey to discover why access to these foods was being threatened. What she found were policies that favor agribusiness and factory farms over small family operated farms selling fresh foods to their communities. Instead of focusing on the source of food safety problems -- most often the industrial food chain -- policymakers and regulators implement and enforce solutions that target, and often drive out of business, small farms that have proven themselves more than capable of producing safe, healthy food. These farmers often buckle under the crushing weight of government regulations and excessive enforcement actions.

Farmageddon highlights the urgency of food freedom, encouraging farmers and consumers alike to take action to preserve individuals' rights to access the food of their choice and farmers' rights to produce these foods safely and free from unreasonably burdensome regulations. The film serves to put policymakers and regulators on notice that there is a growing movement of people aware that their freedom to choose the foods they want is in danger, a movement that is taking action with its dollars and its voting power to protect and

preserve the dwindling number of family farms that are struggling to survive. A movie trailer can be seen at farmageddonmovie.com.

Slow Food Okanogan is part of a global, grassroots movement with thousands of members in over 150 countries, which links the pleasure of food with a commitment to community and the environment. Slow Food Okanogan, and the world-wide organization, believes everyone has the right to good, clean, and fair food. With over 250,000 supporters, 25,000 members and 225 chapters nationwide, Slow Food USA advocates for food and farming policy that is good for the public, good for the planet, and good for farmers and workers.

We believe that food is a universal right. Food that is fair should be accessible to all, regardless of income, and produced by people who are treated with dignity and justly compensated for their labor. We have brought this 90 minute movie to CCC's coffee house because we believe it is important for people of the Okanogan to be aware of how we can support each other and our beautiful area and eat the best of food.

Come to the Tonasket Community Cultural Center Friday, February 24, at 411 S. Western Avenue, Tonasket, for an all-local soup and bread supper and watch this eye-opening film. We will serve food from 5:30 until 6:45, and begin the film at 7pm. Admission to the film is by donation; the soup-and-bread plate will be available for a suggested donation of \$5 a piece. Proceeds from the meal will go to the CCC; donations for the film will help defray the cost of the screening.