

An Agrarian Land Covenant: Food for Thought, For Becoming at Home in Our Place, For Thoughtfulness in Producing Food
from Orion magazine website, February 2011

With future generations in mind, my family will never leave the land we steward poorer, nor its water scarcer than conditions were before we acquired responsibility for their care.

My family will seek to enrich the soil, diversify its plant cover and deepen its roots both within and beyond its harvested fields, grazed pastures, and streamside areas.

My family will think of how our practices affect those who live above and below us in our foodshed and watershed— not only the human lives, but all other-than-human lives as well.

My family will participate in the regional culture of this land, and whenever possible, engage in the community rites and calendrical rhythms that bind us to our place.

My family will work to link the consumers of the food, fiber and timber we produce to the land on which it is produced, so that their values and ours are developed in harmony rather than in conflict.

My family will encourage our members, friends and neighboring consumers to vote for what is best for the land at the polling booth where our choices help determine its governance, and at the table where what we choose to eat can benefit rather than harm the community at large.

My family will share with our neighbors not only our successes in stewardship, but cautionary words of wisdom gained from our past failures as well, so that the principles that guide us and the practices that work on the ground are spread throughout this landscape.

My family will not solely focus on increasing the saleable products from the land, but also on investing in the underlying natural processes which generate those products.

My family will experiment with ways to control pests, diseases and weeds in a manner that does least harm to pollinators, predators, and other necessary links in the food chain.

My family will make long-term decisions about the destiny of the land and the choice of its future caretakers by asking a simple question: “What would the land itself want?”