

FoodHub in the News



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B.Y.O.G.

There's obviously something wrong with a food system when farmers don't make a living yet huge industrial farm corporations do, producing lower-quality foods, and [getting billions in subsidies](#) to produce corn and soybeans. We don't need more tofu and high fructose corn syrup. What we do need is myriad more ways to forge links between the growers and the eaters.

Here are two.

In the U.K., a [few restaurants have started to barter](#). At Artichoke in Amersham, Buckinghamshire, you can bring in your beautiful produce in exchange for a glass of wine. At The Pig, a pub in Norfolk, you can hand over locally produced food in exchange for a pint.

At a pub called the Marksman in east London, you can "barter for a starter" with your greens or even your services.

Haven't you ever wished that your favorite Vietnamese hole-in-the-wall would use organic cilantro and beansprouts, or that your favorite place to stop for a slice could just see their way to switching to organic flour for the pizza?

More local bartering could be a way to make that happen without outlays of extra cash.

In Portland, Oregon, sustainable foodie Deborah Kane, working together with Ecotrust, has started another fine idea for linking food producers with the cooks and eaters.

Called [FoodHub](#), it's not a totally unique concept. Others — such as [Veggie Trader](#) — have tried web sites that give consumers access to local foods. They've never been wildly successful.

FoodHub may have the advantage of a comprehensive database based on long-term Ecotrust contacts with the local ag scene, that will link the web of small farmers and processors with all sizes of buyers. In Portland, fast food restaurant [Burgerville](#) is already a great model of how a food chain can still be a big supporter of locally grown instead of simply another cog in the industrial machine.

FoodHub, if lucky, could spread Burgerville's success to lots and lots of other local caterers, school lunchrooms, and other eateries. Some of which, hopefully, might also still think of taking your potatoes in trade for a pint, or your garden-grown chard for a starter.

Graham Hill is the founder of [TreeHugger.com](#).

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