

Taste of Place #2
Amy Trubek

Present: Marissa Mauro, Paul Lisai, Neil Urie, Patricia LeBlanc, John Clark, John Madndeville, Monty Fischer, Helen Labun Jordan, Amy Trubek, Mateo kehler, elena gustavson (notes)

Amy Trubek:

Overview of Terroir in the USA

Background: Culinary training and anthropology

Terroir: complex term used in many ways,

- people who work the landscape, articulate what is unique in their own practice
- can be explained as external and objective and in nature-in the soil, of the soil, in the grape, of the grape, but there is more
- also about people working the landscape, knowing the landscape and how to take advantage of the landscape
 - environmentally driven
- Do not get to bogged down in "proving" there is terroir
 - There is not only one way to understand terroir
- There are unique sensory qualities that contribute to the soil-but human decision is involved
 - discovery of cheese, dichotomy between tradition & human invention
 - We are inventing Terroir

Background of French Model vs United States vs Vermont

France

- As a culture, historically paid attention to the sensory quality of every day food
 - families interaction
 - school food system
 - long history of cooperative work between farmers
- long term relationship with food
 - developed institutional support in 1930s which was driven by confluence of economics and culture
 - As farming became less about sustenance and more about global business mkt, the country moved towards preservation of that relationship to food
 - Heavily subsidized by the government
 - Champagne is an example

United States

- We haven't historically paid to food in the same way
- more about quantity-historically people came to USA for opportunity
- sensory appreciation has stayed w/ethnicity-reflective of mobile culture

Vermont is unique

- agrarian relationship still exists
- much of the mobility into VT has been because of commitment to landscape
- qualities of cooperation among the population-possibly because of remoteness

Quebec, Canada

Currently working on implementation

- went for meat--mostly because producers came together to get the designation
- no question that people come together as a group, initially, and then the dynamic is pushed through to work with the state an individual or corporation cannot get the label

Feedback:

When a group of people come together to say a product is unique, they can be a *supply chain system* like the AOC

- much broader and more variation than it seems
- some are 10 guys, but some are huge

MATEO:

Question: In VT context where we are individuals making our own individual products--we are "inventing", developing brands, potential for the brand to become an icon of the landscape---

What is the social contract to allow replication?

- cooperative model, franchising, licensing agreements?
- we are a commercial people-seems it needs to be distilled down to the language of economics because we lack the supply change and the historical culture

Question: How do we build something that will have longevity?

AMY: First, come up with your own definition of terroir then commit. Ask what you want it to be.

1. social contract: This has been highly subsidized in France

- -example: 35k euros given to dairy farmer with 50 cows to keep his pasture open (\$50k)

2. has to be larger than just wanting it, but needs government support in Vermont

- has to be an engagement that happens with natural resources, tourism, etc.

3. concept that the viability of this region is cultural and economic-can we get something back from the state for doing that?

HELEN:

The integration is not necessarily there as the policies are being developed

- education, resources, agriculture, tourism
- Act 250 brings together several impacts-economic, environment, aesthetics

AMY:

Act 250 was highly influenced by 70 year old man in Orford who put together slide show and went to every town meeting, etc.

Good guy to come have talk to this group

- John Karol <http://www.persistenceplus.com/karol.html>
- Dona Brown UVM History Dept-just wrote a book on tourism in vermont, new england and back to the land movement

Question:

Mateo: Regarding creating value over time-is there some type of cooperative production that can concentrate and create more value than individual companies creating individual products? What about a hybrid that doesn't try to mimic what is happening in france?

Helen: What aspects of that is most helpful to your businesses?

John: do you picture it here as needing to be subsidized?

Amy: it would be like having the USDA subsidizing us-

Mateo: \$600 million dollars is set aside for cheese in France-not going to happen here-not realistic

John: what would the state's role be in making something like this happen?

Amy: garden variety vt idealist-answer was state and subsidy, but now stuck because it isn't that simple-

is there a way, to have "aspirational legislation" (helen's term)--How can we get constant technical support, benchmark system that will allow you to work towards something

John: it would have to be a partnership with the state

Amy: putting forth that the system will benefit

Helen: what are other options besides private money? a broader way to phrase john's question

John: Can the state provide the legal framework and be the enforcers of making the regulations happen?

Mateo: The food web that currently exists here -- does it dilute or enhance?

Amy: why do you do this at the end of the day? What legacy or framework do you want to have available in 50 years.

-supply chain model (spreads out risk)

-Opportunity here where people want to make cheese-it's attractive because of innovation

Is part of VT's story, the story of risk taking in relationship to farming? folks who struggle with fluid dairy---system fell apart around them-they didn't go in to take a risk-do you want to get rid o the risk or celebrate the risk? the innovation should be part o your story

John: nothing has changed-it has always been risky

amy: maybe adding value throughout the line-a chain does not have to mean all one product

Points to Remember:

1. UVM can give you the resources, research, documentation, etc. that can help dairy and cheese makers
2. Pass on specific questions and topic, create reference point w/ books and literature
3. How does Terroir relate to your current business?
4. Vermont has opportunity to create unique model. Your input, both positive and negative, is vital.
5. How can producers take advantage of current resources?