

Tufts Supplement: Subsistence and Nourishment

Food is necessary for life, yet most people eat not out of necessity but love. I have loved food as long as I can remember, and started cooking early on. Last summer, I worked at local farmer's markets, and quickly learned how much I had taken for granted when it comes to producing food. The amount of work vendors put in, waking before dawn to pick the day's harvest and set up, is unimaginable. Yet these small business owners care so deeply about what they do that they were always willing to spare a few minutes to talk and share a sample.

While I have always cared about the comforting side of food, these markets opened my eyes to a whole new world, where inequality and unsustainability are ever-present. I saw how hurtful the farming industry is to our planet, emphasizing cheap crops over healthier alternatives, and relying on diesel-powered vehicles to transport them. Our customers were both families who could afford quality produce and those on food stamps who had to bargain for what they needed, a difficult situation for the customer that shrinks the narrow profits of the producer.

I am saddened by the lack of support we offer producers and our acceptance of a low nutrition standard for those in need. I first understood food as a way to unite people and share, but it has since taught me more about the world, and dedicated me to bridging the gap between food's nourishing potential and sparse reality.