Motivations and Practices of Texas’ Alternative Agriculturalists

1. Subjects will be adults engaged in alternative agricultural practices in the State of Texas. It is anticipated that the majority of those subjects will be males between the ages of 30 and 60. Approximately twelve subjects will be interviewed.

2. Subjects will be approached based on their being recognized as knowledgeable professionals in their field. Written consent will be solicited by the researcher before any information is obtained for official purposes. Consent to being video documented will also be obtained in writing, as well as confirmed by the subject in the video document itself.

3. Data collection will be obtained through a series of video interviews. Data on age, sex, level of education attained, and number of years involved in agricultural practices will be requested. Research questions include: What is the form of alternative agriculture being discussed? How long has the practitioner been engaged in this practice? Can they explain the process from beginning to end, being as detailed about the steps as possible? What are some of the factors that motivate such an alternative choice? (Please discuss as many potentially motivating factors as possible). Have they practiced “popular”/”mainline” agriculture (in relation to the practice being discussed)? If so, how would they compare the two, both in amount of investment and return in time/resources, as well as any emotional condition of response (such as satisfaction or defeat)? Do they have any opinions on “popular”/”mainline” agricultural practices or any of the externalities they may generate? Do they have any success or failure stories surrounding any form of agricultural practice, “popular” or “alternative”? If there is a product resulting from the agricultural practice: Is there a community/market for the product? If so, how geographically separated is the producer from the consumer? Do they feel like you receive a fair price/return for the product?

4. No potential risks resulting from this study have been identified, as any actions taken in the course of this study are simply being documented by the study and are not resultant from it.

5. To minimize any potential risk the researcher will clarify his position as documentarian, and that actions taken over the course of the study are those taken explicitly under the will and responsibility of the subject.

6. The individual subjects involved in this study will not stand to benefit directly from participation in this study. However, the researcher believes that a greater understanding of the motivations and practices of alternative agriculturalists will benefit the alternative agricultural community as a whole, as greater understanding of any community does.

7. No compensation is to be offered or provided to subjects participating in this study.

8. No risks can be identified that may be in relation to any anticipated benefits to the subjects or society.

9. Agency approval will not be applicable, as no agencies will be approached in the conducting of this research.

10. This research compliments my own academic pursuit of a Master of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies degree, as well as satisfying a current academic course requirement, Applied Interdisciplinary Research, led by Dr. Matthew Eichler.

11. I am including Professor Matthew Eichler’s proposal approval.

12. This study has not been approved by another IRB.

13. Those individuals who will have access to the results of this study, whether they are published are unpublished, include: the participants, departmental supervising authorities, and the researcher.