

William Zhou

5th period

People, corporations, and businesses are all starting to go green all across the world. Some show their progress by beginning to recycle and conserve resources; others show it in their own environmentally friendly ways. But there is a huge part of our lives that need to be changed to be environmentally friendly. It is a thing that is highly essential to us, a need, but at the same time, a want. Food is this thing, and every living being needs it. Essential to our survival we cannot live without it. Now hey, you might think, what's so green about food? Or what can be green about it? Well, food has a huge system; starting from when it is grown or produced to where it is processed or shipped to restaurants where it is then served to customers or to markets where customers purchase produce. And not just that, the way food is grown or served or shipped out greatly affects our economy since it is such a huge part of our economy that generates much of its revenue.

We have to face it; the way food is treated or made factors into much change in the economy and our environment. Now some businesses and people are already starting to push this going of green throughout the nation in their own different ways. Some are leaning towards more organic foods, foods that are grown without pesticides and other dangerous chemicals, while others are beginning to take in produce and foods that come only from their general area to keep emissions from transportation to a minimum. Even in restaurants, people are beginning to go green through recycling and re-usage of materials that were previously thought to be used up.

It may not actually seem like it, but food is also being used up. As our population grows, the amount of food we need to sustain us keeps on increasing. And guess what, the rate of food needed does not increase in a linear formation, but rather for each person, at an exponential rate, where as the population keeps on increasing, the more energy we use, and the more food

that we need, the amount of births exceeds the rate at which people die in the United States. (Lewis, 1992) Food is a huge part of our system and economy. As a whole, we may actually have to watch our eating after a certain time, as there may actually might not be enough food in future dates. The world only has so much limited space in which food can be produced, and in some areas, overgrazing or over-farming causes the land to become infertile and unable to any longer grow crops or raise livestock.

Our generations and each one that comes out after it are a gluttonous bunch, because of all the needs and wants that are provided for us, we being to look into extravagance; extravagant in what we eat, the way we eat it, where we eat it, and even where the food comes from. People are in love with the thought of eating an exotic food, with fancy names, because in a way, the saying “we are what we eat” becomes true in this society. The kinds of foods that people eat depict what part of society that they reside in. Even with all the gluttony, people still care about their outside image, and how they are seen. But if we begin to push for this idea of being “Green”, these ideas and thoughts could also begin to fade.

In areas of production, like farms or ranches, farmers can begin to grow their crops more organically, eliminating the usage of chemicals and pesticides which will lead to a healthier environment. These chemicals will not go into the land and damage it and more importantly, we will be not be consuming them in our very bodies. By causing crops to be healthier by having them become organic leads to an overall improvement in the lives of people and the environment. The cutbacks are that it costs a lot more to be organic, both in the sense of money and time. There will need to be more farmhands and more people to manage the crops contrary to using pesticides; farmers can produce a lot more with the help of less people. (Gadzinski, 2010) So in a way even though going green is better for the environment, towards individuals and businesses attempting to make money or profit, they lose a lot more of the initial profit and they do not always make it back over time. Some may argue though, since being organic

raises the advertising attraction for your business. People like to see that a farm is organic. If there was a choice between organic milk and normal at the same price, it is a given that people would want something healthier for themselves. Though in a society where all wish to be equal be cannot, not everyone can afford something that is organic. Some people can only purchase goods that are cheaper, mass and easily produced. If you consider the amount of extra time and concentration necessary to create organic milk rather than normal processed milk, the time and price range is a lot higher.

Normal processing requires no special food, but rather they feed the cows whatever that can bring the highest profit and still keep the cows nourished and alive. They do not need to create more space for cows to live in and keep it at minimum humane standards. While for organically grown cows, they are fed more natural foods that do not include additives or different chemicals inside it that cause the cow to grow faster and produce more milk. Organically grown cows give off healthier milk and better tasting organic milk. But these cows need more space and more time management to make sure the cows are okay without the help of chemicals and or pesticides to help grow their produce that cows may eat. So all in all, being green is very time consuming, and a lot pricier. We can see why even though it is better for the environment, many still do not turn towards going green. Who can blame them though? At the moment, we are in an economy that is going towards a recession and it would be foolhardy of anyone to not take advantage of anything to maximize their profits to stay on top. Since many people cannot pay off the initial cost of being green, their profits are actually higher when they do not go green.

This brings me to the topic of the economy and how going green in the food industry might affect it. Going green creates more jobs in all levels of the food industry. From all levels of the industry, by going green, more jobs may be produced because of the amount of workers that will be needed as going green requires much more hands on work. Though higher employment rates are good, more of the profit made may have to go towards the growing

amount of employees. The profit they make will have to stay at a point where they would not be able to spend even more on outside products to keep the national economy's money circulating, but will have to spend more on saving or spending just enough on food and other utilities just to keep their business running. Digging even deeper into it though, being green definitely attracts tons of big companies who want to further promote themselves and attracting customers. In many successful green industries or restaurants, people that see that you are doing well may choose to donate or sponsor knowing that it may actually help themselves at the same time. Though, in this way, only those who deal with the customers directly with no middle man can really noticed by organizations or big businesses. These businesses have no need to sponsor someone or donate to another that will not help in bringing up their rate of advertisement. This does in a way help bring up the economy as then these restaurants will be able to purchase more which would cause them to buy more which causes the industries to be able to produce more at no loss of profit.

Restaurants are a key thing to going green in the food industry. Since they are directly linked to the customers, they are the ones that will be directly interacting with them and promoting green services throughout the nation. Restaurants actually save the most by being green and their profits are higher than those that are not green (Kneiszel, 2011) First off, I looked at the recycling in restaurants. By reusing and reducing their waste, the restaurants give back to the community by helping to reduce waste which can cause them to save more money. One restaurant, the Habana Outpost recycles by having their wall boards to be created from used corn husks and other materials that were thought to be wasteful. (Eckert, 2010) They even recycled rainwater to use in their bathrooms which reduced the need to use water that is processed in New York City. Next, they even have part of a roof covered with solar panels to receive electricity; this combined with their partial opening in their restaurant which creates a minimum usage of electricity, so much that they can actually give back to the system and

receives money for it. More of the money generated can go to other things like higher payment or even more improvements towards going green.

Recycling is just the start in the many ways that restaurants can be green. (Suetos, 2011) Another thing people need to look out for is where they purchase their food, or finding out where their produce comes from. Some have produce or foods that can come all the way from another state or fruits flown in from another country. Now of course this interests many big eaters, giving them the idea that what they are eating may be a bit exotic being that it came from another country or area. People have an idea that this makes their food a bit more special, that they are getting that bit more of attention. That is beside the point, but having their produce being imported from another state or another country causes the environment to drop once again. The idea of transportation isn't known to many, but that in itself releases a lot of toxic emissions and carbon dioxide into the air already. A car releases a lot, a truck may release even more, but how about something imported from Florida to California? Or vice versa? Or even from another country? Imagine the amount of emissions and waste that would be released into the system just because a restaurant wants to be more exotic. By only purchasing goods that are from the surrounding area, restaurants can minimize the toxicity that goes into the air. Many restaurants do not do this though, and I cannot exactly blame them as if you look at areas that are less fertile, they cannot exactly purchase goods that come from the surrounding area, which brings me back to the beginning of his system of producing food. By minimizing or eliminating the usage of chemicals and pesticides, farmers can help save the land and keep the land fertile for future uses of growing other crops. Many chemicals cause the land to become infertile and then it can no longer be used, which would lead to that part of land to risk being abandoned as people tend to only move towards places where they can thrive.

The simple fact of purchasing goods closer to home is not only being green by the way, but is also promoting local farm areas and local producers. Like I said, people get a kick out of it

when they hear that something is being produced from a far away land or somewhere halfway across the world. But what is actually so great about it? To actually bring food over from so far away, not even looking at the resources, but the things you need to preserve it. After traveling such a huge, huge distance, could you really still call that ingredient or food fresh still? To me, it would definitely not be anything close to “fresh” anymore. The real fresh goods are the things that you can purchase from the local area, it would be green and you would be helping to promote the local area’s markets. Especially in places like the bay area, where produce can be gotten from a farm or ranch that is in the 500 mile radius. Emissions in the air would be reduced and everyone would basically profit from such the simple transition of buying locally.

I actually asked a customer who shopped at Whole Foods, whose name is Adam Levith. He had been living in San Francisco for about over a decade after moving there after college. He was the typical college graduate; he really liked to eat but was really lazy in the food that he did eat. He had spent a lot of his time eating instant ramen noodles or other snacks and instant foods that did not contain many nutrients that benefited his health. So at first, he actually had been just eating out most of the time, mostly take-out at home or some quick meals at home and had not been watching his health. Over time, he noticed that his health had begun falling so he decided to try and cook for himself in a way to be healthier. He was actually doing really well with this. Then one of his roommates brought him over to Whole Foods to buy groceries and that was when he noticed and tasted the difference. Adam said that organic foods were definitely the way to go, because when he first did the transition, he noticed the clearer, crisper, and fresher tastes of organic foods in comparison to the things he had been eating before. After a time, he couldn’t really go grocery shopping at any place other than Whole Foods. As a San Franciscan, he said that it really helped that this place sold organic foods and they promoted locally grown farms. He said that he felt like many of his friends who shopped here, that he was not exactly indebted to help promote local farms by buying their products but felt better about

being able to help the surrounding small businesses. The ways to reach out to people about being green do not just linger in restaurants but also spread out to place like grocery markets, where many people who like to eat at home or cook for their selves get their groceries and products. Adam actually felt that his lifestyle had sort of changed after he began to get into this organic eating movement. Most of the people he associated with were actually all organic food eaters, people who cared much for their own health and the health of the environment. He had moved from a lifestyle of being a bit unhealthy, a bit lazy, and feeling a lack of motivation to go about through life to a very energetic and more upbeat way of life. (He was smiling a lot while I talked to him.) He said he really believed in the saying of “We are what we eat”, because afterwards, he became like the organic foods he was eating, healthier and stronger and better.

Now, it may seem like this essay is going towards a standpoint of saying, “hey, let’s go back to a more prehistoric age!” but no, that is definitely nothing close to what I want to say. We should be giving up some technologies that are very wasteful though, like extra spectacular lights that consume energy levels at the rate of a normal household every minute. I’m just being silly, but there are some things that we do not always need. In a way, I am saying maybe to live life a bit simpler, you can have the pleasures in life, but people do not need to be as extravagant, or if they do, keep the ideas of being “Green” in mind. As our technology advances, we could actually become more advanced in this machinery sense, but creating machines that consume a lot less energy, or use only renewable energies, like an electric stove or hydrogen powered engines. But even renewable energies need to be kept in check, it is a bit costly to produce, but any amount of money should be able to be put aside or dropped if it to give back to the environment.

As we advance, things actually become more sophisticated, and if the ideas of green are kept in mind, things actually become better and more efficient. Instead of the normal household heaters at home which use electricity and blow out heat, people have no begun to create pipes

that go all around the house in which heated water flows through keeping the whole building warm. Now, this is an exact idea that restaurants can use. Restaurants always have the idea of keeping the customer happy, so if it's cold, they will have some super strong and comfortable heaters. I have seen some at those fancy outdoor restaurants where they have a heater running on glass under a umbrella shaped metal stand, but guess what they run on. Gas. Yup, they run on gas, a non-renewable resource. Instead I feel that they should have pipes running under, with heated water going through, and tiled floors. Tiled floors conduct heat well, but not to the point where it burns, making it terribly comfortable to walk upon, and on a plus side, heat rises. A simple idea can have a major effect, and though the frontal cost would be expensive, in the long run, the restaurant actually saves more money as gas is becoming more and more expensive.

Lots of these technologies have a huge upfront cost, like the solar panels, going back to the Habana Outpost ("Brooklyn's Habana outpost," 2010); the cost of a roof covering can cost money up to the ten thousands. This dissuades a ton of people from being green because they do not like the upfront cost. They worry that in investing in such a huge thing, they will actually lose more. But contrary to their thoughts, people can actually gain a lot more from this. Imagine a restaurant generating enough electricity to actually take out the electricity bill, or in some cases, generating some profit from it by giving back to the whole grid system. And I know, in most restaurants, electricity bills and all those other bills are a huge sum of money. It may take a bit of time, but that money could easily be made back as the restaurant can begin diverting that extra money towards extra profit or other things that can help benefit the restaurant. For instance, the Habana Outpost actually gains some money back from the extra power that they divert into the neighboring grid.

Now, I know that there are actually a lot of people who wish to go green, but cannot because of the expenses and the extra time or work needed to be done just to be green. That's

why we should be turning towards this idea of “Green” as a whole, looking at it as one society, one community in which we basically promote the idea and help each other reach that goal. If everyone got together as a whole, these costs would be next to nothing. Then as a whole, we could advance together. Big businesses, big corporations, small business, and the community as a whole would all benefit. Resources or goods that could have been going to waste could then be turned “sustainable”. In restaurants, people would be eating healthier, and though not noticed, breathing much healthier. In a way, this whole act of going green could be a way to have the general health of the society rise both physically and mentally. People like the idea of getting together and helping out for a greater good in any big or small way that they contribute. By simple letting people know that they are contributing to a greater good, their moral goes up, they become happier to know they are helping.

Seeing as how motivated the public could be about going green if there are benefits or incentives to doing so, I think that the government should actually get involved in this movement. I mean, really involved. By offering subsidies or money incentives or recognition for being especially green, I believe many people would wish to do so. (Doering, 2010) If government took over the producing of solar energy panels or paid private companies to produce more and a cheaper cost, more people would be able to purchase them, and use it to reduce the energy use. If these were placed in many more restaurants and supermarkets, two things in our society that are nearly always running, much, much energy could be saved.

There are actually tons of ways in which we can all be green, but a great way to start is with green sustainable foods. Being that it is part of every single person's life, it is a way that can impact each and every one of us. Other ways of being green are definitely important, but nearly nothing can impact someone on the level that food can. We all need to eat, and we should all eat healthy and do our best to help out the environment as we take in the sustenance that it gives us as a way to help give back what we take. If everyone got together, all the kids,

teenagers, adults in the world, from students to politicians, businessmen to activists; if everyone really got together and pushed for it, I am absolutely sure that having the whole world go towards green and sustainable foods would be possible. In a way, it is both an individual's dream, but at the same time, this dream needs to be realized by a nation as a whole. It needs to be recognized as an important matter and that food will not always be around and stay sustainable. The main thing at risk is our health, and lives are definitely not a price that should be paid just because eating easier is more convenient.

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