The Solari Report

September 14, 2017

Solari Food Series Harry Blazer & Chris Mann

Part Three

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With
Harry Blazer
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Lunch with Chris Mann, Angie Curtes,
Cindy (Kilgren) Dixon, Dave Andrews
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Transcript Only (recording had too much background noise)

Harry Blazer: I would like to ask this question: Any time that somebody says, "This is a way to grow it quicker," I always am concerned that there is a nutritional or an energetic price you pay or something negative, because you are trying to push for faster growth than would occur in a natural setting. Is there any merit to that thinking? Should there be any concern?

Chris Mann: I think you are right. That is actually a huge area of research because it's not only seed and time, but it is also what speeds things up and what slows things down. You need to know which planet is doing what and then develop a method or a material or medicine or something that makes a difference.

Harry Blazer: One of the claims in 'modern assisted agriculture' is that you can use LED lights to mimic all the wavelengths that are significant from the sun in order to grow things under artificial light. Do you feel that is logical?

Chris Mann: That is a logical proposal.

Angela L Curtes: On one of the farms in Germany where I learned the biodynamic composting method, their soil fertility and the fertility of another nearby biodynamic farm was sliding after 80 years as well as the nutritional quality of the foods they produced. They brought in an expert to tease out what the issues were.

Harry Blazer: This was after 80 years of biodynamic farming, and it was going the other way!

Angela L Curtes: Yes, and the reason why was because they were using raw manures on their fields, and they were using a lot of slurries. Even though they were putting biodynamic crops into the slurries and the manures, it was very taxing and detrimental for the living microbial life in the soil.

Harry Blazer: Because the source is actually compromised?

Angela L Curtes: The character of raw manure, in general, was affecting the soil over a long period of time, and the microbial action in the soil is what really truly transfers nutrients.

So in conventional chemical agriculture, there is little microbial life in the soil. That is why you have to flood it with NPK. In this case, you have raw manure, but that was also being a detriment to the microbial action and the transfer of proper nutrients.

They brought in a specialist to look at the soil health, and he took Ehrenfried Pfeiffer's method and integrated it into a dairy cow system because it had been used in municipal waste treatment in Oakland and in chicken poultry plants back in the 1960s. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ehrenfried_Pfeiffer)

Harry Blazer: It was the hot method.

Angela L Curtes: Correct. That is a perfect example of a quicker method that is actually producing better quality. Also, Bruno, who was one of my instructors and my mentor, showed the results of a light root (Dioscorea batatas) that they were growing in a root box in the lab. They popped it, and you couldn't even put your finger into the soil because it was so dry and hard. They're using the compost produced using Pfeiffer's hot method within the light root growing systems in Europe to try to break compaction and improve the flow of nutrients. I'm sure that solution came out of their laboratory work.

Within one year of topical applications of Pfeiffer's compost, they doubled the nutritional qualities of the plants.

Harry Blazer: It also indicates that all these 100% raw food guys may be wrong. Cooking may be a very important mechanism for releasing nutrients, even in our food.

Angela L Curtes: Actually, this composting method is called a 'hot fermentation' so the heat is causing fermentation, and the microbes are also acting as fermenters within the process of decomposition. It very much is like baking bread with this composting method.

Harry Blazer: So agro ecology looks at the social structure and its influence on agriculture and vice-versa as well as biological, chemical and environmental factors. Conventional modern agriculture is rapidly adopting what I call a one-dimensional "pharmacological model" where "every aspect" of the growing process is monitored – which, of course, is not every aspect, but the ones that they have identified and chosen to influence – or shall I say, make money off of influencing. Then arrays of inputs (drugs) are added as determined by the monitoring systems, at a micro level – down to the square foot. That's the dream for agriculture as envisioned by Monsanto and their associates, which is one of the reasons why Bayer is interested in buying them. Tractors become automated chemical dispensing systems run by computers. Soon, people will not be needed to dispense the drugs anymore.

Drones using special kinds of spectroscopy and other technologies analyze such things as moisture distribution. I call it 'pharmalogical' methods because that is exactly what the pharmaceutical companies want to do with human beings. They envision having nanobots in human that monitor conditions and release or triggers other nanobots to release various drugs "as you need them".

Dave Andrews: It could be.

Harry Blazer: So I call it 'synthetic life' and the 'synthetic solution'. That whole stream of synthetics is tied in with trans humanism because these guys think that they know better than nature and nature along with human beings need to be re-engineered. Ultimately, we are going to transcend our humanness and become this greater thing through robotics, genetic engineering and information technologies and who knows what else.

Dave Andrews: I'm not sure that would be a greater thing.

Harry Blazer: Yes, but that's how the trans humanists and synthesists think about it.

Dave Andrews: Right.

Harry Blazer: "Wouldn't you want to live longer and jump higher and be smarter?"

So our challenge is to make the alternative meaningful in a way that can cut the legs off of these synthetic guys because they are changing life, as we know it, and they want to change human beings, as we know them as well.

Dave Andrews: Right.

Harry Blazer: I describe myself as an analog man in a digital world. I am absolutely 100% on the opposite side of this transhumanist/ synthetic life thing. My concern is that because we have such a poor understanding of spiritual –

and whatever else you want to call it – aspects of life that have not revealed themselves to science because science is dependent on their materialistic models and reductionist methods as opposed to a true refutational mode of investigation. Forget how science has been corrupted and politicized through the grant process.

We're ending up without as many dogs in this fight as we need. So the people with dogs in the fight are ideological groups, including so-called scientists and academicians who are so dogmatic that they can't be trusted.

Chris Mann: And they can't listen to you. That is the tragedy.

Harry Blazer: Right, and they are on a power trip of their own.

Dave Andrews: That's correct.

Harry Blazer: That is what we are witnessing here. There is a lot of these factions' bidding for who is going to have control of the future. I don't have interest in controlling. I don't have an interest in saving the world. I have an interest in creating greater personal responsibility - in having responsible people who are interacting with each other to solve problems and who in turn create a field that ultimately solves problems and attracts responsible people and builds responsible communities.

Dave Andrews: So how do you 'cut the legs off', as you put it?

Harry Blazer: We need to run parallel tests that compare our solutions with theirs and in turn provide observable, repeatable results that demonstrate that our alternative will work better.

We need to use science to prove that these methodologies are better.

We need to demonstrate that there is something to these practices, and it's something that current official science doesn't understand. It's also something that the synthetic guys are not even aware of, and that is not being incorporated into their model at all. So their model is fallacious, to begin with because it's totally incomplete. That's what we need to be able to demonstrate.

Does what I'm saying resonate with you?

Angela L Curtes: It resonates, but at the same time, the power structures that are creating these synthetic technologies don't want humans to be connected to the spirit.

Harry Blazer: I understand that. That has been going on for centuries.

Angela L Curtes: It's the consciousness of right and wrong and of life being purposeful and the integration and oneness of all species.

Harry Blazer: Right, but human beings as a whole want that kind of connection.

Angela L Curtes: Correct.

Harry Blazer: They also want authenticity. They want all these things that the synthetic guys talk about but are destroying. The point is: If you let folks know that this other path is credible and effective while preserving natural wealth, you will have a groundswell – I think –

of individuals who are interested in that understanding, just like the groundswell that is happening against GMOs. That happened because the inherent dangers of GMO technology started to make sense to people, or their kids were getting sick, or there was evidence of it changing our biology.

There is just enough stuff now that is coming out that people can sink their teeth into that is creating a crack in the GMO armor and to counter the FDA's claim that GMOs are equivalent to non-GMO food – which of course is absurd.

Dave Andrews: So how long is it going to take all of this to play out?

Harry Blazer: It's playing out now. Just look how the pro-GMO team had to figure out a way around Vermont's GMO labeling initiative and are doing so through this new Senate bill.

Dave Andrews: Did that pass?

Harry Blazer: It passed the Senate. It still has to go to the House, but it probably will. So all that means is that they have taken the right of the states to determine labeling regulations regarding GMOs and put it in the hands of the Feds. In addition, they so obfuscated things that now you don't have labeling in a practical sense. So they know how to work the system. Regardless, interest in non-GMO food and suspicion of GMOs is increasing – as is the private, non-GMO verification initiative. And more countries are banning GMOs altogether.

Dave Andrews: When I was down in Iowa, I wrote the two senators down there about it.

Harry Blazer: They know how to work the system. That's for sure.

The real question is: How do we manage the headwinds? That is how I would describe it. The answer is: It comes back to individuals who are willing to take responsibility and to bring power more and more back to local levels; however you can do it, as opposed to a Federal level – or even as opposed to a state level.

Angela L Curtes: We're talking about education at a grassroots level. It's an up welling from the people.

Harry Blazer: Right, but also a change a mindset from people looking to the government to solve their problems and understanding to a realization that this is their problem that they now have to solve at a local level with other like-minded people. That is the main paradigm change for people. As a matter of fact, so much so that they just say, "I'm sorry. We don't want the government to solve this problem." This change of mindset is actually a major hurdle that people need to jump over.

Cindy Dixon: Provincially in New Zealand, in Hawk's Bay, we are absolutely GMO free. The region is GMO free. We are the primary producer of the country. All the fruit and vegetables are grown there. The people, the farmers, and the entire greater mandated no GMOs – regardless of what the government said.

Harry Blazer: You know; I can make more money growing non-GMO stuff. I can get a better price for it. Not only that, but I can save seed. Not only that, I'm not tied in with all these terminator seed guys who want to control their intellectual property and have me by the noose. And I am saving money by not poisoning my land with Glyphosate (Roundup) and creating a super-weed problem at the same time.

Cindy Dixon: We only have four million people in New Zealand, and we produce food for the Northern Hemisphere. When I can go to Western Europe, Hong Kong, and Singapore – countries with some of the most stringent regulations in the world looking for clean food – I can show that there are residues less than .001 in the soil and in the food. As a result, I can extract $5 to $6 more per carton in that market. You can darn bet that they are happy customers, and they are crying for more.

Harry Blazer: New Zealand has the best processes for extending shelf life because of superb temperature control in your processing plants. For example, for beef primals, you are able to get 100 to 120 day shelf life in vacuum-packed primals, which is minimally double what Conagra and major US producers are able to get.

Now you have something that you can ship by boat very economically anywhere in the world.

Cindy Dixon: We do this with produce as well – not by using aseptic packaging, but through other technologies that we have had to develop because of lack of proximity to the rest of the world.

Also, in New Zealand, all animals raised for food have been declared sentient beings, so it's husbandry on a new level. I believe the only other place where that is the case is in The Netherlands.

Harry Blazer: It's a bill of rights for animals. In this country, just so you know, progressives will use something like that as a control mechanism to further enslave people. What they will do is they will turn around, along with Agenda 21/Agenda 30, climate change and everything else, and say, "That means that you can't live in this area in Montana because we really care about the animals," or why everyone should eat lab-produced synthetic meat.

The point is that you don't have to destroy social networks and people's lives in the name of protecting climate or in protecting animals.

Cindy Dixon: Agreed.

Harry Blazer: That is the difference between the enlightened people in New Zealand and here. So anytime I hear somebody saying in this country, "We're going to make a law that says that animals are sentient", I view it as another move towards collectivism and fascism.

Cindy Dixon: I understand.

Harry Blazer: I just want to put that alert out because of the way that things work.

Cindy Dixon: We couldn't possibly do that in New Zealand. We have four million people and 40 million sheep, not including the cattle and the dairy animals that are in the country.

What it has done is it has taken a bit of rogue behavior, particularly in the pork and the chicken industry, and we have set it in alignment with better methodologies for raising animals.

Harry Blazer: You also brought attention to something. There is a certain size – the optimal size – of social units to be considered. There is a big difference in a country of four million people as opposed to a country with 350 million, and also with smaller communities where you know your neighbors and are dependent on them. It provides a place for certain kinds of successes that we have not seen here.

You're also not as subject to certain kinds of manipulation either because you can get the information much better. It is easier to see the real deal and the dirty tricks and in turn understand the issues better.

Cindy Dixon: And there is shared information. That is a key thing in agriculture.

Harry Blazer: Collaboration.

Cindy Dixon: Yes. We have to be collaborative. Take, for example, when I first moved there, that same year the apple industry deregulated. Although I'm very American and I don't believe in monopolies; in New Zealand, they need regulated market bodies because it actually then puts the growers and producers under certain protocol because we have to meet every world protocol.

There is no, "This is our domestic market."

Harry Blazer: Yes, but if they didn't comply with those protocols, they just wouldn't be able to sell. So why do you need the government to tell you that?

Cindy Dixon: No, it's not the government per se; it's an organization. It's a marketing body which then handles it.

Harry Blazer: However, basically, that is a monopoly because you have to go through them to get a way to export.

Cindy Dixon: It's like Zespri, which you probably know about. The growers themselves have ensured that Zespri has stayed together. (http://www.zespri.com/companyinformation)

Harry Blazer: So it's just like monarchies. As long as monopolies are benevolent, things can be very efficient. The problem is that any time you concentrate power, it tends to go towards corruption.

Cindy Dixon: True, and that is why the industry was deregulated. The industry itself was very fat and growers were very poor. When I say 'very poor' they weren't very poor; they just weren't as wealthy as they were ten years before.

What has happened is it has come around again, and it has actually bubbled up more to a pseudo government level. However, it has brought the collaboration among all the powers involved.

By the same token, when I started, there were 1,300 apple and pear growers in New Zealand. There are now 300 and we have more land area. We went from small farmers and small producers with 10-15 acres producing to: "You can't keep your head above water unless you have 50 acres."

Harry Blazer: Did they do that voluntarily? Was it just a result of market forces? Was it a consequence of over regulation or deregulation?

Cindy Dixon: Deregulation forced it. Then you had rogue behavior. You had marketers that begged, borrowed, and stole. For example:

An apple producer produces a crop with no payment for a minimum of nine months. They see no money other than advanced payments when they submit bids. So they get an advanced payment and then deductions off of their advanced payment. I don't like this kind of arrangement since it's quite an incestuous relationship between the marketer, exporter, and the grower.

Harry Blazer: So what happens if you have a crop failure? Is there insurance, or are you in hock?

Cindy Dixon: You had better be insured, or be very close with your exporter that they will come and float you until next year.

Harry Blazer: So a geo-engineered climate-change program – a weather modification program –

that could basically create some massive droughts or floods could certainly assist in the transfer of assets, land and so on, to a select group of insiders.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, any volatile situation. Again, post-deregulation, one of the major players in forcing deregulation through is now one of the largest, wealthiest growers in the country. At the same time, I know of the damage to many of the growers whom he has hurt along the way and who are no longer in business. He now owns their land.

There is not a lot of give and take in that environment. Those groups now have to work collaboratively together. There has to be a level of transparency in order to make that work.

Harry Blazer: What I would say is: There is something else going on other than just merely deregulation to allow that guy to accumulate all the land. I mean, there must have been some dirty tricks. That is the point.

Cindy Dixon: Yes. In a deregulated market, there were a lot of dirty tricks.

Harry Blazer: However, in regulated markets, there are a huge amount of dirty tricks.

Cindy Dixon: Of course, there are. When you have a corporatized marketing body, let's face it, there are all sorts of things going on, but that is at a macro level.

Now take it down and multiply it by 100. Once that marketing body was dissolved, the following year, there were 137 exporters out of New Zealand for 14 million cartons of fruit, which represents production of less than one variety of a large grower in the state of Washington. So we're not talking about large world volume. We have 0.5% of the world volume in apples and pears.

Harry Blazer: Let me say this. Whether it is a deregulation/regulation cycle or something that is comparable, those cycles have been used throughout history to consolidate wealth. They use this argument at the time, "We have to go this way now to solve this problem," but the system is warped. So you think you're making progress, and you think that the government is in there helping you, and in fact, all it is doing is creating another type of condition that will then be exploited over time.

The bottom line is that there are fewer farmers now than ever. That is what you look at. There is less diversity, there is more centralized control, and there are more of all of the things that ultimately lead to bad food.

Cindy Dixon: I don't disagree with that at all.

Harry Blazer: Anytime the government is involved, I don't trust it. I know it's going to lead to fascism, which is homogenized thought and behavior, and centralization of power and wealth.

I'm all for diversity. Diversity comes from creative individuals being given as much runway as possible, which means as little interference from the government and regulatory agencies as possible. Those are the conclusions that I've come to.

For that world to succeed – because the other one won't, it will always enslave – you have to have responsible individuals. That is the key. If we as humans don't rise up to the occasion, throw off this 'victim mentality' and take responsibility for our own lives first and then our families and our neighbors, it ain't going to work. The world just ain't going to work.

Evil exists; they want control and they have a plan.

Chris Mann: Does Trump have a plan?

Harry Blazer: I wouldn't trust him as far as I could throw him. The only thing is that it would be worse under Hillary.

Angela L Curtes: It's the lesser of two evils, as they say.

Harry Blazer: I haven't voted for any Presidential candidate since McGovern in 1972, but I might have to vote for Trump in order to prevent Hillary from getting in.

Cindy Dixon: When I said it was the government, the Pipfruit New Zealand organization is actually owned by the growers, but it is a form of government. (http://www.pipfruitnz.co.nz)

Harry Blazer: Yes, and the government allows it. They enable that.

Cooperatives are great, but when the cooperative becomes the government, it's not so great.

I went to Organic Valley.

Dave Andrews: Was that on this trip, Harry?

Harry Blazer: No, but I've gone to their head people. I said, "In one sense, it's great. You've organized organic farmers. You provide a market for them because the key to sustainability is having markets for sustainable products. You've got a very powerful coop now, but there is only one problem. In order to expand your market and in particular, to service the large supermarket chains, you needed extended shelf life, so you ultra-pasteurized your stuff. You have taken a product which is superior, and now you've degraded it to where you have compromised the nutritional and inherent value of it by super-heating it up to 280 degrees."

The member of management said, "Yeah, I know that is a bit of a problem. We don't know a way around it."

With the right intentionality and getting your imagination going, you can come up with a way that doesn't destroy the nutritional content or damage the product that you're touting as having more nutrition and being better for you. So that is what I see happening all the time – compromised organizations.

To the chef: What type of seasoning did you put on the trout?

Chef: Just salt and pepper. The sauce I made was from the drippings of the fish along with the white wine that I burned off and organic vegetable broth and the grapes and parsley.

Harry Blazer: Okay. That is helpful. Then I'm a bit suspect of this trout. I want to look up their credentials. There is always a difference that I can taste between wild and farmed.

Angela L Curtes: They are actually not too far from here.

Harry Blazer: That might be worthwhile to visit them. If they are doing things correct, I will get behind them in the supermarket industry.

Angela L Curtes: You're right. A lot of farm-raised trout are fed a soy-based diet.

Harry Blazer: Plus antibiotics, plus other crap that they throw in there that they don't even tell you about.

You were about to ask something really important. It was about how the monopolization of these centralized growing coops, and you were going to ask how to get around it or something to that extent.

Cindy Dixon: Yes. How do you get around it? You have organization or chaos, but a combination of the two is organized chaos. There is a lot of excitement in organized chaos. There is also extreme growth potential.

Harry Blazer: We've had the word 'anarchy' absolutely bastardized, just like the word 'conspiracy'. If you say 'conspiracy', suddenly nobody listens to you.

The CIA developed a program after the Kennedy assassination to destroy the possibility of people knowing more about what they didn't want them to know about by branding them as "conspiracy theorists". Hey, if you are in the criminal conspiracy business, that is a clever way to create a cover.

So anarchy at its roots is not lawlessness and disorder at all as it has been made out to be; it's the opposite. It's people taking responsibility, but basically saying that government is not the answer, and we do not acknowledge or support a centralized government's right to rule us as individuals or as communities. So I just keep going back to that.

In the end, enlightened communities will and can form mutually beneficial relationships. You don't need a master governing body to homogenize everything.

People say, "If we're going to sell our stuff, we need to be compliant in these ways," to the EU or whoever.

The question that I would ask is: Is there a way to trade without becoming a slave of the EU if you want to sell to Europe? That is the question that I would have asked because I don't want to play the game with the EU. They are a major part of the problem.

Angela L Curtes: What about with the TPP now? That throws a whole new wrench in this.

Cindy Dixon: That has been going on for ten years. It has now come to the forefront. I mean, the reason that I can be a dual citizen in New Zealand is because of whatever it was before the Trans-Pacific Partnership. That holding hands has been going on with Australia and the US for probably 30 years.

Angela L Curtes: And the WTO and some of their original agreements.

Cindy Dixon: Right, but it still has to be between the two countries. The US and Australia have their own independent trade agreements. That is how people make a profit off of other countries – by individually making their own trade agreements.

I am a former customs house broker. If you go into the trade agreements, you will find thousands of them. The TPP is just the one that is currently on the table.

Harry Blazer: However, TPP is more than just a traditional trade agreement. It is much more comprehensive with a much different agenda. It's going to have its own major centralized organization. It's going to supersede existing agreements and take a lot of rules and *harmonize* them. It's this famous word that they use, 'harmonize'. They will *harmonize* i.e. homogenize it for sure.

Not only that, but how it affects intellectual property rights is going to be a nightmare. It will allow them to push GMOs and so on. There is an agenda to control.

Angela L Curtes: And the winner is corporate interests really. It will supersede a country's sovereignty and force countries to adopt certain behaviors regardless of the cultural, environmental and societal consequences.

Harry Blazer: And you've complexified things so much that only the large corporations end up having the resources to deal with it.

Cindy Dixon: Correct. So living in New Zealand, who do you think the real threat is for us out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership? I'm an American, and I hate that whole thing. Let me tell you, everybody wants our food. Nobody wants to pay for it, but they all want our food.

I work for an American company in New Zealand, and we undersell everybody in the whole world in the USA. Then we underpay our growers. I'm just going to be really hard-core on this.

For example, in New Zealand, the cost of producing a box of apples is equivalent to $22 US dollars to get the products in a boat and on its way to market. In the US, it's dependent on whom you talk to and what kind of inputs they use, but it's probably roughly $16 - $18.

We produce 160 million cartons of apples in the USA. So it's not like we don't have enough. We store them 12 months out of the year. I can say, "Don't buy US apples right now," because you're eating last year's product that sat in CA (controlled atmosphere storage) for the last 12 months.

Harry Blazer: And you can taste the difference. You can taste the difference over time.

Keep going because you're going to be making some critical points that I want to comment on.

Cindy Dixon: When I am supporting the place where I live and representing the growers in New Zealand, I have to demand a price that is going to get them an equitable return.

The US market, by the way, pays the worst. I won't even go into what happens when you import product into this country. I won't even start with that because we'll be there all afternoon.

Harry Blazer: Do you have to put aside everything that comes in and fumigate everything that comes in?

Cindy Dixon: No, only if it comes into California. We can bring it in everywhere else without having to fumigate. It's only because of the Apple Leafcurling Midge (ALCM).

Harry Blazer: And are you using cold technology everywhere else?

Cindy Dixon: Yes. Only California has ALCM, so fumigation is represented as a way to protect apple growers, but there aren't very many apple growers in California anymore.

Harry Blazer: As I said, but keep going.

Cindy Dixon: As I switched from working for a New Zealand company to an American company in New Zealand, I would get these phone calls from customers around the world who were dealing with the American company that I was working for in New Zealand, a satellite business, saying, "We want Gala. We want Gala. Please send us Gala."

I would say, "Okay. The price is $28 a box minimum for size 160, 165, and 135."

Harry Blazer: The small stuff.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, the small stuff. I took $38-$40 a box for Royal Gala in Asia because it's clean, and we can prove it's clean.

Harry Blazer: And they like those big sizes.

Cindy Dixon: North America also likes the big sizes, and they also like to send the big sizes to Asia.

Well, the US was still selling old fruit, and they were selling for under $20 a box. My boss is calling me from the US, chewing me a new backside.

Harry Blazer: Why?

Cindy Dixon: Because I wasn't selling his customers my apples for $18-$20 a box.

I said, "Alright. That is fine. Then you can write the check for the extra $8 that I'm going to pay my grower, whether you sell this box of apples or not."

Harry Blazer: However, the new crop that comes out of Washington would be considerably higher also than the storage stuff anyway. Did they realize that it's winter down there when it's summer up here? Or does he not understand that?

Cindy Dixon: No, he totally gets it. That's why he wanted me to be down there. He wanted to fill that little niche gap. I went through the cycle in one year, and when the Hong Kong investment company came into a joint venture, I quit. I can't tell you how many proposals on the table there were for investment in New Zealand agriculture – and it doesn't take a huge investment in New Zealand – $200,000 goes a really long way.

Harry Blazer: Investing also gives you certain rights.

Cindy Dixon: Correct. You're securing your fruit.

Harry Blazer: That is the key. The supply chain is the key challenge now for any retailer. The supermarkets in this country don't get it. I say to them, "You have got to partner with your farmers. That means to treat them with respect because the source of supply is going to be your major challenge."

So there you go. The Orientals know it very, very well.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, they do.

Harry Blazer: They are going around the world – to Africa and you name it – developing those relationships.

We want to do it by coercion and force. We want to do it through IMF. We want to do it through overthrowing of governments. We want to do it by creating these situations where we force a price on people, and they can't make a living doing it.

Cindy Dixon: Right, and when they go bankrupt, we say, "Oh, now we're going to have to find the fruit elsewhere." Wait a second. That is more expensive.

Harry Blazer: We'll just buy their assets cheap and put their own people in. They'll put robots on the farm to replace people and lower costs.

Cindy Dixon: When New Zealand is too expensive, they buy it out of Chile. Good luck with that.

Harry Blazer: Eventually, you're going to run out of places to screw.

Cindy Dixon: That's right. Asia is so up on it and are so savvy on it.

Two years ago when the ports on the West Coast shut down and there were thousands of containers sitting in Los Angeles and all over the West Coast – thousands of containers ready to go with all kinds of fruit, but primarily citrus. The ships were strung out all the way to Fuji.

My American company – I was working for them at the time – was just waiting for the gate to open and this flood to happen. The Asian customers were calling me, "When are we going to get your fruit? We don't want that old stuff."

It was diabolical. Who took the loss? The grower did and every time the grower took the loss. For example, Sunkist took billions of dollars of losses as a cooperative. I understand that they are a major marketing body, and they do their own thing and they make their own choices, but they also sell to other exporters.

Harry Blazer: So they had huge losses because the containers couldn't be unloaded and the stuff rotted?

Cindy Dixon: Some, or the containers went and the buyers said, "That is rubbish; we don't want it. We're taking $10 a box credit."

Harry Blazer: So they rejected it. It's the old rejection routine that supermarkets do all the time to squeeze suppliers.

Cindy Dixon: Correct. These are importers doing this before it ever gets to the market.

Harry Blazer: That is one of the reasons why when I ran Harry's Farmers Market that we had some of the best vendor relationships. We never ever did stuff like that. We would do the opposite.

If a shipper had a quality problem that was workable, instead of rejecting it like the supermarkets do, we would say, "We will work with you."

We would go through and cull and re-grade the stuff, and I would say, "I'll tell you how this will work. We're going to send you the cash register receipts that show you exactly how much money we took in, and we're going to give you 60% of that take; we will keep 40%."

Nobody ever does it that way. If they don't reject the shipment and instead decide to keep it on consignment, they will pay you as little as they can, and then they'll go off and sell the merchandise for as much as they can, and that's it. They leave the shipper hanging because it's a perfect opportunity to take advantage.

Cindy Dixon: That's right, and it happens at multiple places in the supply chain. As an example, if I were to send a load to the States, there are different ways of inspection and there are also different things, as you know, that happens. In New Zealand, we will have spent time, money and energy, packing fruit that then, because of a "non-compliance issue", gets dumped into a water tank with everybody else's fruit for re-grading. But then what happens to lot accountability and traceability?

I had full traceability right back to the field. I could basically trace it to the tree that it was picked from.

Harry Blazer: Do you use public health as the justification for that degree of traceability? Actually, the main motivation for these regulations is for access to the associated data by government and other corporate entities.

Cindy Dixon: That's right. So all of that work, and it comes and gets dumped in water with all other products. Because of a noncompliance issue, the importer won't accept it, "We're not buying this."

And I come back at them: "Oh, yes you are. This is what you asked for. This is what you got. The grower is not going to pay for this."

However, there are also other examples other than non-compliance. So, say that today an importer or re-packer needs to pack 135 size granny smiths for Walmart's bagging program. All the apples go into the water vat as part of the bagging operation. Boxes from ten different growers might be utilized during that bagging operation. Normally, when the containers of freight arrive, everything is inspected. There is a percentage of what might be stem punctures or whatever, and that is all recorded – by lot.

Harry Blazer: These are the deviations.

Cindy Dixon: Right, and that is all recorded against the grower number. Nevertheless, when it all goes into the vat and it is bagged, whoever is the last shipper in the vat takes the bath for the whole lot.

Harry Blazer: Really? What?

Cindy Dixon: Let me tell you, I jumped up and down and went mental on this. From that point forward, never ever did I take a noncompliance from the States ever. "No, you won't. If you repacked it, if you touched it or reprocessed it, if you mess with the integrity of that fruit, you suck it." Excuse me for saying it like that.

Harry Blazer: Why do we have to excuse you?

Cindy Dixon: Because that's a bit rude.

Harry Blazer: I don't think so.

So this is the way that all these foreign nations need to handle this: They need to ship nothing to the United States and try as much as you can to find other markets for the production to teach those receivers a lesson. You have to deal with people you know you can trust.

That is an opportunity, actually, for honest brokers to increase their reach and market share.

Cindy Dixon: That's right; agreed. That's why I don't work in the organized industry any longer.

Harry Blazer: So it's $28 instead of $22. Are you packing 40-pound boxes?

Cindy Dixon: Yes.

Harry Blazer: So what is that - $6 for over 40 pounds? About 15 cents extra cost per pound?

Cindy Dixon: Roughly, yes.

Harry Blazer: What does the supermarket charge the customer? What are the margins that they are making? It's stupid margins!

So the retailer should take a bit of a hit on margin for quality. Not only that, but the retailer will have fewer culls and happier customers.

When we were in our prime, we were working on 25% margins. Supermarket produce margin is often more than 40%. That difference in margin makes a huge difference in the retail price. So, for example, an item costing $1 at a 25% margin will sell for $1.33. At 40% margin, it will sell for $1.67 – 25% more. That's how margin works.

We also adjusted our retail prices to help guys out, and we always helped the farmers when they said, "Hey, I'm stuck with this size."

"So the supermarkets would say, no, I need a size 72." We were totally flexible on sizing as long as the quality was there.

Cindy Dixon: One of the big things that rub me the wrong way is we think fruit is supposed to be perfect and plastic looking. On an average year in any food production area, you can guarantee that 10-20% are going to have hail, frost, rust mite damage and that all potentially go to juice or pig food at a loss.

Harry Blazer: If you could change that paradigm, it would make all the difference in the world for the grower. They're doing this whole ugly fruit movement in the UK and other places now, but I've always said that taste trumps appearance. That is the most important thing.

Not only that, but the industry has totally blown trust with the consumer. In the matrix of taste and appearance you have four possibilities -

looks good/tastes bad, looks good/tastes good, looks bad/tastes good, and looks bad/tastes bad. The industry has repeatedly opted for looks over taste and often is selling stuff that looks good but disappoints when it comes to the eating experience.

As hunter-gatherers with centuries of experience, we look at it and say, "All the visual signals I'm getting indicate that this should be really good", however, what the industry has done is create an illusion. They have created an illusion by focusing on appearance, and then when it ends up being not ripe, it's mealy, or whatever the hell it is; we have been misled. Also, the varieties that the industry is developing - they are constantly looking for more shelf life or durability. Taste is rarely driving development.

Cindy Dixon: Right.

Harry Blazer: So the major industry players are behaving irresponsibly, but they are suffering now.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, and they will continue to suffer.

Harry Blazer: Especially super market chains – they are going to lose market share. Nobody trusts them anymore. Also, you have all these alternatives now with the small farmers coming to these farmer's markets, and stuff is fairly reasonably priced. Sometimes it's dirt cheap. Hmong farmers in Missoula, Montana area sell fresher and better stuff considerably cheaper than the grocery stores. And more and more people are starting their own gardens because they don't trust the food supply.

Chris Mann: It's an opportunity for Michael Fields to educate them properly.

Cindy Dixon: Herein lies your challenge.

Dave Andrews: I guess so – in the next two to four months.

Harry Blazer: Cindy, I didn't realize that you were into this as much as you are. Man, you're fantastic.

Cindy Dixon: I'm over the top into it.

Harry Blazer: If I was an importer, you would be my first call. "I'm hiring you."

Chris Mann: That's what I did.

Cindy Dixon: That's exactly what you did. He plucked me out of customs house brokerage.

Harry Blazer: How did you find her?

Chris Mann: I was bringing something in from out of the country and used the company she was with as the designated broker to handle the transaction, and I needed to get it sooner than the normal delivery date.

Cindy Dixon: I'm a broker – a freight forwarder – by trade.

Harry Blazer: Who did you work for?

Cindy Dixon: I worked for the Hipage Company. They were taken over by Robinson, I believe.

Harry Blazer: Where were you located?

Cindy Dixon: In Milwaukee. Chris had come in and stood there and said he had called around to see who could do this for me, and every broker in town told him I personally was the only broker that would clear personal effects, which was true.

I said, "Here is how it works. I can fill in this form for you by hand, and you can carry it down and do this yourself, or I can electronically do it, and we can wait for a response, and then you can carry it down and clear it yourself."

So that was that. He got his stuff. We talked two other times, and then the third time he called I had vessels frozen in the ice out in Nova Scotia – me and every other broker in the world, pretty much. It was bad.

Harry Blazer: Frozen? That's deep; not quite global warming.

Cindy Dixon: That was bad. The ice cutters were trying to free the ships, so it was diabolical really. The Kimberly Clark's and the SC Johnson's – it was huge. We handled 5,000 customers and some of the primary ICI chemicals. That's why I really got out of it; I couldn't cope with what I had to move around the planet. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Chemical_Industries)

Harry Blazer: Gosh, people with a conscience! Aren't they a bitch!

Cindy Dixon: So Chris calls up that day, and I'm strung out to the max. I'm like, "Hello. Cindy speaking. How may I help you?"

He said, "Oh, dear Cindy," in his melodic way. "How are you today?"

I said, "I'm busy, Chris. I'm really busy. What can I do for you?"

"Isn't it amazing how two people who are so very, very busy don't just work together?"

Instantly my hackles went up. "Are you soliciting me?"

He said, "It depends on what your answer is," and I started working for him three weeks later.

Harry Blazer: You would think that your hackles would have gone down.

Cindy Dixon: They did as soon as I got out of there. Three weeks later, I was working for him, and I had no idea who he was or what he did or what on earth I was going to be doing.

Harry Blazer: Only because of whom he was?

Cindy Dixon: I didn't know who he was.

Harry Blazer: However, you knew the way that he was.

Cindy Dixon: We knew that there was a connection. It was really that simple.

Chris Mann: Remember the building?

Cindy Dixon: Which building? Oh, I had moved out to Elkhorn 18 months before – the next community over. For about a year and a half prior my husband and I at the time – I am widowed, so this was my late husband – were driving around Walworth and lower Waukesha County looking for lake property. We kept driving past Michael Fields, which didn't have a sign.

Dave Andrews: How long ago was that?

Cindy Dixon: That was 20 years ago. As we were driving by I kept saying, "Oh my God! Who owns that cool barn house? I want that barn house." A year and a half later, I was working at the barn house because Chris owned it.

Harry Blazer: Be careful what you wish for.

Cindy Dixon: I know! It was pretty amazing actually. What do you think, David?

Dave Andrews: I'm just soaking it all in.

Chris Mann: Life is full of surprises.

Dave Andrews: That's right. I'm waiting for the next one, Chris.

Chris Mann: There is always another one; be flexible.

Dave Andrews: Be flexible. Right. That's a good motto.

Harry Blazer: If we can, at some point I would like to do an interview with you David, and I would like to do it so that I can actually have something that we could broadcast. This is going to be on Catherine Austin Fitts' Solari Report as part of a food series. She's convinced me to do a food series. (David and I subsequently recorded an interview that is available on the Solari Archive for subscribers).

Dave Andrews: How is Catherine doing?

Harry Blazer: Good. I talked to her earlier.

Dave Andrews: She was here two or three years ago.

Angela L Curtes: It wasn't last year. I'm trying to think if it's been two or three years. I think it's been two. It was when Bruno was here, and we met your buddy, Rick Freeman. He came after you guys visited that time. Bruno was here two summers ago.

Chris Mann: He was a Brazilian.

Angela L Curtes: Actually, 2013 was when he was here.

Harry Blazer: So it's been at least three years.

Angela L Curtes: Right.

Chris Mann: Where have you been in the interim?

Angela L Curtes: Have you been hiding out in Montana or traveling a lot?

Harry Blazer: Let me think. The last three years I was on an assignment, and I was mostly in the UK.

Chris Mann: Really?

Harry Blazer: Yes. So when I do these assignments, I move to these places.

Angela L Curtes: This was for Catherine, for The Solari Report?

Harry Blazer: No. This was my food consulting with a major supermarket player. So I was over there with Morrisons, which is the fourth largest supermarket chain in the UK. I was there for quite a while helping them out.

Angela L Curtes: What do you know about this new Meijer food chain that has moved into Wisconsin?

Harry Blazer: Meijer, yes. I think they are still family run. The next state over is where they started, so they are relatively regional. They are fairly close.

Angela L Curtes: So they're a US company.

Harry Blazer: They run superstores.

Cindy Dixon: I was told that they were a German family.

Harry Blazer: They might be of German descent, but they've been operating in America. They are an American company unless somebody bought them out.

Angela L Curtes: They're popping up like hotcakes.

Harry Blazer: Yes. One time I approached them about helping them and was passed to the CMO– the Chief Merchandising Officer – who in most organizations is problematic. They hear what I have to say, and they think, "Oops. This guy knows more than me. I can't let him into the company."

Chris Mann: Lack of self-esteem.

Harry Blazer: That's right. Instead of looking at me as a way that can make them more successful, I'm a threat. I see that all the time.

Dave Andrews: It happens a lot.

Harry Blazer: Dessert too? Damn!

Chef: It's not just local eggs and honey; it's biodynamic eggs and honey.

Harry Blazer: I would take biodynamic over organic any day.

Cindy Dixon: Me, as well. We just have to find a way to market it and make it accessible to all people.

Harry Blazer: There you go. Are there now standardized (certified) biodynamic practices, or is there a very wide variety of biodynamic practices?

Angela L Curtes: There is the Demeter certification, which has very stringent guidelines and regulations. (http://www.demeter-usa.org/for-farmers/certification.asp)

Cindy Dixon: There are 900 certified growers in the world.

Angela L Curtes: Is that it?

Cindy Dixon: Yes.

Dave Andrews: They don't have very many in the United States.

Harry Blazer: So is that certification an example of something you feel has merit? Do you feel they actually have standards that are worthwhile, are meaningful, and actually help soil and help grow better stuff? Or is it another one of those control mechanisms?

Angela L Curtes: There are a lot of animal/humane aspects to it. There is also 25% of a landscape farm that has to be in conservation. There are buffers and the promotion of edges.

Harry Blazer: So there is habitat for insects and beneficials.

Cindy Dixon: Tesco's protocol has that. (tesco.com) There are grocery store chains that have that requirement.

So that's not above and beyond what anybody else is doing. The problem is that it's more expensive than anybody else.

David, what does it cost to get Demeter certified?

Dave Andrews: We don't have anything Demeter certified, so I don't know. That's my short answer.

Angela L Curtes: I thought we had a small area certified?

Dave Andrews: Organic certification is $800 a year.

Angela L Curtes: For how many acres?

Cindy Dixon: It doesn't matter. It is certifying your systems, not your acreage.

Harry Blazer: That is interesting.

Angela L Curtes: So if you have one acre or 300,000 acres, it is $800?

Cindy Dixon: As far as I know.

Dave Andrews: I really like the idea of it being certified.

Harry Blazer: "Meijer is a regional American supercenter chain with its headquarters in Walker, Michigan in the Grand Rapids metropolitan area.

It was founded in 1934 as a supermarket chain. Meijer is credited with pioneering the modern supercenter concept in 1962. About half of the company's 200 stores are located in Michigan's Lower Peninsula, with additional locations in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Meijer has no affiliation with Fred Meyer (which is another chain). The chain was ranked No. 19 on Forbes' 2015 list… based on 2015 revenue, Meijer is the 26th-largest retailer in the United States."

The founder was Hendrik Meijer – however you say that in German. As far as I know, it is as I thought. They are a US-owned company. They were US born and bred and they compete in the US.

Cindy Dixon: And are they spelled, Meijer?

Harry Blazer: Yes, Meijer. They have some very large stores.

Cindy Dixon: We can look up the cost of certification. I know that it is the most expensive. From a producer level, I dealt with certifications, and I had no biodynamic producers whatsoever. For organic, you have to have all the EU certification, and then you have to have Tesco certification, and you have to have certification for every single company that requires one. Marks & Spencer in the UK now does it for free. It's an online certification, so you can go on and make up a whole bunch of *B.S.* and then be certified.

Harry Blazer: That is very significant that you told me that. At one time, M&S had the highest standards and protocols and set the bar above everybody else. I've seen a change in the quality of their stuff, and that explains part of it.

Cindy Dixon: It's a standard certification for covering all the European and North American stores because there are North American compliances as well.

Harry Blazer: Isn't it amazing that there are more and more and more certifications and more hoops that you have to jump through and the quality of the food and the nutrition of the food and many other aspects of food are declining? So they are not measuring and certifying the right things, are they?

Cindy Dixon: Only because I've been actively involved, I think that one of the key points out of New Zealand is that the New Zealand standard exceeds all of them. That tells me that we are doing right by our growers because we can meet the requirements of any market.

Harry Blazer: The success of your farming system is rooted in the integrity of the growers. That is really the foundation.

Cindy Dixon: That's right, and it is the growers that are driving that. When they were accosted to death with every single certification and in a year when there is hail or a drought or whatever, you still have to be certified. It's like getting a license every year to be able to sell your product.

Some certifications, like an organic certification, if you fail one year, good luck. You've got three years to wait until you get it again. And nobody buys transitional fruit anymore (transitioning during the mandatory 3-year waiting period from conventional to organic).

Harry Blazer: You can't get an extra price for it? Is it basically lumped in with the commercial stuff?

Cindy Dixon: Right. Creating a standard that exceeds all the world's expectations was the only way to create the integrity from the producer level to be able to say, "We're going to beat the socks off of all the rest of you and get the price we deserve."

Harry Blazer: This is the point. From a marketing perspective, you need to justify a premium, which you can do. That story is not being told as effectively as it could be.

Cindy Dixon: I tell it all the time.

Harry Blazer: But it's not being told to the consumer.

Cindy Dixon: Right.

Harry Blazer: So there is an aura about New Zealand just because it's far away and that type of stuff.

Cindy Dixon: It's 'clean and green'.

Harry Blazer: Right. So there is this umbrella, but there needs to be a more effective messaging campaign to justify the premium that you deserve.

Cindy Dixon: Correct. There are two mindsets. From a marketing perspective, when I was working directly with producers, we did.

Every year I toured producers in the US and California and all up and down the West Coast. There were 12 of them. I took them up and down the West Coast, into the Midwest, and then to the East Coast. We hit the high-end stores.

Harry Blazer: You took the New Zealand farmers to the stores?

Cindy Dixon: Yes, and we spent a month promoting. It was absolutely fantastic. We would sell out in every store we visited.

Harry Blazer: You made my case for me because you did on the ground marketing in the stores with people who knew and were passionate about the product, and that helped customers appreciate the superior value. That is what I'm saying.

Cindy Dixon: And suddenly the person who first came in and said, "No, I'm not going to buy Jazz apples because I only buy locally grown," suddenly, I step back because as an American I say, "Oh, okay. So you want this nine-month-old fruit? Here you go." That is what I wanted to say.

Harry Blazer: That is what I would say.

Cindy Dixon: I know, but I was wearing a logo; it wasn't just me.

Harry Blazer: So you didn't want to alienate the people who were hosting you or the organization that was sponsoring you.

Cindy Dixon: Right, but the growers then go, "Wait. This is fresh. We've just harvested this. In fact, I can tell you that this is my box. I just pulled it out of the back, and you can see that it was harvested on this date."

When we would leave, I would demand from the manager the sales during our visit. I kid you not. We sold 500 pounds of apples in two hours. They didn't sell 500 pounds in a day or more.

However, of course, 'Kiwis' are cool. Americans like the accent. We had female stalkers in Boston. It was great! This one gal followed us around every store.

Harry Blazer: No kidding!

Cindy Dixon: She wanted to talk to the 'Kiwi blokes', and it was great, but it made it all relevant. As we were standing there, there was a personal association with the product.

Harry Blazer: Absolutely. Customers want authentic stories and pedigrees, and you guys have an authentic story to tell.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, and suddenly at that time Jazz was just being planted in Washington state. So those plantings are probably 12 years old now.

Harry Blazer: They're in their prime now.

Cindy Dixon: Yes. In order to get traction in the US – not just at the grower base, because they were already sold on the product – we had to keep constant momentum from the marketing end of it. The only way to do that is with face-to-face contact. I wish that the US growers would do that with their product.

Harry Blazer: One of the nice things about these unusual breeds of apples is it's basically done the old-fashioned way, right? Is it by grafting to root stock right?

Cindy Dixon: The Jazz apple is a Royal Gala-Braeburn cross. It's developed using cross-pollination.

Harry Blazer: Are they doing cross-pollination to produce seed, or are they using grafting techniques?

Cindy Dixon: Both can be done. Its sister is the Envy apple. To me, the Jazz is a party boy, and Envy is the saucy sister. Envy is Braeburn-Royal Gala, so switch it the other way around.

Harry Blazer: Are they creating a hybridized seed?

Cindy Dixon: Will it start from seed? Yes, it will start from seed, so you can plant the tree from seed.

Harry Blazer: So they cross-pollinate and produce a new starter, and that is what they plant?

Cindy Dixon: Correct.

Harry Blazer: And then they graft it?

Cindy Dixon: Yes. That goes to the standard. Most apple trees from seed, at one point or another, will split. The tree itself will split just because of age. It's meant to produce and grow and become a humongous tree. Well, they become heavy and laden, and they split.

I would recommend the standards (see note below) that are used now for production, whether they are dwarfing rootstalk or they are powerhouses like the 793 varieties, which are huge and you get massive trees. They grow as big as you can imagine regardless of what rootstalk. The integrity of the variety is grafted on that rootstalk so that it maintains the integrity of the variety.

(Apple rootstocks have traditionally been divided into three groups: standard, semi-dwarf, and dwarf.

A standard size tree refers to trees growing on seedling rootstock. If trees on seedling rootstocks are not pruned to limit tree size, the trees will reach a height of about 30 feet and have a crown diameter of about 30 feet. Orchards planted before the 1960s often had only 40 trees per acre and were spaced 40 feet by 40 feet. With good pruning, standard size trees can be planted at about 26 feet x 20 feet with 84 trees per acre; these trees will attain a height of about 24 feet.

Semi-dwarfing rootstocks typically produce trees that are about 60% to 90% of standard size, with a height of about 14 feet to 22 feet, depending on the rootstock. Semi-dwarfing rootstocks were commonly planted at a spacing of 22 feet x 16 feet (132 trees per acre) during the 1960s through the 1980s.

Dwarfing rootstocks typically produce trees that are about 30% to 60% of the size of trees on seedling rootstocks, with a mature height of about 6 feet to 12 feet. Depending on the soil, scion cultivar, and training system, trees on dwarf rootstocks can be spaced at 20 feet x 14 feet (173 trees per acre) to 14 feet x 4 feet (778 trees per acre). Some of the more progressive apple growers, in regions with less vigorous growing conditions, are planting very high tree densities with spacings of 14 feet x 2 feet with 1,556 trees per acre. - http://articles.extension.org/pages/60629/understanding-apple-tree-size:-dwarf-semi-dwarf-and-standard)

Harry Blazer: What I'm saying is: It is not actually a hybridization method like typical seeds, where succeeding generations lose characteristics of the original, and you have to keep freshening it up. Or is it more the way that farmers have been doing it for a very long time?

Cindy Dixon: Yes, as a new variety.

Harry Blazer: So these new varieties are still a real apple as opposed to this super-hybrid that may be a good producer or not.

Cindy Dixon: You do see that in older strains of apples. I will use Gala and Royal Gala as examples. We don't grow Gala at all in New Zealand.

Harry Blazer: Why?

Cindy Dixon: Because it is becoming an extinct variety because it is insipid in color, it gets mealy really quick. We grow Royal Gala, which is red and striped because everybody wants red and striped. It actually is a heartier variety. It is still a Gala; it's just that they've taken the mutations, and they have one branch that is super-red in a tree that is otherwise insipid. Then you take that branch, and you start on that.

It takes 27 years to get a new variety to be plantable.

Harry Blazer: Are they taking the seed from that, or are they taking a graft of that?

Cindy Dixon: They do either/or. If they take a graft of it, this is where you get the possibility of reversion. It will revert, and I can see trees where guys have taken cuttings and grafted. You will see Royal Gala but you will also see whole branches and even as much as half of the tree that has reverted back to Gala.

Harry Blazer: So you use the hybridization/cross-pollination techniques to produce the seed, and then you use traditional grafting techniques to keep it going.

Cindy Dixon: Correct.

Harry Blazer: That is an interesting combination.

Cindy Dixon: And it takes years and years and years, and you set aside a new variety.

Actually, in the sense of world apple production, there are over 350 varieties currently in the world market for sale. Braeburn and Gala are technically new varieties because they have been developed in the last 50-60 years.

Harry Blazer: How many apple varieties are there in nature? (there are some 7500 cultivars)

Cindy Dixon: Probably in the thousands.

Chris Mann: Especially in Britain.

Harry Blazer: There were 25,000 varieties of corn in Mexico before the GMOs started to affect everything. So there is gigantic natural diversity that is being undermined by modern agriculture. The kinds of things we eat and the varieties are limited, even within the apple domain, relative to what is potentially available. It's also limited in terms of all possibilities for food as medicine, etc.

Chris Mann: We used to know which ones were healthy in particular situations and which ones were not, so you could select from those varieties. It was useful for our general health.

Harry Blazer: It's interesting to think that you could go out in nature, and if you had enough understanding of it, you could say, "Oh, you have a sore throat or a cold? Here, eat this."

Chris Mann: You were asking earlier what besides music therapy, etc. are the other things that stemmed from Steiner's insights. Education is one. Education of the mentally handicapped is another that came out of that or came at the same time. Then we have architecture and the arts. That is fairly simple. There are several others, too, which I mean to tell you about.

I'll go into that some other time.

Harry Blazer: What I was asking was: If we look at the world in terms of energetics, then I would ask, "Rudolf Steiner influenced what?" And it ends up involving many disciplines.

Farming, education, and then they came up with movements.

Cindy Dixon: Medicine.

Harry Blazer: And they tie that in with certain symbols and sounds and so on. So what you end up with is this three-dimensional matrix of things that are interrelated that help amplify the positive energetics of all things.

If I was just eating the food, that would be one dimension. Nevertheless, if I'm eating the food and doing the movements, and using the verbal sounds, and then doing the music, the education, the architecture, the organizational development and the medicine, you end up with a many times amplified synergy that makes you that much stronger.

Chris Mann: One of them is a threefold social order, which is being forgotten.

Harry Blazer: What is that?

Chris Mann: That is for another conversation.

Cindy Dixon: That was a carrot, Christopher.

Harry Blazer: That is why I said, "I am not sure how much time it would take to discover everything there is to discover." Every time I start a conversation, there is one other thing that comes out.

Angela L Curtes: There is a homeopathic pharmacy here in East Troy, Uriel. It's anthroposophic.

Chris Mann: It's anthroposophic medicine.

Harry Blazer: You didn't have anything to do with that, did you? (joking)

Chris Mann: No.

Harry Blazer: These are the good things that go viral.

Chris Mann: A person is not neglected (by the universe).

Harry Blazer: Does anybody else know about these three?

Angela L Curtes: There is 1) the civic or the civil aspect, the social aspect – the human social being – and there is 2) the political/ governmental aspect, and there is 3) the business or economic sector. So if we have these three realms of human society today of economy, governance, and civil/social/cultural, all three of them should be weaving harmoniously towards a progressive future that looks at the well-being of its citizens first, the businesses to produce products that will care for its citizens and the environment – because they know the environment is needed to care for its people – and then the government is creating the umbrella of rules and regulations to allow businesses to produce products for its cultures in a way that benefits all. So all of them are benefiting each other, and not one is taking advantage of the other – whereas obviously nowadays the whole governance model is dysfunctional.

Is that basically the concept of it?

Chris Mann: Yes.

Harry Blazer: It's a symbiotic relationship.

Angela L Curtes: Yes, looking at people, animals, and nature as being what business and politics should care for.

Chris Mann: I tried to get anthroposophists working on the questions of money. I did that in Europe, and they developed a group that met every year for about 17 years. It's anthroposophical, and it's a Dutch bank, Triodos Bank (https://www.triodos.com/en/about-triodos-bank/)

Harry Blazer: So what did they conclude about money and the role of money and how money can help as opposed to what the central bankers want? Were there any conclusions that came out of that?

Chris Mann: I think so. Yes.

Harry Blazer: But you're not going to tell us what they are, are you?

Chris Mann: Barkhoff already founded the GLS Bank in Germany, and I think at that time Belgium had an anthroposophical bank. So it was growing (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilhelm_Ernst_Barkhoff).

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Harry Blazer: What were the driving principles for the founding of those banks?

Chris Mann: To work with people directly with their money rather than just saving it or investing it. I wanted to strengthen the association's activities among people who had something to create.

Harry Blazer: At one point, one of the best banks in the United States was one in Whitefish, Montana – Whitefish Credit Union. They would hold all of their loans in house. They would never resell them. They invested 90% of the money within the community. They had 10% reserves – or maybe even higher than that – instead of the 1% or 2% that the Federal Reserve would have allowed. They were basically owned by the depositors. So profits were paid out to the members as a dividend. And their board was made up exclusively of had community members. They had no checking or credit card accounts, just basically community savings and community loans.

Dave Andrews: It sounds like a great place to do business.

Harry Blazer: They changed with the new guy who came in to run things, so I took my money out. It's probably still better than most places.

The three basic tenets that Catherine Austin Fitts always talks about are: Shut off your TV, bank locally and eat fresh. There is a lot of merit in that. There is a revolution for the world within those three things.

Cindy Dixon: It is called 'television programming' for a reason.

Angela L Curtes: Chris, wasn't the mission of Triodos and many other social investment banks financing and investing for a cultural benefit, but also wasn't there an environmental aspect woven into that as well?

Cindy Dixon: Yes, the sustainability initiative.

Harry Blazer: Sustainable is another word like 'natural' that is totally misused.

Cindy Dixon: Yes, I understand.

Harry Blazer: Angela, where is your farm – where the compost is?

Angela L Curtes: It's near Michael Fields. It's down the road.

Cindy Dixon: It's no more than eight miles from here.

Harry Blazer: Do you guys know Will Allen? What do you think of him?

Chris Mann: We worked with him. He is good.

Harry Blazer: I'm going to see him tomorrow to interview him.

Chris Mann: Good.

Harry Blazer: His farm is soil-based, and it seems like he is trying to do the right thing. (Will Allen interview can be found in the Solari Archive. Will's execution was a bit disappointing).

Dave Andrews: I think you're right.

Chris Mann: He is concerned with the soil.

Angela L Curtes: I think he is doing bio-digesting on his city plot with a lot of their scraps for their own energy production, and then they are doing a thermaculture-based compost which I think they use on their farms. Also, I heard recently that they sell it for $100 a cubic yard or something like that, which is pretty unaffordable for the common person. I'm not sure what that is about.

Harry Blazer: I can find that out. If you have a small garden plot, and you don't have to go far to get it, and it can really jumpstart your production, you might be able to justify the cost. So what should it cost?

Angela L Curtes: In compost nowadays, if it is more of a mulch carbon compost, I've seen it for $20 to $26 a cubic yard.

Harry Blazer: That is the crappier stuff, right?

Angela L Curtes: Yes, and then there is the Purple Cow Organics, which dominates the Midwest market, and they are at about $46 a cubic yard. I sell mine for $46 a cubic yard.

Harry Blazer: How about a verma-culture type compost (which is what Will Allen produces)?

Angela L Curtes: I've never seen it go for that much.

Cindy Dixon: I'll tell you that for six twenty-liter bags of worm castings, I pay $40 in New Zealand. So for 120 liters I pay $40.

Harry Blazer: There are about four liters in a gallon, so that is about 30 gallons. And how many gallons are in a cubic yard?

Angela L Curtes: I think it's 300. (there are about 174 dry gallons and 201 fluid gallons in a cubic yard. 1 liter = .264 gallons)

Harry Blazer: So that is four times more expensive, but that is only the castings themselves; it's not the other stuff.

Cindy Dixon: Right. It's just worm castings.

Angela L Curtes: With worm castings, which is great, we also have to be careful of weed seeds. It depends on what resource they use, but worms can grind the seeds, but they don't get all of them.

Cindy Dixon: It's not heat treated.

Angela L Curtes: It's not heat treated, so you could have pathogens and residues of antibiotics and hormones.

Cindy Dixon: However, it does draw more worms, and that is what I want. I want more micro-bacteria in my soil. So I use organic compost. Actually, it's uncertified biodynamic compost. Then I use the castings like icing on the cake. It's almost a medicinal input on my garden.

Angela L Curtes: Is it the dried consistency?

Cindy Dixon: Yes.

Angela L Curtes: What do you mean that it draws earthworms?

Cindy Dixon: Worm castings draw worms.

Dave Andrews: I need to leave any minute now. It's not so much that the staff expects me, but it's just that I've been gone for ten days, and I'm still trying to get caught up. I have four committee meetings tomorrow, so I need to get ready for those.

Harry Blazer: One thing - we could do is an interview by phone.

Dave Andrews: That would be fine.

Harry Blazer: What I want is to hear from you about Michael Fields Institute, the history of it, and what it stands for. I want to get your take on biodynamics – what it is and why it works and so on.

Dave Andrews: I'm pretty inexperienced about biodynamics. I did just notice the way that you said, "It's biodynamic compost, but it's not certified." I hear that so many times from farmers. There are approximately 900 biodynamic farmers who are certified in the United States.

Angela L Curtes: And there is no certification for compost. That is my understanding – whether it is organic or otherwise.

Cindy Dixon: Under the organic protocol, I think that compost is probably one of the loosest areas in the whole protocol. Please don't shoot me if I'm wrong here, but when I first came out, I know that human effluent was still acceptable.

Angela L Curtes: There are NOP guidelines, the National Organic Program standards, for meeting organic standards in compost, but basically anybody could take a conventional slurry filled with antibiotics, hormones, GMOs, and chemicals, and put that raw on your organic-certified farm or put it as compost on your organic-certified farm. Either way, it's acceptable under those standards.

Harry Blazer: That is the problem with this entire thing. That is why the complete industry is losing trust. Even organic is losing trust.

If you use a hot method, doesn't it ultimately break down all those compounds into elements, or does it make a big difference what you are starting with in terms of the soil's material?

Angela L Curtes: Poultry manure has a higher phosphate level, so you would have a higher phosphate level in a compost using poultry than you would with cow or with horse manure. So definitely what your parent material is, affects what elements are higher in compost.

With the Lake Weed that I use, there are so many lake shells that it is nearly four times higher in calcium because of that Lake Weed component. Its C:N ratio is practically equivalent to coffee grounds.

Harry Blazer: I can understand that, but I'm asking something a little different. Even if you have something that is somewhat toxic as feedstock when you go through the hot – because supposedly it's able to break the feedstock down into its elemental components – does it matter?

Angela L Curtes: To some level, but it can't break down all chemicals and herbicides. If you use a resource with herbicides, you could have herbicide residue in the final product. With antibiotics and hormones, my understanding is that you can fry-heat them away. As far as GMOs I don't know.

For me, to feel comfortable making ethical compost that I can sell to the public and say, "This is clean compost," I want to start with a certified organic dairy manure. In most of the lakes in Wisconsin, highly toxic 2,4-D is used as a chemical agent to eradicate Eurasian water milfoil. We're swimming in it, and we're eating the fish out of it.

The two lakes that I get Lake Weed from here, I don't use it. The Lake Weed that I get at my folks' place north of here I don't use either.

I think that it is key to get your compost materials from the cleanest sources possible.

Harry Blazer: People say that through the hot process itself, destroys the bad stuff, so you don't have to worry about it, but this needs to be validated.

David, before you go, just give me a very quick summary as to what the Michael Fields Institute does.

Dave Andrews: Now we focus on research, education, and advocacy for organic farmers. We are doing a little with biodynamics, but it's not enough to mention yet, so we educate organic farmers.

Harry Blazer: So you train them how to do organic at your facility?

Dave Andrews: That's correct, but I'm different from a lot of the staff. The staff loves working with organic farmers, and they are great to work with, but those are not the farmers who we need to be working with. We need to be working with the conventional farmers to get them to use fewer chemicals. We're preaching to the choir by working with organic farmers, but the staff is very comfortable with them.

There are exceptions. Some of the staff have moved on, like Jim Stute. Jim Stute is very comfortable talking to conventional farmers.

Harry Blazer: But basically it's still mono-crop technologies that you're dealing with?

Dave Andrews: No, not necessarily. Most of the organic farmers whom we work with are small farmers. They have two acres to 40 acres.

There is a problem with that, and that is because most of them can't make a living on just two acres. Quite a few of them can't make a living on 40 acres.

Harry Blazer: Is that because they can't produce enough, or is it because they can't use more mechanized technologies to make it more efficient?

Dave Andrews: It's a combination of that, and it is finding markets for the crops that they might want to grow.

Harry Blazer: It's not a problem about availability; it's a question of creating markets for these sustainable products. Even in Africa and in Latin America nobody needs to go in and tell them how to grow stuff. You don't need Bill Gates trying to save the world.

Give them a way to handle sewage and clean water and some electricity, and they will take care of everything else. They actually know for the local conditions how to grow much better than anybody could teach them; they just need markets.

I tried to do that in Latin America, and I couldn't get a supermarket chain to bite. I went down and spent a fair amount of money myself doing some trial programs with the Campesinos, and they produced some of the best stuff I've ever seen. I provided seeds and irrigation equipment and a tractor and everything – just as a trial. I spent about $250,000.

If anybody was going to run with it, we could hook in with the entire Campesino network in all of Latin America. Just imagine the credentials on that. That was my dream on this thing, and I couldn't get a grocer, and I couldn't get a wholesaler to buy into it.

Cindy Dixon: Really?

Harry Blazer: I'm telling you – the stuff that they produced was amazing.

Cindy Dixon: What timeframe are we talking about?

Harry Blazer: This was about six or seven years ago in Canada.

Cindy Dixon: Really?

Harry Blazer: Yes. It was a win-win. I said to the farmers, "You need to own your land; we need to do this on a no-debt model so it's total equity for the farmers. We will come in and provide you with all the raw materials you need to produce this stuff and then get repayment through what you produce. You farm it, and we'll give you above-market prices – way above market prices – for your stuff, and we will do the marketing for you – handle the selling."

For the guys on the retail side, they would probably have saved at least 25-50% off of the market prices because the middlemen are making all the damn money. So it was a total win-win for the retailer and the farmer, never mind for the consumer.

You would say, "Well, if you could create a situation like that, who the hell wouldn't jump on it?" However, I haven't given up on that dream of creating a network of indigenous producers in Latin America and markets to support them.

I also envisioned a program for Mexico where I was going to use the heirloom corn to develop a special brand of tortillas that was certified authentic. Even in their own market, they don't have access to that kind of tortilla anymore. That would have been massive. I envisioned a distributed network of all these small producers and small growers that basically produced heirloom tortillas from the various varieties of corn.

So there are plenty of things to do. If I had the resources, I would just do it myself, and I'm sure we would have a gigantic business out of this thing.

Dave Andrews: Have you ever talked to a fellow named David Byrnes of Yellow Barn Biodynamics?

Harry Blazer: No. I don't think so.

Dave Andrews: This guy came through about two weeks ago. Jim Stute, our Research Director, and I met with him. He is the only person I have ever met associated with biodynamics that is a real entrepreneur.

I mean, this guy came to us because he knew that we were involved in corn research.

He is looking for biodynamic products to market, but he said, "Take, for example, corn chips. If you guys could grow biodynamic corn for me, and I could create a biodynamic corn chip, there would be a real market."

Harry Blazer: Where is this guy? Is he a grower or more of a marketing guy?

Dave Andrews: He is more of a marketing person, and he is looking for growers. He is out of New York State.

Cindy Dixon: Obviously, he has registered a brand. Is it Yellow Barn biodynamics?

Dave Andrews: Yes.

Cindy Dixon: Has he coined the name 'biodynamic'?

Dave Andrews: I don't know. I've got his business card lying on my desk.

Harry Blazer: I'll try to come by tomorrow morning. I have to meet with Will Allen at 3:00, and then I have a flight out at 7:42.

Dave Andrews: Will has done an awful lot to promote urban agriculture. I mean, that is a huge thing right there. He has people in these cities interested in expanding urban farming. I'd love to come to Kalispell and do the interview, but I don't think that is in the cards.

Harry Blazer: That would be fine with me.

Dave Andrews: It was nice meeting you, Harry. Thank you so much. It was great.

Harry Blazer: He has a perpetual smile on his face.

Cindy Dixon: He is the sweetest thing ever.

Angela L Curtes: Even if he's angry, it's still there. He can't let go of it.

Chris Mann: He has turned the Institute around.

Cindy Dixon: He has.

Harry Blazer: What I would love to do is go look at the compost. Angela, do you have time to spend with me so that I can go see what you're doing?

Angela L Curtes: Yes. (Interview with Angela is available at Solari archives)

Harry Blazer: That would be fantastic!

Chris Mann: It's together and close.

Cindy Dixon: Everything is close. And if you want to return here, come back.

Chris Mann: Whenever you want.

Harry Blazer: Great! You are truly fascinating.

MODIFICATION

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