

Anti-corporatism envelops local food movement

If your idea of a locavore is a slow-foodie-body-inscribed-lefty type who's disdainful of big corporations and ready to Occupy, you wouldn't be entirely wrong. The locavore zeitgeist began in earnest by throwing do-it-yourself Molotov cocktails at "Big Ag" in the form of heirloom peaches and backyard eggs. But if the roots of the locavore phenomenon reside in counter-cultural angst, its subsequent mainstreaming has come with an ideological twist: it's turning to the right.

This shouldn't be surprising. The quest to localize fresh food is as much an anti-big-ag endeavor as it is an anti-regulatory one. The Jeffersonian ideal underscoring local exchange is that food safety comes through neighborly integrity rather than the United States Department of Agriculture/Food & Drug Administration leviathan. The underlying notion is equally simple and seductive, and it's one that taps into America's deep myth of self-sufficiency: We can feed ourselves on our own, thank you very much. This libertarian version of the local—as opposed to the more familiar Berkeley-area-limousine-liberal-[\\$4 peach-version](#)—has gained traction in the redder parts of the country.

But for all its appeal, this proud posture of self-reliance comes with consequences that could, depending on how it's managed, lead to internal conflict for this hugely successful movement. Whatever tension these conflicting motivations—anti-government versus anti-corporatism—might generate, it has thus far remained submerged. But a couple of recent developments forecast not so much hugs, but open conflict.

Local food's founding brain trust, despite benefiting immensely from the corporatization of its own knowledge, remains ideologically wary of market-driven solutions. Instead, it creates ample space for systemic governmental support rather than corporate uptake. Recently, the movement's leaders published a manifesto-type call for a National Food Policy last month appealing directly to Obama, to throw down decrees that would weaken the corporate grip on the national food supply and allowing smaller farmers serving local markets a fair shot. Integral to this mission is, they note, the pursuit of "agreed upon principles."

Which brings us back to the original problem: disagreement over principles.

Read full, original article: [Let Them Eat Quiche: How the Local Food Movement Swerved Right](#)