



**An Open Letter from Land Stewardship Project
To the Local Foods Community
June 30, 2010**

I am writing this open letter to clarify possible confusion about the views of the Land Stewardship Project (LSP) caused by the publication of a submitted commentary (“Springing out from the ‘belly of the beast’”) in the Spring 2010 edition of the Land Stewardship Letter.

LSP believes we are well-served in this region by having a diversity of sizes and approaches within the area’s produce farms that are able to provide food direct to consumers or retail establishments and/or wholesale produce to distributors, restaurants and other retailers or institutions in the region. These farms range from small Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farms to larger CSA farms, and also include other locally owned produce farms of various sizes, marketing models and ownership structures. Together they are able to effectively serve various markets and communities. The potential for growth in these markets is great and LSP believes we will need all of these farms and many more to build a more just, sustainable and healthy food and agriculture system in our region and our nation.

LSP acknowledges that the issue of scale and sustainability is an important subject for dialogue. A variety of opinions exist about scale and sustainability within the CSA, wholesale produce and local foods community in general. It is likely a goal of every farm, retail establishment, distributor, co-op and nonprofit associated with this community to strive for sustainability. Whatever their size, many of these produce farms share the need for storage and processing facilities and for finding effective ways to aggregate more food products. Such an infrastructure is needed to be able to actually reach larger percentages of the community’s population with food grown sustainably in our region, including meeting the demands of retail and institutional purchasers and lower income communities. It will take a large measure of solidarity and cooperation. These challenges as well as other key issues need to be part of the dialogue.

However, the regional/local foods movement will be best served by holding that dialogue in ways that builds on and strengthens farms and relationships. It is LSP’s view that the local farms that were named in the commentary and several others like them should be commended for their work to help grow the local foods community. We are updating LSP’s internal policies about commentaries in the Land Stewardship Letter to ensure that the Land Stewardship Project more appropriately achieves that aim in the future and we pledge to continue to engage the community in other ways.

LSP strongly believes the local foods community should build from the base of excellent smaller and larger produce farms focused on sustainably grown food and distributors such as Co-op Partners Warehouse, as well as the region’s many forward thinking co-ops, restaurants, other businesses and the thousands of consumers who are part of the local foods community. LSP is committed to help open up new markets for younger farmers, experienced farmers and both smaller

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and larger farmers who help each other to grow the healthy food that an increasing number of people want to eat.

As the markets grow and the need for new farmers expands, it is also critically important to provide enhanced training opportunities for farmers—be they CSA operations, smaller or larger produce farms, or farmers involved in other crop or livestock enterprises. The Land Stewardship Project is proud to be able to coordinate part of the work of our Farm Beginnings® program with the Organic Field School at Gardens of Eagan through its staff and consultants, as well as its owner, the Wedge Natural Foods Co-op, to advance this critical training need.

I encourage anyone who has questions about LSP's work on local and regional food systems to contact me at 612-722-6377.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Boody".

George Boody
Executive Director