Introduction and Guest Background

In typical American industrial agriculture factory farming, the animals are always stressed. They're stressed immunologically, they're stressed hygienically, they're stressed emotionally, socially.

And so they're stressed. And when you're stressed, you secrete adrenaline, which is cortisol, which tightens up muscles. And so adrenaline makes our muscles get tight.

And so since our animals are never stressed, they're always happy. They don't secrete all that. And so even the muscular physiology is relaxed. And so the animals come to their, you know, their final with a happy.

And so it begs the question, can you eat happiness? This is doctor talks. Real talk from real doctors. Only issues that matter to you most. Hi everyone.

Welcome back to the Integrative Health Podcast with Doctor Jen. I am so excited for today's guest. I met him at the Seton Hall Health Festival Faire conference and he was just amazing and blew me away.

So today we're going to be talking to the lunatic farmer otherwise known as Joel Salatin. He calls himself a Christian libertarian, environmentalist, capitalist, lunatic, farmer, and others would call him the most famous farmer in the world, the high priest of the pastor and the most eclectic thinker from Virginia since Thomas Jefferson.

And those who don't like him call him a bioterror typhoid Mary, a charlatan and a starvation advocate who so c he really knows how to ruffle feathers on and off the farm with a room full of debate trophies from high school and college days, 16 published books, and a thriving multigenerational family farm, he draws on a lifetime of food, farming and fantasy to entertain and inspire audiences around the world.

His is comfortable moving cows in a pasture is addressing CEOs in the Wall Street Business Conference, so his farm with his family is called Polyphemus Farm and Swoop.

Virginia has been featured in the New York Times best seller Omnivore's Dilemma and award winning documentary food, Inc. the Farm Service has more than 5000 families, ten restaurants, and five retail outlets with salad bar, beef, pig aerator, pork, custard, poultry and forestry products.

So we'll get way into more of what you've done. Joel, welcome to the podcast. It's such a pleasure to have you here. Well, thank you, doctor Jen, it's my honor to be with you. Yes.

And what I love about you is you're very unapologetic about the shoes. And just like to tell the truth. And people don't like to hear the truth all the time, especially when it comes to farming and animals.

Well, yeah, we have a lot of dysfunction in our systems today in the food and farming sector. And that dysfunction is defended by the mainstream media, the the basic, you know, governmental narrative, the land grant universities and the main farming and food sectors.

So, just look at the push back even to basic as RFK Jr is trying to take on and look at the push back on him. So, truth is a wonderful thing when you discover it.

And I don't have all the answers, but I'm certainly convinced that a lot of the things that we've learned and do here, are more truthful than what Tyson does.

Yeah, absolutely. And more nutritious. Now, becoming a farmer is not always an easy journey, especially with how you do it and how your parents did it.

If you can share some of your family history, and it's kind of beautiful how your parents came here, how they started a farm, and then how they passed it down.

Sure. So my parents, mom and dad, bought this property here in Virginia, Shenandoah Valley, in 1961. I was just four. And, I don't want to go down too far in that rabbit hole, but, after World War two, dad wanted a farm, and and, you know, he's a midwestern kid.

No money, no land. Well, what do you do? And so he had a dream of going to a developing country where land was cheaper, and it was a more free market, less government and, starting a farm.

So after the World War Two, he flew in the Navy in World War Two of the GI Bill, went to Indiana University and got his degree in business administration when there's a bilingual account.

And then he went to study Spanish for a year, and then, the set for the foreign civil service exam got on as a bilingual accountant with Texas Oil Company off a Wildcat Ventures of Venezuela, and in seven years was able to save enough money to get married and buy a thousand acre farm in the highlands of Venezuela.

And we began raising chickens.

Family Farm History and Early Lessons

My older brother was born than I was born, and very, very quickly he took over the local chicken market because our chickens were clean and the the indigenous ones were not.

And they all had kind of a snot, the post nasal drip, I think you would say, due to kind of a sub therapeutic respiratory packing and because of the lack of sanitation.

And, so when the coup, when the coup happened, a coup de tr hunter in 1959 into 60, we were vulnerable. When you have, lawlessness, scores get settled, that wouldn't normally be settled on, you know, in a normal conditions.

And so basically, the machine guns came in the front door, we fled the back door and, stayed for another 8 or 9 months trying to get protection, couldn't.

And so finally left it all. So dad lost everything at 39 years old and came back to the U. S and he wanted to go back. So that's why we settled here in Virginia, rather than going back to where both of their families were, you know, there in the Midwest and started over on this worn out rock pile of a gold farm.

And, how do you make a living on this farm? And so, we got a lot of advice, and the advice was all biochemicals plant corn, graze the woods, borrow more money, build silos, and my grandfather, dad's dad, had been a charter subscriber to Rodale Organic Gardening and Farming magazine when it came out in like 1945.

Always had a big compost pile of big organic garden. And so dad saw the chemical approach is basically a drug addiction. You become dependent on it. You have to get, more powerful stuff, keep getting new stuff because nature adapts to what you've been using.

And so it's just this treadmill that you're on and you can never get off. And so basically we, we went into a zone then of experimentation. He took a job as an accountant.

Mom was a schoolteacher. They all farm jobs, paid for the land and finally got it paid for in about 12 years. And now I'm, you know, I'm getting up into my teen years.

I want to farm. Well, how do I how do I farm full time? Dad, as an economist, realized that as a small farm, we needed to. Where all those middlemen hatch.

Yeah, those notorious middlemen had to make all the profits that year. The farmers, complain about. And so we

began direct marketing. So, you know, we had a couple milk cows, we made cheese and butter.

I had a big garden, sold produce, had chickens, sold eggs, and then, you know, the spent hens. My brother had rabbits. We butchered rabbits, sold them.

We had cows and some pigs. We butchered those. And so that I, we gradually develop, you know, this idea of becoming not only the producer, but the processor, marketer and distributor, in the community and direct marketing.

And so we kind of had a we had enough experiments in production with composting carbon and that sort of thing and moving, moving animals around, you know, kind of using, nature as a template.

So we kind of had that under our feet to get started. And so then, you know, how do I get back here? So when I was a teen, that was Watergate, Nixon, and, I had a flair for writing and communicating and speaking.

I was on the debate team and newspaper and all that stuff. And so I said, oh, I know I'll, get a journalism degree, go become a reporter, find my Deep Throat, uncover the latest, you know, corruption at the presidential level.

And, then I can retire to the farm. And, that was kind of my, you know, my thinking. And, as it turned out, I got back on at the local newspaper. So I was able to live at home and do the town job thing.

Theresa and I got married. We fixed up the attic in the old farmhouse. We called it our penthouse and lived on about $300 a month. Drove a $50 car. If we didn't grow it, we didn't eat it.

She canned, I don't know, 800 quarts of stuff a summer. We ate out of the garden. We never went out to eat. We never went on vacation. We loved the place here.

And by living frugally like that, we didn't have a TV. I still don't have a TV, but living frugally, we were able to save half of my paycheck even though it was not, you know, a high paying job.

We were able to save half of my paycheck. So in two and a half years, we were able to save enough that we could come back to the farm and live for one year without a paycheck.

So September 24th, 1982 I walked out of that newspaper office, came home. I didn't think we would make it. It was a it was a pretty 50 year. It was a risky deal.

But as it turned out, we squeaked by and it took us about three years to where I say we could exhale, you know, like, oh, okay. Yeah, we, we we made it.

It took about three years, but happiest years of my life. We were here. We just, you know, put our noses the grindstone and loved it. And, here we are today with about 22 full time salaries from the farm and been very, very, very, very blessed.

Oh, I love it. And I think that story is so important to like, play back to your children about how if you have a dream and you're really willing to put the work in and make sacrifices like you did, and I know you tell this story in some of your books and I loved it.

It's so amazing. And you're finding what farmers are told nowadays. They're told to, you know, we just went to the Tennessee State Fair in Lebanon and, you know, they have these big tractors and all this stuff.

And you tell people like in your books, like you don't need all this stuff, like, is that going to pay back? Right? Like, look at an egg collector. I don't know what the example that you gave, but I remember talking to my kids about it, like, you don't need all these big things and big equipment for a farm if it's not going to pay off, because that's how you get in debt and that's how you don't grow.

So I think when you look at farming, I mean, I think with I and I would love your take on this, just how things are going now with technology like farming and actual, you know, organic, well pasture, you know, grass fed farm, like that's what people are going to be looking for and it's going to be a good job, you know, in the coming decades, because I know that's what I look for.

I'll pay extra. I look to get it from a local farmer. I try not to buy these things in the grocery store. And Whole Foods is not really where you're going to want to get your stuff if it's in a pinch.

But really, you want to seek out local farmers. So we call it we. Yeah, we call it Whole Paycheck. But that too. And you're in and the farmer is not getting that money.

Oh no. The farm thing. That money. Yeah. In most cases. I'm sure you have followed. I'm looking back 30 years ago and all these little kind of, you know, mom and pop organic start ups, you know, these little brands, they now they've all been bought by big conglomerate.

So I know. The whole thing has become just really, sad. And in my opinion, the way all that has developed. But yes, the cost of land, cost of machinery, cost of buildings.

So there is a huge hurdle there for young people to be able to get into farming. And the problem is when young people can't get in, old people can't get out.

And so the average farmer in America now is 60 years old, which is about 25 years older then business gurus tell us is the median age of a vibrant economic sector.

When an economic sector is vibrant, the average age of the practitioners is 35. I mean, look at Silicon Valley, look at the look at the eye, okay? I mean, the average I did I did an in-house, sustainability day at, Nike Corporation in Beaver Dam, Oregon, years and years ago.

Okay. And at the time I asked them, okay, what's the average age? And they had some, you know, some people that were kind of, you know, upper level management there.

And I asked, what's the average age of the Nike employee today? And, they said it was about, you know, 32.

Building a Debt-Free Direct-Marketing Farm

And so, farming is at 60. So in the next 15 years, half of all American agriculture equity, that's land, buildings and equipment is going to change hands.

It's going to move to somebody else because the farmers are dying. So the question is who's going to pick that up? Is it going to be Vanguard, Blackrock and Bill gates, or is it going to be a new generation of young, bright eyed, bushy tailed, entrepreneurial, young stewards who take the reins and step up, you know, the next generation?

And so how do you get in? So at our farm, at poly Phase, what we've developed is, I think numerous threads here, if I could just threads into a fabric of being able to get in one of them is portable or mobile infrastructure.

So when you have mobile infrastructure, in other words, instead of building a Tyson chicken house, we have mobile chicken shelters, egg mobiles, turkey shelters, pig shelters, cow shelters even.

And when you have mobility in your infrastructure now suddenly you don't even have to own the land that it's on. Your farm is now this portable infrastructure that you can move around and you can put it on the median of an interstate, you can put it in, you know.

Oh, that would be cool. Yeah, that would be. Driving by and seen some chickens. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And you could put it on a on an airport, grass apron.

You could put it in an industrial park. You could put it in a church lawn, a suburban lawn or, you know, a farm, a different property, and be in the farming business with mobile infrastructure and if your deal goes south, you load it all on a flatbed and you take it up the road to another deal, you know, so the mobile farm is a way in.

And then the second thing is it's modular. So right now farming is all about concentration, consolidation and centralization. That's completely anti nature, doctor Jan, because nature is all about duplication.

If nature wants more humans, it doesn't make a bigger human. It says we'll make babies. If we want more chicks, we don't say make a bigger chicken. We say we'll have some more chicks.

If we want more tomato, we don't say, make a monstrous tomato plant. We say we'll plant more tomatoes. And so nature is all about duplication. Getting to scale by duplication, not centralization, consolidation and concentration like the industrial system is.

And so what we have our module I mean we have 160 of these chicken shelters. So we have as much capacity as a Tyson chicken house. But because it's modular you can start with one, add another one, add another.

Over and over 30 years we've got to 160 debt free. You know Dave Ramsey would be proud. And they can be scattered around the landscape like modern tools rather than being a big concentrated thing.

Yeah. Well and I think when you talk about this modular how you're doing farming, you are producing high quality meat birds without disease. Can you discuss the health consequences of modern day farming versus what you're doing at Poly Face?

Yeah. So if you had a, a diabolical agenda, let's say you were some 007 nemesis, you know, and you organized a committee to create a, a pathogenic farm, you know, like a doctor.

Let's create a pathogenic farm. And if you wanted to do that, you could think of what you would do. Well, number one, you would have a farm. That only raises one thing.

I mean, we don't want the pathogens to be confused. We're just going to be a dairy, or we're going to be a chicken, or we're going to be a cherry or apple farm, you know, a wheat farm, a corn farm.

We're going to graze one thing, and then we're going to push it together as tightly as possible. We're not going to spread it out. We're going to push it all together really, really tight.

And when it comes to animals, we will lock them in a building where they don't get fresh air and sunshine. I mean, let's, let's have these animals living in fecal particulate all day that can abrade their respiratory membranes like sandpaper and make lesions in their mucous membranes. You know, you know.

Right? Right. This is insanity, right? It is, it is. And so that is a pathogen friendly. It's a recipe for pathogenic proliferation. So what we do is we have the animals in mobile infrastructure on pasture, fresh air moved every day or so to a fresh what we call a fresh salad bar, where they pick up all the phytochemicals and the carotenoids from the green material to add, to feed, you know, to grains of if they're getting those, if they're omnivores, cows don't.

And the idea is to allow the animals to express their chicken. This their callousness, their bigness, to create a habitat that respects and honors their individuality.

Interestingly, what we've learned from our restaurants over the years is that all of our meats cooked 15% faster than what's in the store. And, so why is that?

Well, it's because in typical American industrial agriculture, factory farming, the animals are always stressed. They're stressed immunologically, they're stressed hygienically, they're stressed emotionally, socially.

And so they're stressed. And when you're stressed, you secrete adrenaline. I'm probably getting into your

expertise. Here's what I need to be careful, which is cortisol which tightens up muscles.

That's how a 100 pound mom can pick up a car off a toddler, you know? But when she's done, she's all tight. And so adrenaline makes our muscles get tight.

And so since our animals are never stressed, they're always happy. They don't secrete all that. And so even the muscular physiology is relaxed. So the animals come to their, you know, their final with a happy.

And so it begs the question, can you eat happiness? And I would, I would suggest that you can you can eat. Yeah. You are what you eat and yeah. Getting into that cortisol.

Well when we are stressed or burning cortisol or, you know, really excreting a lot of cortisol due to stress, what do we burn through. Nutrients, micronutrients, magnesium B vitamins.

So you could say that your chickens yes you can eat happiness, but you can also eat better nutrients. And when I was at the conference that you were at, I think you were saying something about like they cooked differently, but also like when you get conventional chicken and it's just filled with water, right?

They kind of just blowed it out. And you just like cook a lot of water out of it, right?

Pastured Livestock and Animal Health

You were saying something like that. Yeah. Well the industry. Yeah. They put them in these, because the chicken doesn't have good muscle tone, muscle texture.

They're they're, the meat is soft, spongy, spongy would be the better or. Yeah. Yeah. And so it it's very it takes on water. So Tyson sells like $1 billion of water a year.

And so from the, from the chilled tanks, we actually did an experiment one time where we got a real sophisticated, you know, scale that could measure grams, and we put our chicken in the chill tanks for 24 hours.

We weigh them before weight them at the end. They didn't gain a single gram because our chickens have muscle tone. They, you know, they have more exercise, more room to run and fresh air.

And they're just a better, you know, a better muscle tone. And so yeah, when people say, well, you're expensive, your chickens more expensive. Well a it has way more nutrients in it, but B it actually is dense.

It's denser. And we actually had a, we had a restaurant wants to do a displacement test with our pork. They put a ham roast. They weighed two hammers, one from ours, one from I think Smithfield.

And we are in Virginia after all. And they got the exactly the same weight and then they, they got a pan and filled it up and put the two hunks of meat in one, put it in the other and measured the displacement.

And our meat, displaced whale immeasurably less water than the one from Smithfield, doctor G. And that's muscle tone. I don't know how better to say it.

That's just, you know, a density of muscle tone. So it actually, it actually has more value per cubic inch, you know, than the other. Right? Right. And this is stuff that is not discussed.

And it kind of blew me away. I mean, and this is what you're putting in your body. This is nutrients. So we need to really look at the nutrient density of the food that we're putting in.

And even some people that are like, oh, I can't eat like protein, like, oh, I don't want to eat a lot of it or it's hard for me. Well, maybe you're not eating high quality protein too.

Oh, so I'd like to ask tennis selfishly, too, because I'm wondering for myself. So say someone wants to start. Maybe they live in the city. Maybe they live in the country.

They want to just start being more sustainable and they want to start, you know, maybe with chickens and eggs or maybe a few broiler chickens or a few turkeys.

How do they start? And what is the importance of a compost pile and how would they start that? So I wrote a book, poly Phase Micro, which is everything that we do.

I even have a chapter in there on how to have chickens and rabbits in a Manhattan apartment. So if you have very limited room, you know, you're on a house lot or even in an apartment.

Nature sanitizes two ways with or with livestock. With animals. There are two ways nature sanitizes. One is with rest and sunshine, which is, you know, the pasture moving around the pasture idea.

The second way is with vibrant, decompose addition, i.e. a compost pile. People don't realize you could put a lot of toxic stuff even in a compost pile.

I mean, even like chemicals and things that would that go through an alimentary canal of a of a earthworm and it comes out purified. There's there are now there are now fungi that friends of mine are developing that, for example, gobble up forever chemicals.

You know, these, these, these people, that, that are in forever chemicals. And so don't underestimate the power of the microbial community to cleanse, to sanitize and to revitalize something.

I mean, that's how things have been done for a long, long time, right? You know, before Pfizer and Merck Pharmaceuticals came along. So don't underestimate the power of microbes, you know, to fix things.

So if we have vibrant decomposition, then what we want, if we have a very limited space, is we want a some sort of a kind of decomposable, I call it a carbonaceous diaper abetting pack under those chickens or rabbits or whatever, rather than, you know, a lot of people, oh, I'm going to make this clean.

I'm going to put newspaper under it and clean it out every day. That's sort I think that's actually not nearly as clean as a 12 inch or 16 inch deep bedding of woodchips and sawdust and leaves and things that the chickens can scratch in and that can actually grow a medium of nematodes and protozoa and microbe the material community to attack any kind of pathogens.

And so this can be literally you can have 2 or 3 chickens in the footprint of a La-Z-Boy lay back chair. This doesn't take a lot of room. And you can feed them all your kitchen scraps.

You know, a chicken will eat anything, pretty much. And including meat and leftover meat, fat, different things. And you poor you give it to the chickens.

And, they will incorporate that and give you eggs. And it's the ultimate recycler. And once a year or so, you could clean out their deep bedding, which is now decomposed into this wonderful, wonderful compost and use that on if you have some garden or some herbs or something, you know, in an urban setting.

Now there are all sorts of cool things, like you can get pipe like eight inches in diameter with built in pockets that you can pack with compost and then drip water in there and grow and herb garden or hanging on your front porch along with, you know, your wind chimes in your other little whatever it is you might have out on your porch.

So there are there are lots of ways to niche in plants and animals in very, very small spaces that doesn't stink, that's hygienic and very, healthy and safe for the plants and animals.

Yeah, that's interesting because a lot of the times I see on Instagram people with these really designer chicken

coops and the bedding is always fresh and it and I'm like, why are you cleaning out the fresh bedding all the time?

Because I leave it go a little bit and then I'll. So you're saying just like leave it in, it will like ferment on itself as long as it's not. Yes, but it has to get deep.

Think about a compost. If you and I, if I was at your place today and we were saying we're going to do a compost pile demonstration, and I said, but we don't have very much stuff, all we can get together is 12in by 12in by 12in.

You would say, well, you can't make a compost pile that small and you know you can't. It takes something about a yard by a yard, by a yard to get enough mass to grow a community of microbes in there.

So so what when we talk about that carbonaceous diaper, a decomposing bedding pack, we need at least 12in or more in order to get enough thickness. To simulate a compost pile so that the microbial community when I, when I do you know kid tours and stuff and I've got a bunch of 5 or 6 years old and say look all these microbes in there, they're yeah, they got to have libraries and roads and houses and, you know, recreational parks and, and stuff.

And they can't do that in a little 1 or 2 inch skiff of, of material that it takes, it takes some depth, which means I'm a big believer in kind of a two part chicken coop.

Yeah. Basically a box here on the base. And then you place the top on it, and then once a year you can take the top off, you clean out the box, and then you have stuff for your flowers and some of and, and vegetables and things like that.

One of the biggest problems that very, very small, you know, micro operations like this have one of the biggest problems is getting compost. You know, when you just have a house and yard, how do you develop compost?

Backyard Chickens, Compost, and Microbial Systems

So one of the best reasons to have some backyard, you know, chickens in a coop is to actually get a couple three, 4 or 5 wheelbarrow fulls, a compost a year in order to grow a few vegetables and things for yourself.

But you can use leaves and woodchips and sawdust, build anything brown, anything that used to be living. It works in your deep bedding. The chickens, they'll scratch through it, they'll aerate it.

They'll. They'll keep it turned and it'll grow its own worms and bugs and all sorts of things that will add to their, you know, not only enjoyment, but their nutrition and allow them to express their chickens as well.

Cool. Okay, well, I have some projects to do in my coop now. Now, in thinking of the the microbiome and just how it feeds itself and how, you know, this is nature and this is what it's supposed to do.

I mean, I talk to people about like, fecal transplants, like to cure or deaf people of healthy stool. They, you know, make fecal transplants. And they do this at some of the big university.

So it's it's very interesting. And that's taking someone else's poop and putting it in an enema in your, your microbiome, in your gut and giving the right bacteria because sometimes because of antibiotics, because of, you know, our modern food, we don't have the right stuff in there.

So we shouldn't always be so clean. The over cleanliness is leads to a topic problems, you know, like eczema and like asthma. So we have to think about that.

But Joel, my question is how do you get past the hose? I feel like air ways are like killing the, you know, this dream to have a few backyard chickens and be sustainable.

I mean, that was one thing when we moved to Tennessee, I had in the, you know, in the Zillow search, no HOA because I knew I wanted some chickens. Right, right.

Well, I had a lady call me from Texas. She was in an HOA and she had just had to pay a fine because she had the audacity to have a tomato plant know our bed and the tomato plant is agriculture.

And agriculture was strictly forbidden in this HOA. So, you can sit around and try to make this stuff up, but you can't make it up. It's crazy. I, I would not be okay in an HOA, I think I would lose it.

So we are no you. Know so yeah. So so you know HOA fees are are real problems. I have met people though, who have, you know, embraced that and gone down and, you know, made their arguments and gotten rules, rules rewritten or due permission with a sunset clause.

Let us have three chickens, and if they bother anybody or smell, we'll stop. So we get conditional permission. And that's why what I'm describing, this deep bedding thing, that is why it's so critical.

Because chicken manure is smelly. And if your chickens are on dirt or they're or they're on even even wire where, fresh manure is going somewhere and your kids are tracking it into the house, that's a that's a real problem on a, you know, on a micro scale.

Sure. I'm known for, you know, pastured poultry and, you know, all that out there, but on a micro scale, lots of times a stationary little coop with a deep bedding box on it to make your, on the chickens on a compost.

I can't tell you how many people I've introduced this to. And they say, oh, you revolutionized our chickens. Our kids didn't want to go out there because they were smelly and stinky, and now they can't wait to get out there because it smells so good.

So good. So yeah, this is a critical thing. But yeah, these are a are a problem. And, you know, you might have to move. Right. Exactly. Now what are the weaknesses of the organic label.

And I know ultimately we want to, you know, visit farm, get local. But what about organic labels? Should we even bother with them? What are their weaknesses?

Yeah, well, they're yeah, they've got a lot of weaknesses now. For example, the U. S. is the only country in the world that allows organic certification of vegetables not grown in soil.

No other country in the world will organic certify vegetables or produce, you know, strawberries, berries grown hydroponically except the U. S. and of course, hydroponic is not nearly as nutritious as what's going in the soil.

And I might it might look pretty, but it's doesn't have the nutrition in it at all. And it's full of water. So you're buying something. For. Water and for water.

Yeah. That's how the Netherlands, they sell all their hydroponic tomatoes. And basically, you know, when I've been there, I've been there several times and you go visit these big 25 acre, glass, you know, they're all under glass, hydroponic tomatoes.

And this is way the Netherlands exports their water. And, yeah, they're they're way less nutritious than soil grown tomatoes, animals, you know, the the 95, 96% of all the animals grown under the organic label are in factory farms.

They're not on pasture, they're not outside. They're not getting, you know, green material. They're in factory farm situations. Beef. Organic beef. Not most of it is grain fed, is not pasture, you know, grass finished.

So yeah, that that can be problematic. So my point is that the organic label is a stipulation. Of things you're not doing primarily soil based. Not, you know, it doesn't account for in employee welfare or, you know, are you what kind of people, what kind of pay scale, what kind of animal treatment?

You know, it doesn't account for a whole lot of things. If you make a list of all the things that the organic standards do not ask, it's a pretty big list.

I mean, you know, you can grow carrots in plastic, on mulch, on cover crops and in compost, all under the organic label. So yeah, there's a lot of there's a lot of variety and a lot of variability in that label, a lot of things that most of us think are important, that are never asked or never identified as an organic label.

And when it comes to grains for omnivores, you know, for pigs and chickens and turkeys, 80% of all the organic grain, organic certified grains. So there's a lot of grain that is organic.

But farmers like the grain we buy is GMO free and not organic. Certified. A lot of it is organic. But the Amish farmers that a lot of them that we buy from, they just don't want to play with a government program.

It's not certified organic and organic. Certification, by the way, does not require empirical testing for glyphosate. And so our GMO free mill, they actually test every batch of feed for glyphosate residue.

So we're way beyond the organic standards. But you know, it's it's it's not certified an 80% of the organic certified grain sold in America is imported.

It's not even grown here. And half of that comes through the port of Istanbul from the stand countries, Kazakhstan use Becker, Stan, Stan. And so we can all trust those countries.

We can certainly trust Istanbul, and we can trust those big mega shippers through the integrity of organics. I'm saying that completely tongue in cheek.

Right? Yeah. I mean, there's. Still there's nothing like knowing your source, right? Knowing your farmer and using using credible private vetting to make your decisions.

Yeah, absolutely. Well, we find a farmer, you know, around us locally. We should definitely go visit the farm. Right. Like, how do we know if we visit a farm first of all, that should be the first thing.

You should be allowed to go visit the farm where you're getting your food. How do we know it's true? Blue. What should we look for? If a farmer has any kind of stipulation as to that visit, be dubious.

We have a 24 over seven 365 open door policy. Anyone can come from anywhere in the world, anytime to see anything, anywhere unannounced. No locked doors, no nothing. It's all open.

I'm not suggesting that every farm needs to be that way, but I am suggesting that if you feel one hint of reluctance from a farmer for you to visit at your convenience, be wary.

That's all I'll say. Be wary. All right. So? So a farm should be transparent, open for a visit. What are you looking for? Well, what are your what you're looking for is a sense of order.

And first of all, no smells, no noxious smells and just vibrancy. Ask to see the compost pile, you know. Is there is there a compost pile? If an organic farm doesn't have a compost pile, they're not, they're not doing much.

Organic Labels, Farm Transparency, and Food Freedom

And, walk through the, you know, walk through the vegetables, you know, go out, see the animals, you know, do they look healthy and happy and flourishing?

Is it clean? Is it again, let your nose and your eyes. It should be esthetically and dramatically sensually romantic. That's the impression you should have.

We can go visit. And now let me just say this, doctor Jen, whether you're looking at a website, a farmer's market booth, visiting a farm, all of this, that is all a cultivated skill.

It's just like anything. How do you find, a babysitter for your child? Okay, you don't just. Well, you know, whoever,

you do some vetting, you do some sleuthing, and so, you know, talk to people in the wellness community, you know, all the quacks, the quack doctors, the, you know, acupuncture chiropractor.

Ask them where the best practitioners are in the community and, ask around and, you know, pretty soon, you know, the functional medical doctor, the holistic medical doctor, naturopaths, where do they shop, where do they buy?

And lots of times that'll give you some direction as to who to go to. Yeah, I agree, I loved the farm in Ohio that we were at, and that's where we got our raw milk and we went in and saw how they cleaned, you know, the nipples before and everything, and they would actually send off batches to make sure that they were good.

I think that's one thing I struggle with, like in Tennessee, I'm trying to find a raw milk provider farmer, not a provider farmer. And I mean same thing.

Like you need to visit the farm and see what they're what they're doing and that that's really important and get to know your farmers. Your farmer should be your friend.

You know, they're giving you nutritious food. You're paying for it. It should be more relationship as opposed to just like going to the grocery store and and getting it there.

So I think that that is super important for those listening and get to know your farmer. And it's fun too. And that is so important to know where your food comes from, especially nowadays.

There's a lot going on. And I don't know, would you say, Joel, that they're like coming after farmers harder or are you making some headway politically?

How's the climate they're going? You mean from a government regulatory standpoint? Yeah, just small farms, because we know that they give subsidies to the big farmers, to the GMOs.

So how is that going for the farmer? I, think it's a little bit of both. You know, there seems to be just no appetite at all to reduce subsidies. You know, for the conventional agriculture, partly because those states are conservative.

And those senators, if they go against their, mainline industrial farmers, they are toast. You know, the senators from Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, those big soybean and corn states.

And so so you have that going on. But at the same time, we have an incredibly increased interest, especially through the Omaha movement, freeing up small farms and developing, you know, direct marketing, relationship marketing opportunities for smaller farmers.

And so, I mean, my, my personal, whatever a pulpit, that I'm promoting is a food Emancipation Proclamation. And I'm getting some traction for it. Essentially, if two people want to engage in a food transaction, they shouldn't have to ask the government's permission.

I'm not saying to put, you know, unregulated food in Walmart or send it to Sri Lanka or Vietnam. What I am saying, though, is if you want to come as a consenting adult to exercise freedom of choice, to give your microbiome agency, you should be able to purchase, to acquire your own microbiome fuel without asking the government permission, right, as to whether or not it's acceptable.

Love it. So, so. Right now, our food and farming sector is shackled by, a plethora of Byzantine regulations that make it very, very difficult to buy a chicken pot pie from Aunt Alice at church or buy some of, Uncle Ted's homemade charcuterie or pickles or kimchi or any of these things.

America. You know, doctor Jen, America Ma has really brought this out. How much ultra processed food Americans are eating? Yeah, and it's not because Americans like ultra processed food so much as it is.

Americans don't have a food ethic and they're looking for convenience. We don't view food as foundational for living. We view food as an inconvenience to our day.

Oh, oh, I gotta stop. I gotta stop important stuff and have a bite to eat. And that's the way Americans view food. If you travel out to any other country in the world, suddenly, you know, mealtimes take an hour and a half.

Everybody sits around and talks and jabs and chats. America, you know, 25% of the food we eat is in our cars, our automobiles. We don't even we don't even pull up to a table to eat.

And so here we are with all this convenience food being eaten. Well, there's nothing inherently wrong with convenience food. I mean, goodness, we I mean, you could say a little bit that our home canned vegetables are convenience food.

You know, you don't have to go pick them. You don't have to snap them. You got this jar, you know, you put it in and you heat it up and put a little bit of, you know, bacon bits in it and boom, you know, you've got supper in whatever, you know, 15 minutes.

So there's nothing actually inherently wrong about convenient food. The problem is that in America, convenient food has been dominated by these conglomerates that put in red dye 29, monosodium glutamate and all sorts of crazy chemicals that don't need to be made.

You know, we can make a chicken pot pie and freeze it under the ultimate convenience food, a frozen chicken pot pie. All right. Right. But it doesn't have to have red dye 29 and MSG and a bunch of chemicals in it now and so and so, freeing up farmers like us to be able to step into this convenience food market.

Yeah. Is essential in creating more safety, stability and security in our American food system. How can we help with that? Well, one way to be to periodically read my blog.

I'm trying to keep people up with developments in that sector. There are state agendas being developed. There is, incredible interest. I just had an hour conversation with the Small Business Administration last week.

There are new Trump appointees are on board with this. So I'm just, I'm just agitating here under the under the waves. And I'm not being, reluctant to share.

I'm hoping at some point to get a 30 minute audience with Trump. And I think if I have a 30 minute pitch with Trump to pitch a food Emancipation Proclamation and I think be all over it, it's entrepreneurial.

It takes away power from the big oligarchy that Bernie Sanders wants to control with a bigger government, which we've tried that for 100 years. We've seen that God is and it suddenly would open the floodgates to opportunities for small farmers who on 5 or 6 acres, could actually make a living by making home produce convenience food for their neighborhoods, that that's ultimately where we have to go.

But you can't go there if in order to do that takes a $200,000 Self-Standing permitted license kitchen with a special use permit. The hurdles are too high.

So this doesn't include the cottage food acts that some states as well. Some states are making cottage food acts, but essentially they don't allow any livestock or dairy.

No meat or dairy. Gluten. Well, half of the consumer. Dollar baked goods then. Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's baked goods, vegetables, you know, jams, jellies, bread, you know, baked goods.

And that's the lion's share of it. But that's that's only 25% of the consumer dollar. 50% is meat and dairy. Meat, dairy and poultry is 50%, 25% is dry goods, and 25% is fruits and vegetables, either canned or fresh or whatever.

So the lion's share of the food budget is this big livestock sector. And I would suggest arguably that is the sector

that has most adulterated nature's model, you know, with factory farming, with, you know, the antibiotics and all that.

I mean, yeah, a lot of vegetables get chemicals, but at least they're not getting antibiotics and stuff. And so the animals get the chemicals, they get the antibiotics.

And you know, and you get the abuse and all through and no grass and no exercise and all of those things, you know, in general, I think the the adulteration or the dysfunctionality of the livestock sector is more profound than the dysfunctional movement of the vegetable, fruit and berry sector in our country, you know, since, since World War two.

Yeah. Well, that's this is all super fascinating. And we need to read your blog and pray for you and give support because this is big what you're trying to do, and it needs to happen.

So I think that it is so important to support local farmers, but also pray for and support Joel as he is trying to get this meeting and change health.

Because yeah, we need more health in our in the United States. So how can everyone reach you? Your books are great. You are a great speaker, you know, and also you have a little bit of satire and comedy which which keeps it interesting.

So please share with our audience how they can find you. So my blog is musings from the Lunatic Farmer, and I don't do it on a schedule. I sometimes go two weeks without a post and then I post.

I get on a rant and I post every day for, you know, five days. So, you know, it's a it's a hit and miss blog. But I do very much appreciate that it is a way to really, really reach people fast with breaking stuff.

And, so it's the, the musings from the lunatic farmer. Our, our website is Polly Phase Farms P. O. Life's Polly Phase Farms. And, it has a broad, you know, it has everything from events that we do to books to food to swag, to other podcasts like this one.

You know, we'll bring that on for our social and when it comes out. And so so that's where you can keep up with me and my shenanigans at Polly Phase farms.com.

Well, thank you so much for your time and your expertise and fighting for our farmers. We appreciate you all. Thank you. Doctor Jan. Wow, that was such a great episode with Joel the lunatic farmer.

If you like this and think it could help someone in their health journey, please share this episode with friends and family. It really helps. Also, if you have a few minutes, would you please leave a review on Apple or Spotify?

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