
RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

of urban and rural settings. Promenades, arcades, refectories, and bandstands alternated with areas inaccessible by carriage to produce what Olmsted described as a "concourse of animated life." The goal was not Arcadia, but an attractive and diverting "spectacle."

Nor did the people who flocked to Prospect Park for concerts and ice cream seek unspoiled nature, according to Bluestone. He agrees with architect Horace Cleveland, who wrote in 1889 that "to the great mass of the so-called cultivated people, nature has no attraction except when aided by the merest clap traps of fashionable entertainment."

Feeding the Third World

"Feeding the Earth: An Agroecological Solution" by Michael J. Dover and Lee M. Talbot, in *Technology Review* (Feb.-Mar. 1988), Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The high-tech Green Revolution of the 1960s and '70s enabled some Third World nations (India, the Philippines) to increase food production. But the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that, despite these successes, 64 countries—29 in Africa—will be unable to feed their people by the year 2000 using present farming techniques.

For most such countries, say consulting ecologists Talbot and Dover, traditional farming methods, carefully modified, remain the best hope. Misapplied "industrial methods" not only damage fragile ecologies, but are also too costly.

In Sri Lanka, for example, "modernization" saw the tractor replace the water buffalo as the farmer's main power source. An annual saving of eight to nine "worker-days" per acre resulted. But cash expenses climbed: Fuel prices skyrocketed; the milk and curd once produced by the buffalo had to be purchased; inorganic fertilizers were needed to replace animal dung and urine. Buffalo wallows that once yielded 350 to 400 pounds of edible fish per acre were removed; some of the fish had helped control malaria by eating disease-carrying mosquitoes. The wallows had also been home to snakes and lizards that fed on the rats and freshwater crabs that destroy crops and levees.

The authors suggest that Third World farmers be taught to refine, not eliminate, time-honored practices. For instance, "polyculture"—the combining of crops—increases yields. In Mexico, it was found that 4.33 acres of maize must be planted to equal the amount of food grown on 2.5 acres of maize, beans, and squash.

In Africa, Sudanese farmers who leave their *Acacia albida* trees in place raise crops of millet for 15 to 20 years; without the trees, whose leaves fertilize the soil and provide fodder and shade for cattle, fields are exhausted in three to five years. In Rwanda, West German researchers have developed a "mixed crop-tree system" combining eucalyptus trees, coffee, maize, and other species; it provides firewood, plus 54 percent more calories, 31 percent more protein, and 62 percent more carbohydrates than do one-crop fields.

In most of the Third World, the authors believe, aid programs should "substitute indigenous resources for imported industrial ones."