

Dear INFORMer,

With a renewed sense of purpose and a couple of videos under our belt, INFORM has much to be thankful for this year, not the least of which is our growing list of friends and supporters. Thank you for your continued interest. We wouldn't be here without your help!

As November comes to a close, planning for parties and festive holiday dinners begins. Included in this month's bulletin are helpful hints on how to plan and host an environmentally friendly Thanksgiving dinner. Also read about the man who transformed organic farming across the United States, opening the door for a new way to grow food here and around the world.

## Have an Environmentally Friendlier Thanksgiving

**As the holiday season begins, make this year's Thanksgiving Day celebrations more eco-friendly with these simple tips:**

- **Two words:** Online invitations! Along with cutting out various paper products, such as cards and envelopes, e-vite websites and even social networking sites allow you to quickly send out your invitations online. However, if you do choose to stick with the traditional snail-mail invitations, use environmentally friendly stationary, such as those made by [Botanical Paperworks](#) or [Recycled Paper Stationary](#).
- When shopping for groceries, look for produce at your local farmers' markets. You will be supporting local farmers and reducing your food's carbon footprint, and also getting the freshest fruits and vegetables to serve your guests. For more info, click [here](#).



- When buying your turkey, look for [locally raised](#), certified organic and free-range meat, such as [heritage turkeys](#). Not only are you selecting an animal that was not subjected to cruelty, you're also selecting a more healthy and nutritious bird for your family. Free-range turkeys are generally richer in texture, easier to cook, and more likely to be disease-free as compared to those that aren't. For non-meat alternatives, [click here](#).
- Choose a great organic wine to serve your guests. Made from certified organic grapes and environmentally-friendly practices, this option decreases the amount of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides released into the environment from traditional wine-making practices. [The Organic Wine Company](#) has great selections, history and information on the growing

### INFORM Recommends

Watch The Organic Center's [informational video](#)

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industry. Also ask your city's wine distributor about their local stock and organic recommendations.

- Decorate your table with natural or recycled items. Utilize tablecloths made from organic cotton, hemp or bamboo. Skip store-bought flowers as a centerpiece and fill a glass vase with fruit, wild grass, pine cones, or dried flowers from the backyard. When choosing plates and settings, find recycled dinnerware, such as those offered by [Pristine Planet](#) or [Ecoentric](#) (Make sure these items do not contain lead or toxic paints that can cause serious health consequences).
- After a successful Thanksgiving dinner, package uneaten food in reusable containers and give them to your guests to bring home. US consumers throw out nearly 40% of their food, so instead of shoving leftovers in the fridge and eventually tossing them, sending them out with your friends and family or even donating them to local food pantries or shelters is a great idea.

## Profile: Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems

Today's food systems are extremely productive, but in the long run may not be



sustainable. Environmental degradation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity are just a few of the issues brought about by modern-day farming and food production techniques. The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems has transformed the way food is grown, basing its techniques on Alan Chadwick's farming systems started almost forty years ago. (See full article below.)

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## Cleaning for Health Update

The Greenable Cleanable Eastern Connecticut Conference, held on Friday October 24, 2008 was a great success. There were about 140 attendees including representatives from the Connecticut public health sector, public and private schools, unions, municipalities, hospitals, and healthcare agencies.

INFORM's Carol Westinghouse led a workshop on ***Cleaning for Health in Schools***, providing resources and information on how to implement a green cleaning program in your school district. As awareness of the health risks associated with toxic chemicals has increased dramatically in the last decade, programs and conferences such as the Greenable Cleanable Conference have become an integral part in the proliferation of the "Green Cleaning" and "Environmentally Preferable Cleaning" movement taking place today. To learn more about future INFORM's projects, including the Cleaning for Health program, check out our [website](#).

### Past PROFILES

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[The Wheat Sheet](#)

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[Larry Zirkle, Total Reclaim](#)

### Download

[The Cleaning for Healthy Schools Tool Kit](#)

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## INFORM Wins Coinstar's \$10,000 "Greenest City" Grant!

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In October, INFORM was selected to represent New York City in [Coinstar's](#) national challenge to reuse idling change and bring in coins to reduce the need for new coin production. Beating out nine other cities across the nation, New York held the highest percentage increase in coin cash-ins compared to last year and INFORM won the Greenest City \$10,000 grant.

"This contest proves that individual actions can make a significant impact on improving the environment as demonstrated by the residents of New York City," said Alex Camara, senior vice president of Coinstar Inc. INFORM will use the funds to raise awareness for our "**Recycle Your Cell Phone Campaign**" to educate the public about the need to recycle cell phones and how to do it responsibly. Keep an eye out for our upcoming campaign in the New York City transit system!

## Eco-Dictionary: find out what your food options are!

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**Flexitarian** – The relationship between meat and climate change has gathered significant press as of late. Research indicates that eating less meat can have a significant impact on the environment. One way to eat less meat is to adopt flexitarian habits. Flexitarians eat a primarily plant-based diet, while occasionally eating meat. Clever ways to do this include using meat as a garnish or a flavor rather than a centerpiece of the dinner plate.

**CSA** – or Community Supported Agriculture is a way for us to get closer to the food we eat. At the beginning of the growing season members usually pay for a full season's worth of produce. Then each week they pick up a share of fresh vegetables and fruit. Some farms even offer meat, milk, eggs or flowers. The share is either delivered or picked up from the farm or other local site. Some CSA requires that members pitch in, by helping with the distribution or even spending some time working on the farm. In 1990 there were only about 50 CSA's throughout the country, today there are over 2000. Click [here](#) to find a CSA near you.

**Industrial Organic**- In traditional organic farming, farmers rely on animal and farm wastes recycled into the soil to provide all the necessary nutrients. In today's farming world, many farms do not produce enough organic materials and must buy and import their organic fertilizers. Look into [local composting](#) and [community gardens](#) to promote organic foods while also decreasing your carbon footprint.

## Help Us Grow

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**Please keep an eye out for our appeal, which is coming soon!** INFORM wouldn't be able to continue raising environmental awareness around the country, produce our videos and reports, continue to green schools and protect children's health, roll

out our "Recycle Your Cell Phone Campaign", and send you our monthly bulletins without your support. As the season of giving begins, we hope you will consider making a [\\$25, \\$50 or \\$100 donation](#) to INFORM so can keep on [PRESERVING](#) the environment, [PROTECTING](#) human health, and [INFORMING](#) the public about the hidden environmental issues noone else is tackling.

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INFORM, Inc. is dedicated to educating the public about the effects of human activity on the environment and public health. Our goal is to empower citizens, business and government to adopt practices and policies that will sustain our planet for future generations.

## PROFILE

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### The Center for Agroecology & Sustainable Food Systems

“We need to create the beauty and the quality first.  
The quantity will follow”  
-Alan Chadwick

In the last 40 years, as global food demand steadily increased, global cereal production doubled, mainly from increased yields resulting from greater inputs of fertilizer, water and pesticides, mechanization, and new crop varieties. Today’s food systems are extremely productive, but in the long run may not be sustainable. Increased global food production has contributed to environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and [ecosystem services](#), and the emergence of pathogens. These factors threaten the long-term stability of agricultural production.

[The Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems](#) (CASFS)<sup>i</sup> at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) is tackling this issue and boosting the concept of long term “sustainability” as a popular theme in agriculture. With the world population expected to reach 9 billion by 2050,<sup>ii</sup> we are compelled to consider the connections between global agriculture, food supply systems and environmental sustainability.

Considered by many as the birthplace of organic farming, CASFS has transformed the way food is grown; the Center uses crop rotation methods and utilizes organic compost instead of chemical pesticides and fertilizers to grow fruits, vegetables and flowers. These practices have pushed the agenda of sustainability beyond ecological stewardship to address issues of social justice in the food system, such as the rights of workers to fair wages, decent working conditions, and access to healthy food.

As Christof Bernau, garden manager at the CASFS Farm explains, “Because [the Center’s] methods can be employed in urban spaces, on marginal soils, in the countryside, and in fact, the entire gamut of places we live, we already have in our possession a key tool to address hunger, which is, after all, a crisis not of production but of distribution. Intensive, local production of culturally relevant, nutritionally dense crops puts food where people already are, thus reducing our tenuous reliance on fossil fuel-dependent, international distribution systems, while at the same time reconnecting populations to the sources of their sustenance and enhancing biological diversity through crop diversity, the use of beneficial habitat plantings and the massive reduction of harsh chemicals that destroy the biological communities on which we all depend.”

Founded on the legacy of the famous British proponent of organic farming, Alan Chadwick, the Center has been at the forefront of sustainable agriculture for over 40 years. When Chadwick came to the United States in 1967 and was hired by the UCSC to establish the student garden and training program, the agriculture industry was dominated by chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Chadwick proved that by following his methods, known as the [Biodynamic/French Intensive systems](#), yields of four to six times the U.S. commercial average for fruits, vegetables, and grains could be achieved, using one-eighth of the water, a quarter of the fertilizer, and one-hundredth of the energy per pound of food produced.<sup>iii</sup>

“Small scale, French Intensive/Biointensive production holds incredible promise in addressing the world wide crisis of food security and the reliance on increasingly expensive and scarce inputs that prop up the industrial food system,” says Bernau, “French intensive methods can be adapted to virtually any location, rapidly building the productive capacity of soils, conserving precious water, promoting biological diversity, and employing human knowledge, ingenuity and labor as the primary inputs to sustain local food production.”



Today, Chadwick-inspired gardens and farms spread across America, from California to Virginia. Chadwick's teachings also reach far beyond the United States into the countries of Latin America, the Caribbean, Nepal and South Africa. Indeed, the use of organic gardening to obtain high yields of food in small spaces with a minimal use of chemical inputs can make a significant difference for farmers in the developing world.

The center collaborates with non-governmental organizations, growers, community members, visiting students and researchers, and state and federal agencies, including the [US Department of Agriculture](#) to create agriculture and food systems that sustain both people and the environments in which they live. Currently, the CASFS operates the 2-acre Alan Chadwick Garden and the 25-acre Farm on the UCSC campus. Both sites are run primarily by [apprentice labor](#) using organic production methods and serve as research, teaching, and training facilities for students, staff, and faculty.

A recent graduate from the CASFS Apprenticeship Program, David Evershed says, "As a UCSC student in the Environmental Studies program, internships at the Farm and Garden helped to balance my academic education with practical, hands-on learning and provided me with the opportunity to utilize and expand upon my intellectual understanding of organic agriculture. These internships motivated me to participate in the six month long apprenticeship program offered by CASFS after graduating. The lessons I have learned here cannot be taught by any other modality. By literally digging my hands in the soil and observing the living world around me every day, these lessons have been deeply engrained in me, and they are something I will pass on to those who surround me."

For more detailed information on CASFS, [click here](#).

For more about Alan Chadwick's biography, [click here](#).

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<sup>i</sup> The Student Garden Project and training program at UCSC, which was started in 1967 was renamed as the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems, UCSC in 1993.

<sup>ii</sup> <http://esa.un.org/unpp/p2k0data.asp>

<sup>iii</sup> SeedsOfChange