

Why we need a biofoodies group

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Summary

For thousands of years life has been getting better, we live longer, are fitter, taller and stronger and we have gradually been overcoming infectious diseases. The graph of quality of life has been steadily going up.

This all comes from technology, sewage systems, fresh water, advances in medical and food technology etc.

But about fifty years ago the graph started to flatten and about twenty years ago started to drop. We are no longer living longer, on average we are becoming fatter and suffering from a range of what non infectious or chronic diseases like diabetes, and dementia and people in old age are become less healthy and infirm.

Technology is having a dramatic impact on human society. It is self evident that technology should work for the benefit of humanity as a whole and is equally self evident that this is not universally true, it is creating a society in which a handful of people, the top executive and share holders of mega corporations are becoming excessively rich while a significant proportion of the general population are going backwards.

I am an innovator in new technology, I was recently acknowledged by the Institute of Engineers as one of Australia's top one hundred leading innovators for my pioneering work on computer aided engineering - which literally changed an industry.

But I believe that those of us who have had the good luck to be born with an innovative mind and create new technologies have a responsibility to ensure that technology works for the benefit of the human community as a whole, not an already rich few.

I have, for all my life had an interest in food and its affect on health and now sustainable food production. This is not just a philosophical interest, it is intensely personal as my wife, a qualified doctor and surgeon developed diabetes and was well on the road to becoming a blind cripple until we reversed her diabetes by diet.

I now focus my technical capabilities to study and experiment with how we can grow our food to improve our health.

Our guts form part of an intelligent control system which manages our body. When healthy it instructs our bodies to store just the right amount of fat. Modern diets high in sugars and fats and low in essential nutrients and biology confuse our control system so

they send instructions to store excess fat in the wrong places like our organs and brains which is the root cause of diabetes and dementia.

We now have the technology to grow food to restore our gut biology but that is not enough. We need to develop an alternative food distribution systems. You can read about my plans for setting up this alternative food distribution system at www.pickandeat.shop.

Technology should benefit human society

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Technology, food, health and sustainability

Until recently medical and food technology has had a highly beneficial effect on humanity.

For thousands of years life has been getting better, we live longer, are fitter, taller and stronger and we have gradually been overcoming infectious diseases. The graph of quality of life has been steadily going up.

But about fifty years ago the graph started to flatten and about twenty years ago started to drop. We were no longer living longer, on average we were becoming fatter and suffering from a range of what we call non infectious or chronic diseases like diabetes, and dementia and people in old age were become less healthy and infirm.

Modern foods and the man made health epidemic

The changes in our food are the dominant reason, it is full of fats, sugars and carbohydrates which provide an excess of energy, impregnated with toxic chemicals but low in essential nutrients and minerals, sterile and lacking the biology to strengthen our gut biology which form part of the intelligent control system which manages our bodies.

Compromising our intelligent control system has had devastating consequences on our health. Storing some fats is a healthy part of our evolution but in emergency mode it starts

to store fats into unnatural areas of our bodies, like our organs and brains. The results are devastating and has led to our current chronic health epidemic of obesity, diabetes, strokes, dementia etc.

Of course these diseases have always existed, but what is new is the scale of the epidemic and this is not normal or natural, it is a man made epidemic because we are mismanaging technology which should be beneficial but when wrongly applied is disastrous.

Failures in the economic system

One reason is our economic system and our accounting system, particularly what economists like to call externalities. There is no doubt that the current chemical industrial agricultural system produces food cheaper than any other system and makes a lot of money for the top executives and share holders of the mega corporations which control our food production.

The cost of this cheap food does not include the medical costs of treating these modern illnesses let along the personal suffering. These are borne by the public through our Governments and tax system.

Technology not enough by itself

For many years I, and member's of the Gbiota club, have been developing a system called Gbiota beds™ whose primary purpose is to grow food which makes us healthy particularly enhancing our gut biology, which is a critical part of our intelligent control system.

An emphasis has been placed on making the system as economic as possible by automation.

There is no doubt that this is a highly effective technology producing food which is rich in nutrients, trace minerals and biology, and is highly productive for a given area.

It is totally sustainable based on recycling organic wastes. This may not be an issue for us but is certainly an issue for our grand kids and their grand kids.

But the fact still remains that it is more expensive, in terms of farm gate costs, than the chemical industrial system and superficially is not competitive with the cheap chemical industrial foods - however beneficial the technology so will never gain wide utilisation in our current economic system.

Looking at the food system as a whole

But it is more complex than simple on farm economics, typically a grower may only receive 20% or less of the retail cost of food, the remaining 80% goes in distribution, promotion, retail costs and let not forget profits. It is a very cumbersome and expensive system.

I live in Bundaberg, a major food producing region with many mega farms. But food is harvested, often before it has matured naturally in the soil, is shipped to Brisbane where it is stored in cold stores then shipped back to Bundaberg for sale in the supermarkets.

It is a highly wasteful system which delivers food which without doubt looks good but is far from genuinely healthy.

The alternative food system (altfood)

The aim of the alternative food system is to provide a system where people can buy food grown in nutrient rich, biologically active soil which is essential for health, directly from enlightened growers at a price which overall is competitive by reversing the 20/80 split to an 80/20 split so the grower actually receives 80% of the retail cost and distribution only amounting to 20%.

We call people who want to eat this healthy food, and follow our motto of 'health begins in the soil' **biofoodies**.

There are many enlightened growers who full understand that the modern industrial chemical farming system is destroying their soils so they go to great lengths to nurture the soil biology which is at the heart of sustainable agriculture. They may not be strictly certified organic but they fully understand the importance of soil biology and how it is damaged by toxic chemicals. We call these regenerative farmers **regenies**.

The www.pickandeat.shop website

I created the pickandeat.shop web site to link the biofoodies with the regenies so the biofoodies can buy there food directly from the growers, ordering the produce while it is still growing in the ground then having it picked up in the morning and delivered that afternoon directly to the biofoodies home at an economic price.

But there is more to it than that, I have taken a particular interest in traditional agriculture and visited many regions in the world which would normally be considered under developed. What is surprising is the huge range of edible plants they grow or wild harvest, many of these are reputed to have medical benefits.

One advantage of the pickandeat.shop web site is that the biofoodies can arrange with the regenies to custom grow these traditional plants. This is the aim of Community Assisted Agriculture CAS where a community group will sponsor a grower to custom grow a specific variety and share in the crop when mature.

The imbalance of power

All this may sound great in theory but there is one issue that remains to be resolved and we see this throughout our society, if I wanted to pick the perfect example I would choose our banking system where there are just a handful of incredibly powerful organisation but a customer walking in of the street has zero power.

But our food system also has a chronic imbalance of power. In all my many discussions with people on food and health I have yet to find one person who says they really want to buy vegetables loaded with toxic chemicals yet millions of people do this ever day. Why?

The giants of the food industry may say that the public have a choice but with food if the choice is take it or leave it there is no choice - because we all have to eat.

How do we solve this problem and the many other problems in establishing an alternative food system? Answer the power of the group.

The power of the group

I learned this lesson many years ago in my computer aided engineering days. I used to go around the world giving lectures on the technology I had developed, explaining in detail all the underlying fundamental principles. This is not dissimilar to now when I write numerous articles about food and health.

But there was one simple question in the audiences had in mind 'does it work?'. But however valid my technical explanations were they were still not totally convinced. The fact was that there was significant financial and reputational risk in adopting this new technology so adoption was slow..

Then some companies, who had a serious technical problems which could be resolved by this new technology, would decide to give it a go and fortunately it worked for them and they were quite happy to tell other people about their success. Eventually the technology was adopted around the world not because I was some super salesman, which I am not, but because of the power of the group.

The alternative food movement can be brought about by community action by the biofoodies forming local groups so that collectively they have the purchasing power to buy the sort of food, grown in the way they want.

There are many growers who fully understand the benefits of regenerative farming, but they have to live and pay their bills.

No single individual, certainly not me in isolation, can convince them that they can develop a profitable business by adopting regenerative farming, but a group of committed biofoodies can.

But there are costs involved for the grower. Whatever method of regenerative farming they adopt the labour cost will be higher than with chemical farming. If they decide to use the

Gbiota technology there are cost involved in setting up the infra structure even although the productivity will be higher.

But I can give a picture of how I see it working.

How I see it working

I see the role of the biofoodies group as

- growing the group to a size to have significant credibility and influence with prospective regenies.
- locating and persuading regenies to become suppliers to the group
- organising the same day pick up and delivery of produce

First we need to establish groups of biofoodies.

There are now so many methods of communication, from regular internet searches, social media and the medical support groups for diabetes, nursing mums, health groups etc. But despite all our technology nothing beats just people talking to their friends who in turn talk to their friends. A few enterprising individuals should be able to set in motion a process which establishes a significant group.

Armed with the power of numbers (and their wallets) the biofoodies can establish a corresponding network of regenies.

Again there are many ways of locating regenies on the web, there are excellent sites for locating certified organic growers. But the regenerative growers, who may be small family farms, 'escape from the city' or retirement growers may take a little more locating. But a large enough group, even just driving on a weekend outing should have no difficulties.

There is no need for any formal organisation until we reach the third aim of boxing which involves money.

Boxing

Boxing is a process where the biofoodies order the produce through the pickandeat.shop web site while the plants are still in the ground. (May be even at the seed level with special varieties). They may order from multiple growers to get the full variety.

On an agreed morning a van will drive around each farm collecting the orders which are placed in a biofoodies box for delivery that afternoon.

This may be done by a commercial carrier company but the group may decide they would like to do this themselves which has the big advantage of meeting the grower and having a look around their farm to create confidence that the produce is grown as specified on the growers page.

This is where money comes in. The web site is organised so that there is a single boxing charge on every order (that's picked up). The biofoodies group decide what this boxing charge will be and it is automatically paid into a designated bank account.

An enterprising individual may decide to use boxing as a business opportunity, create a small group and use their personal bank account and simply talk to the group about a fair boxing charge. There is then no need for a formal structure.

A larger group may evolve into what is essentially a buyers cooperative which will then need a formal 'club' structure with it's own bank account.

Boxing is an integral part of reducing the final costs to be competitive if not cheaper than the conventional system.

Contact me

If your are interested in joining this social movement please contact me
colinaustin@bigpond.com

I have already set up 'food for health' groups on Facebook and will try and help you in establishing your own local group.