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I would like to thank Naza Aschenbrenner for giving me the opportunity to provide my perspective on *Investment in Agriculture for Sustainability and Food Security (sovereignty)* since I was not available to moderate the session at the 2014 AIM Conference.

First some definitions.

We define **food** as *primary ingredients or that, which is made from primary ingredients, using processes that do not alter the fundamental integrity, wholesomeness and healthfulness of the primary ingredients used. A primary ingredient is water and also a natural (non-synthetic) nutrient with a fully-disclosed, one-word ingredient statement, which is neither genetically modified nor produced using GM technologies.*

We define **food sovereignty** as *self-sufficiency in the production of all nutrients including water and wholesome, healthful and nutritious: a) land-based foods, i.e. fruit, vegetables, grains, livestock and b) water-based foods i.e. fish/seafood; and distribution of those nutrients to the population as required – in sufficient quantities for the population to thrive.*

We define **sustainability** as *that which at worst is benign and preferably beneficial to the quality of air, water and soil. Sustainability can also be viewed through three lenses:*

- Material – where rate of use < rate of replenishment, with the goal of emulating as much as possible Nature's closed-nutrient-loops where there is no "waste", since the waste products of one process become the feed stock for another.*
- Energy – All secondary sources of energy, even so called renewable sources, are derived from our sun. So the closer we can get to the direct use of the sun's energy, the more sustainable we are likely to be.*
- Economic/Social – the key to financial sustainability is to create profitable markets for sustainable products and processes that allow communities to thrive.*

Current mechanisms for the creation of financial wealth are for the most part in conflict with natural wealth creation. This has been aptly described by Catherine Fitts as the "negative-return-on-investment economy" or "Tapeworm Economy". We need a model whereby increases in financial assets can be realized without destroying natural, social and cultural assets, thus benefiting the entire social and natural eco-system. This implies a distributed, decentralized new world economic order that is based on equity in both senses of the word – a) equitable opportunities for success, and b) ownership (equity) in the fruits of one's labor.

In my opinion, food may be the last major lever in humanity's fight for a decentralized "thrive" strategy. Food sovereignty has become the paramount issue of our time. When we look at the most potent levers of control in this world, there are probably none more significant than food and water. It goes to reason that no citizenry can be in control of its fate unless it has food sovereignty.

Let's imagine that currently your country is dependent on imports to feed your citizenry and that there was a mandate to create food sovereignty within a period of 5 years. What would I recommend?

I would look at the challenge in three concurrent phases:

- To immediately identify alternative sources of essential foods that could be contracted for during an interim period, while we were developing proprietary sources of supply.
- To enable, through strategic equity-based partnerships with local farming cooperatives at home and abroad, a distributed network of diverse, proprietary agricultural assets (e.g. farmland, livestock, heirloom seeds, harvest and post-harvest competencies, packing and storage facilities) that were geographically accessible with the logistics to make it all work.
- To establish an agricultural capability within the country itself that was as close to a closed-loop, sustainable system as possible. This would include some outdoor agriculture along with fully enclosed above and underground facilities that would use the latest energy generation, lighting, climate and environmental control, construction and agricultural production technologies available – to include where necessary the use of agro-ecological soil remediation technologies.

This proprietary food supply would be totally non-GMO and nano-technology free, including no products that were derived using GM or nano processes; not only because of the health risks involved, but also because food sovereignty cannot be achieved through someone else's proprietary IP, terminator seeds and round-up-ready crops. Saving seed and nurturing vital soils are fundamental prerequisites for sustainable food sovereignty. And nothing can compete with millennia of natural adaptations to local conditions that have resulted in astonishing diversity of plant genotype and phenotype – the foundation for food security.

Current trends are antithetical to the natural processes that created this abundance in that they seek to replace this legacy of diversity with proprietary, engineered, controlled and relatively homogeneous "solutions" i.e. scarcity.

So the best solutions to this problem are not the obvious ones nor do they involve using the usual channels or cast of characters. By the same token, no one should be naïve in terms of the potential political ramifications involved in choosing this path. But again, food sovereignty cannot be achieved through food slavery.

My life's mission is to make high quality food (wholesome, healthful, fresh food) more accessible e.g. available and affordable. This requires a vital and viable community of independent, conscientious and optimized growers, producers, investors and customers who are committed to increasing natural and human wealth, based on vital soil, water and air. Sustainability requires a dependable market for sustainable products. Markets require predictable and dependable sources of supply. Enabling these communities of producers and linking them with customers in search of real food, sustainably produced, is where the most powerful investment opportunities for true and equitable wealth creation and food sovereignty live.

I would be happy to assist in helping to manifest this vision for those principle-based investors with similar intention.

Sincerely,

Harry Blazer

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