

Caspar (00:01):

What if the future of food could heal both our bodies and the planet? Today we're joined by a pioneering farmer who's dedicated his life to challenging conventional methods and promoting regenerative practices. He's been featured in documentaries such as Food Inc, and he advocates for environmentally friendly techniques that restore the land and produce nutrient-rich food. With 16 books and global speaking engagements, he leads a movement towards a healthier, more resilient food system. This is the Story of the Lunatic Farmer with Joel Salatin. So Joel, thank you so much for coming on.

Joel Salatin (00:35):

Thank you for having me. It's a, it's a real honor.

Caspar (00:38):

You know, I was reading on your website that you, you give a much more eloquent you know, description than just the lunatic farmer. And I'll, I'll just read this really quickly. You, you're a Christian libertarian environmentalist, capitalist lunatic farmer <laugh>. Yeah. So tell us how, how you came up with that name and what brought you into the farming world as the lunatic <laugh>.

Joel Salatin (01:00):

Yeah. Well, I, I adopted that look you know, when you kind of, when you're a maverick, you can either be frustrated at being the outsider or you can have fun with it. And so, you know, for years I was, I was, you know, this organic farmer. And so, as you know, much of the early environmental and, and I would say still dominant environmental organic farming movement, if you will, is, is primarily a, a liberal you know, green. We call 'em greeny, weenie earth, muffin tree huggers, you know, <laugh> and, and, and, and we love 'em. Okay? I mean, this, this is my, this is my people, but unlike many of them, I am, I am philosophically conservative and, and politically conservative. And as much as I'm, I'm virtually a libertarian mm-hmm <affirmative>. And so I wanna solve these problems with freedom and not with government, reg, regulatory power.

Joel Salatin (01:58):

And so that kind of put me at odds. And so I, you know, I frankly got tired of, you know people assuming that I was for bigger teachers unions, against charter schools, for abortion you know, all these big hot button political issues. I said, you know what? I can either be frustrated or I can have fun with it, so I'll make up my own moniker. And so now I have this moniker with these opposites, you know, Christian libertarian environmentalist, capitalist lunatic. And and, and it, it has become a, a, a wonderful handle now and, and and becomes it becomes winsome and, and imaginative rather than, you know, me having to sit here and, and whatever it defend, backtrack, and explain. Now people can, oh, this guy does not go in a box. And if I can get that kind of outta the way at the beginning, then we're, you know, then we're in good shape.

Caspar (02:55):

It, it's wild how people try to put you in boxes, right? Because Oh, yeah. Even myself, like, number one, I'm in medicine. So people say, oh, you're a doctor. It's like, well, I'm not, my father is, but no, I try and help doctors and <laugh> promote, and then they go, oh, you're an alternative medicine. You must be a liberal. Right? It's like, why? Why does that have to be that way? <Laugh>? Like, no. Like, we automatically put people in boxes. Yeah. And then there's that other box of, oh, farming is farming. Like, what, what are we talking about here? It's just picking fruits and vegetables up. Well, we know that's not true, but for the audience that that doesn't quite get it. Like, what, what is the problem right now that you know about, about conventional farming and, and most of how our food supply is grown?

Joel Salatin ([03:37](#)):

Well if you wanna peel off all the layers of the onion and go to the heart of it, I would say that the, the problem is as most of these, at the core of these things are, as you know, in medicine, it's, it's a, it's a philosophical perceptual problem. And that is that life is fundamentally mechanical. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Rather than biological. And and, and so our, our problem is that in our western reductionist, linear compartmentalized disconnected, individualized kind of thinking, we, we, we have viewed life fundamentally as a car, you know, with parts, interchangeable parts. And you pull out this one, you put this one in, you can, you know, re remodel this one a little bit. And rehab it put, rather than life being fundamentally biological in as much as it is a, is it is spontaneous and responsive. And I think that is the, that is the fundamental issue.

Joel Salatin ([04:41](#)):

And it actually, it actually permeates, as you know, it permeates all of the health, the entire health wellness platform is dominated in our culture right now by a mechanistic view toward life as opposed to a biological view toward life. At least that's, that's the way I see it. That's the way I would, I would argue it. And so, so in farming you know, this really got its big start in 1837 when Justus von Liebig using vacuum tubes in Austria told the world. And he was, you know, world, world famous for explaining to the world that all of life is simply a rearrangement of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus, NPK. And, and he launched, of course, the chemical fertilizer industry with his analysis. And of course, now we know all of life is not just a rearrangement of NPK. There's DNA and, and mitochondria and all sorts of things.

Joel Salatin ([05:48](#)):

Even to the point of, you know, I'm a little older than you are when I was in I remember, well in in 10th grade biology, looking at cells in the microscope and being told, now, you know, there's the nucleus and there's a mitochondria, and there's a mitochondria in each cell. Well, now we know there are as many as a thousand mitochondria in every cell, and they're all communicating, talking, trading, making. You know, I don't want to go beyond more than, than, than we know. But, but I, I, I love, I, I love to, to to imagine this world, this microscopic world as a community of beings that are, are are trading commerce, you know, Hey, I've got some polysaccharide. I'll trade you for that boron. And, you know, and they're actually, they're actually talking and, and trading. And there's, there's this, this tremendous amount of, of dynamism and spontaneity going on in our microbiome, in our cells and, and all around us. And it's not just a, a machine that every, every time you turn the steering wheel to the right, the car turns right. The car doesn't say, you know, this time I think I'll turn left. It, it never does that. And, and, and, but, but life does, life does make left hand turns,

Caspar ([07:10](#)):

Right? And it seems that humans, we always want to break things down to almost mechanistic and technical terms, kind of this Newtonian $A + B = C$ sort of thing. When we know we, we are not machines, we don't work that way. And nature sure as hell doesn't work that way. It is much more dynamic and beautiful in that sense. And you, you say, you know, you talk about nature being this ultimate pattern for farming. Can, can you go into that and how Polyface Farms kind of really embraces that idea of letting nature guide?

Joel Salatin ([07:46](#)):

Sure. So when we came here to the farm, I was just, I was just a little kid. And, and so we're struggling with what, you know, how, how do you, how do you farm? How do you intersect with the land? What, what is the stewardship mandate? And so I can remember well dad bringing in experts that told him to plant corn, graze the woods, build silos, borrow more money, you know, use chemical fertilizers. Well, my grandfather was a charter subscriber to Rodale's Organic Gardening and Farming Magazine when it

came out in like 1945. Always had a big compost pile. And, and was, was you know, of, of the nonchemical ilk. And, and dad got that from him. And, and so dad didn't buy into that approach. But then the other, the, okay, so we're not gonna do that. We're not gonna do the chemical route, but what's the alternative?

Joel Salatin ([08:39](#)):

And began studying, well, how does nature work? And we, you start looking around at nature and you realize, well, okay, animals in nature move, animals move. They're not in confinement houses, they're not in, you know, and they move, well, as soon as you posit animals move, well, now you have to have mobile shelter, mobile water, and a way to control them, because your neighbor doesn't want your cows. And so you've gotta, you've gotta be able to put them where you want them at a certain time. So we began looking at the work of people like André Voisin in the 1950s who wrote Grass Productivity. He still considered the godfather of modern, you know, managed grazing. And he was an astute student of, of herbivore choreography, if you will, around the planet, and realized, oh, okay, these wildabest move, the bison move the <laugh>, you know, these things move.

Joel Salatin ([09:35](#)):

And so so we began using electric fence, and we developed portable shade structure called a shade mobile. And we started installing portable water. We now have 12 miles of gravity fed water from permaculture style ponds that gravity feeds over the whole farm. So we have nice pressure water without pumps and electricity over the whole farm. And, and so that was one, you know, animals move that, I mean, that people say, well, how'd you get so creative? Well, it's just a simple phrase, animals move. And then that, that, that assumption automatically creates well, we have to have, we have to build around that, you know, around that concept. Number two, soil is built by carbon. It's not built by chemical fertilizer. It's built by things that grow and decompose either intestinally or microbially or both you know and, and so, so how do we, how do we develop more carbon?

Joel Salatin ([10:37](#)):

So we began composting. So where most farmers would buy, you know chemical fertilizer, we bought a wood chipper and went to our woods and began began weeding the woodlot of diseased and crooked and junk trees which freed up the good tree, like weeding your green beans freeing up the good trees to grow better. And that biomass then became the carbon, we called it a carbonaceous diaper. And, and, and we began doing large scale composting with, with that, and, and applying it. So, you know, so we started digging building ponds, reducing surface runoff increasing organic matter. So we've gone from 1% to 8% organic matter since we've been here. And and, and so those were critical. And then, and then another one was simply that, well, animals, you never see, you never see a mono species or a mono cropp, or a mono, anything nature is, is highly diversified.

Joel Salatin ([11:36](#)):

Whether you see, you know plant guilds and plant communities, or you see animal, animal, you know, communities, you see, you know you know, squirrels and voles and birds and herbivores, you know, they're all in proximity. So we began, well, how can we leverage what each animal can do? And so so we began building portable chicken houses. We called them egg mobiles that follow the cows to mimic the bird that sits on the rhino's nose. The, you know, the egret on the rhinos nose, that's picking the bugs out. Well, mm-hmm <affirmative>. Chickens are birds. So birds follow the herbivores and pick the bugs out of the manure and scratch it around the, the field. And and starting using animals to do the work, we use pigs to do our, our composting aeration to turn the compost instead of, you know, instead of machinery.

Joel Salatin ([12:27](#)):

And then finally, I would just say that as we looked at nature, we said, most, most systems are, are, are kind of locally cyclical. They they, they don't, I mean, there's always been a global trade in, in things like spices, you know, the spice routes and things like that. But, but people weren't trading. They, they weren't, they weren't going a thousand miles with a watermelon, you know, <laugh>, it was, it was, it was, it was a more the, the cycles were shorter, you know, the circles were, were tighter. And so we began direct marketing. And and so rather than trying to sell into a commodity thing that eventually, you know, goes to Walmart on the other side of the country, instead we began direct marketing, branding and, and value adding and, and trying to get that retail dollar. So we wore the middleman hats mm-hmm <affirmative>.

Joel Salatin ([13:23](#)):

Rather than just being a, a wholesale a commodity producer, we became the processor, the marketer, and the distributor, which got us off the treadmill of having to get bigger in order to stay in business by wearing those value added hats. So those were, those were kind of some of the, the patterns that we saw in nature. And, and as we, as we developed them on the farm, they, they ended up nature uses those patterns for a reason, because they, they're very efficient. They take less capital and less, less machinery, less energy, and they just work better.

Caspar ([14:00](#)):

Nature is our greatest teacher, and it's, it's the arrogance to go against it sometimes that humans, you know, fault and, but, you know, regenerative farming, when, when you explain what goes on at Polyface and, and just a general idea on its face value looks amazing, but you have your detractors and you have people that call you a starvation advocate, and this can't scale, and this'll lead to all sorts of, you know, negative things. What is your rebuttal to that idea that this can't scale up this regenerative farming pattern?

Joel Salatin ([14:35](#)):

Yeah. So the rebuttal to that is number one, that we are, we are far more productive. I'll just give you one statistic. In our county, the average pasture acre of pasture will feed 80 cows per year for for one day. In other words and we, we, we measure this in cow days per acre. So, you know, one person day of food, if you took all the food you're gonna eat today, put it on a plate, that would be one person day of food. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. So if you take all the grass or in pasture that a cow will eat in a day, put it, you know, put it in a pile, that's one cow day worth of, of grass and forage. So in our county the average pasture produces 80 cow days per acre. In other words, it'll be one cow for 80 days a year, or 80 cows for one day a year.

Joel Salatin ([15:28](#)):

Alright? And we average, and we average over over 400 cow days per acre. Hmm. So we're, you know, we're 3, 4, 5 times the county average, and we haven't planted a seed or bought a bag of chemical fertilizer in 60 years. And so and so from a productivity standpoint, we're far more productive than, and, and by the way Caspar, this, this, what I've just described, is not really an organic or non-organic argument. It, it's simply a nature's pattern. How do herbivores go in nature? You, you don't see the wildabeasts spread all over the Serengeti. They're, they're mobbed up for predator protection. Well, that mobbing makes them interact with the soil, with the plants, and with their own movement different, which then makes the biomass, the vegetation react differently. Not sure we have time to go into all the nuances of that, but, but the point is that when you move, mob, and mow, moving, mobbing mowing with the herbivore, it fundamentally changes the herbivore from a liability, an ecological liability, into an ecological asset.

Joel Salatin ([16:50](#)):

And, and the fact is that 95% of all domestic herbivores in the world are, are violating one of those three Ms, moving, mobbing, or mowing. They're violating one of them, and many times they're violating all three. And so and so the, the productivity is simply, is simply there. You know another little interesting tidbit is that pre-European North America, so North America, pre-European produced more food than it does today. Now, it wasn't all eaten by people. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. There were a hundred million bison. There were 2 million wolves that needed 20 pounds of meat a day. There were 200 million beavers that ate more vegetables than all the, all the humans in North America today. Birds, you know, Audubon, Audubon recorded in his diary. He said, I couldn't see the sun for the for the flock of birds that were passenger pigeons flying over that blocked out the sun.

Joel Salatin ([17:52](#)):

He said, for three days, who's, who's seen a flock of birds that blocked out the sun for three days? So, so clearly there was a there was a, a natural choreograph, if you will, in place that was highly symbiotic and synergistic. And, and so so the scale, so, so the production there's no question about what we can produce way, way more with, you know, with, with natural patterns than we can with arbitrary chemical usage. Now, the scale issue is, is kind of a, is kind of an interesting one, because, because when you replace depreciable infrastructure and chemicals and antibiotics, and you replace those crutches with people, it can appear that it doesn't scale as well, because there's more people involved. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. But it, but that is not that is not an indictment of scalability. It's simply a recognition that when you replace all of these shortcuts and crutches with people, it gives a per Yes, it does take more people per pound of whatever, per pound of green beans, per pound of grapes, whatever.

Joel Salatin ([19:21](#)):

Yes. Because, because you are replacing with skill, mastery, and management, the, you know, the, the shortcuts, the, the pesticides, the herbicides, the chemicals, all that. I mean, arguably it does take more time to hand chop a thistle than it does to spray it with a shot of, you know bicep Okay herbicide. Arguably it does. But, but we don't apologize for that. We think that actually a more people centric food system is actually better. And, and when you realize that right now we've got a dead zone, a dead zone, the size of Rhode Island in the Gulf of Mexico, due to farm agricultural runoff down the Mississippi, you know, the externalized costs and the, and the, the, the from pollution to nutrient deficiency in the food system, all of those costs, if we, if we replace all those medical and pollution and toxicity clean up costs with proactive people at the outset, I would suggest that we'd actually have a much superior system, even though it might require more people to be involved.

Caspar ([20:43](#)):

Right. And when, when you make those cases, the environmental case, the connecting with nature case, you could say the health case, even that, that we know this is a healthier route for, for humans to go through regenerative farming, to have more nourishing food that is fresher. You know, you make those cases and you start to wonder, what is the hold back here? Why aren't we discussing this more? Why aren't we seeing more regenerative practices? Is this a political thing? Is, is that where the issue kind of goes to? What is the hold up to see more regenerative farming out there in the world?

Joel Salatin ([21:23](#)):

Yeah. We don't have a food culture in the U.S.

Caspar ([21:26](#)):

Yeah.

Joel Salatin ([21:27](#)):

I mean, if you travel to Europe, every place you go, you will find, you know, a food culture a a really, like from antiquity, a food culture. And every time I go to Europe just for fun, I always ask my hosts I, I always say, alright, when you think of American food call, what do you think? And I've never had it missed, you know, what they all say, as soon as you think American food, what's the first thing they say? They say McDonald's <laugh>. That's

Caspar ([21:58](#)):

What I was just gonna say that Yeah.

Joel Salatin ([22:00](#)):

That, yeah. That, that's, that's worldwide, right? And, and so, and so my mentor, Allan Nation had a wonderful take on this. He was world traveled and, and well read, and he said, you know, the difference between American and European food culture is royalty. In Europe, they never ask you, did you get enough? They ask you, how did it taste? Hmm. And, and, and it was, it was a mark of royalty. It was a mark of that you were not a peasant, that you did not eat a lot when you ate because you knew you were gonna get another meal. Mm. America when the settlers came and, and, and even a Native American society, this is very, well, I mean, I, I remember, I, I listened to a park ranger who was on a, a Native American sacred site out in Nebraska.

Joel Salatin ([22:53](#)):

And he said that the Native American, when they could get all the bison, you know, when hunting was good, and they could get all they could eat, they, they would, they would eat as much as 10 pounds in a day and just gorge themselves because the next meal was unsure. They didn't know if they would find bison the next day. And, and, and if you read Native American literature, you know, you know that they, that that it was very hit and miss. I mean, they, they did preserve food, but it was, it was, it was hit and miss. You know it's, it's, it's, it's feasting for a week. And then we have two weeks where we're just kind of not eating much mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, and so, so in America, in America, it was always, Hey, if you could get it, eat it, you know, eat and eat all you can.

Joel Salatin ([23:38](#)):

'Cause You didn't know if there was another meal coming. And so here in America, food was never, it was never a, a thing about taste. It was about satiation and and enough. And so the idea of eating as a, as a cultural as a cultural phenomenon. I mean, you go to Spain and I mean, a, a two hour meal is, that's culturally normal. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. And we, from the U.S. when I go there, I, I, I, I'm, I'm, I'm uncomfortable, you know, about a about an hour in, I'm sitting there well, are we gonna go do something? You know,

Joel Salatin ([24:23](#)):

Excuse me. Are we gonna, you know, are we gonna, what, what's next on the agenda? You know, I'm looking at my watch, I'm looking at the schedule mm-hmm <affirmative>. They're, they're, they're completely couldn't be happier, you know, Hey, you know, we're all, we're eating. In America, we, we view few food as just a pit stop, a a pit stop between everything that's important in life. And so we have never developed a food, a food culture like that. And and, and I think that, that, that then, that then has made us an expediency, a culinary expediency culture in which TV dinners, squeezable, Velveeta Cheese lunch, Lunchables, Hot Pockets, all of these things have huge desirability because it's convenience and I can eat it on the run. And what is it like 40% of American food is consumed in automobiles? I mean, the statistics are just off the, off the charts. 77% of our food is ultra processed which by definition Yeah. You

can't make in your kitchen mm-hmm <affirmative>. So, so so, you know, what, what's the problem? The, the problem is that we as a culture have not developed a, an awe and an appreciation for, for food as, as ultimate provenance, as ultimate you know, as, as, as, as becoming flesh of my flesh and bone of my bone. You know, we just haven't developed that kind of culture.

Caspar ([26:02](#)):

Absolutely. No, there's this strange relationship with food and a very detached mentality that is, it is simply a sort of fuel that you quickly, you know, abide by, go buy the cheapest one that many people, many Americans really embrace. And, and I do think it comes from not even knowing about the food source or not knowing, wanting to know about where your food comes from, and like you say, getting your hands in the dirt and actually getting your own food, hunting, sometimes doing these things. Yeah. Do, do you feel we need to bring that possibly back to a younger generation 'cause I, I don't see many of the baby boomers now, you know, just suddenly gardening in the cities or something like that. It's just, it's not as feasible. But how about we start with children, you know, how, how is, is that where you see things changing in this culture?

Joel Salatin ([26:53](#)):

Oh, you're, you're speaking my language, yes. <Laugh>, yes. Man, that is, that is my heart language. I am such a huge believer of children's, children's gardens, whether it's at your home or at a school or, or at a day, daycare center, whatever. And, and yes, that is a movement that is gaining steam. Mm-Hmm. And some of the most interesting places that I've visited, been, done seminars have been in at places that do these kinds of things. One of the most interesting ones was I was in California once, and there was a whole school district there that had incorporated a, a, a three acre farm into the academic curriculum. And the kids went out to the farm like a half a day, a half a day every week, half a day, every week. They were out at this farm. And I was, I happened to be there, the, the two ladies that were running the farm.

Joel Salatin ([27:49](#)):

So this, this was middle school program. And so they incorporated the farm, the, the food and the farm into their biology, their math, their science, history, all this stuff. And so the, the two farmer ladies there that were running a farm, they'd made a, a large or a worm box. It was about, you know, three feet wide, three feet tall, and about eight feet long, like a great big coffin, you know, for a big fat guy. And and, and it was a worm box. And so, you know, the kids were learning about worms and all this stuff. And so then the kids had an assignment. They gave 'em an assignment. They said, all right when you come next week, bring, bring some food items. So the next week, the kids came and they brought, you know, Twizzlers and Cheerios and, and you know squeezable Velveeta cheese and, and things like that.

Joel Salatin ([28:38](#)):

And the two farm lays they put in, you know, an apple and, and a a a T-bone steak. And you know, a, a, a piece of of unprocessed cheese. Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. The next week, of course, the kids come, they go charging up to you. They're all prepped and ready to go. They open up the door and they pull out, you know, the twizzlerss and the candy bars and the, the stuff that they put in and, you know, gummy bears and the teacher. And, and they look over here and, well, there's no orange, there's no apple, there's no T-bone steak, there's no cheese. Where did it go? And the obvious question the teachers then asked was, well, why do you want to eat something even worms won't eat? <Laugh>. And it was, it was a graphic, you know, it was really a graphic powerful expression to the kids.

Joel Salatin ([29:27](#)):

And so, I, I, I think that that's, that's one thing. The other thing that I think that's valuable for kids and gardens is to realize that the, that that life is not a video game. You know, yes. The, the, the screen time,

the video game time that kids play, they live in this fantasy, virtual world and feel like, oh, man, I, you know, I, I, I control the world with my thumbs. You know, I, I can just, I can just make this and, and unmake it. And, and when you get out in the garden and the tomato wilts, because it's got fusarium wilt, the, the tomato game doesn't give you a new tomato plant. You know, and, and you learn to deal with, with death and with, with things that are, are beyond my control. And there's, there's, there's things going on out in the world that I can't just, I can't just you know, push a button and, and control. And I think that's a powerful, powerful spiritual and emotional aspect of, of gardening with kids.

Caspar ([30:28](#)):

Yeah. I couldn't agree more. The, the idea of gardening and having a child get it, it's also so healthy, right? They show through the hygiene hypothesis, getting your hands in the dirt, the microbes, your immune system is robust. Suddenly from that, you're active, you're outdoors in nature. Right? It's, there's so many great things. Kids that do that more, have less allergies, have less chronic disease. They're usually not, you know, obese because they're always moving and everything. So there's so many things there that, that point to the beneficial health sides, as well as the relationship to food that you will carry for the rest of your life. So how do we make that a reality now? Let's say you are given an advisory role at the USDA or something, which I'm not saying may or may not happen. There's rumors out there for that. But let's say you were, you were given a, a, a part of the, the solution and power to do it. What would be your actions?

Joel Salatin ([31:23](#)):

<Laugh>? Well, the first thing I would do would be to eliminate the \$10 billion subsidy to Coke, PepsiCo, and Dr. Pepper through the SNAP program Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the, the food stamp program. The fact that that 10%, the single largest budget item in that whole nutritional program is for high fructose, sugary drinks is just a, it, it, it's a mockery of everything that we know. And so, so I'm, I'm not saying, you know, it, they, we, we should outlaw Coke. I'm not, but goodness, we don't need to subsidize it in a nutritional program. And, and, and so, you know, so I think a lot of what we can do is to eliminate the incentivization of the bad. And, and, and if we simply quit incentivizing the bad side, then the good side will have more chance to, you know, to germinate and, and, and, and come on.

Joel Salatin ([32:26](#)):

You know, and, and I don't want to get too political here, but I mean, I remember, I remember well when the when the Iraq war was going on, and and the the thing that I saw was that in one day, in the Iraq war, with one, one day's budget to run that war, we could have tripled every single school lunch program. The, the, the plate cost, the, the, the allowable plate cost. We could have tripled the plate cost in the entire U.S. School lunch program for every single lunch piece of food created produced for a whole year for the, and the whole program for one day in the Iraq War. And so, you know, that, that's just one of those little you know, math little statistics that comes into my mind when, when, when people say, well, yeah, we just can't do this or that other, no, no, no. I've decided there's not a problem on the planet that isn't getting solved because there's not enough money. Right. It, it, it's not getting solved, because there's not will, there's not political will, there's not, there's not agency, there's not freedom. There's not something but, but every problem there, there is plenty of money to solve every single problem. We just we just haven't decided to spend it that way.

Caspar ([33:54](#)):

Right. Priorities, right?

Joel Salatin ([33:57](#)):

Yeah. Priorities. Yeah. Yeah.

Caspar (33:59):

How, how do you feel about the whole shift of things going into the Make America Healthy Again movement. Do, do you feel that will follow through and get us to a point where we're closer to what you're talking about here?

Joel Salatin (34:13):

I I think that the, that the what can I say that the, the shaking and awakening of America really happened there in early 2020 with the, with the Covid sure. Situation. And I think that the MAHA that the, the traction that, frankly, RFK Junior and the MAHA movement has has gotten, is a direct result. I don't, I don't think it would be here without Covid. Co covid shook people. And the fact that 36, 36% of Americans did not take the covid jab you know, we can either be, well, oh, shoot, it's not even half, but 36% is, is, that's pretty healthy. That's a pretty mm-hmm <affirmative>. That's a pretty hefty number. I mean, it's not, it's not 10%. Okay. 36%. And, and then when you realize here we are four years later, and probably, I'm, I'm just surmising I haven't seen this as a poll or anything.

Joel Salatin (35:12):

I'm just in my own experience and people that I know, I'm surmising that perhaps almost half of the people who did take the jab now wish they hadn't. Yes. Or, or, or, or took it only under coercion because they were gonna lose their job or whatever else. Right. And, and so if you add those, now you're, we're over 50%. And, and so in my view, more than half of Americans, and I think they just voted, more than half of Americans, if, if, if Tony Fauci stepped up to the microphone today to do a press conference, more than half of Americans would say the guy isn't telling the truth. Mm-Hmm. I really think we've gotten to that point, and that now that now is, is, is facilitating, it's the catalyst for once you, once those institutional academic experts begin to lose their credibility in a culture, all the other cards in that house start to start to fall, you know. 70, 70 vaccinations per kid before their go to school you know whatever, the demonization of raw milk, <laugh> right.

Joel Salatin (36:31):

You know, all, all these things, the alternative medicine, the demonization of everything from acupuncture to iridology to functional, naturopathy, homeopathy, herbalism everybody that's in the, what I, the, the unorthodox space right now is just, and I'm sure you're seeing it in, in your own world there is a almost a, a mobbing as, as people jump off the orthodox ship and they're looking for alternatives, functional doctors, functional medicine, I mean, people that are even going completely outside the the, the, the insurance, the insurance business and, and, and, and charging for services rendered. Wow. What a, what an amazing concept that might be but a doctor that's willing to talk to you for an hour, you know, because they're not on that health, that insurance treadmill. Th this is a, this is a tsunami as people start to abandon that ship.

Joel Salatin (37:35):

And I couldn't be, I couldn't be more happy. I don't know how far it'll go, you know? Mm-Hmm. There's a lot of pushback. Yeah. Already. But but I, it's, it's very healthy, very healthy. And I, I think, I think looking back, you know, if we go out 20 or 30 years, we're gonna look back and we're gonna say, wow, this was a, this, this was a a tipping point in the culture, at least, I hope so. And, and just the fact that half of Americans are on four medications. I mean, half of Americans are on four. I mean, the, the statistics and, and, but is it, is it 78? I think 78% of young people can't pass the phy can't get into the military because of some mental or physical problem. You know, I mean, these, these are staggering statistics.

Joel Salatin ([38:30](#)):

The, the, and as, as all these these, these children with autoimmune diseases and autism, mental, how does a society pay for the care when you have, when you have one in 24 when babies being born, or, or, or children being autistic? Right. How, how does a culture pay for the care of that? I mean, it, it, it just, it, it's, it's unhaveable. You can't, and so, yeah, RFK Jr has come for such a time as this. I mean, he is, he is prescient. He is there. I I, you know, I, I, I, you know, I, I'm not giving unconditional support, but I am, I am thrilled. I am thrilled that this discussion of, of proper protocol and and cultural priority, I'm thrilled that that discussion has become elevated to, to the place where it has. It, it is time. It is time for this discussion.

Caspar ([39:40](#)):

Absolutely. And I will say, if there was a silver lining to this pandemic, it was that there was an awakening people. Yes. Yeah. There was a realization that my health is my own responsibility and nothing else matters more. 'Cause we, we knew if, if you were already in a, in a state where you had a chronic disease, of course you're gonna be impacted by anything out there, by any stress, anything. You know? And, and, and we saw that, and I witnessed it myself, that people that were on the other side of the fence, that gave their power to the conventional realm of just take a pill for your ill, started to ask questions, Hey, what can I do to truly get better 'cause managing my disease suddenly doesn't seem like it's working. Right. And so that was a beautiful awakening and flip to say, there is something else out there, isn't there? And maybe I should look at it and maybe it is more empowering and it'll lead me to a better life.

Joel Salatin ([40:33](#)):

Yeah.

Caspar ([40:33](#)):

Yeah. And that's where someone like RFK was this beacon of hope for that message. Yeah.

Joel Salatin ([40:37](#)):

Yes. Yes. He, he voiced, he, he put into words what was kind of in the, even in the subconscious of many people, that they didn't even, they didn't even know they had it. And then when he gave voice to it. Yeah. Yeah. That, that resonates with me. How, how do I build an immune system? Let, let's talk about building the immune system instead of just because you said a a pill for every ill, you know, that, that's a, I mean, what if, what if Fauci had come to the podium and said, we're gonna try an experiment, America, let's try an experiment for one month. Here's what we're gonna do. We're not gonna eat any junk food. We're gonna cook from scratch in our kitchens. We're going to drink half a gallon of water every day 'cause we're all dehydrated. We're gonna get eight hours of sleep.

Joel Salatin ([41:24](#)):

'Cause We're all missing sleep. We're going to sweat for 20 minutes a day. We're going to get 20 minutes of sunshine. We're going to, if, if you watch the news, that's all a downer. If you watch one hour of news, you have to counter it with two hours of comedy. So you laugh your head off at, at comedy you know, we're going to, we're we're going to hug two people every day and tell 'em, I appreciate you and I'm grateful for you to affirm each other. And and finally, we're gonna make a list make a list of all the people you hate and forgive them and mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, and stop the vengeance and all that. You know what, let's try that for one month and see, see what happens. I, I guarantee you, I guarantee you we would've had a massive turnaround in health prospects if that had been tried.

Caspar ([42:21](#)):

Absolutely massive. And, and people may discount the, the, the things you're saying, but I've, I've witnessed it myself. I'm sure you have. And others have the power of, of just those things you were talking about, connecting sleep. Again, that relationship to food you know, the, the idea that we address this pandemic with loneliness, with, with, you know, yes. Isolating ourselves, with covering the faces of children that need that connection to see something. It was almost what's the worst we could do in this situation to get us there? But again, fortunately people said, enough is enough. Like they, they look back and say, man, was I duped. Yeah. I should have never done that. And now I gotta go the other way.

Joel Salatin ([43:04](#)):

Yeah. It's exactly it's exactly Caspar, what's happened in farming. I mean, if we, if we let, let's say that we had some, you know, biologic bio di biological diabolical 007, you know a person's gonna you know, ah, let's, let's, let's make, let's make a pathogenic toxic farm, you know? How can we make a pathogenic farm? Well, let's see. The first thing we'll do is we'll only grow one thing because pathogens don't like confusion of, you know, other thing. We'll just, we'll just grow one thing and and we'll, we'll we'll put 'em all close together, you know, like in a, in a confinement chicken house. We'll put all the hosts together so the, the pathogens don't have to struggle to find a, a new host to invade. We'll, we'll eliminate sunshine.

Joel Salatin ([43:55](#)):

Yeah. We'll put 'em, eliminate sunshine. We'll we'll, we'll have them breathe fecal particulate, you know, all the dust that they generate. It'll be fecal particulate. It'll go into their your mucus membranes and give them abrasions that make a abrasions. So the fecal goes right into their bloodstream. Ha ha, ha. You know, you, you see where I'm going with this. And, and, and the point is that if we wanted to create a pathogenic food system, we could not have created a more a more effective protocol for a pathogenic food system than, than what we've, than what we've done and in this country. And so, you know, so, so here we are. So it's time to you know, to un un pathogen our, our farming system and get us back on track.

Caspar ([44:45](#)):

Yeah. I mean, when you explain it in those simple terms, it truly is diabolical. It is truly like, Hey, what's the worst scenario we could like come up with? And let's go with that <laugh>, and let's push that on the people. Now taking, talking a little bit about that diabolical nature of things, and you brought up, you know, RFK, of course, the idea of vaccines, and I've heard this and had questions, but I want to hear your insight. The vaccination of now livestock, is that something you're seeing a big push for? Is this you know, seriously something? Or is it conspiracy theory? Where are we with that?

Joel Salatin ([45:19](#)):

Oh, well, I mean, livestock has been vaccinated for a hundred years, right.

Caspar ([45:23](#)):

But now it's just seems like more and more.

Joel Salatin ([45:26](#)):

Yeah. Now, now it's on a e Exactly. It is following that same human trajectory where where there's a push, and of course, this, this bird flu now. Yep. Here's the thing on, on bird flu, if you want my, my quick on on bird flu, please. The thing that's so crazy about bird flu, anyone who, who selects selects plants or animals for better stock, I don't care whether it's dogs, cats or, or rose bushes. What do you do? You, you go out and you try to find the most robust, vibrant, you know resilient ones, and you, you select

those and you breed them. You don't, you don't go out and find the cripple and the pale and the, you know, the poor, you, you, you, you do the, you do the most vibrant. And so the, the policy that we have right now in our culture is that if, if I have a, I'll just, if I have a Tyson chicken house with 20,000 chickens in it, and one chicken using the PCR test, which is, which is questionable anyway, but, but one chicken test positive for bird flu, the immediate, and, and, and, and let me just say unappealable, the farmer can't appeal this.

Joel Salatin ([46:45](#)):

In other words, as soon as that happens, there is no appeal. There is no, there is no system, there's no protocol for anything except what the government says needs to be done. And the protocol is we go in immediately and annihilate every chicken there. Now, I have friends, I keep up with this. I know, I, I don't know of a single, and I'm talking about factory farms. I'm not talking about backyard chickens or, or our pastured poultry. I'm talking about the worst of the worst, all right? I have not heard of a single factory house operation, even in the most supposedly virulent outbreak of bird flu in which every bird got sick. Not a one, even in a bird of 20,000 birds, there are still a hundred that never get it, that they just don't. But those are killed, the survivors are killed along with the sick ones.

Joel Salatin ([47:50](#)):

You would think that if they really wanted to get ahead of this thing, if it happened in a house, those survivors, they would, they would hold, they would breed those. Yeah. I mean, that's the most elemental, elemental foundation of genetic, of husband natural selection. Yeah, exactly. Let's, let's hold those, let's breed those. And in a few generations we'll build in resilience and we'll be up and running. I mean, this is the whole guns, germs, and steel thing, right? Was the, the, the, the cultures that dominated were the ones that, that did go through mumps and measles and all that stuff. And that's why it decimated the Native Americans mm-hmm <affirmative>. Because they didn't have a, a proximity to livestock like the Europeans did, who had built up immunity to smallpox and, and measles and mumps and these kind of things. And, and so if we and I so appreciate you mentioned the hygiene hypothesis.

Joel Salatin ([48:46](#)):

That is, that we never hear that in, in mainstream discussion at all. But that your immune system is actually a great big muscle mm-hmm <affirmative>. And, and, and it needs, it needs little assaults, if you will, little, little pushes to to keep it energized, to keep it exercise, to exercise your immune system muscle. Which is why in Finland, you know, they've documented over and over that these farm kids that, that get a few a few fingers of of cow poop in their, in their mouth as toddlers, there's so much more, you know, their immune system functions so much better than their city cousins who are, who are kept, you know microbial ster and clean all the time. So, so so Caspar, my, one of my biggest frustrations with the entire bird flu narrative and protocol is that there are survivors in every one of these places. There are survivors, but they're not being cultivated. They're not being, they're not being propagated they're being killed along with everything else because it's a, it's a, it's a burnt, it's a burnt earth. It's a, you know, it's a scorched earth policy, and it, it makes, I, I can't figure that, that just blows my mind. I can't figure out why people, supposedly smart people think that we can get ahead of this by killing the ones that are immune to it. Right. It, it, it doesn't make any sense.

Caspar ([50:24](#)):

Yeah. So many of the policies you see these days don't make a lot of sense, and I hope there is some common sense that comes in there. Joel, where, where do you see things going in the next 10 to 20 years for farming? Do, are you more on the optimistic side that they will improve and they have to, or will we see a lot of the same and, you know, stronger kind of pesticides and different types of GMOs that go further?

Joel Salatin ([50:50](#)):

That's a great question. And one of the things that I, I don't do is prophesy <laugh> because I, I have a whole file of, of prophecies that, that that were wrong, that become hilarious. You know, when you see <inaudible> like, like Tom Watson, Tom Watson in 1966, he was a CEO of IBM, and somebody asked him what the future of computers were, and he said, I think the future of computers is for maybe about five worldwide. And that, that was, he was the, you know, CEO of, of IBM in 1966. So so, you know, I, all I can say is that the current trajectory you know, there's an old Chinese proverb, if, if you keep going the way you're going, you're gonna end up where you're headed. And, and, and I think that there's a lot of truth to that.

Joel Salatin ([51:35](#)):

And so what I see is that, that agri, the, the push for agriculture right now is into more sophisticated, you know, what vaccines and, and medications and ai, artificial intelligence, maybe you've read about, quote unquote precision farming mm-hmm <affirmative>. And so they're trying to get they're trying to get AI coverage of every square foot of land in the U.S. And, and you know, as well as I know Caspar, that if I have a chicken house and I've got a sick chicken, and I, I ask ai what to do with my sick chicken, it is never going to tell me, well, you probably have too many in too much of a confinement house. Why don't you let them go out on pasture and eat some grass <laugh> along with their grain? You know, AI is never gonna tell me that because it's only gonna tell me whatever the orthodox, you know, the orthodox narrative is.

Joel Salatin ([52:33](#)):

And so so I am, I'm both, I'm, I'm, I'm pessimistic about where the, the, the, the culture is going. I think it's gotta get worse before it gets better. Yes. But I'm very optimistic about what both a farmer can do. We've got the most amazing cool stuff today. I mean, electric fences, front-end loader tractors, chippers, chainsaws, and we've got, we can run our carbon economy, we can do all this on, on a carbon economy now and it's fantastic. So what individual, individual farmer can do, and number two, what an individual can, consumer can do in defunding the bad guys. Right. You know, we spend the time of defunding, well, if you wanna defund something, let's defund Monsanto, let's defund Tyson, all right? And, and instead switch those dollars around to where when you look through your plate of food, you're sitting down to dinner, you're looking through your plate on the other side of that plate.

Joel Salatin ([53:31](#)):

Imagine the landscape. And when I say landscape, I don't mean just valleys and hills, I mean, I mean the people, the animals, the plants, the, the, the, the, the, the, the economics. You know, look at the landscape behind that plate of food and ask yourself, is that a landscape I want my grandchildren to inherit? Mm-Hmm <affirmative>. Is, is that a beautiful landscape? Is that, is that something I'm proud of as a culture? And, and I, I don't want to turn this into a, you know, to a cultish thing. I, I'm an 80/20 guy, you know, be, be, be correct on 80%, 20% fudge factor lets you go to your, you know, 3-year-old niece's birthday party and eat a Walmart white cake and enjoy it with everybody. Okay? One, one time of that isn't gonna kill you. Alright? The, the, the problem is, if you do that every day, if you have your Snickers bar every day, a Snickers bar celebrating at work at a party twice a year isn't gonna, isn't gonna kill anybody, but going home and, and, and popping, you know, two cans of, of, of Coke or Sprite every evening when you get home that you know that's a problem.

Joel Salatin ([54:44](#)):

Yes. And so, and so so think about the 80/20 rule and and, and, and try to, to imagine patronizing and funding a landscape you can be proud of and your grandchildren will be proud of you creating for them through that plate of food. Where did that come from? Think about that providence and how it got to you.

Caspar ([55:09](#)):

Yes. No, well said. And I, I feel the same way about medicine, that for some it's gotta get worse before it gets better. Yeah. You know, that, that, that is a truth to it. I see that too many people are ingrained in the old way and their belief systems are very deep-rooted that they, they have to hit sort of almost the rock bottom to see differently. But there is this upswell, whether it's MAHA or all these other things going on, of people already moving that direction, setting the path for when those are ready to go that way. Yeah. So it'll, it'll, it'll be a little bit of a split where you'll see some more attention get to things that really build on health and wellness, and you'll still see the ingrained old way there, but hopefully it'll start to shift.

Joel Salatin ([55:51](#)):

Yeah. I, I, I, I, and I think it is, we, we certainly feel it here at, at, at our, at Polyface you know, we, we do, we we began shipping nationwide in 2019 just because logistics changed completely. Distribution has become so much cheaper. Yeah. The logistics of that. And and so, you know, we've been able to you know, to eliminate that and, and, and or, or to, to add that, I'm sorry, to add that to our, our portfolio. And it's just amazing what has developed since, you know, in the last 10 years as we've seen the logistics of distribution, the MAHA movement, the the frustration with the, you know, the conventional food system. All those things have kind of converged and and, and our farm, our, our sales are up including, including just the whole electronic aggregation and, and whatever, you know, electronic purchasing, you know, amazon.com and what, what Amazon has brought to the marketplace, you know, love it or hate it. But what they have done is created platforms for little people like us to be able to directly interact with people and, and be able to sell to them. That is, that is competitive with the retail, you know, with the retail price. And it it, right. It's a big, it's a big difference.

Caspar ([57:20](#)):

Yeah. No, that technology is driving you to, to have more access to different things such as good food supply. Joel, I know you gotta run, but where can people learn more about you? You have so much going on training courses, articles, you got polyface, of course, the farms themselves, but where can people learn more about you and then kind of guide themselves to a better eating?

Joel Salatin ([57:41](#)):

Yeah, so our website is Polyface Farms, P-O-L-Y-F-A-C-E. If you just put in POLY, it'll probably pop right up Polyface Farms. And I don't have a personal website. Everything is through the, through the business, so, you know, books and, and food and swag and where I'm speaking and events and gatherings and, and conferences that we do here at the farm. So it's all there and yeah, you'll, you'll, you'll enjoy perusing that website. It's pretty comprehensive. PolyfaceFarms.com.

Caspar ([58:12](#)):

Well, thank you so much for all you do, Joel, and congratulations. I, I was reading this about you and, and interesting things. You don't have a smartphone and you've ever drank a cup of coffee before, so that is impressive, my man. <Laugh>, that is something <laugh>.

Joel Salatin ([58:27](#)):

Yep, yep. That's a, that's a you know, it, it becomes, it becomes a, a kind of a kind of classic you know, way to define yourself. And so Yeah, so

Caspar ([58:38](#)):

Badge of honor, wear it, <laugh>.

Joel Salatin ([58:40](#)):

So I'm, I'm still, I'm still on the on, on the, on the cell phone. Oh,

Caspar ([58:45](#)):

I love those old ones. Right. The flip and just, just phone calls and that's it, <laugh>.

Joel Salatin ([58:50](#)):

Yeah, that's right. That's right. I've, I've never, never done an app and I've never taken a picture of a QR code. So here I am now. Now in all fairness, I have people on staff who do this stuff. So, so we can interact of, so my, my young, my young staff allows me the, the pleasure of of being a little bit recalcitrant on all this technology stuff.

Caspar ([59:14](#)):

Yeah. Well, listen, it's still a testament and I think it's a good thing. Getting back to nature, as you said is a wonderful thing. Thank you again, Joel. Wishing you all the best.

Joel Salatin ([59:22](#)):

Thank you, Caspar. Appreciate it.

Caspar ([59:24](#)):

And if you're listening, that website is PolyfaceFarms.com. They also have an Instagram at PolyfaceFarm. And until next time, continue writing your own healing story.