

Revamp ways of agriculture

Not a day goes by that we do not consume something that was made possible by traditional agriculture. We enjoy salads, bread, rice, fruit and cereal. But do we ever think about the costs of bringing us our sandwiches or pizza?

From the Editor

Traditional agriculture requires pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers and other chemicals that don't stay on land very long, running into groundwater instead.

Traditional agriculture requires tilling the soil to prepare for each season's planting. But tilling creates topsoil erosion, which costs the U.S. \$44 billion per year to deal with. The nutrient-rich soil washes into rivers, preventing oxygen and sunlight from penetrating the water's surface. Needless to say, the chemicals and the erosion cause problems for the entire ecosystem.

If we don't already think about those costs, Wes Jackson wants us to.

Founder of the Land Institute in Salina, K.S., the heart of the Breadbasket of America, Jackson will visit Meredith's campus next week. And he has some ideas about the way we rely on and use traditional agriculture.

Instead of traditional agriculture, he calls it annual monoculture because the grains and plants must be replanted each year and only one type of plant is grown per field. And replanting means tilling, which means erosion. And growing non-indigenous crops means chemicals, which means runoff.

But Jackson and the researchers at the Land Institute know that there is a better way to grow the grains and crops we depend on for our consumption and for livestock's consumption.

He calls it perennial polyculture and Natural Systems agriculture, and when he comes next Tuesday and Wednesday, he will describe the benefits of perennial polyculture.

Until then, think about how we use and abuse agriculture. Can we do better? Maybe Jackson himself holds the key.

He will present the spring Honors convocation in the amphitheater next Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. and Wednesday in Jones Chapel at 10 a.m.

Campus forum

Students clarify their position

To the editor:

We group of students recently wrote to the *Herald* (Mar. 8) expressing our opinion regarding a specific book proposal written by Dr. Clyde Frazier. Our letter stated that we believed that opinions put forth in the proposal were demeaning to women and were contrary to Meredith's stated goal of "educating women to excel." In the Mar. 22 issue of the *Herald*, Dr. Frazier replied to our letter, accusing us of "undermining academic freedom" and of charging him with "wrongdoing." Nothing could be further from the truth.

We did not, nor do we now, accuse Dr. Frazier of "wrongdoing." Nor did we, as his letter implied, call for his resignation. Nor did we, as another letter to the *Herald* charged, call Dr. Frazier a "chauvinist." We did, however, affirm Dr. Frazier's right to express his opinion --as we affirm our right to express ours. Academic freedom implies open discourse between mutually respectful parties. We have been, and will continue to be, respectful of Dr. Frazier and urge him to adhere to the same standard.

Dr. Frazier said that "it is impossible to understand how anyone could really be offended" by this book proposal. Perhaps we can clarify this issue.

In the introductory section, Dr. Frazier says, "The tolerance for petty tyrants who rule their wives and children, and as many other men as they can manage, with callous disdain is gone."

In Section II.4, Dr. Frazier stated, "This fundamental reproductive difference has shaped their biological evolution and is the root of other differences between the sexes." He continues, "The common pattern across species is that males are ardent and females are coy. Cross-cultural compar-

isons, survey research and experimental evidence all point to the same pattern in humans."

In Section II.5, Dr. Frazier states, "The importance of culture not only distinguishes humans from other animals, it is even more important for men than for women because their lives are less profoundly shaped by biology."

In Section II.5, Dr. Frazier states, "Coming of age rituals for girls are far less elaborate and demanding, they tend to be celebrations rather than tests and girls are rarely subjected to the kind of pain that boys routinely face."

Later in the same section, Dr. Frazier says, "Failure to 'be a man' is not simply a personal shortcoming, it endangers the society as a whole."

In Section II.6, Dr. Frazier seems to be saying that women's sexual freedom is the cause of men's unwillingness to take responsibility for their children.

Later in the same section, he seems to say that women must publicly defer to men in order for men to participate in family relationships.

In Section II.7, Dr. Frazier states, "Motherhood is more reliable because it is firmly rooted in biology. Fatherhood is less certain because it is largely based on virtue."

Later in the same section he says, "Masculinity is also inherently moral because it is sacrificial."

He continues, "Women sacrifice themselves for their families but men have been expected to make sacrifices for the good of society as a whole." Still later, in this section, he says, "The pressure to adhere to cultural expectations about gender are [sic] stronger for men than for women. Both sexes judge a man who fails to live up to gender norms more negatively than a woman."

In Part III.8, Dr. Frazier says, "To a significant extent, the contemporary rejection of

masculinity reflects our culture's rejection of virtue itself."

In the Appendix, Dr. Frazier seems to be saying that mathematical ability is a "masculine" characteristic.

We hope these examples will help clarify the possibility that some women find this book proposal demeaning and that the work raises issues with which some women (and some men) might disagree. We look forward to continued, reasonable discussion of this topic.

Sincerely,

Maggie Tucker
Hannah Weber
Lyda Fontes
Missy Neff
Elizabeth Pegram
Lyn Tucker
Jennifer House
Lora Tillman
Anna Hopkins

Faculty member supports students

Dear Editor:

Students in the history and politics department have taken a public stand against the views expressed in Professor Clyde Frazier's paper, "Is Masculinity Obsolete?" Their objections have provoked an angry response from Dr. Frazier, who complained in last week's *Herald* that their comments violated the spirit of academic freedom. As a fellow member of the H-P faculty, I am writing to contradict Frazier's claim. The students have conducted their protest honorably, presenting their objections directly to Dr. Frazier from the outset. Rather than attempting to preempt debate, the students have encouraged others to read and reflect on the paper. In the

Please see
FORUM
page seven

Meredith Herald

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