



VIEWER'S GUIDE

BROKEN LIMBS: APPLES, AGRICULTURE, AND THE NEW AMERICAN FARMER

My family has been in apples for three generations. I was to be the fourth, but I'm not. In this family tree, I'm the broken limb.

—Guy Evans

... We lost our sense of purpose in agriculture. The purpose was to meet the needs of people, to enhance the quality of lives of people.

By focusing so narrowly on productivity and economic efficiency, we drifted away from that fundamental purpose.

—Dr. John Ikerd



Film Synopsis

In Wenatchee, Washington, the "Apple Capital of the World," filmmaker Guy Evans learns that his father is on the verge of losing the family farm. Evans embarks on a journey to find out why and along the way discovers a gauntlet of local, national and global issues facing all of America's small farmers. But he also uncovers something else, a new breed of farmer focused on creating a sustainable agriculture. But to survive, what these New American Farmers need most is a New American Consumer.

A Renewed Conversation about Food and Farming

Broken Limbs was created with the single-minded intent to encourage a renewed conversation around food and farming in this country. This viewer's guide offers a few more questions and ideas to keep the conversation rolling.

There are simple things each of us as individuals can do to help ensure the survival of America's small farmers while providing ourselves and our families with better food. The first step is thinking about it.

I'm very concerned that the farmer survive. If the farmers don't survive, we don't have anything.

–Katherine Lewis,
Skagit Valley Co-op

The Chinese and Chileans are doing as good a job for less money...if you go to Costco...you can see awful nice fruit...at an awful cheap price from the Southern Hemisphere and that's what people buy.

–Denny Evans,
Sunshine Orchards



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The issues faced by Denny Evans are issues faced by all our farmers, big or small. And the issues faced by our farmers are issues facing virtually anyone making a living in America today.

Whether gathering with your friends, family or a local organization to watch Broken Limbs, a discussion built around the questions below can help you discover what impact today's food system has in your own life, what you think is sustainable and, better yet, what you might be able to do about it.

(1) Sustainable Agriculture

- After watching the movie, has the phrase "sustainable agriculture" taken on any new meaning for you?
- In the movie, Dr. John Ikerd describes three tenets necessary to creating a sustainable agriculture – farming practices must be ecologically sound, economically viable and socially responsible. If economic viability is removed from the equation, the farmer goes broke, it's not sustainable. What problems might arise if either of the other two concepts are removed?
- **BONUS QUESTION:** Is sustainable agriculture necessarily organic agriculture?

(2) Food security

- Can you think of some examples of food production moving to other parts of the world where labor is less expensive? Do you think this trend will continue? What advantages or risks does this entail?
- In the movie, farmer Anne McClendon says that, "If trucks can't get over the pass, we can't get food." What would your diet look like if your community were suddenly cut off from all outside shipments?

(3) New American Farmers

- After hearing the stories of small farmers like Denny Evans and the Crosbys, where do you personally think the trouble lies for small farmers today? Is there something those farmers could have/should have done differently?
- Can you imagine small farmers like Grant Gibbs or Jerzy Boyz, or a CSA, finding ways to survive where you live?
- Do you agree or disagree with the assertion that it is possible for smaller farmers to provide a higher quality of food?
- Can you name three small farmers who live within an hour's drive of your home? What do they produce?

(4) New American Consumers

- If you wanted to circumvent the middleman in an effort to put more of your food dollar into a local or regional farmer's pocket, how would you do it? Could you?
- What are the hidden costs in the American pursuit of "cheap" or "fast" food? Is sustainably produced food necessarily more expensive food?
- How much of your monthly income is devoted to food?

We live and breathe and are part of a global market. And our job is to find out where we fit into it.

—West Mathison,
Stemilt Fruit

It's all part of reacquainting people with a true agriculture. And maybe we're going to get to the point, hopefully we're going to get to the point, where instead of a consumer just having their own doctor, their own dentist, they have their own farmer.

—Vance Corum,
WSU Small
Farms Program



THE LOCAL BUYING CHALLENGE

In the course of creating Broken Limbs, filmmakers Guy Evans and Jamie Howell discovered their own purchasing and eating habits were transformed. It is important to note, though, that shopping habits formed over a lifetime are not changed overnight, but one small purchase, one meal at a time.



The Challenge

During the course of your normal shopping in the next week, try to buy three products of local or regional origin.

Think of it as a treasure hunt. Read labels, ask questions. Then consider these questions:

- *Was it hard to find local or regional products? Did you have to go out of your way?*
- *Did you buy anything you wouldn't have otherwise?*
- *How did the cost compare to what you might ordinarily have purchased? How did the quality compare?*
- *Did you make any discoveries about your own habits, good or bad?*

Extend your range: A natural extension of this exercise is to seek out foods that offer you a higher level of information about how they were produced.

Organic apples? Free-range chicken? Grass-fed beef? These are all examples of foods labeled with communication in mind. It doesn't matter what you believe in or approve of, only that you momentarily raise your conscious awareness of where the food you buy is coming from and how it was grown.

Vote with your wallet: In the movie Deborah Kane of the Food Alliance pointed out that a produce department manager will make changes in the produce department when about 10 people ask, "Because they figure if 10 people go to the trouble to ask, 100 others are thinking the very same thing."

In addition to actually asking, if you would like to see more local, regional or sustainably produced foods on the shelf, one of the best ways to send that message is through the buying decisions you make every day. Make no mistake, America's businesses are paying attention to those votes.

The Year the Valley Burned
by Guy Evans

The apples, red, ripe,
ready for the picker's bag, warehouse bin,
ready for the grocer's shelf, your fridge,
your mouth. But not this year.
The apples, red, ripe, riddle the ground,
while machines rip the trees from the earth.
A huge pyre burns -
Spirits tended for years billow to the sky.
In a few days, only the apples
and a mound of ashes.

The orchardist stays away that day, talks about
economics at the coffee shop, how the Red Delicious
had to come out, how they just didn't pay their way.
But inside, he fights back the tears
Years of growth, planted in soil
that should have borne fruit for another twenty.
The house might go next year if the prices don't
improve. At least the kids are grown.

All around the valley this fall,
a smoky pall hangs like the last breath of life.
Old-timers shake their heads,
say they've never seen it so bad.
The Hendershot boy out on the flats
got a job driving cement truck -
got to feed that little baby somehow.
No one knows quite what to do,
No way to plant and pick fast enough
to follow the fickle markets.
And so the trees come out,
and men stand huddled by their trucks,
arms crossed, baseball caps pushed back
on foreheads lined with fear, and the autumn
breeze drifts by, heavy with smoke
and the distant sound of snapping trunks.



**ABOUT THE
FILMMAKERS**

Guy Evans and Jamie Howell worked for two years on this film, handling every element of the production right down to composing and performing the music for the soundtrack. Their ultimate goal is to help change how people think about food and farming.

ORDERING INFORMATION

HOME USE ONLY

\$35 check or money order to:

Broken Limbs
3407 Marilane Drive
Wenatchee, WA 98801

GROUP SCREENINGS

\$85.00 rental or \$250.00 purchase
(Special rates for grassroots organizations.)

Bullfrog Films

P.O. Box 149
Oley, PA 19547

Tel: 610/779-8226; Fax: 610/370-1978

www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/broke.html

"Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. ... Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer."

- Rainer Maria Rilke

**RECOMMENDED
READINGS**

The works of Dr. John Ikerd, available at: www.ssu.missouri.edu/faculty/jikerd/
Michael Pollan, *Botany of Desire*, Random House, 2001
Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation*, HarperCollins, 2002
Joan Dye Gussow, *This Organic Life*, Chelsea Green, 2001
Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, Sierra Club Books, 1997
Vandana Shiva, *Stolen Harvest*, South End Press, 2000

For more information, including more resources for farmers
and educators, see our Web site at

www.brokenlimbs.org

