



Lessons in edible ecology

Anichini-Moore Ranch & Farm

Kathy Moore purchased what became Anichini-Moore Ranch and Farms near Woodward at an auction in December 1995. At the time, it was rundown, with only one water well, and no windmill or electricity. But she saw possibilities for transforming it into a place where she could accomplish her lifelong dream of raising ecologically grown food. Call 405-823-8295 or e-mail her at Kathy@anichinimoore.com to arrange a visit, or to sign up for her CSA (community supported agriculture). Learn more at her website, <http://anichinimoore.com>.

Q. How has your ranch fulfilled a lifelong dream?

A. I've been composting my entire life. My parents were organic before I ever heard the word. I wanted to be a farmer and rancher all my life. When I saw this place, there was extensive degradation of the ecology, but I thought it was a diamond in the rough. Without a sustainable agriculture program, I read books for my education, and began experimenting and learning by the seat of my pants. Consequently, I have a "messy" farm, because I inter-mix species, with the idea of diversity or multiple crops as a way of leveraging risk by attracting beneficial insects, minimizing disease and pests, adding soil nutrients, and maximizing the possibilities of having crops to sell.

Q. What are some of the challenges for small, sustainable farmers?

A. It isn't easy. You have to be creative. You have to be willing to reinvent yourself, if you want to be a sustainable farmer these days. There are so many barriers to what we are doing, because it's labor and paperwork intensive. The policies or standards are constantly in a state of flux, and



the fees are increasing.

It is also about education. I think Northwest Oklahoma lags behind because we don't have anything like the Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture here on the Western side of the state, where the culture is more supportive of agribusiness. I believe we need two types of agriculture with different policies for each. As small sustainable farmers, we're different.

Q. What can we do to encourage more sustainability?

A. I'm really an advocate about this. We can recycle and conserve more. We need to fix the health care disparity in some of these small rural towns, where we don't have access to produce and healthy foods. What people are buying at the gas station convenience store is mostly just empty calories. We could encourage more locally grown foods, and teach kids about composting and growing their own food. We can do things like horticulture, landscaping, organic lawn care, selling compost for road construction, and open corner stores and cafés that offer local foods.