

Changing the food paradigm

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Shifting paradigms

Why am I putting up \$15,000 to help the first three Gbiota club coordinators get established? Simple we need a shift in our food paradigm. A paradigm is simply a way of thinking about something, in this case how we grow and distribute our food.

In our current food paradigm our food supply is dominated by mega corporations who work on the paradigm that their purpose is to maximise profits for their share holders. The theory is that customers will choose to buy healthy food so the mega corporations will earn more profits if they supply healthy food.

Let me give some examples of why this is just not right.

Zinc

There are a whole bunch of essential minerals, zinc is just one of these which plays a crucial role in our immune system. Humans are complex creatures continuously breathing and eating which brings a whole lot of harmful bugs into our bodies pretty much 24/7. But no one even thinks about it because our immune system deals with them before they do any harm. We need a fair amount of zinc.

Plants have a sort of immune system too but only need minute amounts of zinc so it is perfectly possible to grow plants that look healthy but do not contain enough zinc for our more complex system.

There is no way of telling how much zinc there is just looking at a vegetable on the shelf. One job of the Gbiota coordinator is to make sure that the beds have enough zinc added to the soil to satisfy human needs.

Researchers are now experimenting with zinc to strengthen the immune system as a treatment for the Corona virus, but by then it is really a bit late. The time to increase zinc uptake is before catching the virus when the odds are in favour of the immune system dealing with the virus before it has time to breed inside us.

Pre and probiotics

There are good bugs and bad bugs and plants are full of bugs (I mean micro-biology not caterpillars). When a plant is growing the plants natural immune system ensures that the good bugs dominate, but as soon as the plant is cut the bad bugs slowly take over from the good bugs and eventually the plant will go rotten. Increasing shelf life is critical in our

modern food system and the term fresh is used to indicate that the produce has not gone rotten, not that it is full of beneficial biology.

But those good bugs (beneficial micro-biology) are critical for our gut biology and immune system so the quicker produce is consumed after harvesting the more effective our immune system.

Another job of the Gbiota coordinator is to organise the system so customers can buy on line while the plants are still growing. They can then be collected and delivered to the home within hours of harvesting so we have a stronger immune system.

Grand kids

Now I am sorry to tell you that my grand kids are the cutest in all the world but you may just get a silver medal.

Grand kids have an annoying habit of growing up and I would rather like to think that they would still have food to eat. Our modern chemical industrial food system is destroying our top soil at an alarming rate. Destruction of our top soils is as big if not bigger problem than global warming but they are linked, soil is a major store of carbon.

Yet another job of the Gbiota coordinator is to work with the growers to ensure they are using sustainable regenerative farming methods such as recycling organic waste.

Coordinators and essential service

Coordinators are essential to creating the paradigm shift from a food system based on profit to a food system managed as a social movement based on providing food which makes us healthy. There is a world of difference between plants that are healthy and plants that will make us healthy.

Coordinators have to gather a group of people to generate buying power (a sort of buying cooperative) work with growers to ensure they are using regenerating growing techniques and are adding essential minerals and microbiological inoculates to the soil, organising same day deliver from farm clusters to multiple customers so the produce is both fresh (in the sense of having beneficial microbiology) and also giving an affordable price so everyone can benefit from food that will make them healthy.

Coordinators also act as a technical resource for both customers and growers so they will need to read through the mass of literature on my webs.

Coordinators need to receive a fair return

In the Gbiota system the growers have to put extra effort in growing the produce that makes people healthy and they expect to receive a fair return on their investment.

Equally the Gbiota coordinators, who are the people that really make this paradigm shift in our food system happen, can reasonably expect to receive a fair return.

In the Gbiota system customers order on line and a commission is automatically paid to the coordinators for all their efforts.

But right at this moment we are just setting up the Gbiota Club system so people with the skills and interest in becoming part of the food paradigm shift have no evidence that they can set up a viable business. While the Gbiota club is not about profits everyone needs to receive a fair return for their efforts.

I have absolutely no doubt that this Gbiota system will create a viable business for the coordinators so I have decided to put \$5,000 into the account of the first three coordinators to set up a fully working local Gbiota group.

I have spent my life in paradigm busting so I want to spend the rest of this article about paradigm shifts, I will tell the story from when I was a toddler to now but first I want to talk about the Corona virus which is really forcing the pace.

Corona virus creates a focus

The Corona virus has certainly thrown the world on its head but also revealed some chronic weaknesses in our current food system.

Specifically one of the world's leading cardiologists who has analysed the data has shown that people who are eating a healthy diet are ten times **less** likely to die.

Link <https://youtu.be/tkW2qD6gjzl>

Let's put that into perspective - based on the current figures the number of people who die from the virus is 20% of those who recovered. This figure indicates that had these people been eating a healthy diet then just 2% of the people who contracted the disease would have died.

Still bad but we would certainly have enough beds and ventilators in our intensive care units and to provide everyone proper medical support without shutting down the world's economy.

But to put this in perspective the number of people dying from other diet-related diseases like diabetes, heart attacks from obesity and dementia is over ten times the number of people dying from the Corona virus.

Even more dramatic is the number of people having a limb chopped off from diabetes which is about one every twelve seconds globally.

Statistics rarely motivates people but for me this is personal. My wife is a medical doctor, an obstetrician who spent her life in hospital where all her food was provided for her. When she retired she didn't like cooking and started to eat processed foods and within a short period of time became diabetic.

But then her foot started to turn black and the doctors started to talk of amputation, which we were not happy about - I rather like my wife's legs.

Fortunately we were able to reverse the situation by eating better food but it did make me become pretty obsessive about how our food affects our health.

The power of the mighty

Food is the worlds biggest industry, worth multi trillions of dollars, spending some eleven billion dollars a year in advertising to convince us their products are healthy, have access to the best manipulative psychologist in the business and quite happy to adopt the dubious techniques developed by the tobacco industry.

Anyone who takes that power head on really need their head examined.

Just look at what happened to John Yudkin, a highly qualified and respected nutritionist who dared to write a book 'Pure, White and Deadly' which examined the health issues of a high sugar diet.

His career was ruined and figuratively he was sent to the meat works and chopped up (hopefully to make sweetened sausages).

So should I, an eighty year old man with no support organisation or professional organisation behind me take them on? I would be nuts.

But I could try and set up an alternative food system where people could buy healthy food directly from the grower and with built in mechanics to ensure the food actually is authentic containing the essential minerals and the active biology which leads to a healthy gut and is free of toxic chemicals which may not harm us but can damage our gut biology.

The alternative food system

There are two part to the alternative food system.

The first is the technology of how to grow the food, to get the essential trace mineral, to get the biology so the food acts as an effective pre and probiotic and to do this without toxic chemicals which will damage our gut biology. Not easy but at least a straight technical problem. All this technology is described in the growing section of www.gbiota.com.

I have been working in this area since I first heard Bill Mollison talking about danger of our system of chemical industrial farming based on mono-culture. That was the best part of fifty years ago.

The second is to develop a system where people can buy this healthy food at a reasonable price and with the assurance of authenticity. That the real difficult bit.

This is the opposite of what the methods used by the mega corporations - it works by people power not profits.

By people deciding that they would prefer not to die from the Corona virus, have their legs chopped or from diabetes or dribble away in a wheel chair wondering why that funny lady (who happens to be his wife) keeps on talking to him about some holiday he cannot remember.

So why should I, an eighty year old man even think about trying to change our food system? Just plain nuts.

Because I know about paradigm shifts.

Even nuttier

I took this decision when I was running the company I formed some twenty years ago (Moldflow) which had grown to become the most successful exporter of technical software from Australia. Twice a year I would buy a first class ticket and travel around the world giving lectures on the technology I had developed to people who respected me as the world leader in my field - all the outward signs of success.

I had just written a book "Faster, better, cheaper" about how to make plastics parts faster, better and cheaper.

I was later recognised by the Institute of Engineers as one of Australia's top technical innovators.

I was 55 and leaving a life that many people would be envious of, why on earth would I give all that up just to take on some possibly futile battle I was most unlikely to win.

But I asked myself what really was the point of life.

Flash back to when I was a kid

Lets have a flash back - it makes a good story and explains a lot.

My formative years were in the second world war. I can clearly remember the bombings, I had no idea what was going on, but I can remember thinking all the search lights and flashes and bangs were really pretty. But in the morning houses would have disappeared into a pile of rubble.

Everybody was digging up their lawns to grow vegetables and setting up houses for their chickens which are the world's premier recyclers. I am an evolutionist not a creationist but if I was I would say having created humans the creator had to invent chickens to clear up all our waste.

But kids are impressional and everyone growing much of their own food made me pretty sensitive to they way we grow our food.

But that was the time I learned about paradigms and how they need to shift.

Mrs Blount and pre school

(So I didn't get sued I checked on the web and let me say that this is nothing to do with Blount education).

In those days we called them pre school rather than kindergartens and as soon as a kid could walk they were sent of to kindy. None of this modern stuff of mum taking kids to kindy, they were shown the way on the first day then it was up to them to find their own way there and back.

My kindy was run by a Mrs Blount who without doubt was the most frightening creature the earth has ever seen. She rode a sit up and beg bike, wore calf lengths lace up boots and spats (yes those military things soldiers wear in the mud) and a long black skirt - straight out of Victorian times.

Mentally she was still living in the Victorian age of empire and was convinced that her role in life was to toughen kids up so they would go and fight for empire. She just had not adapted to the idea that the days of empire were long gone and Britain was just a small Island stuck in the middle of the North Sea.

But she was truly terrifying. Some scientists will trick you into thinking that the dinosaurs were the most ferocious and terrifying creatures the earth has ever seen and were killed by a meteorite crashing into the earth.

Absolute rubbish, one night a Tyrannous Rex had a dream foretelling of Mrs Blount and the next morning they all committed mass suicide rather than face Mrs Blount - the world's most terrifying creature.

Breaking the myth that authority is always right

One day as I was walking back home from kindy alone when I was set upon by the group of local bullies who decided I needed I bit of a work over.

Next morning when I got to Kindy I was accused of fighting, taken into the 'back room' my pants pulled down, bent over a bunch and pinned down while Mrs Blount proceeded to, as they say, beat the shit out of me.

She obviously thought she was doing a great service, toughening up young kids so they could go out with their Gatling machine guns to convince relatively defenceless local tribes how lucky they were to about to become a member of the Great Queen Victoria's empire.

None of this rubbish about giving kids a bit of love and caring, that would turn them into wimps who might hesitate on pulling the trigger on the Gatling gun

Did that teach me to be a good citizen of the now defunct empire? No it taught me that authority sometimes get things wrong and the consequences can be disastrous. Paradigms can be and often are wrong.

The brook

As you can guess I was not happy at Kindy, but it taught me about how authorities could get stuck in obsolete paradigms and that could be extremely dangerous. I would sometimes play truant and go down to what was then called the brook but was just a nice

little creek with flowing water and dragon flies and was just a nice place to hide out and escape the terrors of Mrs Blount. (I don't think they ever found out where I went but the ongoing wet socks from the creek would have given them an idea had they been interested - but there was a war on).

Why was Moldflow successful?

Now a jump forward to my Moldflow days which was all about changing paradigms.

Moldflow success was not because that I was some mathematical genius, because I am not, there are plenty of much better mathematicians than me who could have written the code just as well as me.

Success was because I understood paradigms and how they worked. It may seem obvious that if you want to increase flow you use a bigger pipe. That was the conventional paradigm. But I understood that if you used a smaller pipe you could generate frictional heating which would increase flow (if you could do the calculations).

The paradigm that people had been using to designing plastics parts were just plain wrong - but no one had challenged conventional wisdom. I challenged the paradigm (and won).

Customers are sales people

My computer simulation challenged the conventional wisdom, some enterprising customers understood my arguments for doing things a different way, tried it and it worked.

There was not any brilliant marketing on my part, it was simply that these enterprising customers tried out my idea, it worked, they told other people and soon the word had spread as rapidly as the Corona Virus and the company I had started in my back bedroom became a multi national multi million dollar organisation.

You may never have heard of Moldflow but if you buy a car, domestic appliance, computer or basically anything that uses a plastic component it will most likely have been designed using Moldflow software.

But my little excursions into the creek to escape kindly installed a great love of the natural world.

The conversion (becoming a greenie)

But I have eyes and could see all the damage we were doing with the way we were growing food, we were exploiting water resources which had accumulated over centuries and perhaps worse destroying our top soil on which human civilisation is totally dependant.

So I became one of those generally despised creatures - a greenie. But truth be known I am a bit of a recluse and am just not into demonstrations and waving placards and all that good stuff - it is not my skill set. What I am good at is developing innovative technology.

So I sold the company which gave me enough money to try out any crazy idea that came along without worrying about filling in forms to be read by people who have no idea on what the project is about to get a grant. Any researchers dream.

Developing an alternative food system

The defect in the current food system are clear. It lacks essential trace minerals and food for the trillions of microbes in our gut which are essential for our health (and fighting the Corona virus) and it was steadily destroying the global resources of soil and water on which all human civilisation depends.

It was pretty obvious that the future of humanity depended on a paradigm shift in the way we grow and manage our food system.

Failed experiments

It was clear we needed a better way of growing our food so I set off on a series of experiments, like subsurface irrigation, an artificial intelligent or self learning software for irrigation control which all failed.

One idea that really caught on was Wicking Beds which went viral but still failed to provide that magic combinations of water, air and nutrients essential for plant health.

But being an obstinate sort of person (an essential feature for a technical innovator) I plugged away at developing wicking beds until I solved the problem of suppling the magic combination of water, nutrients and air to the root zone so they are highly productive.

The major inputs were compost and rock dust so this is a fully sustainable system.

I called that system the Gbiota bed. (Gut biota)

Gbiota beds

Now a Gbiota bed technically is just a wicking bed with an external reservoir which floods and drains the soil with compost tea so it never goes pongy however much nutrient is in the water.

So why do I call them Gbiota beds? Therein lies a story. My wife is a doctor, actually a surgeon who spent her working life in Hospitals where they provided all her food so she (I have to write this in small text so no one can read it) never learned and does not like to cook so she ate a lot of processed foods and became diabetic.

So I learned a lot about the gut, how critical it is to our health controlling our food, immune and hormonal systems.

So the technical problems shifted away from just growing food for energy to one of growing food to feed our guts biology. (We eat far too much energy food anyway so there is no need to change that part of the food system, see post understanding food).

And they work great but, there is, as always a but, there are snags.

While Gbiota beds are automated and the basic inputs are minerals and organic waste (with an inoculant) I want to avoid the use of toxic chemicals which may damage our gut biology and that requires techniques like companion planting and intense planting which is simply more expensive than the industrial chemical mono-culture system.

But it is not enough to develop a new and better technology, there must be a real need for it and there must be a way for potential customers to adopt the technology.

I learned that lesson years ago with my invention of the high speed dolls pram.

The high speed dolls pram

When I was a young kid, full of enthusiasm like all young kids, I made my sister a powered dolls pram. This was a technical master piece which went at really high speed, but like the Gbiota bed there were snags. In this case it went so fast my sister could not keep up with it and it would crash into the furniture at high speed, not a happy sister and very definitely not a happy mum. (Ouch that hurt).

Snags with the Gbiota bed

The two snags with the Gbiota bed are the on farm costs are higher and there is no way of looking at a Gbiota plant and knowing for sure that it is more healthy, containing all the essential trace mineral and micro biology and free of toxic chemicals.

Lets face it how often do you see someone shopping in the supermarket equipped with a spectrometer and high powered microscope.

So in addition to developing the Gbiota bed I had to develop a system where people could buy Gbiota food at a price fully competitive with the regular system and where customers could be assured that the food was authentic.

The solution - the Gbiota club

The idea behind the Gbiota club system is really very simple.

It starts with a local Gbiota club coordinator.

Buying power

The first job of the coordinator is form a group of customers so there is real buying power. Buying power is essential as the grower has to spend money on setting up Gbiota beds and it will cost him more money to grow the food without toxic chemicals.

However motivated he may be to adopt regenerative farming he still has to earn a living and pay for the Ute to be repaired.

Once coordinators have the buying power they can go to the farmers and negotiate the supply of Gbiota food with the assurance that the growers will receive a fair return for their extra efforts.

Quality assurance

The local area coordinator provides an assurance to buyers that the food is authentic.

Growers can then buy on line directly from the growers which cuts the costs and the local coordinator can organise bulk transport so the produce is picked up from multiple growers and delivered to multiple buyers which cuts the cost even further.

All sounds great but still just one snag. There may be plenty of consumers wanting to buy healthy food, there may be plenty of growers happy to grow the food (if they get paid a fair price) but the system is dependant on finding local area Gbiota club coordinators (who in turn can be paid a fair reward for their efforts).

Finding the Gbiota club local area coordinators

I am not a marketing person, I am an engineer and technical innovator. But I do understand the power of viral growth.

Marketing experts will tell you that just because you invent a better mouse trap that the world still won't beat a path to your door. That's because the mouse does not really want to be caught. Now provide a service the mouse actually wants, like unlimited wheat in a silo. It just takes one mouse to find the silo and they communicate and you and you will soon have millions of mice.

But you do need something the mice actually want and to have that first happy mouse.

I recognise that there are many people who are perfectly happy with the current food system, just pop down to the supermarket, pick up a packet come home and throw it in the micro-wave. Very convenient and great today. They just don't care if tomorrow they get the Corona virus, diabetes, heart attack from obesity or dementia that's tomorrows problems and they will have developed a pill by then.

But there are equally many people who would prefer to have a sniffle than die from Corona virus, prefer to keep both legs and be fit and energetic into old age and are full prepared to take the effort to eat food that will make them healthy.

But now we have modern means of communication and we also still talk (or at least message on the phone).

It is like the first mouse finding the wheat silo, something has to start the ball rolling and that is why I decided to set aside \$15,000 to encourage three potential Gbiota coordinators to take the plunge and start forming their own local area Gbiota clubs.

Why three, because I am an engineer and engineers are a cautious bunch and want a back up and then a back up for the back up. Creating this social managed alternative food system is just too important to fail and I want this up and running well before my grand kids are old enough to start worrying about surviving the next virus we may be thrown or their future food supply dries up.

Interested just email me colinaustin@bigpond.com