



Michael Dimock Roots of Change

Michael Dimock, president of Roots of Change, a 10-year-old NGO working to stimulate development of a sustainable food supply in California by 2030, said he's "pleasantly surprised" at the progress being made in sustaining agriculture.



"The (sustainability) train has left the station, and larger agricultural interests are lowering their resistance. People are figuring out how to engage and embrace sustainability," Dimock told attendees at Western SARE's California Subregional Conference in Visalia.

Dimock said he has observed the existence of a cultural divide between rural and urban folks and between sustainable and traditional agriculture.

"That divide is a place we should focus on," he said. "We can translate resistance into partnership. We can mitigate the impacts of the cultural divide on our goals." As an example, he suggested creating more incentives for landscape stewardship.

Dimock said producers and their supporters can encourage the regeneration of agriculture by engaging the public.

"Few people in our country have any idea about the complexity of how we produce food. That story can wake up the American public," he said. "People have to understand how you make their lives possible."

One way to help translate this story for the public is to think about some of the sociological elements of food production and how they can bring agriculture into the public's understanding.

"I'm hoping you'll think about ways to bring the public into your research," he suggested to SARE and its grant recipients.

Dimock said another way to enhance agricultural production is to work with the U.S. Department of Defense on food security. "We need clarity on the importance of sound food systems to the security of our country."