

## FILM REVIEW: THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN

Written by Administrator

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He drives a tractor in a bo. Since WalMart now offers Organic Vegetables --Organic farming just ain't for hippy weirdoes anymore!! Or is it?

If you're like me, you shy away from the expensive organics at the store or tend to be too lazy to make the trudge to Farmer's Market on Sunday morning. After seeing the remarkable doc [THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN](#), I think I will try a bit harder to get my ass outta bed.

The film opens with Farmer John making an appetizer from his own soil. "The soil tastes good today." From the get go you realize he's not your average farmer from a horticulture hot spot of rural Illinois

Farmer John Peterson is a round peg surrounded by a blood red Middle American square hole. Shot by Taggart Siegel over a 25 year period, it chronicles one man's fight to stay true to himself in an occupation he loves and a lifestyle that is directly counter to the local competition.. He inherited the farm in the 60's from his father and immediately turned it into a place for idealistic hippies to drop out and tune in. His continual need for an artistic outlet coupled with Reaganomics forced him to sell off his land piece by piece. Not until his mid 40's does he discover that his love of farming, his philosophy and profit can coincide peacefully. He becomes

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a pioneering organic farmer and his passion and respect for the land finally reaps financial rewards.

Farmer John will really get you (in a good way) on several levels. On strictly an informative level the film delivers the real deal on what organics mean. It just means old fashioned farming without pesticides that poisons the body and the soil. The reason it's expensive is because it costs a lot more to do it this way. Without pesticides the crops die faster so less are produced.

One of the reasons I love a character driven documentary is because it forces you to look at yourself.. My generation has been very caught up in ageism-- any of these sound familiar?

"I'm 25 and not married"

"I'm 30 and not a vice president"

"Shit, I'm nearly 40 and I don't have my shit together yet? Shit!

Farmer John didn't even find his purpose in life until he was late 40's... in 1995. With this in mind it's truly inspirational for those of us who are still slowpokin' around. Perhaps what we are looking for has been right in front us all of the time.

The shooting style is as simple as tubin' down a lazy river. Since the film is shot over 25 years, the director uses whatever medium the times allowed. Whether it was trippy super 8 or an 80's video toaster, the filmmaker used what he had and made the most of it. Just like Farmer John himself.

Every person has an epic in them that is their life. Farmer John is not the exception, he is rule.

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But in filmmaking being a hippie weirdo helps. Taste the soil (or is that “soul?”) that is THE REAL DIRT ON FARMER JOHN.