

Farm to Table, a visit to Organic Farms

26 members of the HKCA gathered on April 2 to visit a variety of Organic Farms at the outskirts of Hong Kong in the New Territories. The idea of eating local -Farm to Table- has gone mainstream in many cities. Hong Kong, where most food is imported and agriculture space is limited, the sustainable-food movement has struggled to gain momentum. The development of Organic Farming in Hong Kong has only a very brief history. We know that Organic farming advocates natural principle, emphasis on the conservation of soil fertility, but not on the utilization of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Implementing this concept in the real production system, organic farmers practice crop rotation and recycle animal waste and plant residues to maintain soil fertility and to keep beneficial insects and pest in balance which in turn help to grow healthy crops. Organic farming can produce nutritious and safe food for human; prevent environmental pollution and over-exploration so that a balanced, productive ecosystem can be maintained.

Our trip included the visit to Yat Fung Farm where a young couple runs a sustainable operation as they try to guarantee a steady supply of lettuce, corn, cabbage, carrots and choi-sum during different times of the year. It is not difficult to get harvests in winter, but a farm's success very much depends on whether it can produce a harvest in summer. Hong Kongers are picky eaters, and they often demand certain vegetables that are not in season during summer months.



While some varieties of local produce have been well received, very few people know that Hong Kong also produces its own mushrooms. In Yuen Long, a farm has been quietly churning out tons of fresh, natural and chemical-free mushrooms and selling them to retailers throughout the city. We were amazed on the production cycle and the quality of its mushroom variety as we were able to sample a few.





The visit to ZEN Organic Farm was rewarding. The 250,000 square foot farm is located in the greenest area in the northern New Territories. Prepare to be amazed at the flavour and character of fruit and green vegetables that are planted and harvested at the peak of their flavour and nutritional value. Zen Organic Farm grows gourmet vegetables and expands the horizons of fresh organic produce in Hong Kong by adding an increasing range of exotic and heritage varieties.



A vegetarian luncheon concluded our visit as we have gained first-hand knowledge and experience in regards to the cultivation and management of an Organic Farm. Their produce are either available on local markets or can be directly delivered to individual establishments. Any Farmer may have very different visions, but the revival of Hong Kong agriculture very much depends on their shared values: business sense, innovation and, most important of all, perseverance.