

AN EXPLANATION FOR THE FEBRUARY PICTURES WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S NEWSLETTER.

If you have ever read a book that impressed you and then had an opportunity to hear the author in person, you know how pleased I was when I had a chance to attend a conference at which the keynote speaker was physician Dr. Daphne Miller. Some writers are wonderful in print but not so skilled at standing in front of an audience and presenting their material. This was no problem for Dr. Miller. She is as compelling a speaker as she is a writer.

Daphne Miller has written two landmark books. *The Jungle Effect* explores the relationship of the indigenous diets of populations in several areas of the world to the health of the people who consume them. Her latest book, *Farmacology*, is subtitled "Total Health from the Ground Up," and it concerns just that--the impact farming procedures and choices have on human health.

If one opens this book with the idea that "food as medicine" is going to be dissected, showing how various nutrients affect people, that reader will be pleasantly surprised by a much different approach. Instead, he or she will read that it is actually the farming practices on the fields and gardens that produce our food that determine the value of the food that is grown there.

To see for herself how sustainable farming practices affect our food and, as a result, us, Dr. Miller visited and worked on several farms--a vegetable farm in Washington state, a beef farm in Missouri, a vintner's grape plantings in California, an urban farmer's city lots in New York, an egg farmer's buildings and pastures in Arkansas, and an herb farmer's fields in Washington state. While their products were varied and their specific practices as unique as what they grew, all of them showed how the ecology of the farm and the human are inextricably linked.

Maybe the reason this resonates so much with us here on the farm is because it reinforces our own ideas of what stewardship of the land means. Our Earth is really one organism with all of us--from humans and other primates to the tiniest microorganisms in the soil--dependent

on one another. And, sad as it may seem, the part of that interconnected being that would be missed the least is the human. We have evolved to be a very destructive force on this planet. It seems that we are not content with destroying each other, either. Through ignorance, greed, and/or neglect, we assault the soil, air, and water that keep us alive.

So, Dr. Miller's books are eye-openers for many readers. Perhaps, we have to understand our own place in the web of life on this planet in order to want to work to protect it. *Farmacology* does a wonderful job of showing us just where we fit in the large picture of life on Earth and how, by understanding this, we can enhance our own health and the health of the planet. If you want to do one good thing for your health this year, please read *Farmacology*.