



Annual Kirschenmann Lecture

On June 18, 2015 Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture launched the Kirschenmann Lecture at Stone Barns Center, in honor of trail-blazing sustainable farming leader Fred Kirschenmann, and to mark his 80th year. The annual lecture explores many of the topics that Kirschenmann is most passionate about, such as resource depletion, including the end of cheap oil; the principle of “shared value,” which encompasses both societal and economic progress; and the land ethic, as first articulated by Aldo Leopold. Wendell Berry, the celebrated writer and conservationist, and Fred’s long-time friend, was the guest speaker for the 2015 inaugural lecture.

Kirschenmann is President of the Board of Stone Barns Center and Distinguished Fellow at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. For more than four decades, he has been a champion of agricultural resilience, an articulate advocate for soil health and a pioneer of organic farming. Born on a North Dakota farm during the Great Depression and in the grips of the worst drought in U.S. history, Kirschenmann has spent most of his life working to change how we farm, as well as our relationship to the land. His influence as an educator, mentor, philosopher and farmer runs deep and far. Even as he became a public figure dedicated to leading an agroecological revolution in thinking and practice, Kirschenmann has remained intimately involved in the management of his family’s farm, which he converted to certified organic in the 1970s.

All told, the body of Kirschenmann’s work has helped transform what was once an obscure and marginal field of study—resilient, sustainable agriculture focused on the health and restoration of the soil—into an international movement. In 2011, he was among the first 10 recipients of the James F. Beard Foundation Leadership Awards. In 2014, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements awarded him its Lifetime Achievement Award.

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Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture is a nonprofit organization on a mission to create a healthy and sustainable food system. We are working to create a culture of eating based on what farms need to grow to sustain healthy soil and a resilient ecosystem. In our quest to transform the way America eats and farms, we train farmers, educate food citizens, convene changemakers, and develop agroecological farming practices. To learn more, visit stonebarnscenter.org/story.