

Review: *From the Ground Up*

**Produced by Keith Turner,
directed by Alexandra Crepeau**

Reviewed by [Terry Link](#)
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FROM THE GROUND UP. Produced by Keith Turner; directed by Alexandra Crepeau, Green & Growing, 1994. VHS cassette, 28 min., US \$85.00, includes 45 page teacher's guide. Distributed by Green & Growing, 507-63 Albert St., Winnipeg, Man. R3B 1G4

FROM THE GROUND UP is a good overview of the issues of sustainable agriculture. Using two Canadian farmers as case studies (and some effective animation techniques), the producers include discussions with both scientists and practitioners. Much emphasis is placed on the soil and how till and no-till approaches, pesticides, crop rotation, and natural predators impact the environment. Some attention is placed on the economics and cultural role of food in our society; however, the 28-minute video length prevents more of an emphasis in this area.

The bias is towards organic agriculture, but the producers have given fair treatment to large scale, pesticide-intensive farming as well. Both farmers are depicted as decent, hard-working men. The farmer using pesticides uses them safely as directed, while the organic farmer admits his approach is much more labor intensive. We never see the two together, but we do see honest self-appraisals of each farming technique. The scientists interviewed are predominantly in favor of the organic farming approach, but no industry folks are represented. We also hear students' opinions on the food industry.

FROM THE GROUND UP would be best viewed by interested adults or high school classes dealing with agriculture, the environment, or economics. Well suited for the classroom, the video is accompanied by a teacher's guide providing discussion topics.

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