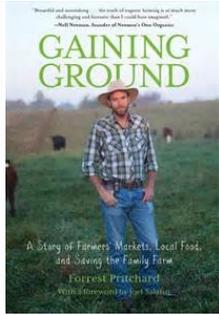




Discussion Guide



About the Book

Book Title: Gaining Ground: A Story Of Farmers' Markets, Local Food,
And Saving The Family Farm

Author: Forrest Pritchard

Published by: Lanham, Maryland: Lyons Press, 2013

Author Website: forrestpritchard.com

Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. This memoir tells the author's story of choosing to farm as a career. How would you rate his storytelling ability and book writing skills in sharing his story?
3. What humor did you find in this book? Do you think Forrest is a funny guy? Why or why not?
4. This book discusses many aspects of our food production system. What intrigued you the most? Did you learn anything?
5. 150 years ago, most people in the USA lived on family farms. Today, small farms are few and far between. What experience have you had with farming? How does farming impact family life? Would you say we're better off now that people don't live on farms? Why or why not?
6. This book is also about a movement that includes growing and buying local, grass-fed, organic farming, and free range. To what extent are you a part of this movement? Does this book make you consider changing any of your food habits?
7. Read over the MAMs comments on the book. Which of them do you most agree with and why?
8. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

Other Links...

Gaining Ground is Forrest Pritchard's non profit agency for hunger relief:

<http://gainingground.org/our-story>

A Nice Visit with Forrest on his farm as he talks about the value of his work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eY5OIMWjLEM> (Forrest Pritchard: Smith Meadows)

Author Interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VY0h4kLeHac> (-Gaining Ground Interview-)



NANCY: A well-written memoir that communicates the author's experience of living his dream, while educating us on how he revived his family's farm through hard work and creative problem solving. I enjoyed this book because he teaches us that we can do new things if we are determined, if we experiment, if we keep putting one foot in front of the other. I also love the window this book provides to the organic farming movement. An educating, fun read.



SALLIE: Yeah for the family farm! I grew up on a dairy farm and it was a great place for me as a child. I learned the value of hard work, I learned to respect and enjoy nature, and I spent a lot of time with my parents and siblings working on the farm. I liked the way Forrest involved his family in his story, and you could see the magnet this became for all them—a way to be together in a beautiful place, each of them finding a path to their dreams. Farms are great places for kids, too. I loved that little story about his grandmother getting unpasteurized milk on the side. We did that, too



ABIGAIL: Forrest says when he started doing this in 1996, organic farming was still a fairly new thing. Now this is where things are happening. Buying organic, buying local has become very chic. We now realize that our industrial food complex does much harm for our diet, and we are trying to go back to more natural food. A great book to help us all think about the food we eat and how we can make better choices in buying.



MOLLY: Well, this book's totally relevant to the MAMs as we create an organic farm in Nancy's book *Revelation at the Labyrinth*. It helps me realize what we've been learning, that organic farming isn't easy, but we need to keep working at it. Farming as a good way of life becomes the river that runs through this book, and what we were hoping for as we help women rebuild their lives. A way to leave addiction and the penal system behind and heal into a better path.



PRISCILLA: Well, I love this story and the way the farm brought his family back together. If we could get Jane to bankroll us, I'd love to go to the bed and breakfast his Mom and sister started on their farm. It's a little pricey, but wouldn't that be fun to spend a weekend there this fall?



KATHARINE: I enjoyed the way Pritchard sought out new ideas and experimented to get his farm moving in a positive direction. As a university professor, I value the way he used both his college degree of an English major, and his training in education to incorporate both into his life. He wrote through the journey, went to seminars and asked why people do things the old way that helped break into the new. Kudos to Forrest!



JANE: A bonafide entrepreneur, this man! He shows the value of hard work, innovation and creativity. Love the Smith Meadows branding. Loved the determination to sell local. Loved his self serve store. Loved that he became one of those 20% of all businesses that succeed. And even though he didn't say this, wouldn't you say he started a triple bottom business, focusing on people, the planet and profit? The ingenuity's what makes our country great.