

UC Santa Cruz

Cultivating A Movement

Title

Roberta Jaffe, Founding Director, Life Lab Science Program, Co-Founder of Community Agroecology Network

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3p67k9nr>

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Publication Date

2010-05-01

Supplemental Material

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3p67k9nr#supplemental>

Roberta (Robbie) Jaffe



Robbie Jaffe at the coffee farm of Roberto Jimenez in Agua Buena, Costa Rica. Roberto is a leader in CoopePueblos Cooperative, CAN's partner organization, and is host to many student interns. He has visited UCSC several times.

Founding Director, Life Lab Science Program

Roberta (Robbie) Jaffe grew up in New York in the 1950s, and moved to Florida when she was sixteen. She attended the University of Florida and University of South Florida, and graduated with a degree in sociology. During and after college she was deeply involved in the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement as a field organizer and boycott organizer for the state of Florida. Jaffe first came to the Santa Cruz area with her then-husband, Jerry Kay, who was also active in the sustainable agriculture movement. They farmed ten acres near Elkhorn Slough, and in 1976, Jaffe helped start the first farmers' market in Santa Cruz County, at Live Oak School.

After that marriage ended, Jaffe studied horticulture at Cabrillo College with Richard Merrill, and took a position with a CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program called Project Blossom. As part of that program, she co-founded a school garden at Green Acres School in Live Oak, a semi-rural area near Santa Cruz, California. This was the genesis of the Life Lab Science Program, which grew into a groundbreaking nonprofit organization that works with schools throughout the United States to develop school gardens and curriculum for teaching science and nutrition. Jaffe served as founding executive director of the program for many years.

Jaffe earned a second master's degree in education from UC Santa Cruz, with an emphasis in agroecology. She met and married Steve Gliessman (also the subject of an oral history in this series). In 2001, they co-founded the Community Agroecology Network (CAN). CAN defines its goals as, "to help a network of rural, primarily coffee-growing communities in Mexico and Central America develop self-sufficiency and sustainable growing practices, and direct market coffee to consumers in the United States."

Jaffe is the co-author of "From Differentiated Coffee Markets Towards Alternative Trade and Knowledge Networks," in Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Sustaining Livelihoods and Ecosystems in Mexico and Central America, and many Life Lab publications, including The Growing Classroom. Ellen Farmer interviewed Robbie Jaffe on May 5, 2007, at Farmer's house in Santa Cruz, California. Farmer's MA thesis (in public policy) at California State University at Monterey Bay focused on the coffee crisis. As a graduate student, she worked with Jaffe at CAN, and brought her knowledge of the economics and politics of coffee growing in Latin America to the interview.

Additional Resources

Life Lab Science Program: <http://www.lifelab.org/>

Blog about Life Lab's History: <http://lifelabhistory.blogspot.com/2009/01/share-your-life-lab-story.html>

Community Agroecology Network: <http://www.canunite.org/>

Condor's Hope Winery: <http://www.condorshope.com/>

Vance Corum, Marcie Rosensweig, and Eric Gibson, *The New Farmers' Market: Farm-Fresh Ideas for Producers, Managers & Communities*, (New World Publishing 2001).

Jennifer Meta Robinson and JA Hartenfeld, *The Farmers' Market Book: Growing Food, Cultivating Community* (Indiana University Press, 2007).

Roberta Jaffe & Chris Bacon, "From Differentiated Coffee Markets Towards Alternative Trade and Knowledge Networks," in *Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Sustaining Livelihoods and Ecosystems in Mexico and Central America*, Gliessman, S. et al., (MIT Press, 2008).

Gary Appel, Glick, L. & Jaffe, R. Life Lab, in *Promising Practices in Elementary School Science*, R.E. Yager, editor, Phi Delta Kappa and National Science Teachers Association, 1993.

Roberta Jaffe and Gary Appel, *The Growing Classroom: Garden-Based Science and Nutrition Activity Guide* (Revised Edition 2007) <http://www.lifelab.org/store-curricula.html#tgc>

Early Background

Farmer: I'm in Santa Cruz with Robbie Jaffe and it's May 5th, 2007. So Robbie, where were you born and where did you grow up?

Jaffe: I was born in Bronxville, New York, which is a suburb of New York City in Westchester County, and for my first sixteen years I was in the New York area in the suburbs. I lived, I think, my first nine years in Eastchester and my grandparents were about, oh, maybe fifteen miles away in Mount Vernon. And then in fourth grade, they moved out of their house, and my family moved into their house, so it was the house my mother grew up in. Then when I was sixteen, my family moved to Florida because of my father's work. We moved to Miami,

which was a very traumatic experience for me, at sixteen having to leave everything I knew, and my whole world revolved around New York. So from sixteen through college I was in Florida. Then in 1975 I moved out to California.

Farmer: And was your family ever involved in farming?

Jaffe: I think my early gardening-farming influence was my grandparents. In the house that I moved into they had an extra lot next door to them. My memory is this phenomenal garden and fruit orchard. I remember picking raspberries there, and I remember them having an apple tree that produced five different kinds of varieties, and I never could figure that out. I remember watching my mom and my grandmother can in the kitchen. I think those are probably my connections with gardening.

Farmer: And it wasn't a way that they supported their family?

Jaffe: No, it was totally a hobby, I'd say.

Farmer: What is your educational background and training?

Jaffe: I went to college at University of Florida and University of South Florida, and graduated with a degree in sociology. This was the late sixties, early seventies, so it was a pretty exciting and interesting time to be there and definitely influenced my direction—a clear change of life and change of expectations for me. Later, after I moved out here, in 1975, I went back to school

in 1982 and got my master's at UC Santa Cruz. It was in education with a focus on agroecology.

Farmer: What kind of work were you doing out of college, then?

Jaffe: The in-between times? I was definitely influenced by being in college between '68 and '72, and also being in college in Florida which was fairly conservative, so I felt whatever I got involved in was really important because there weren't a lot of people doing it.

Farmer: So you were more to the Left?

Working as an Organizer with the Farm Workers Movement

Jaffe: Oh, yes. I was involved in a lot of the anti-war organizing, and all of that. And then my senior year, I had transferred to University of South Florida, Tampa, and I got involved with the farm workers movement, and there was a combination of the boycott that was happening nationwide—

Farmer: Was that lettuce or grapes?

Jaffe: At that point the grape contract had been settled in 1970, the table grape contract, and this was '71, so that was new. Then they had moved on to a combination of lettuce, and then there were wine grapes. But also, organizing was happening in Florida in the orange groves.

Farmer: Labor organizing?

Jaffe: Yes, farm worker labor organizing. So right before I finished college, and then for a few years after I finished college, I worked for the UFW [United Farm Workers] as an organizer, both field organizer, but then mainly boycott coordinator for Florida. That totally shaped and changed my life, and taught me everything from organizing, to about agriculture and world issues.

Farmer: And what were the people like? Who you were organizing?

Jaffe: Whom I was organizing with?

Farmer: Who were the farm workers, yes.

Jaffe: Farm workers in Florida. Actually, at that time, especially—the percentages probably have changed at this point—but they were mainly black workers, and still very much embedded in a way of tenant-farmer slave philosophy, very often living in really horrible company housing, getting paid next to nothing. It was a pretty amazing time, and a phenomenal education for me.

Farmer: So it had that Old South kind of feeling.

Jaffe: Oh, totally.

Farmer: And they were picking oranges, mostly?

Jaffe: They were picking oranges, or citrus—so orange, grapefruit. The big company that we organized with was Minute Maid, which is owned by Coca Cola. The big organization campaign that we actually won the contract with was Coca Cola. There were a lot of other big companies in there as well, and a lot of old, large families, or large plantations that were owned by old Florida families.

Farmer: White families, I'm assuming.

Jaffe: Oh yes, of course. The University of Florida stadium is named after one.

Coming to California

Farmer: So then, how exactly did you get to California? What brought you here?

Jaffe: What brought me here was I spent several years with the union, organizing. One of the things about the union is, one of the things I learned from César [Chávez] and everybody was: our value was defined by our work. So we were basically working all of the time, and people burnt out pretty quickly. So after I was there two or three years and was pretty much burnt out, I left the union. A person was sent out from California to take my place, Jerry Kay.

I actually left Florida and then I came back, and we met. We ended up hooking up and getting married, and he was from California, so that's what got me out

here. It turns out that his dad had purchased, at that time, ten acres of land behind Elkhorn Slough that was totally undeveloped. It didn't have water, or any kind of sewage lines, or anything. We decided to come out and homestead. So we went from all of our farm worker organizing experience to saying, "Okay, well let's go farm." We moved out here in 1975, and homesteaded out there for a few years, were involved in the start of the first farmers' market. Actually, we were involved in the start of changing the regulations so farmers' markets could exist.

Helping Start the Live Oak Farmers' Market

Farmer: Tell me more about that.

Jaffe: In 1975, which was very much the start of the markets, I think—'75, '76—regulations were such that farmers could not sell crops that were at all blemished; they had to sell them in certain standard containers. There were all these regulations that were against having a direct market, the farmers' type of market. So there was a movement going on in the state for farmers to change these regulations, and there were hearings in Sacramento. I don't remember a lot of the details of it, but there were hearings in Sacramento, and what I do remember is the Farm Bureau was *against* the farmers having the regulations changed for the farmers' market, which to me was just—you know, I loved it. As a UFW organizer, we had to fight the Farm Bureau all the time, and here farmers had to fight the Farm Bureau to get something that was so proactive for them. But there was a shift in the California Department of Agriculture, and the

regulations were changed so farmers' markets could exist. There was also stuff that had to happen with the Health Department. Basically we were involved in all of that, and involved in setting up the first farmers' market in Santa Cruz, which started at Live Oak School.

Farmer: And did you go to the meetings to set that up, the ones that were at Live Oak School?

Jaffe: To actually set up the market? Well, the meetings weren't at Live Oak School. I was part of the first board, and actually I was the first farmers' market manager, now that I think about it. The idea initiator was Rachel Spencer, who's actually now on the board of Cabrillo College, and then the rest of us were a group of farmers. Jerry Thomas, Jerry Kay, and I were involved.

Farmer: Nick Pasqual?¹

Jaffe: Nick was there as a farmer. He wasn't involved in the board. But Nick is phenomenal. He taught us all tons.

It was amazing. It was magical. I remember the first market. The right number of growers showed up, and the right number of consumers, and everyone had this great, great, great time.

Farmer: So did you do a lot of advertising to get people to come, or how'd you get the word out?

Jaffe: What did we do to get the word out, initially? You know, I don't remember. Probably flyers, and probably had it in the *Good Times*. It was very exciting.

Farmer: So this was seventy—

Jaffe: It was probably '77.

Farmer: So they're in their 30th anniversary year, maybe.

Jaffe: Yes, maybe.

Farmer: So it was at Live Oak School.

Jaffe: It was at Live Oak School. It was at Live Oak School for years, and then when the Mediterranean fruit fly invasion happened that area got quarantined, and that's when it moved over to Cabrillo [College].

Farmer: So the people who got together to go to Sacramento and fight to change the legislation, was that people other than farmers?

Jaffe: No, that was very much farmers, or people organizing farmers' markets around the state.

Farmer: So there were other ones that were starting up?

Jaffe: I remember we were the second ones to open. The first one was over in San Jose. They all happened right around the same time, because there was this movement to change it and to make it happen. And where that all came from, I don't know. I don't know the history of that.

Farmer: And there was something about it being certified?

Jaffe: Yes. The whole certification process got set up with the new regulations. You had to be a certified farmer in order to be able to sell.

Farmer: What did that mean?

Jaffe: Basically it meant that you were growing the crops.

Farmer: Okay. So you're not buying it somewhere else.

Jaffe: Right. Exactly. And the original markets, that's all you could have. Now they'll have a separate non-certified section where you have restaurants or bakeries, or whatever, selling their pieces.

Farmer: So when you were first doing this farming, were you farming sustainably, or were you aware of the chemical/non-chemical issues?

Jaffe: We were completely farming organically. But there was no certification or anything like that at that point.

Farmer: This was the mid-seventies.

Jaffe: Yes, this was when we started, '75, '76.

Farmer: What were you growing?

Jaffe: We did some of everything, but our main crops for selling were garlic and raspberries. Nice combination.

Farmer: I was going to say! (laughter)

Jaffe: Tasty together.

Farmer: How did that go? What was the learning process for you?

Jaffe: Oh, the learning process was phenomenal on every single level. We didn't really know what we were doing, so we were constantly learning. Part of our learning process is we started taking horticulture classes from Rich Merrill at Cabrillo College.² So [we] really got major education there, from him, around how to farm, how to farm organically, what to do. That was a major, major influence. So actually two pieces, there was Rich Merrill and taking horticulture there, and then the fact that the farmers' market was at Live Oak. Both were major influences on developing Life Lab.

The Beginnings of Life Lab

Farmer: Okay, let's talk about Life Lab.

Jaffe: So basically we farmed on this land for a couple years, and then Jerry and I split up. I moved into Watsonville and then Santa Cruz. At the time of my moving off the farm, I was taking horticulture classes, and I started taking more of them, and really got engaged in that, and a really important "click" (makes a knocking sound) happened for me. When you hear Rich Merrill lecture, science becomes alive. And science, which I absolutely *hated* in high school and couldn't wait to get through, became this— Everything I was looking at was about learning about science, and learning about plant interactions, and plant-soil interactions, and plant-insect interactions. I was charged by it, and I loved it. I couldn't take enough of it in.

And at the same time, I was moving off the farm; I needed to find work, and there was a federal program called CETA. Do you remember CETA?³ It was a training act. Government agencies could get funding to hire people who met certain qualifications, and they'd be paid through this training program to do certain projects. Well, Live Oak School District, which is in an unincorporated area, had a wonderful community-schools director at the time by the name of Mark Seamark. Mark actually was instrumental in getting the farmers' market located there, and I knew Mark through that. Mark, with the support of the Live Oak School District board, created a project through CETA that got funded, called Project Blossom. It turned out that the Blossom staff was made up of, I

think we had seven or eight people, seven women, and one token guy. Pretty much all of us, all of the females, anyway, had college educations. We were probably not your typical CETA workers, or not what they had in mind for CETA workers. But we were all people that were single moms, people who met the qualifications in terms of not having work, even being on welfare, whatever. It was a phenomenal group of creative energy, creative minds. We were funded, and we were based at Green Acres School in Live Oak. That's where we had our office, and that's where the school district offices were. Some of us were working on school-based projects; some of us were working on community projects. It was pretty much a free-for-all. We could create whatever kind of projects we wanted, and we had that creative energy. We were probably all in our twenties, maybe some were in their early thirties, and it was a time to literally blossom, for us.

I got involved in a project creating solar greenhouses. I'm trying to remember where the idea came out of. I don't remember that right now, but we were going to build solar greenhouses onto the homes of low-income seniors in Live Oak. We had some funding from PG& E [Pacific Gas and Electric] for the project, and I think the county government even kicked in some funding. We built the greenhouses on those folks' homes. Then the principal at Green Acres School, George Buehring, said to me, "Well, let's do one here too," and I, of course, said, "Oh sure!" We got the funding for that, and we built it adjacent to one of the classrooms, actually with Ruth Antolini who was my mentor teacher, her fourth grade class, or third-fourth grade combination class.

George said, "Great! You know how to garden, right? Let's start a garden." I said, "Sure!" He said, "Let's do it right outside of my office." So right next to his office we put in a fifteen-foot-by-twenty-foot garden. He invited me to a teachers' meeting to invite the teachers to participate. I'd never been to a teachers' meeting, and oh my God! The energy of a teachers' meeting when everyone's sitting there grading their papers, and they're looking like, "One more new project? We don't want to do one more new project." I was pretty blown away. I can still feel that negative energy.

George and I said, "Well, who wants to volunteer for it? Whoever wants to do it, I'll be willing to work with your class." Ruth, of course, was totally in there. Ruth has a farming background and was a totally experiential teacher. She loved it, and she helped shape what the program was and is. Four or five teachers participated. We had a great time! The combination of what I was getting from Rich Merrill, and the whole idea of "This is science," and understanding the interactions, and learning and living it, is what it was it was all about. The kids *totally* went that direction. We would follow the kids' lead. They would develop questions, and we would say, "Let's experiment. Let's set it up. Let's figure it out." It was this phenomenal inquiry learning taking place at a time when science wasn't taught at all in elementary schools, much less inquiry learning. It was very, very exciting. It was at that point very small-scale, but what would happen is the parents would start coming in and saying, "What's going on? How come my kid is *not* involved? Why isn't my kid's class out here?" So there started to build up some momentum around it.

In the meantime (this was all still part of Project Blossom), Project Blossom had a grant writer on the staff, Erica [Lann-] Clark. She's now a storyteller in town. Erica and I worked to get some grant funding to expand this and to create a science and nutrition curriculum to go along with it. We got what was then called Title IV C. It was part of the whole Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is federal, which is now No Child Left Behind.

At that time there was a Title IV C which was for innovative education. The way education title funds are distributed is they come to the state. Then the state, depending on what kind of funding it is, either runs a competitive grant program for that money, or distributes it to schools based on student populations. So this was a competitive grant within the state, and we applied and got it. This was in '79, and we got funding to develop a curriculum and establish a model program using a garden to teach science. That was the real start of Life Lab. George said to the staff, "Well, the first year of the program everyone's required to participate, and then the second year you could choose. But I want everyone to at least start off in it." He gave us this whole— Actually, I think there's a picture. Could I show you a picture?

Farmer: Yes.

Jaffe: This is *The Growing Classroom*⁴, and I'm pretty sure they have the old pictures in here. This is a revised publication.

Farmer: Is this a curriculum guide?

Jaffe: It's a curriculum guide for how to use the garden. Here's Green Acres School. This is what it looked like in '79. It was basically a dirt parking lot, an overflow parking lot for Little League, or whatever. All the topsoil had been totally removed. George gave it to us to transform.

Farmer: As a principal.

Jaffe: Yes.

Farmer: And so they also had a playground area and a parking area— This was extra school property.

Jaffe: Yes, this was basically extra land. It was a phenomenal transition. It transformed everything, not only just that the gardens came and were absolutely beautiful, but the kids painted murals on the wall. The whole school took on a whole new energy. And this became a central place. Basically, especially at that point in education, teachers went into the classroom and had their own room and did their own thing, and there wasn't a lot of cross-grade-level-type planning going on at all. Well, the garden became the central place. Everyone was there.

Farmer: So you were teaching at the different grade levels, different curriculum.

Jaffe: Right. We were designing a science program based around garden-related topics. Each class had a scheduled time once a week to come out, and then the

teachers had follow-up lessons that we gave them to do inside the classroom. So, it became a whole-school, integrated program. The farmers' market was going on for the first few years. We had a table. The kids would take stuff over—

Farmer: Oh, how great!

Jaffe: —and sell at the farmers' market.

Farmer: So marketing was part of it too.

Jaffe: Marketing was part of it. Actually, an aside on marketing, and this is the first time I met Steve [Gliessman]—this must have been '81, and he was teaching a class on sustainable ag, and they did a Saturday field trip to visit farms. Two of his students were interns at Life Lab setting up a marketing garden, and one of them happened to be Drew Goodman, who was the founder of Earthbound.⁵ So Drew Goodman's first market garden was at Green Acres School as part of Life Lab.

Farmer: He was a Life Lab intern?

Jaffe: Yes, he was a Life Lab intern.

Farmer: Okay, great. And it looks like from the picture, you made raised beds. Was that what you learned with Rich Merrill?

Jaffe: Yes. We learned how to do double digging and raised beds, and those kids were out there doing it. Each class, I think, had two beds. It became a place not only for the school community [to] gather, but people from outside of the community would come there. Parents would come in, but also people would come by who had something to contribute. I remember someone who studied entomology came and did entomology lessons with the kids.

Probably one of the biggest resources, and what was really, really exciting, was students from UCSC and Cabrillo [College] got involved. They would set up projects. We had solar projects going on from the solar technology program at Cabrillo; we had environmental studies interns from UCSC do everything from develop a pond, to develop a recycling program, developing composting. It was really amazing. It was a learning place for everybody.

Farmer: All ages.

Jaffe: Yes. And one of the really exciting things is the kids kept saying they wanted animals. So some of the parents got together, and we got permission from 4-H to set up a 4-H program. 4-H is typically rural, and the kids would have the animals at home. Here, they kept their animals at the school. The parent group raised the funds to build the barn. Gary Garmann, who is now passed away, but had been a local architect, designed it, and we called it the 4-H Hilton. They got this gorgeous, gorgeous barn. The carpentry was contributed. The lumber was all contributed by Big Creek and San Lorenzo Lumber.

Farmer: Were you instrumental in making some of that happen because of your organizing background?

Jaffe: Yes. My organizing background just keeps circling around throughout my life. It's something I have to accept. But anyway, so, it was a very, very exciting time, and it was magical. It was people's energy coming together and making it work. A couple of people I need to mention: one is Gary Appel, who was a co-developer with me.

Farmer: Was he part of the Blossom Project?

Jaffe: He wasn't part of Blossom. But when we got the Title IV C grant, there was funding there to hire a second educator, and Gary was the person who was hired. He came out of an environmental education background. He had done a lot of work at outdoor-ed camps, and had done some curriculum development. As soon as we interviewed him, I knew he was the perfect one. It was great. We worked together as partners until he ended up moving to Michigan in the nineties.

Farmer: So it was twenty years.

Jaffe: We developed at Green Acres School, and then ended up developing Life Lab into a national program, its own non-profit organization.⁶ Gary was key in that.

Farmer: And you've always used organic principles for all of the Life Labs everywhere.

Jaffe: Oh, throughout.

Farmer: So nobody ever pulls out chemicals?

Jaffe: No, well, you can't at a school. You can't when you're working with kids. So it's sort of like, okay, if you want a science program, you want things to happen, you want things to change. If you're going to control it all with chemicals, you miss the point, right? And also, I mean, just legally, you can't use them around kids, so—

Farmer: So has anybody ever done a study of the students who were in these classes, and what happened with their lives?

Jaffe: There's always been talk about it. Once in a while people try to follow up, but we have never really done an extensive one, which would be really fun to do. Especially in this area, because people would tend to be in this area.

Farmer: Well, you could probably do some kind of reunion someday. Have you ever done a reunion?

Jaffe: No. That'd be fun! Do it up at the garden classroom now. The center of Life Lab right now is at UCSC, the main offices.

Farmer: For the national program?

Jaffe: Yes, for the national program.

Farmer: So is it incorporated within the university?

Jaffe: No. Okay, so another key person along the way is Neil Schmidt, who was the superintendent of Live Oak School District. He came in while Life Lab was already off the ground, but he embraced it and was very excited. To have the administrative support of Neil and George was phenomenal. It made all the difference in the world. They were really, really supportive of it happening. Live Oak School District is a very small school district. At that time it was just three schools, and now it's four schools, as a K-8 district. We started getting requests from other schools in the county to help them set up Life Labs.

Farmer: And didn't that happen rather quickly?

Expanding Life Lab to a National Program

Jaffe: Yes, that was probably, I want to say '81, '82. Yes, pretty quickly. Maybe '82, '83. Packard Foundation funded that expansion. Neil said, "That's great. I really support it. But it's outside of the school district mission, and how about you guys forming a non-profit?" He actually did all the research for it—"This is how you go about doing it," and helped us set it up, and we just went, "Sure!" He never told us that we'd be spending the rest of our lives writing grants! We

probably would have done it anyway, and we did. So we formed a non-profit. We had developed *The Growing Classroom* as part of Live Oak School District; it had a Live Oak School District copyright, but they gave us the copyright as a way of starting out.

Farmer: So that's your curriculum guide, *The Growing Classroom*?

Jaffe: *The Growing Classroom*, yes. It's one of them, but it was the main one, and the one we initially developed as part of that first grant. We developed teacher-professional development around *The Growing Classroom*, and other curriculum that we later developed, and did trainings nationwide on helping schools set up gardens. We first started in the county. At one point we did a study. Almost every elementary school in the county had a school garden.

Farmer: Pajaro Valley School District?

Jaffe: Oh, yes, Pajaro has a lot of school gardens going in. It's involved in a program that we did in the late nineties around language acquisition through science education. Pajaro's been involved since the start.

Farmer: And then what happened after the county?

Jaffe: Gary went on the road. He did bus trips, road trips around California, and we got funding. I think Gary really pulled this off and really lobbied for this at

the state level. And Sam Farr's office was really helpful in getting us funding to set up ten model sites around the state.

Farmer: So this is when Sam Farr⁸ was in the state legislature?

Jaffe: Right, in the state legislature. He was key in helping get that funding. And Gary. I think this was at the point that I decided to go back and get my master's, and Gary and a team of some other staff set up ten sites, and helped the ten sites around the state do training, helped them set up their gardens, and start programs.

Farmer: So each of those would have been in a district that could have expanded [the program] within its own district?

Jaffe: Right. It was in different regions, so that they could serve as models. So that happened. And then we got some national funds. The U. S. Department of Education had what's called a National Dissemination Network (they no longer have that) where they go through this rigorous evaluation process and they identify exemplary programs. We got selected as one. We went through the process and got selected. That means then they have a representative in each state who lets schools know about the program. We ended up doing trainings from Alaska to Florida through the National Dissemination Network.

Farmer: And so your national office was in Santa Cruz?

Jaffe: Right.

Farmer: When did it move to the university?

Jaffe: It [started] at Live Oak School District. Then we moved to the Santa Cruz County Office of Ed[ucation] in Capitola, and had our office there for a couple of years. Then in, I want to say '87, we got funding from the National Science Foundation, our first NSF grant, to develop a grade-by-grade curriculum around school gardens and science. At that point we were going to need more staffing, more space, and so it was time to figure out where our next move was. We had a pretty strong relationship with Steve Gliessman, who was director of the Agroecology Program, and plus a really strong relationship with [Congressmember] Sam Farr's office, who was very involved with the university. So between Steve and Sam, they talked to the [UC Santa Cruz] chancellor, who I believe at the time was Robert Sinsheimer, and got permission for Life Lab to locate itself at the [UCSC] Farm. And to do that, we had this very interesting relationship, which was Life Lab purchased a trailer, a nice new doublewide trailer for office space, and donated it to the university. So here's little Life Lab, giving this to the university (laughter), because we couldn't purchase anything capital out of the grant, but we could pay rent. So we basically paid rent in advance to purchase this trailer, and then it was discounted by the university. We donated it, an¹d paid for everything to install it, and did all of that. It's something that probably could not happen today at all, because what it would

cost to do something like that would be prohibitive because of the university permit fees and all that. So it was a special time that we were able to do it.

So it became located there, and we worked on this whole next-level curriculum, grade-by-grade curriculum, for national use.

Farmer: How many staff did you have at that point?

Jaffe: Oh, Life Lab as a non-profit rides the rollercoaster of when there's big grant money and the staffing's high, and when there's not, staffing is low. Right now Life Lab I think is at a pretty steady place with staffing. But at that point, working on this and then also working on the garden trainings, we probably had a staff of around fourteen or fifteen. There was a core staff of some people working on teacher training and program development. Most of our staff comes out of education, have teaching credentials. There are some stories of people who were apprentices at the UCSC Farm, who then found out about Life Lab and got their teaching credential, and eventually came to work for Life Lab. There are a few that took that route. And then there're people who went through environmental studies and then got their teaching credential, and became Life Lab teachers, people like Erika Perloff, who worked with Life Lab for years, and helped shape Life Lab.⁹

Farmer: So now there are Life Lab sites all over the country. Does the training go on because there're always new teachers coming up?

Jaffe: I think it goes through different cycles. Gardens are becoming “in” again. The past five years at least, maybe ten years, have been so back-to-basics. And the teachers, not even—take away gardening—they’re afraid to teach *science* at elementary level.

Farmer: Because it’s not on the test?

Jaffe: Because it’s not on the test. It’s all reading- and math-focused. Now in California they’re starting to test fifth-grade science. The pendulum has swung to the back-to-basics conservative teaching, so that gardens were pretty rare. And now, with the focus on nutrition, people are all of a sudden going, “Oh, gardens, they’re a great way to teach!” It’s just so sad. The education piece in this country is just so sad. Because if you engage kids in contextual learning that they could get excited about, they want to learn and they take it all in. And there’s no reason why writing and math and science, language, everything can’t be integrated around something like the garden, or something that’s really meaningful to the kids.

Farmer: Yes, up in Alice Waters’ neighborhood up there in Berkeley, they’ve got them gardening and creating their own salad bars and things like that.¹⁰

Jaffe: Right. We had that here too. It’s great. It’s so vital, so important. In Santa Cruz, there are preschool programs with gardens. There are elementary school programs with gardens. At middle school and high school, it probably gets a

little bit thin. Soquel has a really old—been around for a long time—a vocational ag program.

Farmer: Soquel High.

Jaffe: Soquel High. Cabrillo [College] has [a] phenomenal horticulture program. And then UCSC. So there's this thread that you could follow, that influences not only the kids, but their families, in a really exciting way. I think the students coming out of Cabrillo and UCSC revitalized the idea of family farms and small farms. When you look at the farmers' market today, you see things like Route One, or Swanton Berry—well, Jim [Cochran] didn't come out of the schools here, but all the different local small farms that have been generated by the appreciation of them on a local level.¹¹

Farmer: Were you involved in the development of the organic farming movement here?

Jaffe: I wasn't involved in the certification part at all. I was involved in organic gardening and organic farming, practicing that and involved in it. I was involved much more from the education perspective, I would say.

Farmer: So you would teach gardening, but you weren't really charged with making your living at marketing the things you were growing.

Jaffe: Yes, I would write grants (laughter) to support vegetables!

I remember a while ago we got some funding (this was quite a long time ago) to develop a small curriculum around organic farming. I was hesitant because I wanted the school gardens to be in the education system and be used as a teaching tool. I didn't want it to be politicized or labeled. I felt pretty strongly about that, especially with elementary teaching. In college, or whatever, I think it's different. It takes on a different frame. I think that awareness really needs to develop. But I just wanted the kids to get engaged, and understand where their food came from, and how it could be grown, and healthy. I think one of the most valuable lessons that is so, so true is that kids will eat anything they grow, anything they grow at all.

Farmer: Because they're proud of it?

Jaffe: Because they're proud of it. I've seen kids that come out and pick their radishes and eat them. One of their favorite crops was kohlrabi. Most people don't even know what it is. It's a brassica, and the part you eat almost looks like an apple, and it grows in the middle of the stem. So they would come running out at recess and harvest a kohlrabi and eat it. I would get parents coming to school saying, "What's going on? My kids are eating cauliflower!" (laughter)

Farmer: So were your gardens supplying the school cafeterias at all?

Jaffe: A couple of changes happened in Live Oak School District. One was they started a salad bar, and when we had stuff from the garden they would use it. When we harvested corn they would serve the corn, and kids would love that.

Way before Alice Waters was doing any of this, Pacific School up in Davenport created a food lab. They had the Life Lab; they were one of the first Life Lab schools. And they created a food lab where the fourth-through-sixth-grade classroom was responsible for cooking lunch every day in combination with ingredients from the garden and other stuff. They baked their own bread. Our kids went through that program, so I know it well. It was phenomenal. They not only learned a lot through it; they learned how to cook, and eat well, and those kids would be responsible for serving the other kids. It was a really wonderful, wonderful program. It still exists.

Farmer: Do you think a lot of them are going on to careers in this area, or did they just feel empowered around it?

Jaffe: I think they felt empowered around it. I don't know. Actually, I have had my son cook for me, so there is hope. (laughter) I think they learned things. It probably takes different forms. Like, I have had kids come up to me. They'll recognize me, which is very flattering. I don't recognize them. And they'll be able to tell me ways it's impacted their lives, whether it's careers or not, they'll know. They'll compost. It's definitely had an impact in their way of thinking about living.

I'm on the board of Life Lab now. I'm no longer staff at Life Lab. Life Lab, several years ago, got funding again from Packard Foundation. Packard Foundation has been long-term support for Life Lab. And when Life Lab first started, Julie Packard and Robert Stephens were students at UCSC. Robert was on one of the

first boards of Life Lab. They've always been right there, really supportive, strong believers in it. One of our dreams when we were up at the university was to create a garden classroom, a model school garden, both for kids to be able to come up for school trips, as well as to be a teacher training center, and a place for university students to get involved—all of that. Packard Foundation funded the initial development of that. It's this gorgeous garden that models all different types of things. It has an outdoor kitchen that was funded by Chez Panisse Foundation, and it's just wonderful. I forget how many students go through there in a year, but their field trips are booked up a year in advance, and they run different ones based on the season, the grade level, and what they're trying to teach in terms of science and nutrition so it can meet the state standards. Then they run teacher training out of there. It's magnificent. This is having big impact on the region because it has a regional focus, and students from UCSC do internships there, get engaged, work on the tours, and become teachers. So it's having all sorts of powerful impact.

My original background of getting into this was through the farm workers, and having tremendous respect for the work that farm workers do and how important it is and how difficult it is. After I finished with the UFW, I spent a year working in the field in Florida. Everything I said when I was an organizer was more than true once I experienced it. It was such hard, hard work. I would spend all day working in the field, and you get paid piece rate, and some days I'd walk away with twelve dollars.

What happens very often in this region, if you consider the Salinas Valley, and Watson[ville], Pajaro, the kids who are kids of farm workers, rather than being taught pride in what their parents are doing and the pride that could go along with growing food, they learn to scorn it, because it's a scorned position in our society. And they're also encouraged by their parents to get an education and get out of it. So how do you bridge that, and be able to teach the kids about the pride they could have in their parents' work, and about the knowledge their parents have? Life Lab worked for many years, and still does, on programs that are connected with that.

One of the programs—we got a second NSF grant in probably 1995—was around putting language acquisition and science education together. It was called Language Acquisition and Science Education for Rural Schools (LASERS). Pajaro was part of it. School districts in the Salinas Valley and Hollister area were also part of it. There were seven school districts. It was all around: How do you connect culture and science education and language development? It was so exciting to see it and to do this, and in a way, to reverse the scales, to reverse the way we look at things. We would do things like family science, which would bring the parents in. We'd have parents tell stories about—many of them came from rural areas in Latin America—and to tell about how they grew up, and what they planted, and what they knew about corn. And we'd even have parents come in and teach the teachers about it.

It was pretty phenomenal. We saw this capacity for the parents to share, the kids to learn from the parents, to make this bridge between home and school that's so,

so important to support learning. Also, hands-on learning promotes language development, and so the kids who were learning English as a second language, their English was really able to develop too. It was beautiful in how many learning objectives it met in a positive way. I think that's something that our education in this region could really contribute to if you really think about, who are we trying to educate, and how do we involve the whole community in doing it, and what's the knowledge and strength there? Rather than looking at it as people lacking, people not having a formal education background, it's what *do* they bring? They bring a tremendous amount, and how do you build on that?

Farmer: There's also that emotional component of learning, of feeling proud of your family.

Jaffe: Right. A sustainable livelihood is key so many levels. But it's got to be more than just that. It's got to be having pride in the culture, having pride in what you bring, and respecting that. Because otherwise it just gets lost in a material world.

Farmer: Do you know if there's any organizing of agricultural workers in organic farming going on now? I know there's Jim Cochran—¹²

Jaffe: Yes, that's about it. There was an effort to pick up, to try to go beyond Jim Cochran with strawberry contracts. As far as I know, it did not get anywhere. There was some effort in Watsonville, and then there was some effort in Salinas, and then also in, I think, Ventura County, or somewhere in that region. But as far

as I know it didn't, it hasn't kicked off the ground. Right now the UFW's pretty small. It's not that there aren't efforts, but— The issues around agricultural organizing go way back.

Reflections

Farmer: So what have been your greatest rewards and your greatest challenges along the way?

Jaffe: I feel really blessed in what I've been able to do. A lot of that's timing. So much of that is timing. I think if I hadn't gone to college in the late sixties— The expectation around me was to be a married housewife. So to have that freedom, to have been able to dream these dreams. I remember when I first started learning about social change in college it was like, "Yes! That's what I want to do!" I've been really lucky in that I've been able to dedicate my life to doing that kind of thing.

Farmer: Can you talk about Ivan Illich's influence on you?

Jaffe: I read Ivan Illich in college. I was thinking then, oh gee, I want to work overseas. Illich says work at home. Do your work in your homeland, and organize there. I guess I really took that to heart. The union, the UFW, taught me a lot about that too. My bosses were farm workers. This was their movement, and I was there assisting them. I learned a lot from that dynamic that I truly believe in.

I did spend a lot of my time focused here and working here, both in the farm worker movement and then Life Lab. But at the same time, I partnered up with Steve Gliessman in 1985, who's very much involved in international work around agroecology.¹³ So I've been involved in the international community. As our society is moved much more towards globalization, I think that's become very relevant, and important.

Community Agroecology Network [CAN]

Steve and I have become involved in organizing another nonprofit called Community Agroecology Network, CAN.¹⁴ It's a network of researchers and community organizations in Latin America and Central America that are working together to connect sustainable livelihoods and environmental conservation. There are five communities that are currently part of the partnership, and four of them are coffee-growing communities. It very much came out of the coffee crisis in the early 2000s when these communities were being decimated, and people were immigrating to the US, and/or migrating to the big cities in their home countries.

We felt that we could work together with the farmer cooperatives in a partnership to help both create direct markets where they would get more return for the coffee, and in return, they live in very sensitive ecosystems where they could work, and the way they farm coffee could be done in a way that really could help conserve or reestablish a diverse ecosystem.

I was thinking about this just a couple weeks ago. I don't know if it was when you had asked me to do this [interview] and it was floating in the back of my mind or what, but [I was thinking about] the parallel between the way CAN is organized [now], and how the UFW was organized at the time. And I went, oh, here are my learning roots, and I'm just basically replicating them. (laughter) César [Chávez] really effectively used the economic boycott, and instead of using a boycott with CAN, we're using a direct market.

Farmer: An alternate market.

Jaffe: An alternative market. So it's like, okay, how do you use the economy to create change?

Farmer: Consumers. Get the consumers involved.

Jaffe: Get the consumers involved, right. It's a consumer voice. And then, the other leg for us is environmental conservation. Well, César, with the union, really started moving in that direction. They did a lot around limiting pesticides in the field.

Farmer: Oh, because it was a worker right.

Jaffe: Yes. Right. And then he became a very avid organic gardener, and was moving more and more in that direction. So it was interesting for me to sit back

and look at what I've learned, that really goes back to those roots, as I look at my path.

Farmer: So did you have personal contact with César Chávez?

Jaffe: Yes.

Farmer: Did he train you, or did you go to meetings?

Jaffe: No, I was trained by one of his, what was called lieutenants at that time, one of his chief people, actually Eliseo Medina, who is now one of the *jefes* with the SEIU, I believe, the Service Employees International Union. Everyone thought he would follow César, but different things happened and he didn't. He was the lead organizer in Florida. I got to really learn a lot from him.

Farmer: So what was your contact with César?

Jaffe: César would be [at] meetings, and he would come to Florida for organizing and I'd get to interact with him.

Farmer: Did you ever march with him or anything?

Jaffe: Oh yes.

Farmer: What was that like?

Jaffe: Oh, he was a magnet and he emanated that sense of—“we can do this”—and empowerment. It was always fascinating watching him speak, because he wasn’t a great speaker, yet he would convey something else beyond his words to people hearing him, and everyone would get engaged, and learn that together you can make it work.

Farmer: Do you think he inspired by example, then, by how hard he worked, and that he showed up?

Jaffe: Oh definitely. Definitely. It was thrilling to watch how he inspired workers. It was amazing. I went to a march after he died. A year after he died, there was a march on Sacramento. It was his birthday, and I forget if there was a strike going on, or what the purpose of the march was, but seeing all of the Chicanos there, and realizing that a lot of them were young and their parents were probably workers in the field when the UFW was organizing, and the impact that that’s had on the state is phenomenal. I’m not sure that it’s at all appreciated in terms of really acknowledging that prior to then, the capacity, ability, of Chicanos to move out of farm-worker, working-class, low-income jobs was difficult. Change has happened.

Farmer: So you were talking about your current project, which is CAN, and one thing that we missed was how you moved out of being a staff person at Life Lab and into being on the board.

Jaffe: So in 2000, Steve and I took a sabbatical year, and we went and we lived in Mexico and traveled around Central America and Mexico, and plus also spent some time at our vineyard [Condor's Hope], which we haven't talked about yet.

Farmer: Yes. That's one of your passions.

Jaffe: Okay, and when I returned, I realized that I was ready to retire from Life Lab. I had this perception that I was really going to retire, and I also had this perception that I'd worked so hard, and put all of this energy in because it was Life Lab, and Life Lab needed [it] and Life Lab was my baby. So I decided, okay, I'm ready to have a more balanced life, so I'll retire from Life Lab and I'll be on the board, and just see what happens.

Farmer: So after how many years?

Jaffe: Well, basically since 1977. I took a couple years off for my master's, but basically, to 2000.

Farmer: So twenty-three, twenty-four years, something like that.

Jaffe: Yes. So basically, we did that, and I came back. I was good friends with Ellen Moir, who is director of teacher education at UCSC. She had started the New Teacher Center. She said, "Oh, why don't you come work part time here?" I was helping them with science education programs.

Farmer: You were just going to retire and not work, was that the idea?

Jaffe: Well, I didn't know. I wanted to have space. I wanted balance. It was a concept. I don't know it very well.

Farmer: (laughter)

Jaffe: So I'm now working seventy-five percent time for the New Teacher Center. It's basically a full-time job. Plus, when Steve and I came back, and when we were there and visiting coffee communities, we realized how destitute it was, and how the prices farmers were getting were driving them off of the farm, and they literally couldn't survive.

Farmer: This was six years after NAFTA started too. I don't know if that had an effect.

Jaffe: It was also after the U.S. pulled out of the International Coffee Association (ICA), which really had a dramatic effect. The controls on coffee prices just dropped. There was a[n] open market, and open market means screw the producer. It was devastating. Farmers, or their organizations and co-ops, were getting forty cents a pound for coffee that we'd pay ten, eleven dollars a pound for up here.

Farmer: When the standard price had been around a dollar twenty-five for years, because of the ICA.

Jaffe: Right. So anyway, we're back [in Santa Cruz]; we know all this is going on; what can we do? Steve has had a long-term relationship with a community in southern Costa Rica called Agua Buena. When he finished his doctorate in the early seventies, he went there and lived on a farm, was a coffee farmer, and actually was on the education committee of the co-op we ended up working with. So over the years he had maintained relationships there, and he was sending UCSC environmental studies students down to live with families and to do internships there in a very informal manner. And students were coming back and saying, "Okay, well, why can't we do something?" They literally were bringing the coffee back that the farmers had roasted on their stoves, and saying, "Let's just start selling this, and we'll send some money back."

So out of a very grassroots effort by the students and the farmers together, this whole idea of "Let's set up a direct market" developed. The Costa Rican mail system is basically as good as the U.S. mail system. So they were able to ship the coffee from southern Costa Rica, and within a week it would be in people's mailboxes. We started in '03 or '04, with sending a letter out to our friends. Actually, we sent a bunch of holiday presents out in December '03, just to see, did it work? It worked! People were all excited. I never thought about it. People were all excited to get a package from Costa Rica. From there, we've built a direct market that also involves two of the other communities we work with in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Then the researchers work in the communities with the farmers around sustainable farming practices and reforestation. Students go down, undergraduates, living with the farmers and learning from them. So here we go again. Here's the cycle all over again. And I'm not retired yet.

Farmer: No! (laughter)

Jaffe: But very lucky. Really lucky.

Farmer: And do you have to write grants for CAN?

Jaffe: For CAN? Oh, yes. New nonprofits, it's always a struggle to prove ourselves. And we're different than most, so we're working on that one. We've gotten some small grants but we do need to do it. I think what's different this time, though, is we're looking at: How do you also create diverse funding sources? Like, how can the market help support us as well?

Farmer: Yes, because nonprofit doesn't mean that you can't make money from selling coffee. But you want most of the money to go to the community.

Jaffe: Right.

Condor's Hope Ranch

Farmer: Okay, well, what is your other recent passion, then? How long have you been on the ranch?

Jaffe: The ranch! (big sigh of relief) So, when did we get it? I guess in '94, '95, right around when we moved into this house. Steve grew up in Santa Barbara, and spent many, many years backpacking in the backcountry, in the mountains,

the Santa Barbara coastal range. His brother still lives in Santa Barbara, and through friends found this piece of land that was for sale, twenty acres of land that was off the grid, right up against Forest Service land on the northern side of the Santa Barbara range. No one would recognize it as Santa Barbara County, or anyone's image of Santa Barbara County. It's in between Santa Maria and Bakersfield, out there in a very dry area. And gorgeous. So we ended up going in with his brother and getting the piece of land. This was going to be Steve's and his brother's project, and they wanted to plant a vineyard. It had always been a dream of theirs. I said "Fine. As long as I don't have to work on it." Now, I think 2003 was our first commercial vintage. Steve's brother is no longer involved. It's very much our family operation—Steve and myself, and our son Erin, and now his girlfriend Oriana, and we all love it. It's a place where we can get off e-mail.

Farmer: Is it still off the grid?

Jaffe: It's off the grid. It's all solar-powered, designed by the folks who now do Full Circle Solar. We have a solar water pump, solar electricity, since the beginning. That system's been going for quite a while and it works great.

Farmer: You have a refrigerator?

Jaffe: We have a propane refrigerator. Yes, we have a propane tank.

Farmer: And is that how the stove works, too?

Jaffe: Yes.

Farmer: What about irrigation?

Jaffe: Because it's such a dry area we do have a drip irrigation system. But we dry farm, so the plants are grown very differently than the typical vineyards you see throughout California. We've had as our mentor this wonderful old Italian farmer named Benito Dusi, who grows in Paso Robles right along Highway 101. Anyone who knows Zinfandel grapes will tend to know his vineyard. He pretty much sells completely to Ridge Winery and is one of their estate labels. Steve, being the naturalist that he is, would observe the Dusi Ranch from the road along 101. We'd pull off on the side, and this probably went on for a couple of years. He would just watch it. He'd see what [Dusi] was doing. He said, "Okay, he's cultivating that way. He's doing this." It was a dry-farm system. It's totally different. You create a dust-mulch layer to keep the water, to seal off the capillary action so the water won't evaporate, and to hold the water in the ground.

Farmer: Dust mulch?

Jaffe: Yes. It's called a dust mulch. Generally the trellis vineyards which are really for high production will have grass; they'll have some kind of ground cover. That's to protect the soil, which is good. But in a dry-farm system you actually don't want anything that could take the water out and put it into the atmosphere. You want to cap it. And so Steve would watch the Dusi vineyard

and see what he was doing. I kept saying, "Well, let's just go up. The farmhouse is right there!" It was this wonderful old 1920s farmhouse. Steve is sort of shy and didn't want to do it. I finally said to him, "How about writing him a letter?" and he said, "Okay, I'll do that!" He came home and he wrote a letter, and the next week he got back just a little note saying, "Sure, stop by anytime!" That's when Benito Dusi became our mentor, and has taught us so much about so many things, but definitely about dry farming, the old traditional way of growing grapes. So that's the model we use. Just like a dry-farm tomato, it produces this really intense grape, because there's no water in the grape, it's all the fruit. So the wine is that really big, intense Zinfandel and Shiraz.

Farmer: And you have olives, too, right?

Jaffe: And we have olives, too. We're intercropping, of course, with olives. They're just starting to come into production. Last year we had our first official olive press[ing] that we took to a place that had a mill, and pressed the olives. Prior to that, we were doing home pressing, and it was pretty funky, but the olive oil is absolutely delicious. Hope to take that to market next year. So we're learning a lot about marketing.

Farmer: Is your goal to have the farm support itself?

Jaffe: It depends how we define "support itself." It would be nice to have it cover its costs. That would be great. Whether that's possible or not, I'm not sure. We'll have to see.

Farmer: You wouldn't count labor costs in that.

Jaffe: Well, part of what I really wanted out of—we call it Condor's Hope because it's one of the first areas where the condor was re-released to the wild—is a place for community to gather. So our friends and family come harvest with us. Our costs are food for everybody. And pruning is a special treat for Steve's garden group that he works with. They come down and help prune, so we've been really lucky in that.

Farmer: How much acreage is it?

Jaffe: The whole piece of land's twenty acres. Right now we have four acres planted. And there are some large oaks, blue oaks.

Farmer: So does it feel different to be a stakeholder in that way?

Jaffe: To actually be a farmer?

Farmer: Yes.

Jaffe: Does it feel different? You know, when I first came out to California I was farming too, so—

Farmer: Right.

Jaffe: Yes, it feels (laughter) the word that comes to mind is, “very grounding.” Farming tends to be grounding, because it’s this way of being in touch with nature, and being on the plants’ cycle. Our society is so out of kilter, and I’m very much out of kilter, too. I’m addicted to e-mail. I feel like I have to do, do, do, to get everything done. And going there puts me on the cycle of the plant, and makes me part of a system. We are definitely manipulating the system, but we’re not trying to control the system. We’re trying to work with the fact that it is a dry area, and we’re trying to irrigate very, very little. Unfortunately we had a late frost there, after the buds had already opened, broke, on the vines. So we lost a lot of the bud break, which will probably impact this year’s harvest. But there’s a part of that, just going, “Okay, yes, that’s what happened.” I mean, we’re really lucky. We’re not the coffee farmer who’s depending on what the market’s going to bear, to pay them. That’s a whole different situation. This is a luxury for us. We’re not dependent on it for our income. So it’s a really different way than farming, where you’re dependent on it, and you’re going to lose the farm. You can’t really compare that. It becomes a retreat place for me. To go down and prune for a weekend is a total meditation for me. It’s so different.

Farmer: So the marketing, that’s new for you as a personal stakeholder of these particular grapes and olives.

Jaffe: Well, I’ve never really been involved in marketing. I’ve been involved in education. So here I am with CAN working on direct marketing, and with Condor’s Hope, working on also direct marketing.

Farmer: Which has a lot to do with labels, and what else?

Jaffe: Labels and promotion. Like, how are you going to let people know about it, not being afraid to get it out there, learning how to tell the story.

Farmer: And you're at the farmers' market, right?

Jaffe: Right, the [Westside Santa Cruz] farmers' market every Saturday, with the wine. And the [CAN] coffee [at the downtown Santa Cruz market] every Wednesday. The students sell the coffee at the Wednesday market downtown.

Farmer: And that was hard to get in because of the certified local grower thing, or?

Jaffe: I think just the politics of getting into the market.

Farmer: But the market where you sell the wine is newer, right? That's on the Westside?

Jaffe: It's a newer market, and also they love having the wine there because it's different and innovative. And we're certified because we're the growers of the grapes.

Farmer: Where do you bottle the wine?

Jaffe: We bottle the wine with River Run Vintners in Aromas. He does a custom crush for us. We've always liked what he did. It's a one-person operation, and we always loved what he did with his big reds, so we knew that he could really do a good job with ours.

Farmer: Great. So it sounds like you've been involved in every single part of all of this, over time. No retirement in sight, really.

Jaffe: Is that true? (in a plaintive voice) We'll see.

Farmer: Not necessarily what you want?

Jaffe: I don't know! Who knows? I don't know, but I'm definitely at a point of thinking about what does balance look like for me?

Farmer: I think you told me one time that part of getting the vineyards going and everything was to somehow have [your son] Erin be more part of that, or run it?

Jaffe: Now that's becoming a reality. At that time, he didn't have very much interest in it. So now that he's in his early thirties, he is taking a major role in it, and is much more interested in it. That's great, and we love that. I think for me the next couple years will evolve, and I'll see where it goes. I think there'll be some changes and some prioritizing. Because I don't think I can keep going right now at the pace I'm going.

The Future?

Farmer: Yes. It's a lot. So, as a final question, what are your predictions for sustainable agriculture, in general, fitting into the whole big picture of what we need to do for the planet?

Jaffe: Well, I think it's really fascinating. First of all, what did I think ten years ago? Did I think organic would be the way organic is now? Did I think that it would be such a small world? Right now, I think that the immediate piece that's going to come to people's forefront is buying locally, for a number of reasons. One is the level of contamination going on, for everything from the *E. coli* to whatever the—was it pesticides that got into the dog food? The rat poison that got into the dog food that came from China.¹⁵ There's going to be a backlash around all of that. There's been so little talk around the *E. coli* with the spinach.¹⁶ They're all looking at the source on the farm, but no one's looking at the packaging and how packaging it in a plastic bag [could be] a breeding house for the *E. coli*. No one is saying, "Wait a second! Maybe we shouldn't be doing that."

I think there's going to be some [questions]: "Should we be importing everything? What *can* we grow locally? What does that look like?" With energy costs going up (and they're going to go up more and more), I think that's the next big shift in sustainability. Mother Earth bats last. I really believe that. I think if we all don't get in tune with nature— And I say that for myself too, because I don't live a sustainable lifestyle. I drive everywhere. There are things I do that I think are wonderful and sustainable, but I live a very American lifestyle. So, am I

willing to change? If we don't pay attention to nature, nature will flick us off the earth. Which might not be such a bad thing.

Let me end on a more optimistic note. I think one of the things that is my absolute privilege to do with CAN, and was my privilege to do with Life Lab, is to work with students, and with CAN, work with a lot of university students. To see their optimism and to see their vision for what the world can be like, is so renewing and so exciting. I watch them create miracles. And they're going to do it. I mean, they're really, really going to do it. They understand so much, and they understand it in a way that I don't think I understood it at that age. At that age, I think I was looking at things in much more of a black-and-white perspective. I have *such* high hopes for these students! So we'll see. We'll see what happens. It's a thrill to work with them.

¹See the excerpt of Nick Pasqual's oral history reprinted as part of this project.

²See the oral history with Richard Merrill in this series.

³The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act or Public Law 93-203) was a federal law enacted in 1973 to train workers and provide them with jobs in the public service.

⁴See *The Growing Classroom: Garden and Nutrition Activity Guide*.

<http://www.lifelab.org/index.php?page=activity&lls=1>

⁵See the oral history with Drew Goodman in this series.

⁶See the oral histories with Gail Harlamoff and Erika Perloff in this series for more on Life Lab.

⁷The Pajaro Valley School District represents an agricultural, primarily low-income Latino population.

⁸See the oral history with Sam Farr in this series.

⁹See the oral history in this series with Erika Perloff.

¹⁰Alice Waters' The Edible Schoolyard project is a non-profit program located on the campus of Martin Luther King Junior Middle School in Berkeley, California. See:

<http://www.edibleschoolyard.org/about.html>.

¹¹See the oral histories with Jeff Larkey of Route One Farms and Jim Cochran of Swanton Berry Farms in this series.

¹²See the oral history with Jim Cochran for his discussion of the contract UFW has with Swanton Berry Farms.

¹³See the oral history with Stephen Gliessman in this series.

¹⁴See <http://www.communityagroecology.net/>

¹⁵In the spring of 2007, aminopterin, a chemical used in rat poison, was found in recalled pet food that killed several animals and sickened hundreds of others. The poison was added to wheat

imported from China. Wheat is an ingredient in nearly one hundred kinds of dog and cat food brands.

¹⁶ Jaffe is referring to the *E. coli* outbreak of fall 2006 in which bags of pre-washed spinach contaminated by *E. coli* bacteria, sickened several hundred consumers in the United States. One hundred and four people were hospitalized and three died from the outbreak.