

Sustainability in the California Drought

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Introductions

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Needfinding Methodology - subjects

Christa - policy advocate

Hannah - Columbae resident

Kathleen - Row house chef

Needfinding Methodology - questions

“Have you done anything differently since the drought started”

“What would I find surprising about how you shop for food”

“Tell me about a time you made a purchase decision or changed a behavior to reduce your water usage”

“How do these behaviors make you feel about water consumption?”

Interview Results - Christa

- “trying to attack a giant with papercuts”
 - e.g. A steakhouse serving water on request
- Agriculture gets a bad rap, but we still need to eat
- Meat is far larger problem than any crop
- Finds some behavioral change too difficult
 - (“If it’s yellow, let it mellow”)
- Serious answers lie in infrastructure and homeowners



Interview Hannah

- Has made major lifestyle changes (recycling, vegetarian) and feels like those actions add up
- Experiences reinforcement from Columbae community but also is aware that even within that community there is a lack of information
 - Especially trade-offs between environmental and moral values (bananas?)
- Sustainable decisions are half second nature, half-conscious
 - most difficult when tired/stressed

Interview (Kathleen)

- Surprised that she is very concerned with sustainability issues
- Tries to buy local produce / no hormones
- Takes many individual measures
 - saves warm-up water, only flushes solid waste
- Still finds it hard to discriminate between companies
 - Water use in particular isn't well understood



Say

- Companies don't know
- Lack of info on specific food types
- Conflate with organic/local/no hormones
- Personal behaviors like "paper cuts"
- unanswered questions for environmental/moral tradeoffs

Think

- want to be good for environment
- lack resources to make informed decisions
- personal behavior makes a difference
- sustainability requires sacrifice (money/time/work)

Do

- eat vegetarian / less meat
- brick in toilet
- less flushes
- research type of food
- buy secondhand
- only buy coffee with reusable mugs
- turn off other people's lights for them

Feel

- frustrated that sacrifices make it hard to make changes and convince others
- helpless that there is lack of information
- blind in terms of decisions that they make
- frustrated that large steps are out of our power
- burdened by conscious steps required to be green

Inferences

- frustration in making informed decisions and convincing people to make sacrifices, especially money
- Behavioral changes stem from a genuine desire and belief that actions are doing something

Needs

- Community value of people also making the same decision
- “see an impact”
- Feel influential in their actions
- Feel like it’s not a sacrifice (part of their routine) or that sacrifice is worth it

Summary

We would like to interview someone who does not place a high value on sustainability.

Among people who value sustainability, the key motivators are feeling that personal actions add up, and seeing people around them reinforce their actions. Their shared challenge is a lack of information, especially as it relates to tradeoffs between different values and priorities.

Questions?

Companies don't know
Lack of info on specific food types
Conflate with organic/local/no hormones
enough demand -> no hormones
Personal behavior (tap water/ short showers /
"water on request")
symbolic compared to consumption/landscape
- unanswered questions for environmental/
moral tradeoffs

Think
want to be good for environment
lacking resources to make informed decisions
personal behavior makes a difference
sustainability requires sacrifice (money/time/
work)

brick in toilet
less flushes
research type of food
personal behavior (all second hand
- buy secondhand
- reusable mugs
- recycle

Feel
frustrated that sacrifices make it hard to make
changes and convince others
helpless that there is lack of information
frustrated that this is out of our power
frustrated in trying to convince others to be
green
burdened by conscious steps required to be
green
blind in terms of decisions that they make