

**EMBARGOED UNTIL SEPTEMBER 15, 2009**

## **15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HEINZ AWARDS**

### **RECIPIENT BACKGROUNDER**

**Joel Salatin, 52, Swoope, Virginia**

Joel Salatin, farmer, author and lecturer, is being honored with a \$100,000 Heinz Award for creating alternative, environmentally friendly farming techniques and helping propel a movement towards local, sustainable agriculture that has been replicated by family farms around the country.

Mr. Salatin has created a new paradigm for sustainable agriculture. He has successfully challenged the traditional commercial production of chicken and beef that has been the mainstay of food industry giants since the 1970s. Instead, his pioneering vision inextricably and beautifully interweaves a food system with the land, creating new agricultural practices that are being embraced by thousands of farmers throughout America.

At Polyface Farm, Mr. Salatin's 550 acres of rolling Virginia hills in the Central Shenandoah Valley, he raises beef, sheep, chickens, pigs, rabbits and turkeys in a complex rotation based on the symbiotic relationships of these animals to one another and to the grass that is at the basis of the farm's food chain. Polyface Farm nets more than \$150,000 annually, which, maintains Mr. Salatin, is proof that sustainable farming is a viable way to keep family farms together while producing healthy food in harmony with the environment. Mr. Salatin, with his bold confidence in the benefits of his alternative methods for a healthier planet, has been featured in books, periodicals and the 2009 documentary *Food Inc.*

What began as a foray into organic farming has evolved into a breakthrough model for a sustainable agricultural system. Through his system for rotating animals to enhance their symbiotic relationships, Mr. Salatin is accomplishing nothing less than a transformation of traditional agricultural practices, a transformation that will have a profound impact on farming well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Said Teresa Heinz, chairman of the Heinz Family Foundation:**

*"Joel Salatin is more than the 'high priest of the pasture;' he's a brilliant farmer. He is brilliant because he keeps it simple. It starts with the grass and a divine rotation of cows, chickens, sheep and other farm animals taking their turn to graze. They work in unison the way, I believe, Mother Nature intended. The big corporate farms can no longer tell us that pollution will always come with farming. Mr. Salatin's work shows us that is not true because on his lands, farming is no longer part of the problem; it is part of the solution to a better environment. For this wonderful work, it is an honor to present him with this award."*

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