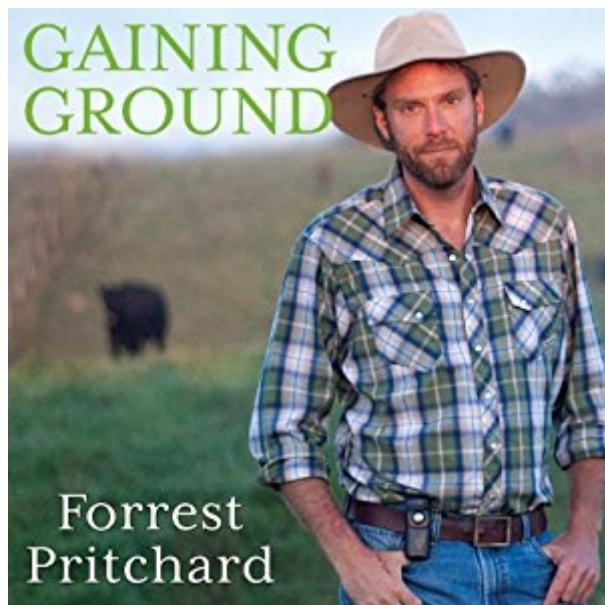


The book was found

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



Synopsis

One fateful day in 1996, after discovering that five freight cars' worth of glittering corn have reaped a tiny profit of \$18.16, young Forrest Pritchard vows to save his family's farm. What ensues - through hilarious encounters with all manner of livestock and colorful local characters - is a crash course in sustainable agriculture. Pritchard's biggest ally is his renegade father, who initially questions his son's career choice and rejects organic foods for sugary mainstream fare. But just when the farm starts to turn heads at local farmers' markets, his father's health takes a turn for the worse. With poetry and humor, this inspiring memoir tugs on your heartstrings and feeds your soul long after you've finished.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gaining Ground: A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food, and Saving the Family Farm by Forrest Pritchard is the perfect book for a wannabe farmer. In fact it's the perfect book for anyone who has had a dream and wondered what the process might be to make dream reality. It doesn't have to be a farming dream, because all dreams are achieved the same way: by hard work, determination, and sacrifice. Sure, there are some other things that go into the recipe for success, but I believe these are the backbones, and Forrest Pritchard illustrates this quite well in telling his story of becoming a farmer and saving the family farm. As Joel Salatin points out in the forward to the book, this book is especially important for people who will never farm. Not everyone can or should farm, but that doesn't mean they should be disconnected from the food they eat and feed their children. As Mr. Salatin says, "Every time we eat, we participate in farming." Forrest does a superb job in reminding

us of this as he takes us down the road of his personal journey into farming. Who is Forrest Pritchard? Forrest Pritchard was a farm kid who didn't know much about farming. His family farm was managed by various farmers after his grandfather died while his parents worked everyday 9 to 5 jobs in other towns away from the farm. These farm managers tried using industrial farming techniques to keep a profit going, but inevitably little by little the farm was accumulating debt and failing. After graduating college Forrest was faced with the big question we're all faced with: What am I going to do with the rest of my life? His father encouraged him to get a secure position as a teacher. After all it was steady work with insurance and a pension. It's safe.

Before I begin my review of *Gaining Ground*, allow me to make a quick disclaimer: I am not an objective reader. In fact, I have worked for Forrest at farm markets every weekend for over a year now, in rain, snow, wind, thunder and tourist season. Before Smith Meadows came into my life I was largely vegetarian in order to avoid sponsoring the horror stories I read about the papers and books like *Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Deep Economy*. Then, through a boyfriend's friend's sister's best friend I found Smith Meadows, the perfect local farm with all the practices and principles an idealist could hope for. Forrest Pritchard is Smith Meadows' farmer, its steward and practically a part of the soil he has worked so hard to nourish from the sad state it was in after years of overuse. As it turns out, lush pasture is easily achieved through a combination of patience and well planned herd rotation, switching between cattle, pigs, chickens and sheep, letting each fertilize and refresh the soil in turn. "Easily," of course, is a relative term when one is reading about it all from a comfy chair with a nice cup of tea. In truth, it took not only years of hard work but decades of failure for the Pritchard family farm to turn around and produce a profit (as well as valuable land, animals and a sterling example of good farming practices). *Gaining Ground* recounts the journey Forrest took his entire family on when he realized that farming might be more of a calling for him than teaching (though writing is clearly still in his repertoire). As a bit of a book connoisseur, I did note that the book itself has a good looking, glossy cover, the text is printed clearly on nice feeling paper and the photos are incredibly helpful in placing the reader right there on the farm.

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