

# The "Slow Money", Truly Green, Investment Approach

Contributed by Marc Courtenay  
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What I'm about to share with you comes partly from this excellent book. We whole-heartedly recommend it. It might just be an antidote to the avarice and "get rich quick" mentality that plagues our society.

Wouldn't it be great if one solution to the global warming and financial crises gripping our world would be the simple act of us growing our own food? It could be as simple as having a few window boxes where we grow tomatoes and peppers in our places of abode.

This is the premise of a "must read" article in the November 2008 edition of Ode Magazine and it introduces us to Woody Tasch, the author of the book highlighted above, and the Investor's Circle, a national group focused on funding socially responsible companies.

Tasch evidently believes that one aspect of social responsibility has been left out that can no longer be neglected: a more personal connection to our food. Ode Magazine reports that for years Tasch has promoted a philosophy of green investing which prioritizes the social good over the urge to make a quick dollar under a philosophy known as "patient capital."

Today, if we have any hope of curing society's greatest ills--much less fixing our reliance on rapid growth and rising debt that created the current crisis in the global financial markets, we will need to be more than patient with our investments.

In his book Tasch writes that Slow Money is "a new vision for investing that looks above the top line and below the bottom line [by] put[ting] soil fertility back into the calculus of investing."

Investor's Circle (<http://www.investorscircle.net/about-us/frequently-asked-questions#Who>) has placed \$130 million into 200 "green" businesses and venture funds. Better access to healthy and affordable food is what Tasch hopes Slow Money will provide.

In fact, Tasch evidently named his initiative after Slow Food, the popular movement launched in 1986 by Italian Carlo Petrini to protest the opening of a McDonald's (NYSE:MCD) fast food restaurant in his home city of Rome, Italy. Slow Food has more than 83,000 members worldwide, one of whom is Tasch.

Tasch wants to see a "step change" in socially responsible investing by focusing on sustainable agriculture. He called sustainable agriculture the "forgotten sustainable niche market". He quotes American poet Gary Snyder: "Food is the field in which we daily explore our 'harming' of the world."

If we're sustainable, Tasch reasons, we must understand where our food comes from, how it's grown and, above all, how it's financed. In addition to his book he has established an NGO also called Slow Money to promote his ideas through outreach seminars and marketing. This writer would love to become involved in that organization's work.

Eric Becker, a 15-year veteran money manager with Trillium Asset Management (<http://trilliuminvest.com/>) agrees with all this: "Slow Money is an effort to find opportunities for investors to support sustainable agriculture in their investment portfolios in a way that hasn't been possible before."

Since its inception in 1983, Trillium has focused exclusively on socially responsible investing (SRI), managing \$1 billion in assets for its client base of institutions and high-net-worth individual clients.

"Each year we ask our clients what priorities they want reflected in their portfolios," Becker says. "For 25 years they've been checking the box that says 'sustainable agriculture and organics.'"

"But other than a few public companies like Whole Foods (Nasdaq:WFMI) or Celestial Seasonings (Nasdaq:HAIN) teas, there have been no investment vehicles to target capital toward new or growing companies that have the health of the soil as the key component of what they're doing".

So I'll ask the question that others have asked before me, "Wouldn't it be gratifying, even if we were sacrificing quick profits and riches, if what we invested in was absolutely good for our precious planet, our home that has been poisoned unconscionably for decades?"

Anyway according to Ode, for Woody Tasch, dollars aren't the right metric for measuring success and failure in these

unprecedented and challenging times.

"We live in a world of ever-depleting resources. Money is no longer the currency. Air, water and soil are the currencies for the future." We couldn't agree more.

You can read a valuable excerpt from Mr. Tasch's book at <http://www.odemagazine.com/doc/58/slow-money-excerpt/>. The Slow Money movement gives me great hope for the success of the Green Revolution movement and the survival of this blue-green jewel that we all have to share.