



from Morning Star. Full Belly's farmers fertilize their fields with dung from their own sheep, herded into the fields after harvest. A bank of trees and shrubs by the creek harbors bats and birds that feast on insects—pest control. The farm relies as much as possible on such predators as well as good mulch. When those measures fail, it turns to organic controls, including garlic, cedar and clove oils. "Our goal is to somehow take the farm, which is an artificial system, and mimic the systems you see in the natural world," says partner Andrew Brait, 42, whose heirloom tomatoes are one of the farm's biggest sources of profit.

Brait has staked his heirloom tomatoes in a patch of un-

even bottomland alongside gorgeous heirloom peppers, eggplants and squash. But in the tomato patch, things don't look quite so good. Tobacco mosaic virus, long ago controlled by breeding resistance into commercial tomatoes, has attacked the vines, causing the leaves to shrivel and some of the fruit to abort while tiny. The plants are still growing, and Brait will be happy if they yield as little as five tons to the acre, or about one-eighth of a Morning Star harvest from one acre. Chic Bay Area stores and restaurants such as the Zuni Café and Chez Panisse cheerfully shell out \$2.50 a pound for Brait's heirloom tomatoes. (Last year Morning Star reportedly paid farmers the equivalent of 3 cents a pound.) In the farm's packinghouse, Brait feeds me vine-ripened Green Zebras, verdigris-and-orange-mottled Marvel Stripes and Zapotec Pinks, wrinkled as a bulldog's muzzle (the breeder term is "catfaced"). I chew on his tiny Sun Gold cherry tomatoes and

---

**ARTHUR ALLEN** of Washington, D.C. is the author of *Vaccine: The Controversial Story of Medicine's Greatest Lifesaver*.  
*Photographer ED DARACK's next book is Victory Point.*