What's at stake: “A new mythos, affirming cooperation, freedom, peace, life, and unity, is struggling to be born to replace the old mythos based on competition, separateness, war, exclusion, and the idea that might makes right. Food is a critical key to this birth, because our food habits condition our mentality profoundly. . . .” Will Tuttle, *The World Peace Diet*, p. xiv

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Nutrition, Health

Facts About the Meat Industry

NUTRITION, HEALTH

Shocking Facts About the Meat Industry

DR. MERCOLA OSC ON DECEMBER 21, 2014
There are many reasons to switch to grass-fed beef. For example, I've discussed the nutritional differences between organic pastured beef and that from animals raised in confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) on many occasions.

Here, I will focus more on the current farming model, which is what makes CAFO beef such an inferior product in the first place, and the regulatory restrictions that sometimes make grass-fed meats hard to come by in the US.

Our food system is in dire need of change in order to protect human health, but it's a system that is difficult to change. It's not impossible, but it will require more people to change their shopping habits in order to drive up demand, and hence the industry's resolve to address the shortcomings.

**Multi-Faceted Problems Stemming from Industrial Farming Practices**

Industrial-scale farming has wide-ranging problems. Typically, the focus is on deteriorating food quality and safety. Certainly, the factory farm model directly contributes to Americans' increasing reliance on processed junk foods; the very same foods that are making us obese and riddled with chronic disease.

Emerging diseases in livestock, wildlife, and humans are also traceable to industrial farming practices. This includes antibiotic-resistant diseases, mad cow disease in cows, and chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk.

Infectious proteins causing mad cow and CWD have also been implicated in Alzheimer's disease in humans—the only differentiating factor being the time it takes for symptoms and death to occur.

According to one estimate, up to 13 percent of all Alzheimer's victims may actually have mad cow infection, acquired from eating contaminated CAFO meat.

The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) also attribute nearly 133,000 illnesses each year to contaminated chicken parts. The agency has set a goal to reduce illness by 34 percent.

As for salmonellosis cases, the USDA estimates contaminated chicken and turkey cause about 200,000 illnesses a year. FSIS' goal is to reduce that number by at least 25 percent by 2020. Factory farmed chicken is by far the greatest culprit when it comes to food poisoning.

Beef is also frequently tainted, and a USDA rule requiring labeling of mechanically tenderized beef has been under consideration for six years already, for the fact that the procedure compresses pathogens from the surface down into the meat, where it can more easily thrive and survive cooking. Mechanically tenderized beef has been blamed for at least five E.Coli outbreaks between 2003 and 2009.

But like a multi-headed hydra, the adverse effects of industrial farming sprout in many other directions as well. For example, large-scale factory farming is also responsible for:

- Loss of water quality through nitrogen and phosphorus contamination in rivers, streams, and ground water (which contributes to "dramatic shifts in aquatic ecosystems and
Agricultural pesticides also contaminate streams, groundwater, and wells, raising safety concerns to agricultural workers who use them.

A decline in nutrient density of 43 garden crops (primarily vegetables), which suggests possible tradeoffs between yield and nutrient content.

Large emission of greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.

Negative impact on soil quality through such factors as erosion, compaction, pesticide application, and excessive fertilization.

**Industrial Farming Is Destroying Food Quality**

"How do you alert people to the problems of industrial-scale farming?" a recent article in National Geographic asks.

"The issues are urgent, but they are also difficult to confront: The indifference to animal welfare, the strip-mining of poor countries’ resources to feed the rich, the environmental damage and antibiotic overuse can be so hard to face that many people just turn away."

Philip Lymbery, an animal-welfare activist and author of the book *Farmageddon: The True Cost of Cheap Meat*, notes that one of the techniques used to perpetuate factory farming is *secrecy*. For example, in Europe, eggs from caged hens are marked "battery eggs," whereas in the US, those same eggs are labeled as "farm fresh" or "country fresh."

If you don't know there’s a problem, you won't root for change, and that is exactly why the food industry is fighting tooth and nail to prevent labeling of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in the US, as well as legislation that would prevent them from fraudulently labeling GMOs as "Natural."

It is imperative for the food and chemical technology industries that currently monopolize agriculture to keep you in the dark about how your food is produced.

They've even lobbied for gag laws that make it a felony to video tape animal cruelty or other heinous activities occurring on factory farms, lest sympathy start upsetting the proverbial apple cart... When asked if he's opposed to animal farming for food altogether, Lymbery replies: "This is not, in any way, a call to vegetarianism. This is a call to put animals back on the farm. Pasture is one of the most ubiquitous habitats on the planet, covering 25 percent of the ice-free land surface. This is about using that ubiquitous habitat to produce great food in a way which is environmentally friendly and kinder to animals, leaving much-scarcer arable to grow crops directly for people..."
Three times a day, through our meal choices, we have an opportunity to change our lives and thereby help change the world.

It's as simple as buying free-range eggs, pasture-raised beef and chicken, and looking for milk that has come from cows that have been able to graze... We'll start to support family farms, will help to support a better environment, and will help to feed the world in a more humane and efficient way."

The US Meat Racket

Most all conventional meat and poultry (beef, pork, chicken, turkey, etc.) is raised in CAFOs. It's a corporate-controlled system characterized by large-scale, centralized, low profit-margin production, processing, and distribution systems.

This is the cheapest way to raise meat, for the largest profits. But the ultimate price is high, as there's a complete disregard for human health, the environment, and ethical treatment of animals and plant workers alike.

A series of recent articles, listed on NewAmerica.org, delve into the various aspects of the monopoly that is America’s meat market. In one, titled "The Meat Racket," Christopher Leonard reveals how the US meat industry has been seized by a mere handful of companies, and how this tightly controlled monopoly drives small livestock farmers out of business.

Other articles detail the drugs used in CAFO farming, and the risks this drug based farming poses to human health. One side effect is the creation of antibiotic-resistant superbugs, which I've addressed on numerous occasions.

Martha Rosenberg also recently highlighted a USDA Inspector General Report, which revealed that beef sold to the public have been found to be contaminated with a staggering 211 different drug residues, as well as heavy metals.

Hazardous growth-promoting drugs like Zilmax and Ractopamine are also routinely used in American CAFOs, and as much as 20 percent of the drug administered may remain in the meat you buy. Their use is disturbing when you consider that side effects in cattle include brain lesions, lameness, heart failure, and sudden death. Salon Magazine also recently ran an article on the subject of factory farming, penned by Lindsay Abrams, in which she discusses journalist Ted Genoways’ new book, The Chain—an expose of the American pork industry. She writes in part:

"What journalist Christopher Leonard recently did for Tyson and the chicken industry, Genoways... does for pork, recounting the history of Hormel Foods... as it evolved from humble beginnings to an industrial giant with a nearly myopic focus on expansion and acceleration, regardless of the costs.

And boy, are there costs... a mysterious neurological disorder linked to a machine that has workers breathing in a fine mist of pork brains... abuse suffered by the animals on whom workers' frustrations are instead taken out; and a decline in food safety that, unbelievably, is set to become the new industry standard."
Genoways book reveals how societal issues "fan out in all directions," as he puts it, from the way our pork is produced. Sure, there are many disturbing safety issues, but it doesn't end there. According to Genoways, another hidden issue is that many of the health hazards that affect plant workers affect already exploited immigrant workers to a disproportionate degree.


- See more at: http://bullhorn.nationofchange.org/shocking_facts_about_the_meat_industry#sthash.oB1IXFN3.dpuf

**ANIMAL RIGHTS AND PROTECTION**

**Steven Best**

*The Politics of Total Liberation*

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*The Politics of Total Liberation* vividly articulates the crises haunting the social and natural worlds, which are coming apart under the impact of global capitalism, human overpopulation,
species extinction, and runaway climate change. Steven Best contextualizes the 21st century as the decisive moment in human history wherein our actions will determine whether the future will be merely burdensome or catastrophic. Overcoming this crisis demands a new politics of total liberation that unites the disparate movements for human, animal, and earth liberation. Avoiding bravado or false optimism, Best questions humanity's ability to rise to the occasion, and dares to imagine a "world without us."


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About the Author

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Steven Best is an award-winning writer, noted international speaker, public intellectual, and seasoned activist with over 30 years in diverse political movements. He is Associate Professor of Humanities and Philosophy at the University of Texas at El Paso, USA.

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Rainforest Destruction: What's Meat Got To Do With It?

"I have no doubt that it is part of the gradual destiny of the human race in its gradual development to leave off the eating of animals." - Henry David Thoreau

Everyone knows that the rainforests are disappearing, but few realize how rapidly and how their food choices play a key role. Since 1945, half of the world's rainforests have been burned, bulldozed, and mined into oblivion. Each day, 140,000 acres of tropical forest are demolished, 8 acres every few seconds, and 50 to 150 different species become extinct. In fifty years, mining, logging, oil, cattle, and banking interests have destroyed what has taken nature hundreds of millions of years to create. At the current rate of devastation, the rainforests of the world will be completely leveled in another fifty years.

A world without rainforests is unsustainable for complex life forms. The rainforests deliver oxygen to the air, stabilize climates, and they regulate humidity, wind, and convection patterns. Although only 7% of the earth's total area, the rainforests provide a lush habitat for 50% of all animal and plant species, and a home for many indigenous peoples. They yield a rich bounty of fruit, nuts, spices, gums, and medicinal compounds; while rainforest plants have already provided cures for many diseases, only 1% of them have been studied. The rainforests are the oldest and the most diverse ecosystems on this planet.

Left standing, trees absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen. Burned or chopped down, they release concentrated amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, undermining the ozone layer. There is a growing consensus among the world's scientists that we are indeed in a new epoch of earth history: the Age of Global Warming. The evidence of global warming is visible everywhere: unprecedented heat waves and drought, super-ferocious storms, a dramatic rise in skin cancer rates, the breaking up of the Antarctic Ice Shelf, and increased pests and diseases.

While corporations like Mitsubishi, Arco, Texaco, and Honshu Paper are the main culprits in deforestation, every person who consumes meat also plays a role. One of the principle reasons for deforestation is to provide grazing ground for cattle. In terms of global warming, this means that enormous amounts of carbon dioxide are released into the atmosphere. The grazing of cows and other ruminant animals also causes the emission of two other major ozone destroying gases: nitrous oxide (in fertilizer) and over a hundred million tons of methane gas a year -- which some scientists see as becoming the primary global warming
gas in the next 50 years.

Americans eat more beef than any other country in the world, consuming 32% of the total production. Meat-eaters are not only destroying their own health by consuming these toxic products, they are contributing to numerous other problems such as world hunger (the land needed to feed cattle is 20 times the amount needed to feed people), the expropriation of people from their lands (used to graze cattle), the destruction of human and animal habitat, and the aggravation of global warming. Experts estimate that every person who switches to a pure vegetarian (vegan) diet saves an acre of trees every year.

Before biting into the next hamburger, one might consider the real cost — 55 square feet of rainforest, 12 pounds of grain, and 2500 gallons of water. I for one believe that the earth and its teeming life forms are worth much more than fast food chains and Big Macs. The best way to care for the environment is to become a vegetarian; to be consistent in one's beliefs, an environmentalist must also be a vegetarian.

END VEGETARIAN ACTION NEWSLETTER #15, January 14, 2015

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Dick Bennett

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