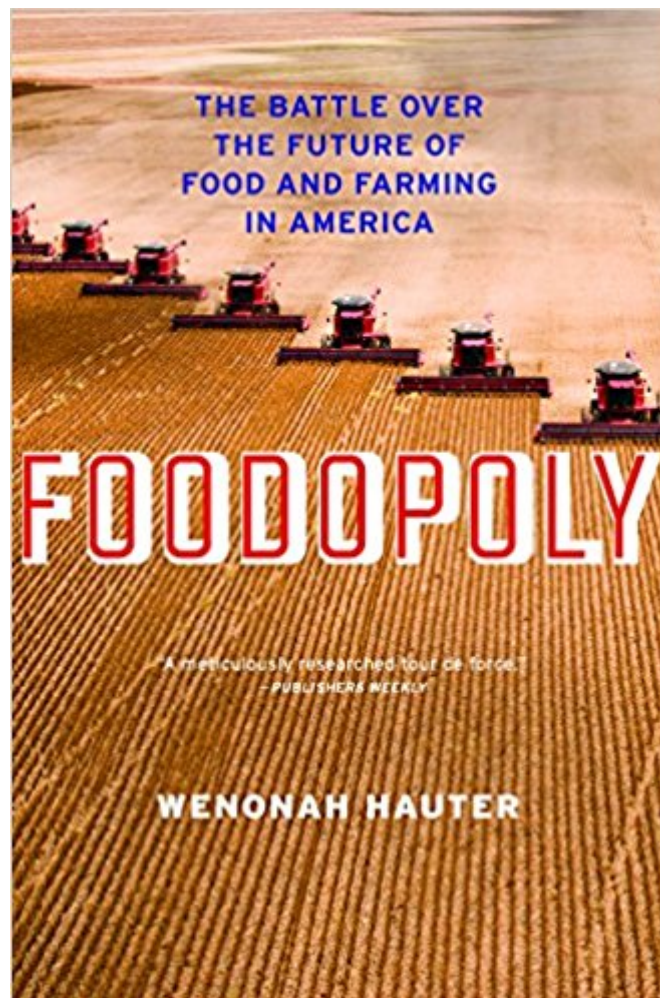




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Foodopoly: The Battle Over The Future Of Food And Farming In America



Synopsis

A terrific primer on the corporate control of food in the United States, and the actions of those who fight back (Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed and Starved*), Foodopoly takes aim at the real culprit behind America's food crisis: the ever-growing consolidation and corporatization of food production, which prevents farmers from raising healthy crops and limits the choices that people can make in the grocery store. In the tradition of the bestselling *The World According to Monsanto*, Foodopoly tells the shocking story of how agricultural policy has been hijacked by lobbyists, driving out independent farmers and food processors in favor of companies such as Cargill, Tyson, Kraft, and ConAgra. A meticulously documented account of how we have lost control of our food system (Steve Gliessman, professor emeritus of agroecology, UC Santa Cruz), the book demonstrates how the impacts ripple far and wide, from economic stagnation in rural communities at home to famines in poor countries overseas. In the end, author Wenonah Hauter argues that solving this crisis will require a complete structural shift, a grassroots movement to reshape our food system from seed to table—a change that is about politics, not just personal choice.

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Customer Reviews

In a meticulously researched tour de force, Hauter, the executive director of Food & Water Watch, examines the pernicious effects of consolidation in every sector of the food industry. Not only has deregulation and the weakening of antitrust laws led to a significant reduction of competition, it has

failed to allow the consumer to benefit from the economies of scale achieved by larger production facilities. More dangerous for our democracy, Hauter argues, the surviving firms have used their wealth to capture the political system in order to rewrite the regulations for their benefit. They have persuaded governments to subsidize their irrigation costs with publicly funded water projects; successfully pushed for the enactment of the Cuban sugar tariff, which directly led to high-fructose corn syrup becoming the sweetener of choice; and weakened oversight by federal bureaucracies, preventing the FDA from testing meat for contamination before and during processing. In fact, Hauter suggests, the FDA is no longer capable of enforcing its regulations at all and must resort to persuasion and, at times, begging. Though alarming, Hauter's argument is undermined by her resort to the suggestion of conspiracy on occasion. Overall, though, the book deserves a place on the shelf beside the burgeoning journalistic explorations of the dangers of the current system. (Dec.)

--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Excellent" Wenonah Hauter, the executive director of Food and Water Watch details the takeover of our food system." Mark Bittman, The New York Times "From familiar ground such as the obesity epidemic and junk-food advertising, to the lesser-known yet important terrain of corporate supply chains and a largest-takes-all food infrastructure, Hauter provides bountiful evidence to buttress her deep working knowledge of the food system. . . . Foodopoly is politically brave; not just naming names in the agri-industrial complex, but pushing us to think more deeply about the politics and economics that dictate our diets beyond our own roles as shoppers and eaters." San Francisco Chronicle "A shocking and powerful reminder of the distance between our image of the family farmer and the corporate agribusiness reality. Make sure you read it before dinner." Bill McKibben, author of Earth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet "Foodopoly is a meticulously documented account of how we have lost control of our food system, as well as a roadmap for taking it back. We must respond to this call to action." Steve Gliessman, Professor Emeritus of Agroecology, UC-Santa Cruz "Food is life. Today food and life are being hijacked by corporations; seed by Monsanto, trade by Cargill and giant agribusiness, retail by Walmart. And our earth, our farmers, our health are being sacrificed to increase corporate profits and control over our food systems. This is the story Hauter tells in Foodopoly. This is a story we must hear in order to create food democracy and food freedom." Dr. Vandana Shiva "Wenonah Hauter knows where the bodies are buried beneath the amber waves of grain. This is a terrific primer on the corporate control of food in the US, and the actions of those who fight back. By turns heartbreaking, infuriating and inspiring, Foodopoly is required reading for anyone who wants

to understand both the scale of the challenge in reclaiming our food system, and the urgency for doing so."#151;Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed and Starved: The Hidden Battle for the World Food System* "This may be the most important book on the politics of food ever written in the US. Hauter doesn't buy the notion that we can buy our way to a healthy future. She puts the blame for our food crisis squarely where it belongs: on the political and agribusiness leaders who benefit from a corporate-dominated food system. Read this essential book and take action!"#151;Maude Barlow, author of *Blue Covenant: The Global Water Crisis and the Fight for the Right to Water* "Foodopoly makes a compelling case for how corporate consolidation and control of the food supply are at the root cause of a host of problems. Hauter is absolutely right that unless we break the stranglehold of corporate power with significant policy change, such as enforcing federal antitrust laws, the food movement will continue to have only marginal success."#151;Michele Simon, president of *Eat Drink Politics* and author of *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines Our Health and How to Fight Back* "A meticulously researched tour de force."#151;Publishers Weekly "We all know how Monopoly ends: one person corners Boardwalk and Park Place and the rest are screwed. Winner-take-all is fine for a board game, but disastrous, as Wenonah Hauter reveals in this important new book, when it comes to our food. In compelling prose, Hauter breaks down why the concentration of corporate power over food matters#151;and what we can do about it. Kudos to Hauter for this vital book#151;essential reading for anyone who wants safe food and clean water."#151;Anna LappÃfÂ©, founder, Food Mythbusters and author, *Diet for a Hot Planet*

In this encyclopedic examination of the history and politics of the American food production system, long-time agricultural scholar-activist Wenonah Hauter dissects the links binding agricultural policy, giant financial interests, and food production conglomerates into a highly consolidated, virtually impenetrable fabric resistant to input from public health, environmental, labor, or consumer interests. The "cheap food" lavishly displayed in our supermarkets is hardly cheap given the price we all pay for deteriorating health, disappearing soil, dangerously polluted land, water and air, economic crises for farm labor, and the most cynical disregard for consumer health. The enormous profitability of our highly monopolized food production system exists in large part because there is virtually no requirement upon those profiting most to bear the cost of these negative externals. As one of many examples, the drive to monetize every ounce of animal flesh by routinely feeding healthy animals antibiotics so that they might quickly grow to market weight in cheaper, filthy, crowded conditions has resulted in the squandering of the greatest medical advance of the 20th Century - antibiotics - as our "miracle drugs" become useless against drug-resistant strains of

microorganisms emanating from these animals and infecting foods intended for human consumption. Today, while advanced antibiotics (many with serious adverse effects) address some of these organisms, we are also faced with organisms that seem resistant to any drugs now available. Even organic foods, that last outpost of sanity for health-conscious consumers seeking respite from the prevailing situation, have been compromised both by efforts to weaken organic standards, as well as by a poorly conceived public relations campaign attacking organics as "unnecessary" and even "elitist." If you are concerned about what has happened to the American food supply today - and you should be, because it costs you plenty whether you know it or not -- Foodopoly will be a fascinating read and a valuable resource.

Living in the Midwest, I have lamented agribusiness's rapid increase in huge factory farms and feedlots, and the resulting decline in small farms and small towns. Hauter takes you step by step through how and why this has happened. She thoroughly explains how a very few corporations have taken over all aspects of food production, including such things as produce, food safety, factory farming, distribution, and specific examples of raising hogs, beef, and poultry in huge, confined feeding operations. When a chicken spends its whole life in an area of a couple of square feet, it makes me reluctant to eat chickens anymore. The poor farmer gets little or no money for raising the product. She also points out that these corporations, by being politically very active, resist any regulations. In the end, she outlines what we need to do to stop corporate control of the entire food chain. The book should be mandatory reading by congress and the president.

Ms. Hauter is known via Food & Water Watch to be a proponent of clean eating and corporate responsibility, so Foodopoly is meant to be a whistleblowing on the corporations whose profits are driving our eating habits, and Americans are following the unhealthy trends, without batting an eye. With diabetes on the rise in just about every developed country, not to mention the obesity epidemic that will kill more children in the youngest current generation than any other time, not counting war or historical disease, Ms. Hauter asks all of us to step back and review how we allowed America to get here. From farm bills that breed greed to even the First Lady's health plan for children, American farmers and small businesses are left behind to watch the "big boys" vertically integrate, introduce GMOs, add fillers like corn, sugar, fats and salts, all the while selling our health to the lowest bidding importer. Obviously, there are no quick solutions to regaining control of our foods as a nation, but as individuals, we certainly have a choice, from the kitchen counter to the voting booth. We can choose farm co-ops and farmers markets, smaller grocery stores, and even if you are 1 in 3 who shop at

Walmart to save on groceries, choosing carefully the brands and ingredients you are feeding your family.

This book shows the true horror of our corporate food producers and the danger to all our lives because these producers are only interested in profit, not nutrition or health. I have recommended the book to my friends and family. We need to keep informed!

There is so much to say about this book. It covers TONS of information regarding our food system, agribusiness corporations and how their greed threatens our food security and environmental sustainability, the political power in government and agencies that protect these corporations, and what we as citizens can do on the grassroots level to solve this huge problem. I Highly suggest this read to any and all people, because it makes you realize the severity of the food issues plaguing our country and that corporate greed threatens the health and livelihood of Americans and future generations. This book was highly informative on this topic and the more people who read it the better because it definitely helps raise awareness on food security and will most definitely help spark the much needed social movement into gear to fix the disaster of a food system we currently blindly follow.

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