When a Foodie Meets an Economist

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WELCOME TO Fabulous LAS VEGAS NEVADA

What Happens In VEGAS, Stays In VEGAS
“toxic food environment”
“Americans have a national eating disorder.”
“a holocaust of a different kind”
Join the Pamela Anderson pledge:
I want to eat better, feel better, and stop supporting cruelty to chickens, pigs, cows, fish, and other animals who are raised and killed for food. By signing my name, I pledge to explore veganism/vegetarianism for at least 30 days.
“THE industrial production of animal products is nasty business. From mad cow, E. coli and salmonella to soil erosion, manure runoff and pink slime, factory farming is the epitome of a broken food system.”

Food companies use salt, sugar, and fat as “weapons”

Food companies need to be held “accountable for the social costs that keep climbing”

“To diminish these cravings, they would have to pull back on their use of salt, sugar, and fat, perhaps by imposing industry-wide limits”
THE JOURNEY OF A FOOD INTOLERANT AND AN INTOLERABLE FOODIE.
The Problem

Too much sugar, too much meat, too much processed food, too many pesticides; we’re too fat, spending too much on health care.

Agriculture is too corporate, too monoculture, too subsidized, unsustainable.

- “Hidden Battle”
- “Dark Side”
- “Took Over”
- “Hidden Toxins”
- “Secret Take Over”
The Solution

local, organic, slow, natural, unprocessed

A return to nature

Taxes, subsidies, regulation, social pressure
“Even while I protest the assembly-line production of our food, our songs, our language, and eventually our souls, I know that it was a rare home that baked good bread in the old days.”
“Something’s just not right—our air is clean, our water is pure, we all get plenty of exercise, everything we eat is organic and free-range, and yet nobody lives past thirty.”
Pollan: corn is “too cheap” and we should “pay more, eat less”

Nestle: “food is too cheap in this country”

Bittman: “Prices for these foods are unjustifiably low”

Pew blog (May 2014): “Is food too cheap for our own good?”
842 million hungry people in the world

- 553 million: Asia and the Pacific
- 227 million: Africa
- 47 million: Latin America/Caribbean
- 16 million: Developed countries
Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in U.S. households, 1995-2013

Prevalence rates for 1996 and 1997 were adjusted for the estimated effects of differences in data collection screening protocols used in those years.

Physiological
Safety
Loving/Belonging
Esteem
Actualization
Are local foods the solution to our health, environmental, and food security problems?
Miles traveled is a poor indicator of environmental impact.

~80% of global warming impacts happen on the farm.
For every $100 spent at a locally owned business, $73 remains in the local economy, $27 leaves.

For every $100 spent at a non-locally owned business, $43 remains in the local economy, $57 leaves.
What kind of food future will we have?
Thinking about the future, which of the following food and agriculture challenges are you most concerned about?

- Inequitable distribution of food throughout the world, 8.1%
- U.S. food imports and exports, 8.4%
- Involvement of large corporations in agriculture, food production, and food processing, 8.5%
- The profitability of U.S. farmers, 9.1%
- Current government policies directed at farms and food production, 9.5%
- Finding ways to prevent adverse environmental impacts of food production, 10.0%
- Producing enough food to meet the demands of a growing world population, 11.1%
- Changing the type and quantity of food eaten to address obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, 12.0%
- Having affordable food for me and my family, 23.3%

Source: Food Demand Survey (FoodS), Oklahoma State University, December 2014
Which of the two following options do you believe would be most effective in addressing the challenges you thought were most concerning?

Adopt a more "natural" agriculture production system - more local, organic, unprocessed crops and food, 76.23%

Adopt a more "technological" agricultural production system - more innovation, science, and research in crops and food, 23.77%

Source: Food Demand Survey (FooDS), Oklahoma State University, December 2014
40% less time in food preparation
81% less time on meal clean-up
Today, less than 10% of disposable income spent on food
Annual income spent on food
(% of household consumptive expenditures)
SOURCE: USDA/ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE, 2008

A map of the world based on food costs as a percentage of income compared with incidence of juvenile malnutrition.

The size of the country represents the percentage spent on food. The darker the color, the higher the rate of malnutrition.
More food per acre
More food using less land and less labor
Australian Ag Productivity

Living longer
“There is no doubt that [the food system] delivers—more nutritious food with wider variety; improved safety, with less environmental impacts; and greater convenience than at any time in the Nation’s history.”
My take

• Need an optimistic, forward looking vision for the future of food
Innovation, Entrepreneurship
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