

Farm and Food Policy

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Available at www.nwveg.org/mvp_resources.php

PURPOSE

- # To provide an overview of farm and food policy in the US
- # To show how food choices, availability, and costs are affected
- # To portray outcomes for our future

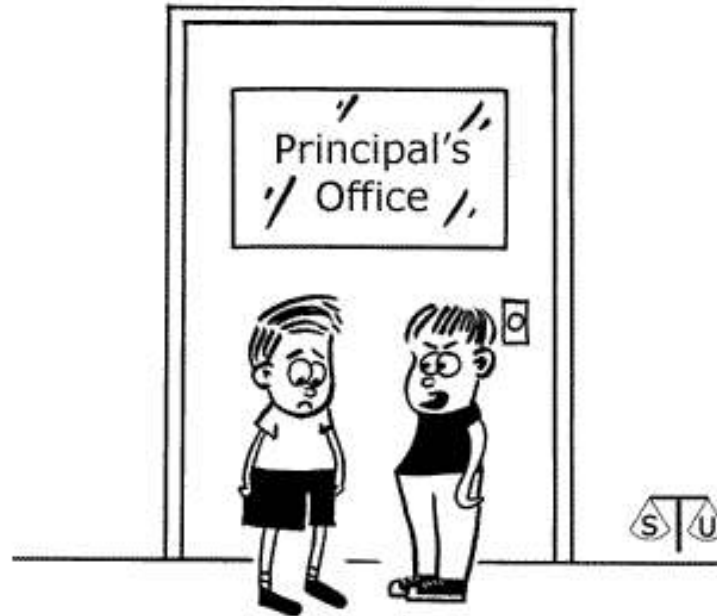
PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- # Food Industry Policy and Practice
- # US Farm Bill and Related Trade Policy
- # Sustainable Agriculture
- # Organic Agriculture
- # Genetically Engineered Foods
- # Fair Trade
- # Our Voice and Our Action

Industry Policy and Practice

The technology mindset that would dump billions of pounds of deadly chemicals onto the soil, and mix the genetic material of different species, and build factory farms where livestock are treated like industrial commodities, and clone animals to give them uniform size, has a deeply arrogant view of the natural world. It regards Nature as something to be conquered and controlled for short-term profit.

Eric Schlosser in Foreward to *Organic Manifesto*



I'm just mad we got caught for something so small. My daddy made \$72 million before getting busted.

CORPORATE STRATEGY

- # Maximize profits
- # Use PR tactics, consistent with corporate culture, to influence consumers
- # Promote and defend (lawyers, lobbyists, marketing specialists, advertisers)
- # Influence elected and appointed officials
- # Influence regulations and regulators
- # Collaborate in Trade Associations

Resources: Policy and Practice

- # *Appetite For Profit: How The Food Industry Undermines Our Health And How To Fight Back*, by Michele Simon, 2006. And supporting website at www.appetiteforprofit.com
- # *Food Politics: How The Food Industry Influence Nutrition and Health*, by Marion Nestle, 2007. And supporting website at www.foodpolitics.com
- # *Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out On How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care And Deceiving Americans*, by Wendell Potter, 2010

The US Farm Bill and Related Trade Policy

“Before we go back to organic agriculture, somebody is going to have to decide what 50 million people we are going to let starve.”

- Broadly publicized quote from Ag Secretary Earl Butz, Nixon and Ford Administration

CURRENT US FARM BILL

- # Passed: June, 2008 (veto override)
- # 68% to Title IV, Nutrition Programs
(trending up)
- # 11% to Title I, Commodity Programs
(trending mixed)
- # 7% to Title II, Conservation
(trending up)

2007-2008 FARM BILL

- # Increased funding for hunger and conservation programs
- # Discussion on more reasonable subsidies
- # Trade with meaningful labor and environmental protections
- # Emphasis on sustainable practices
- # Strong emphasis on family farms and attracting young workers to agriculture

Debate on 2012 Farm Bill

- # Likely no structural changes that were envisioned before November elections
- # Reconstituted House Ag Committee will drive funding
- # Conservation and nutrition programs will likely be targeted to reduce costs

RESOURCES FOR THE FARM BILL

Food Fight: The Citizen's Guide To A Food and Farm Bill, by Daniel Imhoff, 2007

National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition,
www.sustainableagriculture.net (includes an informative weekly blog)



Michelangelo's famous statue of The David returns to Italy this week after a successful 12 week, 20 city tour of the? USA .

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainability rests on the principle that we must meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

From the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, www.sustainableagriculture.net

FEATURES OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

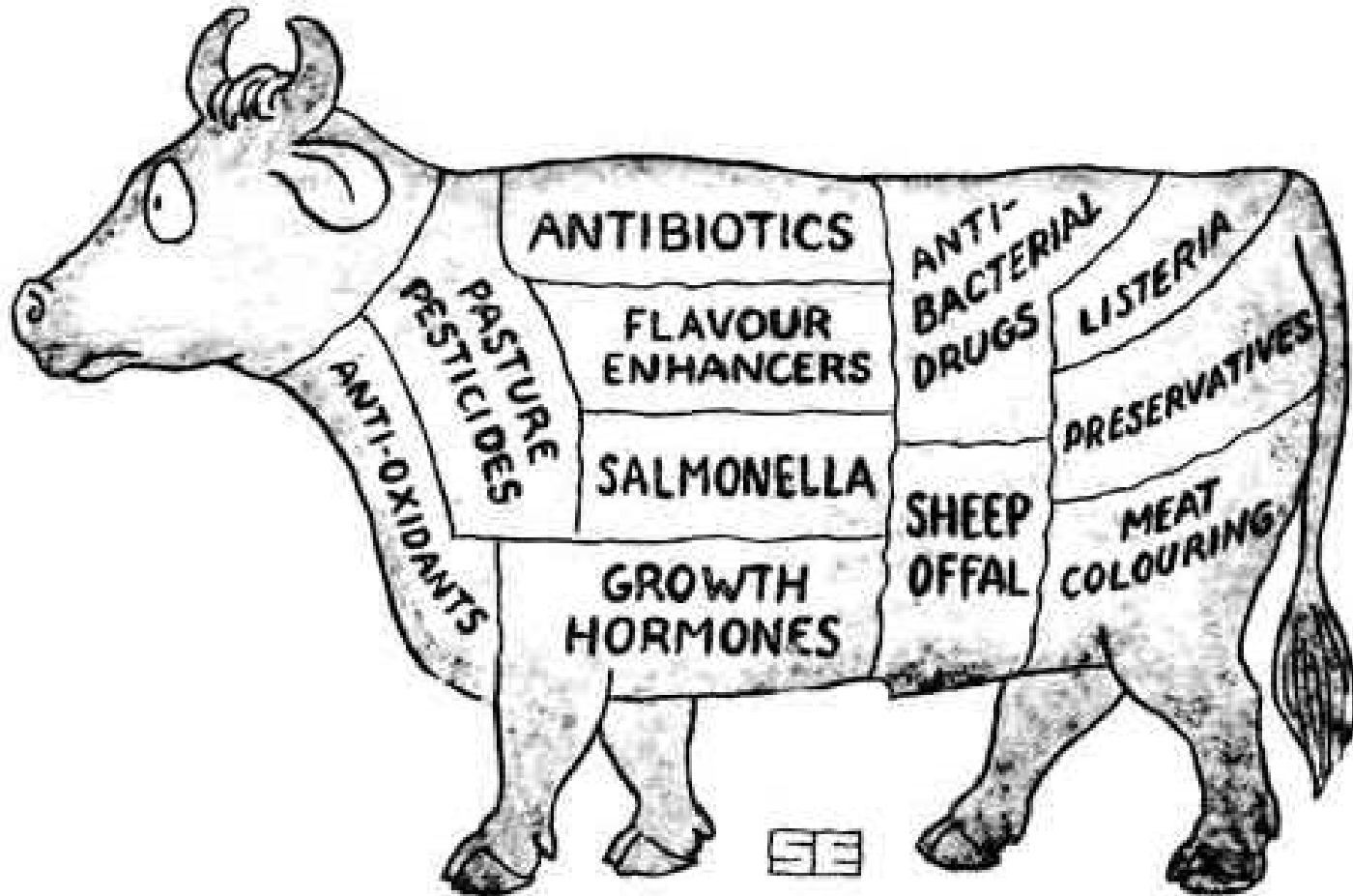
- # An integrated system of plant and animal production practices
- # A system that enhances environmental quality and the natural resource base
- # A practice that makes the most efficient use of renewable resources and on-farm resources
- # A system that perpetuates economic viability of the farms and farmers, large and small

ENCOURAGING TRENDS

- # Much smaller than conventional ag, but rising
- # Defined broadly in the US Code (title 7, chap 88)
- # Ag Secretary Vilsack boldly places a certified organic “people’s garden” at USDA HQ
- # Michelle Obama places a certified organic garden at the White House
- # Vilsack selected Kathleen Merrigan, advocate of SA, as Deputy in early 2009
- # Strong, dedicated SA movement in place

CONVENTIONAL AG SHORTCOMINGS

- # Outbreaks of tainted food, and food recalls
- # Applies large quantities of pesticides to soils
- # Consumes fossil fuels
- # Draws water from aquifers in excess of recharge
- # Depletes topsoil nutrients
- # Erodeable soil goes to rivers and estuaries
- # Antibiotics and hormones to livestock cause problems to humans and other animals



RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- # Article from UC Davis, leading land grant univ. on SA, at <http://www.sarep.ucdavis.edu/concept.htm>
- # Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education at www.sare.org (part of USDA)
- # NSAC at www.sustainableagriculture.net
- # Union of Concerned Scientists at www.ucsusa.org/food_and_agriculture

Organic Agriculture

The USDA organic seal has become a symbol that people can trust to ensure that there are no toxic chemicals in their food.

*Maria Rodale in *Organic Manifesto* (2010)*

FEATURES OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- # Defined in Legislation and Enabling Regulations
- # Strong and dedicated farming sector
- # Practice retains topsoil
- # Practice avoids chemical inputs
- # Practice minimizes water use
- # Farm laborers not exposed to pesticides
- # Practice has potential to sequester up to 40% of current CO₂ emissions

LEGISLATION FOR ORGANIC FARMS AND FOOD

- # Organic Foods Production Act (1990)
- # Adoption delayed by biotech and chemical companies
- # Standards adopted in 2002
- # Regs and enforcement neglected (02 to 09)
- # Consumer demand increasing
- # Imports can be a problem
- # Loopholes exploited for livestock and poultry

RESOURCES FOR ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- # *Organic Manifesto: How Organic Farming Can Heal Our Planet, Feed The World, and Keep Us Safe* by Maria Rodale (2010)
- # *Soil Not Oil* by Vandana Shiva (2008)
- # Oregon Tilth, www.tilth.org, certifies farmers and processors and has important educational and research components
- # Organic Consumers Association at www.organicconsumers.org with emphasis on organic ag practices and condemnation of GMO

Genetically Engineered Foods

Genetically engineered crops were created not because they're productive but because they're patentable. Their economic value is oriented not toward helping subsistence farmer to feed themselves but toward feeding more livestock for the already overfed rich.

Amory & Hunter Lovins, Rocky Mountain Institute

BACKGROUND ON GE FOODS

- # 75 - Asilomar Conference, Monterey Bay
- # Early 80s - Can GE plants resist Roundup?
- # 87 - WH Directive. PROMOTE BIOTECH
- # 92 - FDA rules on GE food safety
- # 96 - GE corn and soy sales rise briskly
- # 96 - Monsanto buys seed companies
- # 98 - Most European countries reject GE
- # 02 - Organic standards reject GE

GE MARKET PRACTICES

- # Revolving door(business and government)
- # Buyers subjected to strict contracts
- # Aggressive litigation when opportune
- # Controll all research and oversight
- # Aggressive propaganda campaigns

October 2007



Concepts For Propaganda

- # GMOs are needed to feed the world
- # GMOs have been thoroughly tested and proven safe
- # GMOs increase yield
- # GMOs reduce the use of agricultural chemicals
- # GMOs can be contained, and therefore coexist with non-GMOs

HEALTH CONCERNS

- # The few health safety studies are discredited and marginalized
- # Proposed studies squelched, and scientists discredited
- # Rising consumption of GE foods corresponds to rise in allergies and asthma
- # Known toxins and carcinogens overlooked

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

- # Pollinating crops spread with wind
- # Seed diversity lost
- # Superweeds need increasingly stronger pesticides
- # Topsoil losses, high fertilizer needs, high pesticide inputs with accompanying pollution
- # Water needs are more than conventional agricultural practices

RESOURCES FOR GE FOODS

- # *Food Fray* by Lisa Weasel (2009)
- # *The World According To Monsanto* by Marie-Monique Robin (2010)
- # Organic Consumers Association, weekly newsletter at www.organicconsumers.org
- # Institute For Responsible Technology, Jeffrey M. Smith, ED. www.responsibletechnology.org
- # Center For Food Safety, Andrew Kimbrell, ED. www.centerforfoodsafety.org

Fair Trade

An organized social movement and market-based approach to build equitable, long-term partnerships between consumers in North America and producers in developing countries

FAIR TRADE'S PURPOSE

- # Partner with marginalized producers and workers
- # Move them to security and economic self sufficiency
- # Become stakeholders in their enterprise
- # Enjoy a wider role in the global arena

FAIR TRADE ORGANIZATIONS

- # See www.fairtradefederation.org for detailed overview on this subject
- # See www.transfairusa.org for certification
- # Equal Exchange (coffee, tea, chocolate, snacks)
- # Oxfam (see www.oxfamgifts.com)
- # Catholic Relief Services at crfairtrade.org (coffee, chocolate, handcrafts)

FAIR TRADE IN A LOCAL CONTEXT

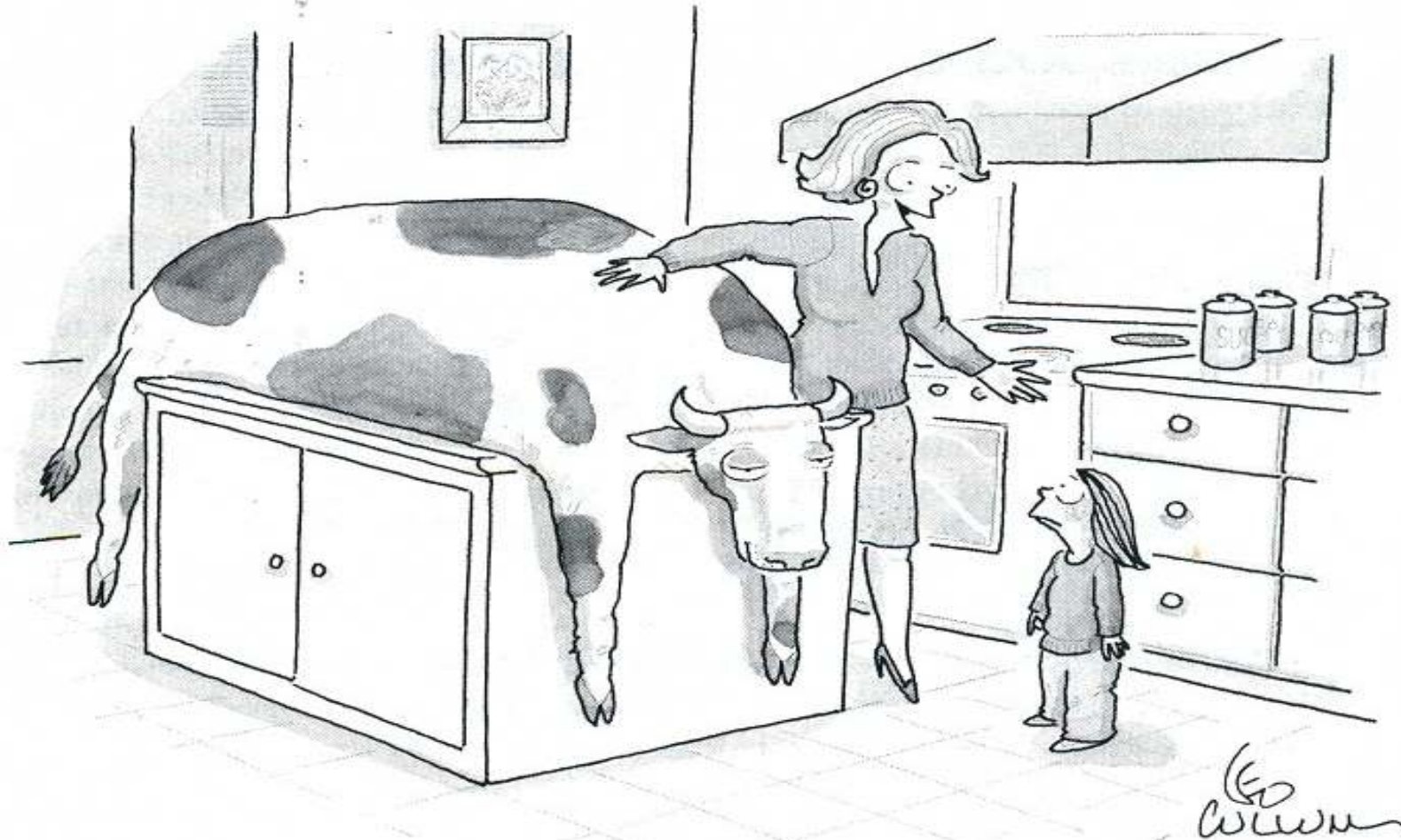
Purchases direct to business
Money stays in community

- # Community Supported Agriculture
- # Farm Stands and U Picks
- # Farmers Markets
- # Food Coops (Food Front, Peoples, Alberta)
- # Food Carts
- # Vendor Fairs
- # Bartering
- # Gleaning (to food bank, other charities)

Our Voice and Our Actions

Never doubt that a group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

- Margaret Mead PhD, Anthropologist and Author



"Mommy wants you to know where your food comes from."

ONE PERSON, MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- # Respond to media misinformation
- # Boycott harmful products and inform others
- # Volunteer and support oversight groups
- # Contact elected officials
- # Donate to causes that reflect your values
- # Live lightly with compassion for all

Be The Change You Want

*Every choice we make can be a celebration
of the world we want.*

- Frances Moore Lappé, Author and
Lecturer