

Farmageddon Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Farmageddon is a shocking compendium of the facts and figures about how the mass production of cheap meat influences our world, ranging from water and air pollution, to threatening species, to making us obese and sick, in order to show why we must return to more traditional farming techniques to sustainably feed the world.*

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



First of all, *Farmageddon* has nothing to do with the 2011 film of the same name (which is really good, btw). Isabel Oakeshott and Philip Lymbery co-authored this book in 2014, to raise awareness regarding the issues with mass meat production in factory farming.

Lymbery is the CEO of Compassion in World Farming, a UK registered charity and animal welfare organization, which fights for fair conditions for animal livestock and against all agricultural mass production systems, which drive most of the meat we consume today.

The book is a compendium of incredibly shocking statistics, showing how far the impact of cheap meat really goes, from fish to air, from famine to bacteria, from cramming to cloning.

To stay focused on the most important part, I've decided to share 3 lessons from the last part of the book, which address the core of the issue, and what we can do about it:

1. Even China starts to farm industrially now, which is a huge problem.
2. The only way to undo the damage of factory farming is to go back to more traditional ways.
3. We as food consumers must vote with our voices and dollars to save the future of food.

Ready to get real about food? Prepare for Farmageddon!

Lesson 1: The more popular factory farming gets, the more problems it causes, and now even China catches on.

China is the world's biggest country, with over 1.3 billion people living there. So whenever something becomes a trend in China, it's likely to affect the whole world, as they make up almost 20% of the entire population of the planet. In the past decade, China has gotten wealthier and wealthier, as it slowly goes from developing to developed country, mimicking a lot of what more Western countries, like the US or Germany, do.

As the middle class in China gets stronger, so does the demand for meat, because now the majority of the Chinese population can finally afford it on a regular basis. The average pork consumption per person, for example, has topped the British average of 25 kg/year already, with **the average Chinese person consuming 34 kg of pork annually**.

And Chinese meat manufacturers are happy to comply, for example Muyuan Foodstuff Co., Ltd. shoots for 9 million pigs per year in 2017, while others go as far as importing especially well-bred pigs from over 9,000 km away via Boeing 747 – a £330,000 trip.

Next to the usual side effects of mass pig farming, like bacteria development, low quality meat and horrible conditions, these companies are also prone to scandals, often using steroids and adding chemicals to the animal food and meat products, in order to cheat their way to meeting safety standards.

Lesson 2: Going back to traditional farming can undo the damage mass meat production is causing.

Of course going back to more traditional farming methods is a rather obvious answer to this problem, but it's still the best one. However, there's something even easier we can do right now: **waste less food**.

The US alone waste about 30% of all the food consumers purchase. Imagine that! If you spend \$30 on food, \$10 goes down the drain (or into the trash can, rather). Worldwide, we waste about 11 billion (!) chickens, 270 million pigs and 59 million cows – every year.

If we did nothing but cut down how much food we waste, we'd easily be able to feed the world.

This would also save precious resources, for example some of the 28% of agricultural land, which is used to produce food that goes to waste, the supply water of which alone could take care of the domestic needs of 9 billion people.

Traditional farming is also much more sustainable for all involved: humans, land and animals. Humans can't eat grass, but cows naturally do, so instead of feeding them grain and fish we can eat, we can just let them eat what they want and give us milk and meat in return (without shipping it across the globe). Due to the natural cycle management of traditional farming, soil would be replenished and stay fertile for much longer too.

Lesson 3: We, the food consumers, must vote with both our voices and the dollars we spend, to save the future of food.

Do you buy the food you eat?

Yes? You do? Then guess what: You're part of the problem AND also the only solution. No one but us, we, the food consumers, can turn this around. What the food industry does is give us what we demand, as long as we demand it enough. **So every dollar spent, every complaint made, and every food label read makes a difference.**

We want earth to survive, after all, it's the only way we can survive, and the only way to make that happen is to make a conscious choice with how we spend our money.

One thing you can do to instantly make better choices is to look out for labels like "grass-fed" and "pasture-raised," which indicate that the animals ate grass – their natural choice of food. Avoid meaningless ones like "farm-fresh" or "all-natural," which companies are legally allowed to use, even if raising their animals in horrific conditions, and you'll be one step closer to making a difference!

Farmageddon Review

I seriously couldn't believe how many "Holy shit!" moments I had while reading the blinks. The number of horrifying statistics in *Farmageddon* is insane. It's like a slap in the face with a pork chop, saying "Hello, buy higher quality food!" Much needed and recommended book.

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What else can you learn from the blinks?

- How many farms just raise one type of animal
- Why California produces as much waste as the entire population of the UK
- How much food really depends on the existence of bees, and why it's seriously threatened
- What happens to the 100 billion farmed fish each year
- Why cramming animals together isn't even space efficient

- How much water and oil factory farming wastes per acre
- What the “suicide belt” in India is about
- How mass produced meat makes us fat and sick
- The surprising double role of genetically modified crops
- How many cloning attempts are really successful

Who would I recommend the Farmageddon summary to?

The 15 year old who loves to eat Schnitzel and won't finish his veggies, the 28 year old lumberjack, who eats at McDonalds more than three times a week, and anyone who doesn't read the food labels while grocery shopping.