There were a lot of catch phrases and statistical analyses in this program but one that really got my attention was the fact that despite all the emphasis on agriculture and support and subsidies from the government less than 3% of farm land in the U.S. is designated to cultivation of fruits and vegetables. Besides the environmental effects of the monoculture practices of the big industry, the fact that these practices results in a high availability of token ingredients inevitably results in incentives for practices that move us away from our omnivore roots. It may be that as population increases and our resources become more limited the need for synthetically produced sources of nutrients becomes inevitable but that is not the case currently. Hopefully before we have to submit to a regiment other than the natural one our collective knowledge of the matrix of ingredients that provide for optimal health have improved too. As is we know far too little to adequately satisfy the complex nutritional needs of our bodies.

As was demonstrated in the documentary our most effective solution is to look for as many different sources of nutrients as possible. This single maxim brings forth plant based sources almost by default. The endless variety of fruits and vegetables and many ways to consume them automatically put us on a path of nutritional diversity. If alongside of this plant based general eating habit we reserve special occasions for animal based products then we can be sure that we have embarked on a sustainable path without feeling of depravity or social awkwardness. We neither have to be the one with an empty plate at the family BBQ nor should refuse to partake in a friend’s birthday cake. So long as our normal daily intake varied and diverse we build up reserve allowances for what until not so long ago was rightfully considered luxury food.

This point was further illustrated by apparent low cost of food items in the grocery stores. What the casual glance at price tags neglects to see is the cost of each actual unit of life sustaining nutrient. The price of processed food includes the cost of artificial colors and flavors, packaging, and advertising. If the rice was based on the actual nutrients and freshness ingredients the numbers would surly have to reflect that. The cheap food fallacy is predicated on the ignorance of the consumer. A consumer that considers every meal as a step on a life road that could either be long and productive or short sluggish will certainly consider the cost of the meal as an investment. Such investment hedges against healthcare cost and provides for many more years of financial viability.

The program also demonstrated the other side of the spectrum which is energy expenditure. Lack of physical activity can easily partner with consumption of calorie dense processed food to advance a self-fulfilling mechanism. The body starved of nutrients craves more food but intakes empty calories instead. The empty calories are stored as fat. The fat gain makes moving around and exercising difficult and the cycle continues.

Watching this documentary could initially be demoralizing experience. But if we consider that we ultimately are in charge of our lives the experience becomes eye-opening and empowering. The solution is neither expensive nor difficult. If one keeps to a diet that is based on consumption of as many different fruits and vegetables as possible half of the problem is solved. For the other half a moderate regiment of regular physical activity is sufficient. So as the lady in the program says: the weight of the nation maybe out of control but we can fix that.