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## Should mass production be the main method of producing food?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2015) to mass-produce is “to produce a lot of goods cheaply using machines in a factory”. While mass production is now a social “norm” and a common method of producing goods, its practicality and vitality are still often debated. This should not be the main method for producing food because of the dramatic decrease in quality of food when quantity is the prevailing factor and its negative environmental impacts. Conversely, mass production does yield some positive results, such as an increased efficiency. Local production of food is also not enough to provide for the global population. I chose this topic because it is a truly global dilemma that almost no one is exempt from; nearly every corner of the world is gripped by the influence of mass production. This was simply not an issue that could be ignored, so I took it upon myself to delve further into it.

The first, and perhaps most important, reason against mass production is the generally lower standards of food when quantity is the main priority. Not only is the quality of the product decreased, but it also runs a much higher risk of contamination. One such example of this contamination dates back to 1992, with the Jack in the Box fast food chain. The restaurants sparked an intense E. coli outbreak that was later traced back to several mass-slaughter plants, located throughout the U.S. and Canada, owned by the Von Corporation (Outbreaks, 2015). This makes it clear that mass produced products are often lower in quality, and can even be dangerous for human consumption, thus proving that mass production should not be the main method for producing food. Marler Clark, who has also sponsored dozens of other food safety blogs, including ones about salmonella and raw milk, patrons this E. Coli informative blog. While the article includes a full list of reliable sources, it does not list a specific author; this makes it impossible to determine the vested interest, nor background/expertise, of those responsible for producing it.

Another example of contamination caused by mass production comes from Europe in 2013, when horsemeat was found in products labeled as “100% beef”. According to Cullinane (2013)

On Monday February 4, Swedish food producer Findus withdrew its frozen lasagna -- labeled with the British spelling, "lasagne" -- from British stores as a precaution after its French supplier, Comigel, raised concerns about the type of meat used. On Wednesday February 6, tests confirmed that horsemeat was present in a number of samples... Then on Friday February 8, retailer Aldi withdrew two products -- Today's Special Frozen Beef Lasagne and Today's Special Frozen Spaghetti Bolognese -- after they were found to contain between 30% and 100% horse meat... Agence France-Presse (AFP) has reported that Comigel supplies products to customers in 16 countries.

This shows that mass production can often result in food contamination, further supporting my claim. Susannah Cullinane is a British journalist who has worked with BBC News, The New Zealand Herald, CNN, and Radio New Zealand. She has authored countless articles for these publishers, though she predominantly writes about political issues/controversies, making her less insightful on this particular topic.

Mass production should also not be the main method for producing food because it often has a great negative impact. Concentrated animal feeding operations, also known as CAFOs, are the fastest growing system of farm animal production, and also greatly contribute to climate change (Rising Number of Farm Animals Poses Environmental and Public Health Risks, 2015). According to the Word Watch Institute (2015)

The industry accounts for an estimated 18 percent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, including 9 percent of the carbon dioxide, nearly 40 percent of the methane (a greenhouse gas 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide), and 65 percent of the nitrous oxide (300 times more potent than carbon dioxide)... Livestock production is a major driver of

deforestation: cattle enterprises have been responsible for 65–80 percent of the deforestation of the Amazon, and countries in South America are clearing large swaths of forest and other land to grow animal feed crops like maize and soybean.

This proves the extreme environmental dangers of mass-producing food, and should therefore not be the main system of food manufacturing. The World Watch Institute is an international organization attempting to help the world achieve sustainability, and has offices located in more than 20 countries. The group's website ([worldwatch.org](http://worldwatch.org)) presents news in real time, and is constantly updating, in order to provide accurate information. However, this article does not list an author nor does it show the date of publication, making it impossible to determine potential partiality.

Environmental damage caused by mass production is also seen throughout Asia. China, Thailand, and Viet Nam have faced a great increase in pollution as their production of poultry and pigs has nearly doubled. These operations, predominantly in the coastal regions of these nations, are being exposed as a major source of nutrient pollution of the South China Sea (Pollution from industrialized livestock production, 2015). The Food and Agricultural Organization (2015) illustrates just how vast these farms are by saying "along much of the densely populated coast, the pig density exceeds 100 animals per square kilometre and agricultural lands are overloaded with huge nutrient surpluses". Run off from such plants is critically damaging water and sediment quality in "one of the world's most biologically diverse shallowwater marine areas" (Pollution from industrialized livestock production, 2015), resulting in red tides and the harming of local marine life. This demonstrates just how harmful mass production can be to our fragile environment. The Food and Agricultural Organization is an agency under the United Nations, which promotes, and publishes articles about, food security and safety. It is a multinational, highly noted group. Unfortunately, no author could be found on this piece, thus making it less credible.

On the other hand, mass production should be the main method for food production because it allows for a much more efficient manufacturing. This is seen in Japan, where an abandoned Sony factory has been transformed into what some are calling the farm of the future (Dickie, 2014). According to Dickie (2014)

Shigeharu Shimamura, a plant physiologist and CEO of Mirai, has constructed the world's largest indoor farm—25,000 square feet of futuristic garden beds nurtured by 17,500 LED lights in a bacteria-free, pesticide-free environment. The result? About 10,000 heads of fresh lettuce harvested each day... The unique "plant factory" is so efficient that it cuts food waste from the 30 to 40 percent typically seen for lettuce grown outdoors to less than 3 percent for their coreless lettuce.

This is clearly much more effective than traditional farming methods, thus upholding my point that mass production should be the main method for producing food. Gloria Dickie is a scholar and journalist specializing in environmental science from Boulder, Colorado, who has authored dozens of pieces on topics similar to this one. Her profession and educational background make her very reliable on this topic. While she has travelled to many foreign countries to write and research some of her informative articles, she is not entirely a "global" source, and is therefore less dependable on this international issue.

China also gives us an example of this increased efficiency. There are more than 60,000 "factory style" facilities within the nation, and has now surpassed the United States as the biggest producer of pork, raising and slaughtering more than 700 million pigs each year (MacDonald, 2009). According to MacDonald (2009) "In 2008, the largest ever such tranche ever recorded, 1.925 million tonnes of pork were imported. China's is also the world's leading producer of "meat" chickens". China would never be able to reach such substantial numbers without these less than humane means, further supporting why mass production should be the main food production

procedure. Mia MacDonald is a highly educated scholar, the founder and executive director of the Brighter Green organization, and the writer of many articles and books. She has worked with numerous international associations, including several United Nations organizations. Nevertheless, she is from New York, thus making her less credible on this global topic.

Local food production is also not enough to provide for the ever-growing global population. A local food system would likely raise the cost of food by “constraining the efficient allocation of resources” (Sexton, 2011). As said by Sexton (2011)

Finally, higher costs on certain foods may be a solution to the big health challenge in the developed world. But higher prices on any food are precisely the wrong prescription for the great health problems in the developing world, where millions remain undernourished. As the food crisis of 2007-08 revealed, winning the war on human hunger requires a constant commitment to getting more food out of less land, water, and other inputs.

This makes it evident that using a local system as the main method for food production would result in more problems than solutions. Steve Sexton has authored numerous articles on various social, environmental, and economical issues, many of which are considered to be quite controversial. His work shows that he is well informed on a wide variety of topics, including this one. However no background information could be found on him, making his article much less sound.

Cordero (2011) also explains that something that is locally produced is not necessarily environmentally friendly; “If equipment or supplies have to be shipped in to create the product, that can offset any benefit of creating or growing the product locally” (Cordero, 2011). Smaller farming operations also do not always have access to expensive alternative energy sources, such as wind and solar power, which are now heavily utilized throughout the world. The overall efficiency of larger systems adds to their ‘greenness’ as well (Cordero, 2011). Marcos Cordero is the author of several articles for the Green Business Bureau, many of them having similar themes to this one, and appears to be well versed on the topic. However, his background could not be found, making it more difficult to rely on him as a source.

Mass production has many negative impacts, and should not be the main method of producing food. It not only decreases the quality of food and increases risk of contamination, but also harms the environment. It is for these reasons that I do not lean in favor of mass production, as they speak to my humanitarian side. My research has showed me how many people, as well as the environment, are affected by this human thirst for wealth. However, mass production does yield positive results; it allows for the efficient production of food for countless people, while local production is simply not enough to do so. I went into this project believing that mass production was a horrible thing: end of story. However my findings on the alternate perspective have changed me, and made me realize the benefits that mass production actually has. After my research, I still believe that mass production is unjust and does more harm than good, though further research must be done in order to find alternatives to this rapid manufacturing method that is so deeply employed today. In order to reduce the importance of mass-produced products people must begin relying more on local production and less on these massive corporations.

In conclusion, mass production should not be the main method of food production, as it decreases the quality of food/runs a higher risk of contamination. Although, some argue in favor of mass production, due to its greater efficiency over small-scale production, and because local food production is not adequate to nourish the constantly growing global population.

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