

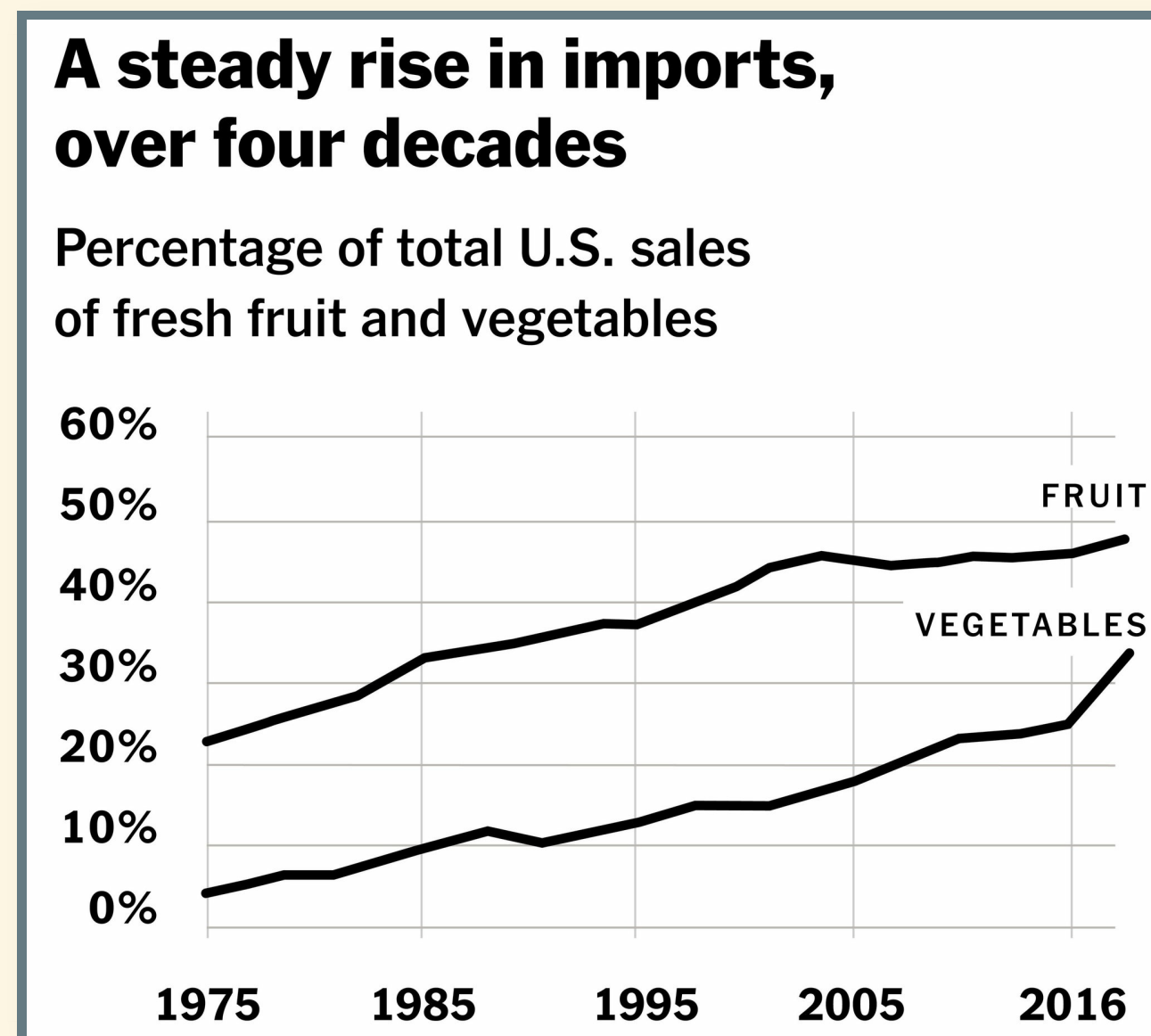
# WEEK 15 ELITISM & LOCAL FOOD

# THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM

1. Technologically driven
2. Large scale
3. Highly efficient
4. Monoculture
5. Commodification

# GLOBAL PRODUCE

- Imported fresh fruit rose to 53.1% in 2016, from 23% in 1975
- Fresh vegetable imports rose to 31.1% from 5.8%



# ADVANTAGES OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

- Increased *availability* and *variety* of fresh produce, particularly in winter, when imported berries, grapes and stone fruit compete with citrus and stored apples
- Many imports *cost less* than domestically grown equivalents, & competition from imports keeps prices down for domestic produce
- Imported produce is also sometimes *fresher* than the domestic equivalent (e.g. in-season apples or grapes)

# DISADVANTAGES OF THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

- Imported produce labeled organic may not be as reliably free of pesticide residues as domestic equivalents
- Primarily supports large growers/producers
- Possibly increases import of pests and invasive species
- Because imported fruits and vegetables typically travel farther than domestic produce from farm to table, they cause greater harm from *carbon emissions* and *pollution*.

# THE ELITISM ISSUE

*[It's messed up] telling some poor little boy that he can't eat a 99 cent fast food cheeseburger because it doesn't have integrity. Telling him how easy it is instead to save his ducketts and maybe he can have a grass-fed...burger at the end of the month as a reward, but in the meantime get your protein from these canned beans that you can't actually bake because you don't have a stove and, even if you did, your mom works two jobs and moonlights as an Uber driver so she doesn't have time to heat that shit up anyway. (Chris Newman, January 28, 2018)*

# IS LOCAL FOOD ELITIST?

## Food Elitism:

local/organic/sustainable/pro-animal food is really for a select few only—those who have the luxury of time and money to produce & purchase such goods

Is (advocacy for) local/organic/sustainable/pro-animal food 'elitist'?

1. Yes
2. No



# REPLY: IT IS GLOBAL FOOD THAT'S ELITIST

*[the objection to localism] gets the elitism charge precisely backward. America's current system of food production — overly centralized and industrialized, overly controlled by a handful of companies, overly reliant on monocultures, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, chemical additives, genetically modified organisms, factory farms, government subsidies and fossil fuels — is profoundly undemocratic. It is one more sign of how the few now rule the many. (Eric Schlosser, Washington Post April 29, 2011)*

# LOCAL FOOD CULTURE = INFORMED FOOD CULTURE

- Recognize that going 'local' doesn't mean that one's practices are necessarily "healthier" or more "just"
- Many if not most of our food choices have global ramifications
- There may be irreconcilable costs and benefits to both global and local approaches
- Be able to say where your food is from & who produced it
- Being informed about your food choices = having (some) control over those choices

# REFERENCES

- USA imports of fruit & vegetables
- Food miles and the environment
- USDA Agricultural Projections to 2027
- Bittman on Food Elitism
- Chris Newman on 'clean food'
- Eric Schlosser on 'foodie elitism'

