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Generally speaking, there are four aspects in which the “food system” has something to do with our health. The first lies in the process of producing food, such as the feedlot approach of growing cows. The second aspect is about the pollution happened alongside the “industrial” food chain. The other important issue is what people should eat given the variety of food choices available. The last one is “supersizing”, which is regarded as one of the major factors of American obesity epidemic.

Directly connected with eaters’ health is the safety issue around industrial foods. Processed foods are certainly problematic (Pollan 85 – 99), but “industrial cows” are by no means safer. For instance, because cows cannot tolerate corns, feedlots have to use antibiotics to ensure that cows could survive long enough. Consequently, superbugs might evolve and affect the public health in a catastrophic way (Pollan 78). Another related issue is that most cows are already infected when slaughtered. Lethal bacteria on these cows may kill beef eaters (Pollan). USDA should have a more comprehensive research over the safety of the beef industry. They should conduct preventive studies before it is too late.

Pollution is another place where the food industry and our health intersect. Pollan discussed this issue with two case studies, one about corns (32 – 56) and the other about feedlots (65 – 84). For example, the traditional grazing is ecologically sustainable—grasses are eaten by cows and cows’ manures protect the prairie; there is no pollution (Pollan 70). By feeding cows

with grains, however, people have to suffer both the pollution of growing corns and that of cows' manures (Pollan 70 – 71). If one considers the petroleum involved during the lifetime of a grain-fed cow, it takes nearly a barrel of oil before one can slaughter a cow (Pollan 84). While the meat industry enjoys the myriad profit brought by cheap subsidized corns, it is taxpayers and the environment that pay all the hidden costs (Pollan 82 – 83). The government should consider regulation in agriculture products as well as enforce stricter environment protection laws.

The third health issue affecting most Americans is what to eat. There are so many conflict food suggestions available that people do not know who to believe. Even though USDA did have its guideline (USDA 112 – 113), people seem not to trust the agency (Nestle 72). The situation is caused by the ineffectiveness of nutrition science research, as noted by Marion Nestle in his essay *Eating Made Simple*. As Nestle explained, the current approaches employed in the field have two main problems (73). First, it is the “overall dietary pattern” rather than some isolated variable in one's meal that affects people's health. However, traditional experiments can only monitor the effect of one factor. Second, while large-scale studies can partially bypass this issue, participants can hardly stick to their “restrictive dietary protocols”, making the results useless. Moreover, there are significant disagreements between studies sponsored the food industry and those by independent sources. Results from the former were usually favorable to their sponsors (Nestle). Therefore, policy makers should require relevant studies to manifest their relationship with the food industry in an explicit way. When companies cite these reports, they should also state the funding sources of these reports.

The last topic is about supersizing, which contributes much to the obesity epidemic. Wansink and Payne noted that classic recipes contain much more calories than they did 70 years ago (Wansink and Payne 120 – 121). Soft drinks full of high fructose corn syrup are also sold in

supersize (Surowiecki 123 – 125). A good measure against this would be the policy brought by Michael Bloomberg: banning the sale of supersize drink (Surowiecki 123 – 124).

Works Cited

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