

America's Food



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We don't think much about how food gets to our tables, or what had to happen to fill our supermarket's produce section with perfectly round red tomatoes and its meat counter with slabs of beautifully marbled steak. We don't realize that the meat in one fast-food hamburger may come from a thousand different cattle raised in five different countries. In fact, most of us have a fairly abstract understanding of what happens on a farm. In *America's Food*, Harvey Blatt gives us the specifics. He tells us, for example, that a third of the fruits and vegetables grown are discarded for purely aesthetic

reasons; that the artificial fertilizers used to enrich our depleted soil contain poisonous heavy metals; that chickens who stand all day on wire in cages choose feed with pain-killing drugs over feed without them; and that the average American eats his or her body weight in food additives each year. Blatt also asks us to think about the consequences of eating food so far removed from agriculture; why unhealthy food is cheap; why there is an International Federation of Competitive Eating; what we don't want to know about how animals raised for meat live, die, and are butchered; whether people are even designed to be carnivorous; and why there is hunger when food production has increased so dramatically. America's Food describes the production of all types of food in the United States and the environmental and health problems associated with each. After taking us on a tour of the American food system---not only the basic food groups but soil, grain farming, organic food, genetically modified food, food processing, and diet--Blatt reminds us that we aren't powerless. Once we know the facts about food in America, we can change things by the choices we make as consumers, as voters, and as ethical human beings

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