**Introduction**

1-2 Potato anecdote

2-3 Cattle feedlot anecdote

4 What is the omnivore’s dilemma?

5 Organization: Four Meals

6 Point of Book? Pleasures of Eating

**Part I—The Industrial Meal: Food from Corn**

**Chapter 1, “How Corn Took Over America”**

9-11 10 examples of how corn pervades the supermarket

12-13 To what process can we trace back all of our food and almost all life on Earth?

13 Explain the statement that “’we look like corn chips with legs.’”

14 While 40% of the average Mexican’s diet comes directly from corn, which country has more corn in their diet?

14 How many acres of corn are planted each year in the U.S.?

14-18 Explain the rise and spread of maize throughout the world

18-19 M. Pollan, Food Detective: Explain the premise of the book . . .

19 How are natural and industrial food chains contrasted?

**Chapter 2, “The Farm”**

20-21 How did the Naylor’s family farm change in the past 100 years?

22-25 Explain how planting corn has changed over the years. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

25 What are the differences between hybrid and genetically modified organism (GMO) seeds? How do corporations profit from GMO seed? What is the concern with GMO seed?

26-27 What happened after the arrival of high-yield corn? Identify three ways did this totally change life on the farm.

**Chapter 3, “From Farm to Factor”**

29-31 Why do plants need nitrogen? And how and why did the government get involved with agribusiness after World War II?

31 Contrast how farms are powered now as opposed to before

32 Explain the chart on page 32. What is this industrial agricultural system dependent upon? Is this sustainable?

33-34 What are several disadvantages to the nitrogen in fertilizers?

35 Why are farmers struggling economically?

36 Why do we subsidize corn? Why is there a difference between cost and price? Is this good or bad?

36 Describe the “vicious cycle” in which many industrial farmers find themselves trapped.

38 How did the U.S. government’s farm policy change in the 1970s? Why?

39 What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of cheap, abundant corn?

**Chapter 4, “The Grain Elevator”**

40-41 How is “number 2 field corn” different than the corn that we eat? How does agri-business view corn?

42 How did the introduction of the grain elevator change the way that corn was stored and transported? What are its advantages and disadvantages?

43 Identify three effects of the over-supply of corn.

43 Identify six ways that corporations (like ADM) are involved with the corn industry.

**Chapter 5, “The Feedlot—Turning Corn into Meat”**

47-49 Contrast a traditional family farm and a CAFO? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of CAFOs?

51-52 Describe the symbiotic relationship (partnership) between ruminants and grass. What helps them to do this.

53 What’s the purpose of the “backgrounding” pen?

54 How does the author’s use of diction in describing the feed lot slant the reader’s perception?

55-56 What else is added to the cattle’s food?

56 What are the advantages and disadvantages of corn fed versus grass fed beef?

58 What type of illnesses do cattle get from eating corn?

60 Why do the cattle take antibiotics? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

60-61 What are the differences between CAFO and small farm cow manure?

62 What doesn’t the cost of $1.60 per day include?

**Chapter 6, “Processed Food”**

64-66 Splitting the Kernel & Industrial Digestion

66-70 Starch into Sugar & Made From Corn

70-72 Cereal Secrets

73-75 Can You Eat More, Please & Food That Doesn’t Feed

**Chapter 7, “Fat From Corn”**

76-78 Can you Eat More, Please? Part II & Extra Calories

78-82 A Sweet Deal & Supersize!

83-84 Cheap Fat

**Chapter 8, “The Omnivore’s Dilemma”**

85-87 Is That Food? & The Modern Omnivore

87-90 The Omnivore’s Brain & The Bitter & The Sweet

91-93 Rats! & Food Fads

94-96 The No-Fad French & Marketing New Meals

When people stick to a traditional diet, they have fewer health problems. The French, for example, have a lot of traditional customs around food. Americans don’t. And we make a lot of unhealthy choices: eating alone, too much, snacking between meals, etc . .

**Chapter 9, “My Fast Food Meal”**

97-101 Fast Food & Chicken or Nuggets?

101-107 Where’s the Beef? & Corn Eaters ‘R’ Us

By the time it reaches us, industrial food has been processed to seem like something that it’s not. Three people directly and indirectly consumed 3.5 pounds of corn in one McDonald’s meal. Todd Dawson, a biologist from UC Berkeley, tested the carbon in the meal:

* Soda = 100%
* Shake = 78%
* Salad Dressing = 65%
* Chicken Nuggets = 56%
* Cheeseburgers = 52%
* French Fries = 23%

Yeah, but . . . . is that all bad? So What? Depends on where you stand. From Agribusiness point of view, it’s great. They made money.

At 4,510 calories, helped munch through the corn surplus, but also 1.3 gallons of fossil fuel for that meal alone.) It’s also very affordable calories (if you don’t count the gov’t subsidies). Seems good until you consider obesity, diabetes, heart disease. Also, it’s not so efficient in terms of energy use. Growing moncultures of corn also damages the soil, pollutes the water, threatens the health of creatures downstream, and

HFS and obesity: since 1971, 3x obese children and HFS from 3 to 200 calories per day. Fast food is designed to be devoured quickly. Real food is a pleasure to share, savor, and eat. “After a few bites . . . “ on 107

**Part II: The Industrial Organic Meal**

**Chapter 10, “Big Organic”**

111-114 Once Upon a Time & The Birth of Organic Food

114-116 Industrial Organic & Hippie Food

117-119 Agri-business Moves In & Growing by the Rules

119-120 Down on the Industrial Organic Farm & USDA Organic Labeling Standards

120-122 Organic Weeding & Bar Graph

122-124 Let Us Sell You Lettuce

124-126 The Salad Factory

**Chapter 11, “More Big Organic”**

127-129 Meet Rosie, the Free-Range Chicken & It’s a Bird’s Life

130-132 My Organic Industrial Meal & Airlift Asparagus

132-135 Is Organic Better for You? & Do Plants Need Organic Food?

134-138 Is it Health Food? & Eating Oil

137-139 Food Miles and Jet-Setting Carrots & A Different Kind of Food Chain

**Part III—The The Local Sustainable Meal: Food from Grass**

**Chapter 12, “Polyface Farm”**

143 Explain why the author knows he will never complain about high food prices again.

146 Why does Joel Salatin describe himself as a grass farmer. Summarize the chart.

147 How is industrial farming more linear while Polyface farm is more circular?

147 Why do the chickens eat in the pasture?

148 Historically, what has been the relationship between humans, grass, and large herbivores?

150 Using the chart, compare the Naylor Farm with Polyface Farm.

153 According to Salatin, what is the most important thing about grass? What is the law of the second bite?

154 What are the benefits of moving the cows every day?

155 How does the author contrast Poky Feeders’ cows with Salatin’s cows?

156 How do grasslands combat climate change?

157 Why is grass farming more difficult than industrial farming?

162 Why did the chicken cross the pasture? Did you see this at Eaters’ Guild Farm?

163 What is the incredible “Egg Mobile”?

164 Describe the symbiotic relationship between birds and herbivores.

165 Why does he wait for three days before allowing the chickens into the pasture after the cows?

165 What limits the scale of this type of farm?

166-67 How are rabbits and turkeys moved around as well?

167-68 Describe what happens in the winter.

168 How do the pigs assist in creating compost?

169 What is one major disadvantage to Salatin’s method of farming?

170 Identify four advantages of the woodlot.

171-74 How does Salatin’s way of slaughtering the chickens break the regulations set by the USDA?

174-180 What did you think about the whole process the Salatins used to kill the chickens?

182 Contrast the industrial food chain with Polyface Farms? Why does it matter?

185 What is one example of Food from afar? How does that seem non-sensical?

186 If we are willing to buy water, why are we not willing to pay more for healthier food?

187 What has happened with farmers’ markets in the last fifteen years? What does that indicate?

189 What are the natural season for red meats? Chickens?

189-90 What’s the idea behind eating seasonally? What’s the idea behind eating your view? What’s the idea behind voting with your forks?

191 If you give up processed foods, what do you have to learn how to do?

192-197 What characterizes this meal that Michael Pollan cooks for his friends in Charlottesville, Virginia?

197 Why does it make sense from an evolutionary point of view that grass-fed animals might be healthier for us?

198 What is the suggestion of the chart on corn-fed fish?

198-99 Identify three advantages of eating the meat from animals raised in pasture?