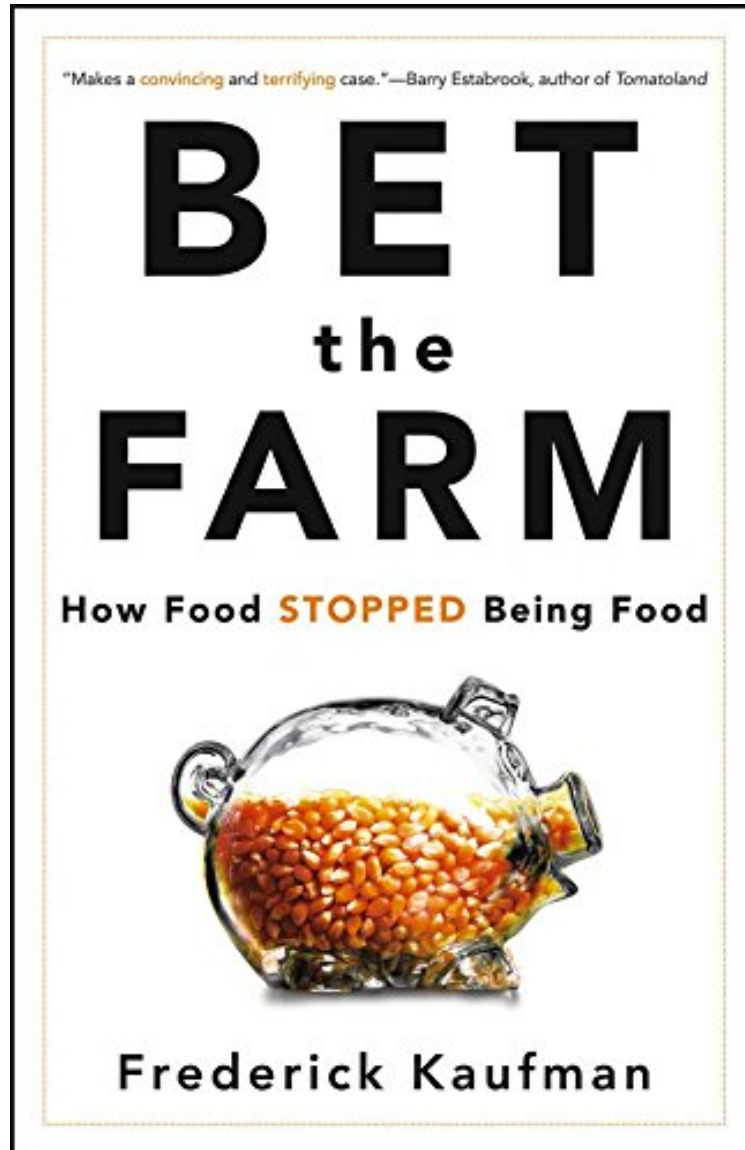


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## Bet the Farm: How Food Stopped Being Food

*Frederick Kaufman*

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**Frederick Kaufman : Bet the Farm: How Food Stopped Being Food** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bet the Farm: How Food Stopped Being Food:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An Important Book ...By WDRFives stars plus! This is an important book and should be read by everyone interested in food / agricultural issues...as one commentator on the cover said, "This story should have been on the cover of the New York Times." Why is half the world, the affluent half, overfed and the other half underfed. As is true in many issues in the modern world, to figure it out "follow the money". Kaufman does a superb job of investigating the influence of big corporations, big government, and big money on the

woes of our current food system. Some of the fixes needed are quite simple to implement but difficult to accomplish, since we now live in a plutocracy. But the first step is awareness. Kaufman is a great writer and this book is an easy read. But be aware, what you learn will probably upset you. Read it and then pass it on ... the more that aware of the problems the better. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The "Invisible Hand" Revealed By Mark E. Smith It turns out that the price of food no longer has anything whatsoever to do with supply and demand--it is determined by commodity speculators. I remember that some years back I'd bought a wheat product I'd been eating for decades, only to find out that it no longer tasted the same. I could find nothing to explain this, until reading *Bet the Farm*, where I learned that the market in the type of wheat used for that product had been cornered by commodity traders, causing the price to rise so drastically that most food processing corporations couldn't afford it and switched to other types of wheat. I'd stopped buying that product, but after learning what the problem had been, I tried it again this year, and it is back to being the product I'd always known and enjoyed. The author did a lot of research that I'd never thought of doing, and I'm very grateful. Five stars. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Wall Street's derivatives market now controls our food prices By Absentee Owners Of Our Country Aside from the fact that it raised my blood pressure; this book should be read by every American who cares about the continual rise of food costs and their country. We are not powerless and this book proves it. The inexorable race to maximize profit at any cost to humanity has turned the word profit into a dirty word. We no longer have a 'free' country when our so-called news media, now being TV/Cable news, lies by omission to its viewers about what is happening to our food supply, among other things. The derivatives, the 'shadow market' of \$600 trillion, now controls ALL of our food costs. Gone are the true hedgers (farmers) in the commodity market who protected themselves for unseen shocks to the food supply. This book shows that there is no difference between the Republicans and the Democrats when it comes to doing what is best for themselves and their campaign contributors. And, how many people saw on '60 Minutes' sometime during the last two weeks of May - after their segments had ended and they went to their commercials before sign off to have them come back and say, quickly, "Congress has removed their ban on insider trading." And the program was off. I did not see or read this 'news' anywhere. Did anyone else? BA - 6.18.13

A prominent food journalist follows the trail from Big Pizza to square tomatoes to exploding food prices to Wall Street, trying figure out why we can't all have healthy, delicious, affordable food In 2008, farmers grew enough to feed twice the world's population, yet more people starved than ever before; and most of them were farmers. In *Bet the Farm*, food writer Kaufman sets out to discover the connection between the global food system and why the food on our tables is getting less healthy and less delicious even as the the world's biggest food companies and food scientists say things are better than ever. To unravel this riddle, he moves down the supply chain like a detective solving a mystery, revealing a force at work that is larger than Monsanto, McDonalds or any of the other commonly cited culprits; and far more shocking. Kaufman's recent cover story for Harper's, "The Food Bubble," provoked controversy throughout the food world, and led to appearances on the NBC Nightly News, MSNBC, Fox Business News, Democracy Now, and Bloomberg TV, along with features on National Public Radio and the BBC World Service. Visits the front lines of the food supply system and food politics as Kaufman visits farms, food science research labs, agribusiness giants, the United Nations, the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and more Explains how food has been financialized and the powerful consequences of this change, including: the Arab Spring, started over rising food prices; farmers being put out of business; food scientists rushing to make easy-to-transport, homogenized ingredients instead of delicious foods Explains how the push for sustainability in food production is more likely to make everything worse, rather than better; and how the rise of fast food is bad for us, but catastrophic for those who will never even see a McNugget or frozen pizza

From Booklist Much has been made of the organic, local, and slow-food movements, but when it comes to feeding seven-billion people, these laudable efforts represent a small fraction of the food supply. Food has become in effect a type of currency, and the universal currency of food is pizza. Kaufman deconstructs a Dominator's pizza, tracing it back to the soil to find out how the massive quantities of wheat, tomatoes, meat (pepperoni), and milk (cheese) in it are produced. Surprisingly, he discovers a different movement of sorts, a sustainability movement being undertaken by the likes of industry giants Unilever, Tyson Foods, and the nation's largest grocer, Walmart, a company that has taken a proactive stance on the ecological impact of its products. At the Ohio State University's experimental research station, Kaufman considers the pros and cons of genetically modified food in a world in which new organisms are treated as intellectual property. These examinations lead us on a quest to discover why, in a world of food surpluses, a billion people still go hungry every day as food becomes increasingly globalized, industrialized, and commoditized. --David Siegfried From the Inside Flap In the last half decade, the world has seen two devastating spikes in the price of food, and a third may be on the way. In 2008 and 2010, farmers gathered record wheat harvests, yet more people starved than ever before; and most of them were farmers. How is that possible? In *Bet the Farm*, Harper's magazine contributing editor Frederick Kaufman investigates the hidden connection between global food and global finance by asking the simple question: Why can't delicious, inexpensive, and healthy food be available to

everyone on Earth? You will find his discoveries shocking. Like a detective intent on solving a mystery, Kaufman travels from the corporate headquarters of Domino's Pizza and Tyson Foods to Walmart's sustainability research center, to mega-farms and organic farms and numerous genetic modification laboratories. Kaufman goes to Rome to the meeting of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and finally ends up on Wall Street and the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where he discovers the answer to the riddle. His investigation reveals that money pouring into the global derivatives market in grain futures is having astonishing consequences that reach far beyond your dinner table, including the Arab Spring, bankrupt farmers, starving masses, and armies of scientists creating new GMO foods with U.S. marketing and shipping needs in mind instead of global nutrition. Our food is getting less healthy, less delicious, and more expensive even as the world's biggest food companies and food scientists say things are better than ever and that the rest of us should leave it to them to feed the world. Readers of *Bet the Farm* will glimpse the power behind global food and understand what truly supports the system that has brought mass misery to our planet.

**From the Back Cover**  
**Praise for *Bet the Farm***  
"Kaufman makes a convincing and terrifying case that the same merchant bankers who destroyed our housing market—and economy—five years ago are at it again. This time their target is the world's food supply."  
—Barry Estabrook, author of *Tomatoland*  
"Frederick Kaufman's great skill as a writer is to know when to be an insider and when an outraged critic in his journey through the international food system. In going toe-to-toe with everything from a runaway pizza machine to Bill Gates, he goes to the heart of a complex world and shares why you should be angry. That makes this the best kind of journalism—one from which no one emerges unscathed, nor any reader finishes unmoved."  
—Raj Patel, author of *Stuffed and Starved*  
"In *Bet the Farm*, Frederick Kaufman connects the dots between the food commodity markets and world hunger. Kaufman is a wonderfully entertaining writer, able to make the most arcane details of such matters as wheat futures crystal clear. Readers will be alternately amused and appalled by his accounts of relief agencies and the interventions of rich nations. This book is a must-read for anyone who cares about feeding the hungry in today's globalized food marketplace. It's on the reading list for my NYU classes."  
—Marion Nestle, author of *Why Calories Count* and *Food Politics*  
"Eating is an agricultural act,' as Wendell Berry said, but Frederick Kaufman shows, undeniably, that it is an economic act as well. *Bet the Farm* describes a global food system that has made food and money indecipherable, where what we eat is determined not by the seasons, but by the ebb and flow of market forces. It's a compelling portrait of a system on the edge of crisis, and a necessary call for change."  
—Dan Barber, chef, author, and activist  
"Since time immemorial, the most important human question has been 'What (if anything) is for dinner?' This book explains how that question is being answered (badly) for our planet right now—the forces that are driving us to human and ecological despair."  
—Bill McKibben, author of *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet*  
"This is more than a book about food. It's a book about how to revise our usual ways of thinking."  
—Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food  
"This story should have been on the front page of the New York Times."  
—Jami Floyd, Political Analyst, MSNBC