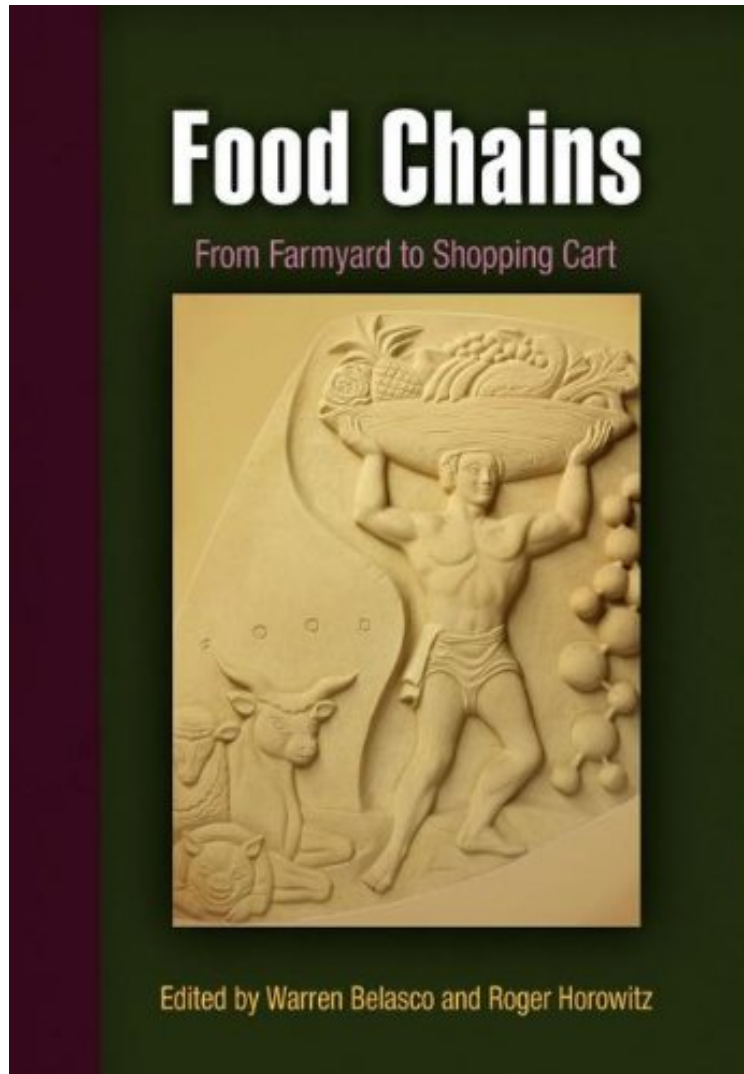


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Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart (Hagley Perspectives on Business and Culture)

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From University of Pennsylvania Press : Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart (Hagley Perspectives on Business and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart (Hagley Perspectives on Business and Culture):

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R. good book 3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended especially for college library collections
By Midwest Book Review
Food Chains: From Farmyard to Shopping Cart is an anthology of scholarly essays by learned authors discussing assorted aspects of the history of food production and distribution. Individual case studies include "Provisioning Man's Best Friend", about the inception of the commercial pet food industry; "Wheeling One's Groceries around the Store" about the invention and popularity of the modern grocery cart; "Trading Quality, Producing Value" about crabmeat and the global seafood trade; and more. Food Chains is a thoughtful collection examining facets of an increasingly important issue as human population puts an ever-increasing demand on the amount of food the world needs to sustain itself today. Highly recommended especially for college library collections.

In recent years, the integrity of food production and distribution has become an issue of wide social concern. The media frequently report on cases of food contamination as well as on the risks of hormones and cloning. Journalists, documentary filmmakers, and activists have had their say, but until now a survey of the latest research on the history of the modern food-provisioning system—the network that connects farms and fields to supermarkets and the dining table—has been unavailable. In Food Chains, Warren Belasco and Roger Horowitz present a collection of fascinating case studies that reveal the historical underpinnings and institutional arrangements that compose this system. The dozen essays in Food Chains range widely in subject, from the pig, poultry, and seafood industries to the origins of the shopping cart. The book examines what it took to put ice in nineteenth-century refrigerators, why Soviet citizens could buy ice cream whenever they wanted, what made Mexican food popular in France, and why Americans turned to commercial pet food in place of table scraps for their dogs and cats. Food Chains goes behind the grocery shelves, explaining why Americans in the early twentieth century preferred to buy bread rather than make it and how Southerners learned to like self-serve shopping. Taken together, these essays demonstrate the value of a historical perspective on the modern food-provisioning system.

"The essays in this book . . . help us to discover what we might learn from the past and identify what might aid us in interpreting our food provisioning system in the future."—Food and Foodways
Food Chains is a significant achievement, reflecting original work from a variety of disciplines and offering penetrating insights on the complex connections among the different components of food-supply chains."—Business History
About the Author
Warren Belasco is Professor of American Studies at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and author of Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food. Roger Horowitz is Associate Director of the Hagley Center for the History of Business, Technology, and Society and author of Putting Meat on the American Table: Taste, Technology, Transformation.
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1. Making Food Chains: The Book
Roger Horowitz
I begin my food history classes by drawing a simple line on the blackboard with "farm" at one end and "dinner" at the other. Then I ask the students to explain some of the steps that are necessary for food to move from one end to the other. Within a few minutes the simple line is a complex tree bristling with stages such as "processing" "trucking" "scientific research" "retailing" etc. etc. When the board starts to get too hard to read—which doesn't take long—I stop, to make the point of how complicated it is to bring food to our tables. Many students in my classes come with prior interest in food; often spirited discussions break out about the merits (and demerits) of particular Food Network chefs. Some are looking for careers in nutrition, others work in restaurants, and a few even cook themselves! Yet most have little knowledge of the complex chain of firms and social practices that are necessary to make our provisioning system work. And they want to learn more. A somewhat equivalent gap exists in the growing food studies field. Among the steady outpouring of books much is written on the culinary and cultural dimensions of food and food consumption practices, along with an astonishing proliferation of books that combine recipes with eating philosophy. Studies that consider provisioning are growing in number, but remain small in proportion. Yet there is considerable interest in histories of food that engage with larger patterns of social development, especially how we get the food that we eat. These insights informed the discussions among Phil Scranton, Susan Strasser, Warren Belasco and myself as we started planning a conference on food history at the Hagley Museum and Library in the fall of 2006. As the nation's leading business history library, Hagley has considerable resources for the study of food that we wanted to bring attention to scholars in the field. We hold one or two conferences on varying subjects each year; we felt it was time to do another one on food. A 1999 conference, "Food Nations," had been a big success and was the foundation for a highly successful book in our Hagley Perspectives on Business and Culture book series. While Food Nations dealt with—as the name implies—food, identity, and social practice, we titled the 2006 conference "Food Chains" as we wanted it to focus on the provisioning systems that supply our world with food. We defined "provisioning" in the call for papers as "the complex institutional arrangements necessary for food to move from farm to the dinner table." To complement the conference's impact we issued a guide to research materials at Hagley that can be used to study food history. This volume includes all the papers presented at the conference, plus two solicited specifically for this publication. All are original essays not previously published. The book's structure emulates that of food chains, starting with "animals" from which food comes, moving to the "processing" necessary to turn natural

products into palatable items, and concluding with the process of "sales" through which consumers obtain their meals. Some articles hone in on one item—pigs, chickens, crabs, ice, ice cream and shopping carts—to show its role in provisioning systems. Other essays look at industry segments—foods processed in imperial nations, dog food, and Mexican food—to elaborate on its internally complex "chains" of acquisition, manufacturing, and distribution. And a few consider places—kitchens and retail stores—where consumers make the decisions over what to buy and what to make for their families. The opening "Overview" section contextualizes the volume's content through two synthetic essays. Editor Warren Belasco surveys current literature in the food studies field and suggests the contribution of taking "Food Chains" as an organizing principle to understand food in our society. Shane Hamilton looks closely at theoretical work by historians and social scientists employing commodity chain analysis. He assesses the value of taking a comprehensive approach to identify actors, technologies, forms of knowledge, and forms of capital involved in transforming a raw material into a consumable good. The subsection "Animals" follows with papers that discuss pigs, chicken and crabs. The authors all consider how the nature of consumer demand and food distribution influences the use, and at times the very character, of these animals. Joe L. Anderson charts how farmers and agricultural colleges changed the form of the American pig following World War II in order to satisfy changing consumer demand. He argues that these efforts revealed tension about health and diet within postwar society that were sufficiently powerful to fuel a massive effort to remake a species. As incomes rose and concerns about fat content increased, firms, farmers and other actors in the industry (such as the federal government) altered the hog from an animal intended to supply fat to a "lean" version whose principal purpose was to provide meat. Andrew Godley and Bridget Williams show how poultry became the most popular type of meat consumed in the United Kingdom after 1960. In contrast to the United States (where the USDA was so influential), the modern poultry industry emerged in the first thirty years after the Second World War in Britain because of the deliberate investments by a select group of leading food retailers, who needed to economize on the costs of meat distribution as they pioneered self-service stores. The widespread distribution of cheap chicken led to its mass adoption throughout the country. Kelly Feltault sees the expansion of the imported crabmeat industry as emerging from the development of global supply chains for American seafood restaurants. She emphasizes that scarcity of Chesapeake Bay crabmeat was not a factor in the efforts of large seafood firms to expand production in Thailand. The adoption of domestic quality standards known as HACCP regulations facilitated production and importation of Asian crabmeat into the American restaurant market. Expansion of the crab industry also intersected with Thailand's export oriented development strategy. All food has to move from producers to consumers in a market economy, a complex process that requires processing—in complex ways—of raw ingredients, in which transportation, processing, and preservation are critical. The papers in the "processing" subsection consider such transitions, both the transformation of the foods that can take place and the complex matrix of production needs and consumer preferences that influence the firms engaged in such activities. Richard Wilk considers how extended food chains create settings where products can change their cultural significance as they move from place to place. He argues that the transformations which goods go through as they move along industrial commodity chains are just as significant as the conversion of cultural property into commodities such as 'tribal' art, music, and traditional medicine. Wilk illustrates his argument by showing how raw foodstuffs from 19th century colonized nations were transformed in substance and meaning when they moved through trade networks, especially when goods were processed and packaged in imperial nations such as Britain to create genteel "civilized" food. Jonathan Rees explores the unique character of ice in the late nineteenth century United States, as it was both part of the food provisioning system and food itself. He adeptly shows that not all ice was the same. Natural ice, cut from lakes and rivers, varied considerably in quality. It could be a factor in food preservation when packed into railroad cars or grocer's freezers, as well as a consumer good when sold for use in home iceboxes or drinks. Rees shows how consumer concerns about the purity of the ice that came into contact with food bedeviled the natural ice industry. Katherine Grier uncovers the roots of the American pet food business that currently attracts annual expenditures of \$18 billion. Curiously, it was a product that nobody really needed; certainly dogs and cats did not demand it! Grier identifies the development of pet food, then, in the way it met human needs in the American provisioning system. Pet food absorbed surpluses among producers of human food and the decline of urban kitchens as sites for processing of raw materials left fewer table scraps for pets to eat. Pet food succeeded as it satisfied the needs of humans at several places along the provisioning axis. Jenny Leigh Smith tells a fascinating story of how Josef Stalin and his successors put the resources of the Soviet state behind the development of a national system of ice cream production and distribution. Soviet citizens could easily purchase ice cream from local vendors, unlike the many obstacles they encountered when buying other kinds of food or consumer goods. Smith sees two main factors explaining this curious paradox. First, the Soviet government wanted to create a cheap luxury product for citizens to counteract the social problems it faced with so much material scarcity. Second, it was easier for the command economy to distribute a frozen good such as ice cream than the more perishable ingredients that comprised it, especially milk. Jeffrey Pilcher unravels how Mexican food spread internationally. He focuses on the development of an infrastructure necessary to supply Mexican ingredients to restaurants and home cooks throughout the world. Globalizing Mexican food required basic structural transformations in the traditional labor-intensive nature of this

cuisine. To supply such food profitably demanded considerable economies of scale, thereby hindering the competitive efforts of Mexican firms whose advantage lay in local knowledge and advantaging large American-based companies. As a result, Pilcher contends that the globalization of Mexican food has been in its Americanized form. Food exists to be consumed, so the book closes with a section that considers the selling of food to men, women and children for them to eat. The emergence of particular retail food stores and restaurants depended on changes in the production and distribution of products as well as patterns of consumer demand. We fittingly close this subsection with a paper on the shopping cart, so necessary for consumers to take their purchases from the store, leaving all other stages of the food chain behind. Lisa Tolbert explains the attraction of self-service retail stores among white women in the early 20th century South by focusing on the Piggly Wiggly chain. Southern white women often preferred to call in their orders to stores as there were many challenges to respectability in public retail space. Tolbert shows how grocers strategically used the concept of self-service to transform the cultural message of the southern grocery store and food shopping. Piggly Wiggly created store interiors and advertising campaigns that successfully recast the cultural role of the grocery store as an emblem of modernity and food shopping as an appropriate activity for white southern ladies. Patrick Patterson details the transformation of food retailing in Eastern Europe following World War II. He shows that by 1975 relatively prosperous Communist countries such as Hungary and Yugoslavia had markedly improved food production and distribution methods. At the retail end of the food chain, modern self-serve grocery stores paralleled the western focus on consumer-oriented and well stocked food emporiums. They were, however, state-owned stores wedded to a discourse of "socialist commerce." Nonetheless they shared much of the theory, styles, and practices of privately owned western supermarkets and were able to deliver abundant food to their customers. Katherine Leonard Turner identifies the choices facing working class families in the late 19th and early 20th century between cooking and obtaining ready-to-eat food. Kitchen appliances, home sizes, and availability of space to grow food or harbor animals varied widely from city to city, and influenced the calculations of housekeepers whether to prepare or buy food consumed by their families. Especially in the case of bakers bread she shows that locally prepared food did not entirely replace home cooking but it provided an important supplement, thereby altering the nature of food preparation in the working-class home. Catherine Grandclement sketches the technological and mythical processes of creating the supermarket shopping car. Self serve food stores needed a reliable means to prevent the weight of goods from determining how much shoppers would purchase to bring home. Yet the development of the proper vehicle was complex as it had both to satisfy the customer yet also address the needs of the retailer. Grandclement also shows that the traditional "creation myth" of the shopping cart elevated one inventor (Sylvan Goldman) above other claimants, when in fact the invention process was marked by simultaneous innovations all intended to answer the same shopping challenges. We hope that readers will leave this volume with a richer understanding of the complex arrangements that bring food to our tables. Making this book also required complex relationships, and many thanks to the Hagley Museum and Library staff, especially Carol Lockman, for their role organizing the 2006 "Food Chains" conference. Commentators at that conference, including Shane Hamilton, Tracey Deutsch, Phil Scranton, Warren Belasco and myself, commenced the process of turning papers into articles. Editor Robert Lockhart at University of Pennsylvania Press expertly brought the book through the editorial review and subsequent manuscript preparation process. And it is for me always a pleasure to play a role throughout the complex chain between imagining a book and seeing it finally appear in print.