

Food Inc



Frieda Morrison the former presenter of The Potting Shed chaired the session when all present expressed their shock at the contents of the film and their hopes that this would not happen here in the UK. The food industry in the US was shown to be run by two or three major corporations who direct the way that their farmers run their businesses.

FOOD INC

‘You are what you eat!’

We have heard it all before. Supermarkets appear to have a great variety of food from a wide variety of sources, but is that really true or has globalisation affected our food chain as well as our economy? Do we really know where our food comes from?

On 17 February 2010 a film is being shown in Edinburgh which you really should not miss if you care about what you eat. Food Inc explores the food we buy and eat. According to the film’s official website www.foodincmovie.com our food has been radically transformed, and that is not all good news for us the consumer. Frieda Morrison, the well respected broadcaster, will be on hand after the film to head up a discussion centred round our dependence on processed food and how that might be altered.

Frieda says:- ‘I remember reading about the amount of water it takes to make a beefburger – and according to a European Commission report, within the EU, the food we eat represents nearly a third of our climate footprint as consumers, and yet the food debate and the energy that is wasted in our food production hasn’t reached centre stage in the climate debate, nor has the impact on our diet-related ill health been measured that much, with the patterns of food production. I am

really looking forward to the event on the 17th and hearing what the audience has to say after watching the film.'

Food Inc shows how in the US a handful of corporations control the nation's food supply. Though the companies try to maintain the myth that food still comes from farms with red barns and white picket fences, food is actually raised on massive "factory farms" and processed in mega industrial plants. The animals grow fatter faster and are designed to fit the machines that slaughter them. Tomatoes are bred to be shipped without bruising and to stay edible for months. The system is highly productive, and Americans are spending less on food than ever before. But, at what cost?

Cattle are given feed that their bodies are not biologically designed to digest, resulting in new strains of E. coli bacteria, which sickens roughly 73,000 Americans annually. And because of the high proliferation of processed foods derived from corn, Americans are facing epidemic levels of diabetes among adults and alarming increases in obesity, especially among children.

Food, Inc. illustrates the dangers of a food system controlled by powerful corporations that don't want you to see, to think about or to criticise how our food is made. The film reveals how complicated and compromised the once simple process of growing crops and raising livestock to feed ourselves and our families has become. But, it also reminds us that despite what appears to be at times a hopeless situation, each of us still has the ability to vote on this issue every day – at breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Soil Association is the official charity partner of the new Oscar-tipped documentary and through their partnership they are promoting the solutions that organic systems offer, particularly in the UK. They hope that the more people see this film, the more people will understand the work of the Soil Association, a non-profit organisation founded in 1946 by

a group of farmers, scientists and nutritionists who observed a direct connection between farming practice and plant, animal, human and environmental health.

Dr Eleanor Logan, Head of Soil Association Scotland said :-
'Eric Schlosser who is co-producer of the film is very aware of the work that the Soil Association does in the UK and asked if we would like to be official charity partner in the UK. Since the film is highlighting what we have been campaigning about around food it is a perfect match for us and an unbelievable opportunity to get the issues discussed in the mainstream. As we have seen so far, the film has got people talking about where our food comes from and how feed ourselves in very accessible ways. At the end of the film there are a list of things people can do to take control – including campaigning for change and buying local food from local producers. All things we advocate.'

Today the Soil Association is the UK's leading organic organisation, with over 200 staff based in Bristol and Edinburgh and working as certification inspectors across the country. The Soil Association is a charity, reliant on donations and on the support of its members and the public to carry out its work.

For information on why organic matters its best to go to the [website](#)

In case you don't make it along to the film then here are some of the facts from Food, Inc.

In the 1970s, the top five beef packers controlled about 25% of the market. Today, the top four control more than 80% of the market.

In the 1970s, there were thousands of slaughterhouses producing the majority of beef sold. Today, we have only 13.

In 1998, the USDA implemented microbial testing for salmonella and E. coli 0157h7 so that if a plant repeatedly failed these tests, the USDA could shut down the plant. After being taken

to court by the meat and poultry associations, the USDA no longer has that power.

In 1972, the FDA conducted 50,000 food safety inspections. In 2006, the FDA conducted only 9,164.

During the Bush administration, the head of the FDA was the former executive VP of the National Food Processors Association.

During the Bush administration, the chief of staff at the USDA was the former chief lobbyist for the beef industry in Washington.

Prior to renaming itself an agribusiness company, Monsanto was a chemical company that produced, among other things, DDT and Agent Orange.

In 1996 when it introduced Round-Up Ready Soybeans, Monsanto controlled only 2% of the U.S. soybean market. Now, over 90% of soybeans in the U.S. contain Monsanto's patented gene.

Supreme Court justice Clarence Thomas was an attorney at Monsanto from 1976 to 1979. After his appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Thomas wrote the majority opinion in a case that helped Monsanto enforce its seed patents.

The average chicken farmer invests over \$500,000 and makes only \$18,000 a year.

32,000 hogs a day are killed in Smithfield Hog Processing Plant in Tar Heel, N.C, which is the largest slaughterhouse in the world.

The average American eats over 200 lbs. of meat a year.

30% of the land in the U.S. is used for planting corn.

The modern supermarket now has, on average, 47,000 products, the majority of which is being produced by only a handful of food companies.

70% of processed foods have some genetically modified ingredient.

SB63 Consumer Right to Know measure requiring all food derived from cloned animals to be labeled as such passed the California state legislature before being vetoed in 2007 by Governor Schwarzenegger, who said that he couldn't sign a bill that pre-empted federal law.

Corn products include: ketchup, cheese, Twinkies, batteries, peanut butter, Cheez-Its, salad dressings, Coke, jelly, Sweet & Low, syrup, juice, Kool-Aid, charcoal, diapers, Motrin, meat and fast food.

Corn, which is the main ingredient in animal feed, is also used as a food additive. Those products commonly include: Cellulose, Xylitol, Maltodextrin, Ethylene, Gluten, Fibersol-2, Citrus Cloud Emulsion, Inositol, Fructose, Calcium Stearate, Saccharin, Sucrose, Sorbitol, High Fructose Corn Syrup, Citric Acid, Di-glycerides, Semolina, Sorbic Acid, Alpha Tocopherol, Ethyl Lactate, Polydextrose, Xanthan Gum, White Vinegar, Ethyl Acetate, Fumaric Acid, Ascorbic Acid, Baking Powder, Zein, Vanilla Extract, Margarine, and Starch.

1 in 3 Americans born after 2000 will contract early onset diabetes; Among minorities, the rate will be 1 in 2.

E. coli and Salmonella outbreaks have become more frequent in America, whether it be from spinach or jalapenos. In 2007, there were 73,000 people sickened from the E. coli virus.

Organics is the fastest growing food segment, increasing 20% annually.

Stop press – [Edinburgh International Film Festival](#) – tickets go on sale on 3 June 2010 – mark this date in your diary!