Table of Contents: Our national eating disorder

Introduction: Our National Eating Disorder

I. Industrial Corn
- One: The Plant: Corn's Conquest
- Two: The Farm
- Three: The Elevator
- Four: The Feedlot: Making Meat
- Five: The Processing Plant: Making Complex Foods
- Six: The Consumer: A Republic of Fat
- Seven: The Meal: Fast Food

II. Pastoral Grass
- Eight: All Flesh is Grass
- Nine: Big Organic
- Ten: Grass: Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Pasture
- Eleven: The Animals: Practicing Complexity'
- Twelve: Slaughter: In a Glass Abattoir
- Thirteen: The Market: "Greetings from the Non-Barcode People"
- Fourteen: The Meal: Grass-Fed

III. Personal
- The Forest: (Hunting and Catering)
- Fifteen: The Forager
- Sixteen: The Omnivore's Dilemma
- Seventeen: The Ethics of Eating Animals
- Eighteen: Hunting: The Meat
- Nineteen: Gathering: The Fungi
- Twenty: The Perfect Meal
Our National Eating Disorder

“... the way we eat represents our most profound engagement with the natural world. Daily, our eating turns nature into culture, transforming the body of the world into our bodies and minds.”
Appetizer

• What should we have for dinner?
  – Native wisdom ---> confusion and anxiety

• Silver bullets and lightning in a bottle
  – Adkins effect
  – Legislation
  – Melting Pot

• Struggles of our conscience

• Explore three food chains around four meals
  – Industrial
  – Pastoral
  – Personal

• Eating is an agricultural act and ecological and political

• Eating defines us and agriculture reshapes our natural world
“Industrial Complex” Food Chain

- Feeds most of us
- The Supermarket Paradox
- What should I eat?
  - What am I eating?
  - Where in the world did it come from?
- The Cornbelt
- Focus on Zea mays
- Over 25% of 45,000 food items
Corn-man (& Country) walking

- If we are what we eat, “processed corn”
- Survival of the fittest – challenge to capture and store energy – corn is king
- Reshaping the landscape
- Advancement in production agriculture
- Economics verses Ecology
- Plague of cheap corn

Corn = evil???
What Propels the Northern Flow of Gold

• Number 2 Yellow Fever
• Commingling
• A river runs through it
  – Headwaters
  – Ports
• What are you marketing
  – animal, vegetable, mineral
• High Fructose Corn Syrup
• Everything but the “squeal”
• Value-added
Corliss

- Six: The Consumer: A Republic of Fat
- Seven: The Meal: Fast Food
- II. Pastoral Grass
  - Eight: All Flesh is Grass
  - Nine: Big Organic
  - Ten: Grass: Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Pasture
The United Nations reported that in 2000 the number of people suffering from **OVERNUTRITION** — a billion — has officially surpassed the number suffering from **MALNUTRITION** — 800 million.

- Obesity has officially become an epidemic
  - Americans are eating an extra 200 calories a day
  - More accurate to say we are drinking these extra calories

- Increase in High-fructose corn syrup
- Belief that we “think” processed food taste good
- The rise of supersized drinks
  - Cheaper; humans are programmed to look for the best “buy”

- Current health problems are due to the industry and its policies
The Fast Food meal

• McDonald's is evil!!

• Serves as the basis for
  – high health costs
  – cheap fast food,
  – environmental and global economic costs
    • especially for the world’s poorest regions.
  – Comfort food

We eat more and more and are left not satisfied, but “simply, regrettably, full”
“I’m a grass farmer” and “beyond organic”

• Polyface Farm (VA) is based on the “old agrarian-pastoral ideal,”
  – a diversified farm ran to be an efficient and sustainable system that uses
    • both modern technology and
    • knowledge about ecology
  – Rotates his field and animal grazing times to maximize output and products
  – Don’t ship nationally; only local to lesson the use of fossil fuels in shipping
  – Against the government term – “organic”

• The agricultural industry should be grass-based not corn-based
Supermarket Pastoral

• Taps into “our deepest, oldest longings” for connection to the earth and safe and healthful food for ourselves and our children
  – Begins an investigation into the industrial organic industry to determine the reality versus the imagined
    • So many confusing terms!!!
    • People’s Park
      • Greening revolution in 1969 in America
    • Criticizes heavily the farming practices in industrial organic complexes
    • Who owns the term “Organic”

• Better than what? ... Is organic better? For the taste? For health?
Corn is money

• Why is the food industry based on corn instead of grass?

  – Pollan answers that the temptations of cheap, easy food outweigh the benefits of slower, though ultimately more nutritious, food. Industry, not nature, is prized.
David

- Eleven: The Animals: Practicing Complexity'
- Twelve: Slaughter: In a Glass Abattoir
- Thirteen: The Market: "Greetings from the Non-Barcode People"
- Fourteen: The Meal: Grass-Fed

III. Personal

- The Forest: (Hunting and Catering)
- Fifteen: The Forager
Karen

- Sixteen: The Omnivore's Dilemma
- Seventeen: The Ethics of Eating Animals
- Eighteen: Hunting: The Meat
- Nineteen: Gathering: The Fungi
- Twenty: The Perfect Meal
Discussion: The Omnivore’s Dilemma

• What are the influences of culture on what we eat? How does this affect our health?

• Relating this to the 5 Grand Challenges, how might this affect the way we “Enrich our Youth” and “Feed the World”? 

Food is Love
Discussion: The Ethics of Eating Animals

• What are your views on the ethical question of animal suffering and your meat consumption?

• For those involved with beef and poultry production, and those who hunt, has this book changed your views? Do you agree with the author?
Discussion: Hunting the Meat

• Those who have hunted, have you experienced similar emotions and physical feelings as the author during his own first hunting experience?
• Those who have not hunted, do you think hunting your own food would give you a different perspective on what you eat?
Discussion: Gathering the Fungi

- What do you think mushroom foraging suggests about the omnivore’s dilemma? How does this compare to the ethical uncertainty of slaughter and hunting for meat?
Discussion: The Perfect Meal

• At the very end of Chapter 20, the author states that his first meal (McDonald’s) and last meal (dinner party with friends) are equally unreal and unsustainable.
  – Also, “the pleasures of one are based on nearly perfect knowledge; the pleasures of the other on an equally perfect ignorance.”

• With all this in mind, how do we define the perfect meal?

• How do we balance the diversity of nature, and the ingenuity of industry?
Conclusion
Pics – Please feel free to choose and place on your slides.
• “So that’s us: processed corn, walking.”
• “… the way we eat represents our most profound engagement with the natural world. Daily, our eating turns nature into culture, transforming the body of the world into our bodies and minds.”
• But that’s the challenge -- to change the system more than it changes you.”
• “Eating is an agricultural act,’ as Wendell Berry famously said. It is also an ecological act, and a political act, too. Though much has been done to obscure this simple fact, how and what we eat determines to a great extent the use we make of the world - and what is to become of it. To eat with a fuller consciousness of all that is at stake might sound like a burden, but in practice few things in life can afford quite as much satisfaction. By comparison, the pleasures of eating industrially, which is to say eating in ignorance, are fleeting. Many people today seem adeptly content eating at the end of an industrial food chain, without a thought in the world; this book is probably not for them.”
• “Were the walls of our meat industry to become transparent, literally or even figuratively, we would not long continue to raise, kill, and eat animals the way we do.”
• “Very simply, we subsidize high-fructose corn syrup in this country, but not carrots. While the surgeon general is raising alarms over the epidemic of obesity, the president is signing farm bills designed to keep the river of cheap corn flowing, guaranteeing that the cheapest calories in the supermarket will continue to be the unhealthiest.”
• “This for many people is what is most offensive about hunting—to some, disgusting: that it encourages, or allows, us not only to kill but to take a certain pleasure in killing. It’s not as though the rest of us don’t countenance the killing of tens of millions of animals every year. Yet for some reason we feel more comfortable with the mechanical killing practiced, out of view and without emotion by industrial agriculture.”
• “Curiously, the one bodily fluid of other people that doesn’t disgust us is the one produced by the human alone: tears. Consider the sole type of used tissue you’d be willing to share.”
• “You are what you eat is a truism hard to argue with, and yet it is, as a visit to a feedlot suggests, incomplete, for you are what what you eat eats, too. And what we are, or have become, is not just meat but number 2 corn and oil.”
• “Without such a thing as fast food, there would be no need for slow food,”