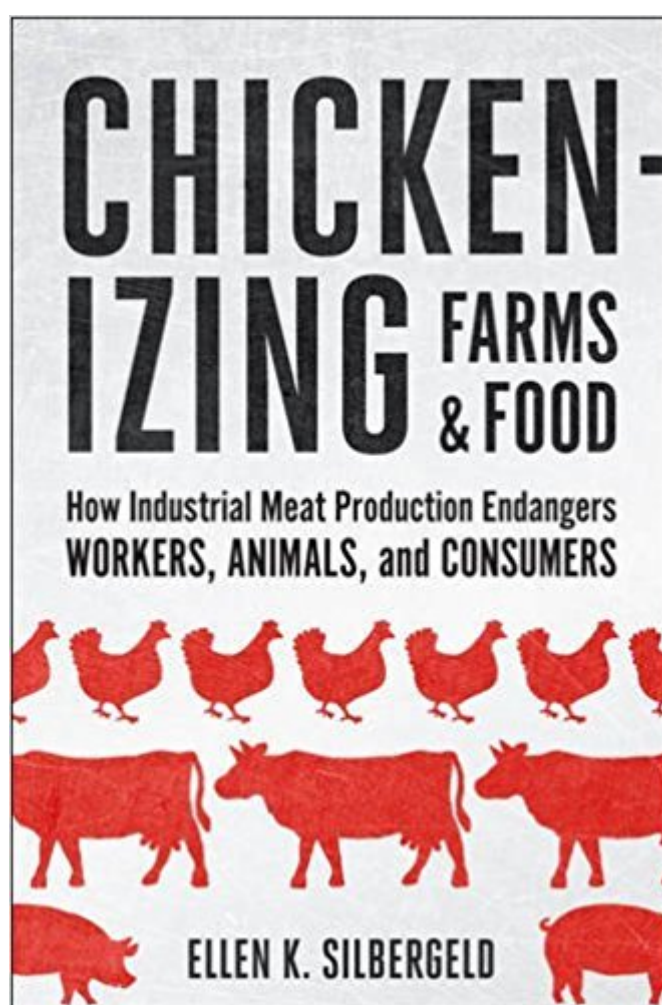


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# Chickenizing Farms And Food: How Industrial Meat Production Endangers Workers, Animals, And Consumers



## Synopsis

Over the past century, new farming methods, feed additives, and social and economic structures have radically transformed agriculture around the globe, often at the expense of human health. In *Chickenizing Farms and Food*, Ellen K. Silbergeld reveals the unsafe world of chickenizationâs big agricultureâs top-down, contract-based factory farming systemâs and its negative consequences for workers, consumers, and the environment. Drawing on her deep knowledge of and experience in environmental engineering and toxicology, Silbergeld examines the complex history of the modern industrial food animal production industry and describes the widespread effects of Arthur Perdueâs remarkable agricultural innovations, which were so important that the US Department of Agriculture uses the term chickenization to cover the transformation of all farm animal production. Silbergeld tells the real story of how antibiotics were first introduced into animal feeds in the 1940s, which has led to the emergence of multi-drug-resistant pathogens, such as MRSA. Along the way, she talks with poultry growers, farmers, and slaughterhouse workers on the front lines of exposure, moving from the Chesapeake Bay peninsula that gave birth to the modern livestock and poultry industry to North Carolina, Brazil, and China. Arguing that the agricultural industry is in desperate need of reform, the book searches through the fog of illusion that obscures most of what has happened to agriculture in the twentieth century and untangles the history of how laws, regulations, and policies have stripped government agencies of the power to protect workers and consumers alike from occupational and food-borne hazards. *Chickenizing Farms and Food* also explores the limits of some popular alternatives to industrial farming, including organic production, nonmeat diets, locavorism, and small-scale agriculture. Silbergeldâs provocative but pragmatic call to action is tempered by real challenges: how can we ensure a safe and accessible food system that can feed everyone, including consumers in developing countries with new tastes for western diets, without hurting workers, sickening consumers, and undermining some of our most powerful medicines?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An insightful book that should be of interest to anyone who eats food, animal or not." (Kirkus Reviews)"This engaging treatise lays out a compelling case for reexamining the way we produce the food we eat. Required reading for those who are interested in learning more about where our food comes from." (Library Journal)"Little doubt exists that meat production is fraught with problems. After reading Silbergeld's book, my next visit to the farmer's market will be a more enlightened one." (Science)"A sobering, vivid tour of people and places covers the far-reaching impact of Arthur Perdue's chicken empire, animal-feed antibiotics and MRSA, worker safety at a hog-slaughter megaplant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, and Brazil and China's recent "chickenization"." (Chronicle of Higher Education)"Chickenizing Farms & Food is essential reading for anyone concerned about food safety, about worker safety, and the industry that has far too little concern for either." (Metapsychology)"... much good can be found in these pages, and Ellen K. Sibergeld offers useful input regarding the most complicated question in globalization and food production today: what are we supposed to do about it?" (San Francisco Book Review)"She is clear-eyed and practical in the solutions she offers at the end of the book. Refreshingly, Silbergeld does not advocate a return to "the agriculture of the past" (which she believes is romanticized and effective only for affluent producers and consumers), but rather a systematic overhaul of agriculture as an industry." (Choice)"Silbergeld writes in an easy, conversational style that demonstrates a sweeping knowledge of human history ranging from the Egyptians to Immanuel Wallerstein's works on the modern world system. She also marshals an impressive array of facts to defend her case. Chickenizing Farms & Food is a must-read for anyone who cares about the production of the things we eat." (Washington Independent Review of Books)"The strengths of this volume are its clear presentation of concepts and evidence, lucid explanations of the supporting science, and spirited critique of both sides in the Big Ag/Food vs. Small/Local Ag/Food encounter." (FoodAnthropology)"The book is engaging and compelling... She [Silbergeld] glosses over nothing." "A powerfully original exploration of the problems of industrial-scale animal agriculture that

touches on public health, the environment, and worker safety. No one else has written so thoughtfully or vividly about the 'chickenization' of the agricultural industry around the world and what it means. Silbergeld has written an important, informative, and excellent book." (Tom Pelton, host of The Environment in Focus public radio program)"Listen to Ellen. The dangers that she reveals are real, but so are the opportunities to do better. As a life-long farmer, producing over 50 million chickens annually with no antibiotics or drugs, I know that a superior and safer model can be successful." (Scott I. Sechler, Owner, Bell & Evans)"It takes a tough professor to write a book that takes on the proponents and opponents of the industrialization of agriculture at the same time. Ellen Silbergeld's approach is based in public health: how to make sure all people are able to access nutritious and safe food. She writes with data, humor and passion. This is a critical contribution to discussions about our global food supply." (Joshua M. Sharfstein, MD, former Principal Deputy Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Associate Dean for Public Health Practice and Training, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health)"This timely book raises issues at the core of our agricultural dilemma. If we're going to expand production sustainably and safely, we need to take this uncomfortable dive into the murky ways in which we keep ourselves fed." (Jonathan Rushton, Royal Veterinary College, London)"This is a must read for anyone interested in our food system—how we got here, why it doesn't work, and how we move forward. Ellen Silbergeld has many groundbreaking insights about how and why the industry failed us when it comes to public health, food safety, and protecting workers." (Fedele Bauccio, CEO, Bon Appetit Management Company)"What are the consequences of the industrialization of our food production? Ellen Silbergeld's journey shows why we should be worried, and offers a glimpse of a hopeful future." (Jan Kluytmans, Consult Microbiologist and Infection Control Specialist, Breda, The Netherlands)"Chickenizing Farms and Food is an insightful look at where our food comes from and how it is brought to the dinner plate. Silbergeld brings us face to face with the harsh reality as she explores ways we can go forward in feeding the world." (Food Inc.'s Carole Morison)"Our agricultural systems and processes have changed over the last century, with unintended consequences—from increased human health risks to degraded environmental conditions. Bravo to Dr. Silbergeld for reminding us of our past, confronting us with a reality we have allowed, and presenting us with questions for which we must find answers." (William C. Baker, President, Chesapeake Bay Foundation)"This absorbing and compelling work exposes the interconnected risks to food and worker safety from industrialized animal production. Silbergeld describes the devastating impact of deliberate manipulation and weakening of consumer and worker protections by powerful vested interests. Few books have the power to change public policy. This is one."

(James Ritchie, International Union of Food Workers (IUF))

Ellen K. Silbergeld is a professor of environmental health sciences, epidemiology, and health policy and management at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. In 1993, she was the recipient of a MacArthur "genius grant."

The author has delved into a critical area with a dispassionate examination of industrial agriculture, its benefits, its externalized costs, its political perversions and the needs of the population of the world. Her conclusions address the most troubling issues, but would require massive cultural awakenings from not only government and industry, but from consumers as well.

I gave this book to my brother and he said it was very informative and would recommend for all to read. I will be reading it next and will pass it on to other relatives.

Despite some very dense going, this is a must-read for anyone interested in the corruption of industrial food systems.

excellent book

Silbergeld is looking at how we need to make changes in agriculture that allow for healthier livestock and healthier ecosystems, and thus, healthier people; while still making production cost effective enough to feed even those who can't afford "boutique" food (CSAs, etc.). I have read extensively on this topic and my major was in animal science; I have not encountered anyone presenting this topic with such knowledge and depth before. I feel Silbergeld deserves 5 stars (though her editor does not). Silbergeld's overall style is enjoyable and not dry, but she can make sentences overly complex and wordy. Basic overview: CH 1 "Perceptions of agriculture and how the agricultural industry manages these perceptions. The "one health" concept of public health practitioners and veterinarians which looks at the interconnections between animal health and human health. CH 2 "History of industrial agriculture. CH 3 "More on the history of recent agriculture, mainly looking at broiler chickens (where it started). This is the chickenization referred to in the title. CH 4 "How the chickenization process was applied to other livestock and crops used to feed livestock, across the world. Subheading in this chapter are Different Paths To Chickenization; The Power Of Research:

Brazil; Thailand: The Multinational Corporation's Role In Industrial Food Animal Production; China: Import The Industry And Then Buy Back The Originals; India: Trade Restriction, Resistance To Social Change, And Poverty; Summary.

CH 5 " Use of antimicrobial drugs in livestock. Subheadings in this chapter are: Origins: The Tale of Dr. Lucy Wills; March Of The Antimicrobials; What's The Evidence That GPAs Work?; Two Wrongs; Resistance.

CH 6 " Use of confinement in industrial agriculture. Subheadings: Other Porosities: Humans And Animals On The Move.

CH 7 " Environmental damage caused by industrial agriculture, including antimicrobial resistance. Silbergeld shows that most of these negative effects could be avoided, but are not. Subheadings: A Dangerous Confidence; How Agriculture Builds The Environmental Resistome.

CH 8 " Harmful effects on the environment. Subheadings: Taking; The : The Soybean Frontier; Putting; Human Ecology.

CH 9 " Harmful effects on those who those who work in agriculture.

CH 10 " Food safety. Think food borne illness, for one. Subheadings: The Score Is: Industrial Far Outweighs Traditional; What About Nutrition?; High Fructose Corn Syrup; The Chicken Nugget. CH 11 " The need to make changes that provide healthy food to the whole world, not just those with the most money. This is the overriding topic of the book. Subheadings: What Do We Mean By "Feeding"?; What Is The "World" That We Commit To Feeding?; "What" Are We To Feed The World?; How Are We To Feed The World?; Beyond Production To Food Security; Can We Feed Ourselves Without Industrial Agriculture?; What Is The Point?

CH 12 " Silbergeld's vision of what needs to be done, in summary. Starts with a presentation of conclusions, then moves to steps to take. Subheadings: The Way Forward.

This is a pretty good book, focusing on agriculture and new farming methods which often have had a negative impact on animals, workers, and consumers. It gets fairly scientific in spots, sometimes too much, but if you can stick with it through the end of the book it's well worth the effort. Chapter 8, Collateral Damage, is one of the best in the book. Silbergeld talks about the damage done by damming certain rivers, civil strife in certain areas, drought, and other factors. The sections on poultry in the countries of Brazil, Thailand, China, and India are also excellent. The author highlights the problem of growth-promoting antibiotics (GPA'S), drugs added to feeds to increase the growth rates of chickens, pigs, and other farm animals raised for human consumption. Not an easy read, but worth the effort.

I consider myself to be fairly well-educated about industrial farming, and yet I found myself thinking

over and over, 'are you freaking kidding me?!' I'm familiar with the insidious 'ag-gag' laws that prohibit anyone who has anything to do with certain types of industrial slaughterhouses from discussing what goes on with anyone not in the 'club', but I certainly was not aware that being in an airplane above a slaughterhouse in order to take air samples is an issue. Are you kidding me? When purchasing a chicken in a supermarket, you are buying a bird that was slaughtered at 7 weeks of age and is about 4 pound, yielding probably a bit over 3 pounds of edible meat. In those 7 weeks, the bird produced 10 pounds of feces. Now think about pigs and cows, and that's a heck of a lot of waste. The antibiotic laden wastes are not all lovely fresh fertilizer for our azaleas and roses. It is not carefully composted. There are few to no restrictions on the handling of hazardous and disease riddled waste. Now think of workers in the industry. This book is written more as educational text, it is without the high emotions and gut reactions that the facts give to the reader. It is a well thought out and well documented argument for industry reform.

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