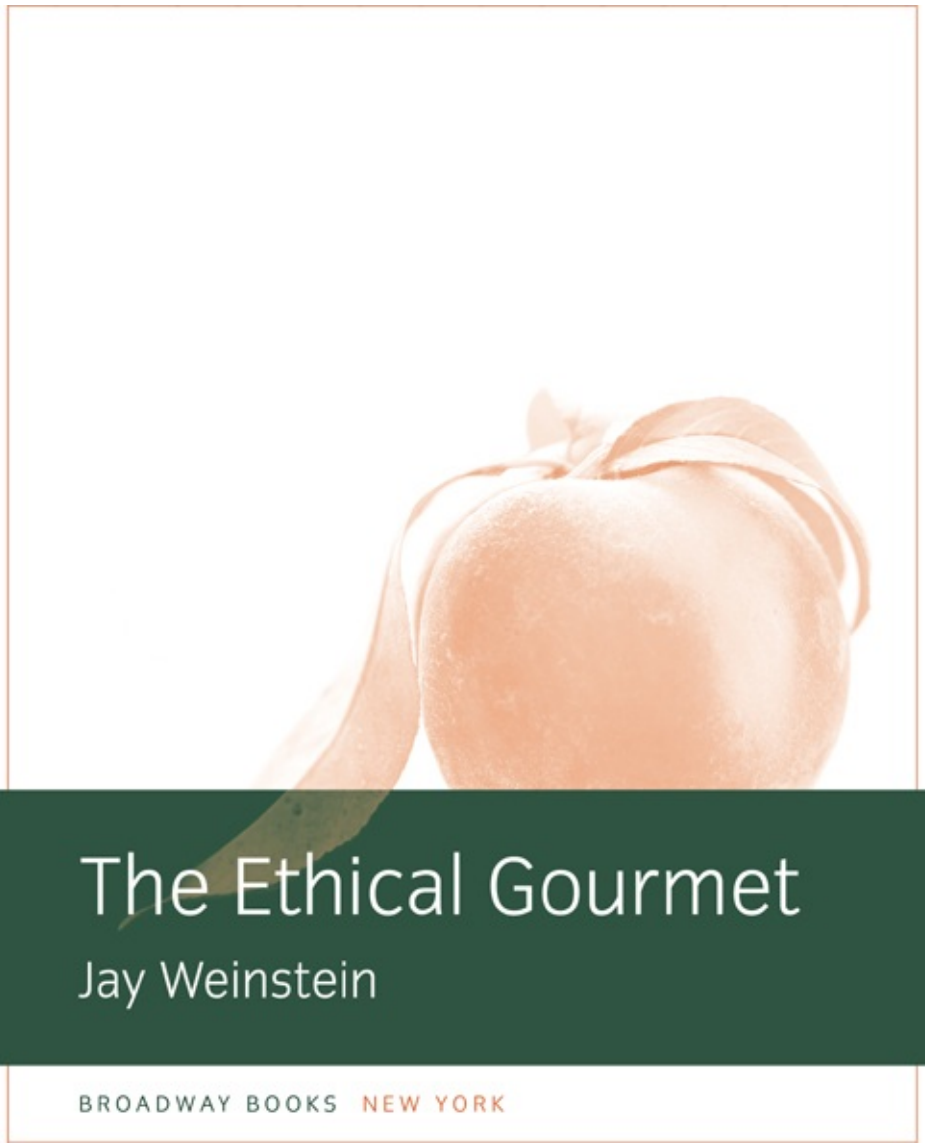
THE ETHICAL GOURMET

JAY WEINSTEIN

ALSO BY JAY WEINSTEIN

A Cup of Comfort Cookbook: Favorite Comfort Foods to Warm Your Heart and Lift Your Spirit

The Everything Vegetarian Cookbook: 300 Healthy Recipes Everyone Will Enjoy



The Ethical Gourmet

Jay Weinstein

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THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED, WITH LOVE AND RESPECT, TO MY PARENTS.

Contents

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Introduction

We're at a turning point in the history of American food production, when a reborn ethic- that we're responsible for the way we treat the land and its bounty—is changing what we se on our supermarket shelves and dinner plates.

Flavor, freshness, and overall quality of food are rising. It's easier than ever to bu ingredients that don't despoil the environment, exploit endangered wildlife, or create undu suffering in the world.

We have all heard of the rain forests that are continually disappearing, the rivers that ar being polluted, and the acid rain that is harming our very being. But most of us are s overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems that we just throw up our hands when comes to trying to help solve them. This book is written in the belief that if each of us do his or her part we can make a difference, and the world will be a better place for it.

These pages feature more than a hundred recipes that showcase mainstream organic frui and vegetables and ethically raised products. A combination lifestyle guide, shopper resource, and cookbook, this book brings together the concepts, sources, and methods fo enjoying today's conscientiously raised harvest.

The age of the industrial organic farm has arrived. While bad news for some small organ farmers, it's a boon for the ethical gourmet. Agribusiness, armed with the Food and Dru Administration's new organic labeling law, is undercutting mom and pop in the pesticide-fre naturally fertilized food market. Quality organic and environmentally sensitive food produc are going mainstream—available in supermarkets and other food stores throughout th United States and abroad.

The vast majority of Americans identify themselves as environmentalists. If they had choice, they would choose fish from nonendangered stocks, produce whose growth doesn pollute the land and waterways, and pork from pigs that led a good life. Every recipe in th book is based on that assumption: People do the right thing if all else is equal. Here's a wa to put beliefs into practice.

Whole grains used to be hard to find. They can replace meat's nutritional role if you ca find them. Now, supermarkets carry wheat berries and quinoa. Even if yours doesn't, th book will tell you where to get them easily. You'll learn to recognize brand names o humanely raised meat and poultry you can trust, names of endangered fish and game speci you'll want to avoid (even though they're cheap and widely available), and produce yo know is grown right, even if it's from a factory farm.

With the endangered status of wild edibles constantly in flux, it's more important than eve to know the causes of species loss and the types of harvesting that wound the ecosyster With the help of this book, savvy consumers will be able to assess for themselves the impa they make with each purchase.

No matter what the organic moralists tell you, there's no credible evidence that organ foods are any more nutritious than nonorganic foods. But there are good reasons to choos them. Their pesticide-free production causes much less pollution and degradation to the lan

and water that nourish them. They're free from dangerous residues. They also usually tas better. Ditto for humanely raised livestock. This book allows responsible stewards of th Earth to enjoy delicious foods. You can open any page of this cookbook and find recipes th will not make you feel guilty about what you're doing to the sea, air, or land. At the sam time, you'll be making an unintentionally healthy choice by moving powerful pesticides o of your diet and giving meat an exalted place, rather than an overbearing one, on your men as a complement to wholesome grains, vegetables, and legumes.

The recipes come from my years of fine-dining restaurant experience and the Culinar Institute of America (CIA) training built into my repertoire, tempered by my lifelo commitment to the environment, understanding of our food system, and my respect for livi things. My independent insight, earned from years of professional buying and cooking, is n driven by producers, but by knowledge, research, and principle.

In the 1980s, my chef and mentor at a New American restaurant in Boston's North En Jasper White, engaged in the kind of ingredient sourcing that was sweeping the nation, fro Alice Waters's Chez Panisse in Berkeley and Mark Miller's Coyote Café in Santa Fe to Pa Prudhomme's K-Paul's in New Orleans and Larry Forgione's American Place in New Yor They were rejecting the consolidated food suppliers that had arisen in the last half-centur and going back to buying directly from producers. Jasper sourced ingredients from betwe sixty and seventy companies, large and small, while other, larger restaurants were buyi from only six or seven megadistributors. Of course, we had accounts with giant suppliers lik Sexton and Sysco, who sold virtually everything from daikon radishes to dish detergent. B Jasper White and his colleagues across America knew that the principles of buying locall direct from producers, had tangible benefits that were being undermined by the consolidate food distribution system our country had developed since the end of World War II. Th concept—consciously choosing where to buy ingredients rather than always going to the mo convenient seller—makes as much sense for the individual as it does for the restaurateur.

We all care about preserving natural beauty, eliminating the suffering of th underprivileged, and treating animals humanely. But to put our money where our mouth are, we have to look beyond the convenience of supermarkets and "big box" stores some the time. As the New American restaurant chefs know, there is a place for the big players food sourcing. But there's also a place for producers who sell direct to the consumer. T know when to buy at Costco and when to buy from a family farm stand, or when to pick u meat at the supermarket versus when to order it over the Internet, read the pages ahead.

When you're the only one of your friends paying extra for organic milk or boycottin Atlantic cod, it's easy to think that your efforts are for naught, but what you're doing do matter. Instead of seeing yourself as filling the ocean with a teaspoon, think of eatin ethically in the same way you view giving money to a grossly underfunded charity to, sa free African children from the threat of malaria. You won't be able to cure malaria b yourself. Perhaps even all of the current efforts to solve the problem aren't enough to end th scourge. But if your contribution buys one mosquito net that prevents one child fro contracting the disease, then your effort has meaning.

Pork is more than just the other white meat. Political pork is the driving force behi needless overproduction in agricultural states where congressional representatives bri home federal farm subsidies.

The lion's share of these subsidies go not to the mythical "family farmer" so often evoked b politicians on both sides of the aisle, but to giant agribusinesses looking to fatten their botto line. While factory farming isn't all bad (it may even be the route to affordable organic foo for the masses), paying off corporations for political support is undemocratic, and undermines our natural environment. Protectionist tariffs, like those recently imposed c farmed catfish from Vietnam, undermine a proven ecologically responsible industry in sensitive region to coddle a domestic niche in politically valuable Southern states. Chee connoisseurs in the United States have lamented for years that fine, artisanal Europea cheeses are disingenuously prohibited because of so-called health protections. Obviously, th French, Italians, and Spanish aren't dropping like flies with every bite of raw-milk Morbie Taleggio, and Cabrales. Could lobbyists for America's hormone-crazed dairy industry b behind the ban? Food quality and prices are more closely linked to government policy tha many people know.

Agricultural Doublespeak

We love our cheap food in this country as much as we love our cheap gasoline. Mo Americans think that farm subsidies are keeping food affordable. But agricultural subsidi hide the real cost of our foods, by artifically depressing prices of domestically produce goods with money paid by taxpayers. It's like giving the ice cream man a couple of hundre bucks every summer in return for a promise that he'll keep the price of a cone at one dolla Sugar is the most egregious example, but wheat, soy, rice, and corn (the most heavi subsidized crop) also have hidden costs. Soy, mostly used as livestock feed in the me industry, seldom reaches our plates in the healthy form of soy protein. Instead, it shows up a inexpensive (read: subsidized) oil and margarine, staples of processed foods. Both sugar an corn contribute to the massive oversweetening of the American diet that many nutritionis believe has led to the obesity epidemic in the U.S. I personally believe the roots of ou country's weight problem lie mostly with excessive portion sizes and unwise individu choices, but one could argue that these are fueled by cheap food, too. In any case, this is le a book about health and good looks than a discussion of how what's beneficial for us in th short run can wreck our land in the long run.

Subsidies on food production give domestic producers a leg up on foreign competitors. guess that was the original intention of most of these expensive programs. But while w encourage other peoples to adopt our economic system and values, we demand that they liv up to standards we don't expect of ourselves. America encouraged impoverished Vietname farmers to convert their rice paddies into catfish farms so that they could produce a mo lucrative crop and lift themselves out of economic stagnation (presumably so they could bu more American goods). But when they proved highly successful at raising catfish and began

export them, the U.S. put up trade barriers to protect domestic catfish farmers.

The farm bill signed in May 2002 by President George W. Bush represented nearly $20 billion in agricultural subsidies, mostly going to large corporate farms. The result is a va oversupply and lower prices, which will inevitably lead to calls for more subsidies. I wish could say that just one political party was the party of big subsidies, and the other was th one to vote for if you're concerned about destructive and wasteful farm policies. But on th issue, both major parties have shameful histories.

If farm subsidies are so counterproductive, enriching megafarm corporations far more tha the much-glorified family farmer and supporting destructive encroachment of farming in ecologically sensitive areas, why hasn't the process been eliminated yet? The answer simple: politics. Leaders of farm states need subsidy-supported farmers' votes, so they use a of their leverage, on both sides of the political aisle, to maintain the status quo. It's the mo brazen example of buying votes in the country.

SCIENCE TAKES ITS LUMPS

No administration has manipulated science to suit its own agenda as much as th administration of George W. Bush. From its endless "wait and see" approach to looming crise like global warming to the promotion of mineral and oil exploration in sensitive ecologic areas, the Bush administration has chosen industry giveaways over science every time. Foo policy reflects this approach. For example, the administration's policy makers redefined th term "wild" so that hatchery fish are counted in with threatened wild steelhead trout specie This enables them to fill Western rivers with genetically different hatchery spawn so they ca circumvent protections that regulate irrigation diversions—a giveaway to corporate farme looking for more free water. Similarly, the administration has made rule changes that wi count hatchery salmon in with wild, so that much larger counts will be used to assess whethe to remove fifteen species of salmon from federal threatened and endangered species lists.

FIDDLING WHILE ROME BURNS: REGULATORY GAMES

Our employer-employee relationship with our elected representatives is an odd one. We hi them to enact our interests into law, but we can't exactly give them direct orders. Onc they're hired, they can pretty much do as they please, at least until the next election com around. Lately, many of the people we've hired to represent us in Congress have approache their jobs as though by doing nothing, they'll offend no one.

As industrial fishing operations strip-mine the oceans of large fish (wiping out 90 percent them over the last thirty years), three initiatives to protect oceans and estuaries languish. Ou leaders instead choose to debate the wording of the Pledge of Allegiance. While millions gallons of fuel are burned flying foreign foods to our shores, consumers remain uninforme about the origins of most of their foods. A provision of the otherwise-egregious 2002 Far Bill mandating country-of-origin labeling lies idle, while our representatives refine th definition of marriage. While consumers unknowingly buy severely depleted wild fis legislation that would require stores to label fish as farmed or wild sits in limbo. Our electe officials are busy enacting additional tax cuts that will incur debts for future generation Unfortunately, endangered birds, fish, forests, flora, and fauna have no voice—n representatives. But from the looks of our latest congressional sessions, it wouldn't do the

much good anyway.

The White House has become much stronger because of Congress's inaction. Under th administration of George W. Bush, environmental regulations have been weakene ecologically sensitive areas have been exploited for mineral wealth, polluters have been give massive breaks, and environmentalists have been maligned as nuisances at best, traitors worst. In his drive to link every part of his agenda with the terror attacks of September 1 and the all-encompassing war on terror, the president has implied that opponents of his o drilling initiatives in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge support continued dependence on o from despotic Middle Eastern states. In rejecting the Kyoto global warming treaty, he severe U.S. environmental policy from that of the rest of the civilized world. A former head of th Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for two Republican presidents called Preside Bush's record a "polluter protection" policy, saying he's weakened the Clean Air Act, amon other things. The administration's disastrous policies, combined with Congress's inactio have set America on a downhill slide that may take years to reverse. Food policy, strongl tied to land and ocean management policies, needs major attention from our politicians. On a few are taking action.

The tug-of-war between the interests of the food industry and the concerns of vote sometimes forces politicians to choose between corporate and public benefit. Crop subsidie drinking water protection, origin labeling, and organic certification are some issues whe congressmen must grapple with their two constituencies: big donors and individual voter The big donors fuel campaigns that draw more individual voters, so the choice is often mone driven. That may be what decided the awful Farm Bill of 2002.

That single piece of legislation, originally intended by senators Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) an Richard Lugar (R-Indiana) as an ecologically constructive way to give small farmers a han while ending huge agricultural subsidies, morphed into the most destructive policy th administration had undertaken until the Iraq invasion. It ended up costing taxpayers $24 billion—representing an increase of more than 80 percent over the 1996 Farm Bill. Since th aid focuses its cash largesse mainly on eight "program" crops (cotton, wheat, corn, soybean rice, barley, oats, and sorghum), it predominantly benefits breadbasket states, which happe to be electoral swing states.

During the run-up to the 2004 presidential election, the Food and Drug Administration d the beef and feed industries a huge favor: It slowed down. Following revelations about a cas of mad cow disease in Washington State in 2003, the federal regulators had promised swiftly reform practices in the meat industry that foment disease. But, in an effort to placat corporate sponsors of the Bush administration, the agency took steps to delay the mo significant changes involving what could and could not be included in animal feed. Breakin with years of nonpartisan tradition, in 2004 the National Cattlemen's Association endorse President Bush for reelection immediately after the delays were announced. It's common fo agencies to go into semihibernation around election time, a process known as "slow rollin to ensure that no controversial decisions upset the reelection campaign. But with the healt of the American people and the welfare of tens of millions of animals at stake, this case government inaction is particularly egregious.

We who care deeply about the Earth and other living things need to take back our polic

making role in this country. That means choosing candidates who stand up for th environment. To review ratings for all senators and congressional representatives, look environmental scorecards and environmental group endorsements on the following Web site www.lcv.org and www.sierraclub.org.

HOLY ROLLING: WHEN RELIGION STEAMROLLS THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental destruction is insignificant to anyone who believes that all must be destroye for the coming of the Messiah. Today, belief in what is called the rapture, a global apocalyps preceding the salvation of all believers, is a fundamental belief of our most powerful electe leaders. From the White House to the houses of Congress, nearly half of our leadersh receives between 80 and 100 percent endorsement from the three main proponents of th theory—the country's most powerful Christian right organizations.

The belief that the Day of Judgment requires the annihilation of nature is drivi environmental policy in our time, with the White House and its congressional alli (including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, Assistant Majority Leader Mitch McDonne Conference Chair Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, House Speaker Dennis Hastert, a Majority Leader Roy Blunt) taking aim at the pillars of our nation's environment protections, including land management policies on food production.

Along with the well-publicized agenda of oil and gas exploration of the Arctic Nation Wildlife Refuge and Padre Island National Seashore (the last pristine stretch of the great wi seashores that once hugged our perimeter); downward revisions of the Clean Water Ac Clean Air Act, and Endangered Species Act; and relaxations of emission standards for ca SUVs, and heavy equipment (including farm machinery), the administration has set its sigh on endangered species protections from pesticides, and it wants to waive environment review for grazing permits on public lands. The free-for-all for polluters can easily b shrugged off by anyone who believes, as one-third of Americans do, according to a 200 Gallup poll, that environmental degradation is part of God's divine plan.

It's against this backdrop that the not-for-profit caretakers of the last parcels of sensitiv wilderness—groups like World Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, and The Nature Conservanc —fret over the likely repercussions of the 2004 elections. What Vice President Dick Chene describes as a mandate is viewed by many in the environmental movement as a deat sentence to the most vulnerable creatures, lands, and waters in America. The irony th disdain for environmental safeguards is being practiced in the name of religion, which prais God for creation, is undeniable.

In a speech upon receiving the Global Environment Citizen Award from Harvard Medic School's Center for Health and the Global Environment, journalist Bill Moyers, an ordaine Baptist minister, spoke about the wave of adherence to a doomsday belief sweeping th nation under the title, "The Godly Must Be Crazy." He pointed out that the bestselling book in the country are the twelve volumes of the "Left Behind" series by right-wi fundamentalist zealot Timothy LaHaye, who cites what Moyers calls "a fantastical theolog concocted in the nineteenth century by a couple of immigrant preachers who took dispara passages from the Bible and wove them into a narrative that has captivated the imaginatio of millions of Americans." His succinct synopsis of the movement's viewpoint is chilling:

Its outline is rather simple, if bizarre (the British writer George Monbiot recently did a brilliant dissection of it and I am indebted to him for adding to my own understanding): Once Israel has occupied the rest of its "biblical lands," legions of the anti-Christ will attack it, triggering a final showdown in the valley of Armageddon. As the Jews who have not been converted are burned, the Messiah will return for the rapture. True believers will be lifted out of their clothes and transported to heaven, where, seated next to the right hand of God, they will watch their political and religious opponents suffer plagues of boils, sores, locusts, and frogs during the several years of tribulation that follow.

So what does this mean for public policy and the environment? Go to Grist [www.grist.org] to read a remarkable work of reporting by the journalist Glenn Scherer—"the road to environmental apocalypse." Read it and you will see how millions of Christian fundamentalists may believe that environmental destruction is not only to be disregarded but actually welcomed—even hastened—as a sign of the coming apocalypse.

I read Moyers's words with horror but not surprise. It explained a lot about what wa happening in our country, and how a toxic mixture of theology and ideology was taking t back to the future. We who believe in the value of nature, and try to protect it, are bein swept back, along with the rest of the country, to an antiscience, anti-free-thought Dark Ag where fatalism and profligacy go hand in hand. We must swim against the tide if we hope t preserve what's left of our natural environment, and get back on the path toward making th world a cleaner place, with better quality of life for future generations of humans and ou wild cohabitants on this planet.

"What would Jesus drive?" was the question posed by a responsible evangelical group, th Evangelical Environmental Network, which cites scripture in support of environment protection. Noting that pollution causes suffering and disease, the group's Web sit www.whatwouldjesusdrive.org, cites the most famous proverb, "Do unto others as you woul have them do unto you." Evoking Christianity's values of peace and goodwill, the group say that "dependence on foreign oil from unstable regions heightens the potential for arme conflict … working against the Prince of Peace."

The group's message about the real threats of global warming cites declines in agricultur output in poorer countries as one of the serious consequences the phenomenon may bring. B addressing the possibility that 80 to 90 million poor people could be at risk of hunger an malnutrition later in the twenty-first century, the group is sending out the message that I ha thought religions generally taught: Help the poor first. The approach they're taking "Protect and improve the things we share: air, water, and earth."

How Green Are the Golden Arches?

If someone had told me a few years ago that McDonald's was insisting on humane practic from its chicken suppliers (mainly Tyson), phasing out growth-promoting antibiotics in i meat supply, and touting organic salad dressings, I'd have thought he or she had mad co disease. But the company *is* bowing to consumer concerns and making some change Premium producers like Ben & Jerry's ice cream, Starbucks coffee, and Sara Lee cakes hav also made some (but not all) important decisions based on fair labor practices in foreig countries, sustainable practices from suppliers, and environmental protection. No majo corporations are yet wholly dedicated to comprehensive ethical decision making, but effor of those who are heading in the right direction should be reinforced with consumer support.

If McDonald's PR machine is to be believed, the company is not only benign, but a for for global good, cutting down on consumers' waste, helping reform the most inhuman practices of the meat industry, stemming the tide of rain forest destruction, and more. And the animal rights groups, environmental organizations, and antiglobalization forces are to b believed, the company is bringing on the apocalypse, with utter disregard for animal welfar massive pollution, decent standards of living for the underprivileged, and dwindlin biodiversity. The truth lies somewhere in the middle.

WHAT CAME FIRST: THE CHICKEN McNUGGET OR THE EGG POLICY?

In a classic case of creating a problem and then taking credit for solving it, McDonald's taking steps to end the trend of excessive antibiotic use in animal agriculture. Of course, th company's gargantuan demand for cheap meat products was one of the key forces that led the egregious practices that have become commonplace in America's factory-farm mea production system. Conditions caused by the speeding up of production, such a overcrowding and stacking of animals in dangerous forms of confinement, led to the high rate of injury and infections that producers say necessitated preventive antibioti applications. And the company's demand for massive amounts of chicken also led to th administering of antibiotics for the sole purpose of promoting faster growth in the birds.

Starting in the late 1990s, McDonald's began routinely auditing production facilities of i suppliers for adherence to humane treatment standards the company had developed wi respected animal behaviorist Temple Grandin. The standards affected the living condition and slaughter practices for cattle and pigs, as well as confinement criteria for egg-laying hen Again, the company was addressing problems created, at least in part, by its own demands fo cheap, plentiful products. Conditions had gotten so bad for animals by the 1980s th consumers were beginning to heed the alarms being raised by animal rights groups lik People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), who had been saying for years th meat industry practices were tantamount to torture. The bad publicity forced the company hand. McDonald's now pays a little more for its eggs.

The company's humane standards are not yet equal to those that will be mandated b European Union (EU) animal welfare guidelines, scheduled to take effect in 2012, but are line with humane standards set in place by United Egg Producers (UEP), an industry grou that raised the bar in 1999. Those guidelines increased the minimum space allotted to eac hen from between 48 and 54 square inches to between 67 and 84 square inches. At 48 squa inches (about half the size of a sheet of copier paper), the hens had become so violent th they routinely pecked and scratched at each other through the cages, leading producers to c off toes and beaks.

The European standards will prohibit "battery cages," where rows and tiers of wire cag confine the animals on sloped grades. The EU standards will also increase minimum cage siz to one-third larger than the U.S. standard, and require that hens have a perch (which comfortable for the hens, and promotes good leg bone health) and a litter-lined nest box retreat to for laying eggs and natural dust-bathing activity. No word on when, if eve McDonald's will adopt the stricter European standards, but the company does set trend Burger King adopted the UEP standards shortly after McDonald's did. Now it's estimated th 80 percent of eggs produced in the United States are produced according to those standard

For consumers who wish to buy eggs that meet or exceed the coming EU regulations, Humar Farm Animal Care, an animal rights group, has instituted a certification program for bee pigs, dairy cattle, laying hens, and broiler chickens. The label "Certified Humane Raised Handled" indicates that the group audited eggs/meat/milk production and found it to be compliance with its strict standards, posted at www.certifiedhumane.com.

WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Although McDonald's has claimed for years that it never utilized beef grazed on land cleare from Amazon rain forest, witnesses have taken the stand in trials against the company Britain, alleging they personally saw Brazilian rain forest slashed and burned to create lar from which McDonald's currently sources beef. That said, the widespread belief th McDonald's is a major force behind the destruction of rain forests is untrue. Its American ar Canadian outlets use only domestically produced beef, and European outlets use almo exclusively European beef.

McDonald's claim that it is eliminating growth-promoting antibiotic use in its meat overblown (yes, antibiotics promote accelerated growth, just as hormones do). First of all, merely *encourages* producers of beef, pork, and dairy to comply. Second, the directive appli only to firms that produce the meat *specifically* for McDonald's. That leaves a full 30 perce not even being "encouraged." Yes, lip service is better than nothing, and may yield som improvements, but for listings of eateries, markets, and producers near you that really c prohibit antibiotic-fattened meat, go to the search engine at www.eatwellguide.org, a servi of the agro-environmentalist organization Institute for Agriculture and Trade Polic (www.iatp.org).

Shamefully, McDonald's, by its never-ending expansion into new markets, is promoting a ever-increasing worldwide demand for meat, which is indirectly responsible for 60 percent the pesticides sprayed in the United States alone (in the form of treatments for corn ar soybeans raised as feed). It is estimated that 70 percent of all water consumed in the U.S. used to grow feed and provide drinking water for livestock (much of it in the drough plagued West). McDonald's alone isn't responsible for the worldwide trend away fro vegetable-based diets and toward meat-based diets. But it's a force, and is unapologetic abo that.

THE VALUE OF WORK

The fast-food industry possesses considerable political clout, and has used its influence t depress wages and worker protections. Industry lobbyists fight fiercely to prevent increas in the minimum wage, which is now worth only 40 percent of what it was in 1970, inflation-adjusted dollars. Although the meatpacking industry, of which McDonald's is th world's biggest customer, has the highest incidence of workplace injuries in the countr (exceeding even coal mining and firefighting), lobbyists, along with their mostly Republica allies in Congress and the White House, have ensured that safety oversight is minima Favorable legislation allows meatpackers in Texas to exempt their employees from worker compensation. Instead, the company provides its own "compensation" on its own terms.

One form of worker exploitation that's become more common is intimidation. Workers slaughterhouses and meatpacking plants are told to hush up about injuries, so that th

industry, facing public criticism about abusive work conditions, can claim that injuries a going down, rather than up. The workers, many of them illegal aliens, are cowed submission, in fear of losing much-needed jobs.

Most fast-food employees earn the minimum wage, and the industry, the fastest-growi employer in the country, pursues mainly teenagers and immigrant labor to staff its store The McDonald's Corporation doesn't set wages paid at its franchisees' restaurants, but it se conditions, such as food prices, that depress wages. A cycle of teens working at fast-foo outlets, falling behind in school, and becoming trapped in a low-wage life track is widenin the gap between rich and poor.

Farmworkers, mostly undocumented immigrants, are the nation's poorest group workers. Migrant pickers of tomatoes and other agricultural products earn less than $8,000 year, and the companies for whom they work often charge them for food, housin transportation, and sometimes the fees paid to "wolves" who smuggle them across th border. In early 2005, boycotts and public outcry over the abuses of these modern-day slav reached critical mass in Florida, where Yum Brands, owner of Taco Bell, KFC, Pizza Hut, a other fast-food brands, agreed to a stricter set of standards for farms that supply the millio of pounds of tomatoes Taco Bell uses every week. Their commitment amounts to a penn per-pound increase in what they pay for tomatoes, but should roughly double the wages many workers on their suppliers' farms. It seems that if we're unable to foment meaningf change through the government, pressure on corporate citizens is a good second line of atta for those who wish to end the exploitation of workers in our own country.

Fair Is Fair Trade

Buying locally supports our communities and reduces pollution. But some foods will never b local. Coffee, tea, and cocoa require tropical growing conditions that most of the Unite States doesn't have. However, half of Americans are regular coffee drinkers, and almo everyone eats chocolate. Raw materials for these beloved foods come from some of th poorest places on earth. When worldwide coffee prices collapsed in 2002, average prices fo double lattes in America, the world's largest importer of coffee, hardly budged. But millio of small-farmers who depend on coffee growing for their livelihood fell into abject pover and debt. Only those producers who were guaranteed a fair price for their product, regardle of market fluctuations, were able to avoid the suffering. Those farmers were supported b buyers of Fair Trade-certified coffee. Fair Trade is a nongovernmental organization th certifies products produced according to its standards. The organization's American branch called TransFair USA (www.transfairusa.org).

In exchange for conducting their farming in sustainable ways, these farmers received a livab rate of income, technological support, and help with their children's education.

More than 80 percent of Fair Trade coffee in the United States is certified organic. Fa Trade coffee is mostly grown under various fruit and shade trees. By contrast, the past thir years have seen a dramatic increase in production due to the introduction of higher-yieldi plants that grow in full sun. In addition to the massive deforestation required to cultiva these varieties, petrochemical fertilizers have been introduced to boost yields even highe Most growers sell to middlemen, who pay them pennies on the dollar, and then sell companies like Maxwell House (Kraft Foods) and Folgers (Procter & Gamble). Those tw companies supply 56 percent of the U.S. market. Fair Trade products, certified in the Unite States by the nonprofit organization TransFair USA, cuts out middlemen and brokers, getti growers their fair share of the final market value of their products.

A SYSTEM FROZEN IN TIME

On an April day, a slave ship carried several dozen boys and girls from Benin, West Afric bound for plantations where they were destined to work as unpaid laborers. The year w 2001, and the plantations were cocoa farms in Central Africa. The ship was denied entry several ports, and the case focused world attention, briefly, on the trafficking of child sla labor in a little-discussed industry. The cocoa industry, which produces products for the $1 billion United States cocoa and chocolate market, is one of the most egregious abusers child labor. In Ivory Coast, which supplies 43 percent of the world's cocoa, one-third farmers' children have never attended school. Most farmers employ their own children dangerous machete harvesting of crops and distribution of toxic pesticides. It doesn't have be this way.

Fair Trade demands that its farmers adhere to strict child labor standards. No child und the age of eighteen may harvest with machetes or other dangerous tools or apply pesticide Children under fifteen may work on the farm only if their education is not jeopardize American consumers do have a choice when buying chocolate. We must exercise it. Stor like those in the Wild Oats Marketplace chain, Starbucks coffee stores, and Whole Foods ar Fairway markets always carry Fair Trade items. Mainstream supermarkets like A&P car some. In coffee alone, Fair Trade has channeled $34 million in additional income to sma scale family farmers over the last five years by certifying their coffee as Fair Trade.

But Fair Trade isn't the only ethical certification agency. The Rainforest Allian (www.rainforest-alliance.org) is also making a big difference by certifying foods produce with environmentally sound methods in tropical rain forest areas.

Coffee

America's favorite hot beverage presents more ethical choices than many people know Beyond the usual agricultural considerations, like organic versus nonorganic and domest versus imported (yes, the United States does produce coffee beans, in Hawaii), come oth issues of environmental impact, exploitative labor practices, and sustainable use of resourc at home. Even sweetening and lightening a cup of joe involve choices that have real impa on the environment and our fellow human beings.

Like having to choose between buying local or buying organic, shopping for coffee ofte forces us to prioritize our concerns. Are we more worried about habitat destruction and lo of biodiversity in South American rain forests than we are about pesticide runoff in Asia Does addressing near-slavery working conditions in one place take priority over stemming th tide of deforestation elsewhere? These are all issues connected to the global trade in coffe The good news is that you can make a difference in more than one area with a single choice.

Sustainable coffees include three main approaches: organic coffee, Fair Trade coffee, an shade-grown coffee. All of these coffees are produced in ways that mitigate problems, both i the environment and in the livelihood of the most vulnerable workers in the industry, th conventional production systems cause. Shoppers can find labels indicating which of thes approaches was applied to production on packages of coffee in most outlets. Organic coffee the most widely available, followed by Fair Trade, and then shade-grown (sometimes calle "shade coffee").

Because organic coffee is produced with methods that preserve the soil and prohibit use chemical pesticides and fertilizers, its production helps preserve a clean environment fo workers and indigenous peoples. Fair Trade coffee is purchased directly from cooperatives small farmers that are guaranteed a minimum contract price, with some of the profits bein invested in education and health care for those grower communities. In return, they ar encouraged, trained, and usually expected to grow the coffee using sustainable, ecofriendl practices. Shade-grown coffee is grown in shaded forest settings that are good for biodiversit and birds. Such settings preserve quality of life for native peoples, and help ensure that the livelihoods won't be exploited out of existence.

Can Organic Chocolate Be Good Chocolate?

I've searched high and low for good organic Fair Trade chocolate. For years, what I found always came up wanting. Most of the organic products had a waxy and distinctly unsexy mouth feel. I was beginning to think that some nonorganic process was

absolutely essential to produce luxuriously silky, sophisticated chocolate like that made in Belgium and France. There wasn't. It just took a lot of searching to find the right one.

Dagoba chocolate, manufactured here in the United States (Central Point, Oregon, to be precise), induces the reactions that only exceptional chocolate can elicit. The company's 73 percent cacao content dark chocolate may be the best chocolate of any kind I've ever tasted. It's at once fruity, smoky, exceptionally chocolatey, and pleasantly sweet.

It melts on the palate at room temperature, and remains deliciously al dente when chilled (my favorite way to eat chocolate—each bite lasts longer, and I love the transition from firm to chewy to molten to pleasant memory that accompanies each chilly morsel).

Dagoba markets their 73 percent cacao bar under the name Conacado, which is the name of the cooperative of Dominican Republic growers that raises the organic, Fair Trade cacao beans used in the bar. As with all Fair Trade participants, these growers are paid a guaranteed, predetermined fair price ($1,750 per metric ton, $1,950 per metric ton organic, and scaled to rise higher if world cocoa prices rise above $1,600 per metric ton). Harvesters are never slaves, and they earn significantly more than the near-slave wages paid to many of the underage workers in Ivory Coast and other African cocoa-producing nations. The premium price the chocolate maker pays these farmer-owners has almost no effect on the retail price of the finished chocolate, because he is dealing directly with the farmers, saving intermediary costs. The bars (two ounces) go for about $3 apiece. That's a few cents higher than France's fine Valrhona brand, but worth every penny. This is a perfect example to hold up to nay-sayers who claim that organics and Fair Trade make running a business too expensive. Buy Dagoba chocolates online at www.dagobachocolate.com or order from the company at (541) 664-9030.

Another organic chocolate of good quality is Newman's Own brand (go to www.newmansownorganics.com). Sweeter and with a more toasty flavor than Dagoba, it's also significantly better than most of the organic chocolates I've tasted. Though it's not certified by Fair Trade or Rainforest Alliance, the company, founded and run by actor Paul Newman and his family, asserts that the Central and South American sources for its cocoa are "slavery free." Newman's Own requires its producers to certify that the

cocoa they produce is made without the use of forced labor. In addition, Newman donates all of the royalties he receives from the sale of the chocolate to educational and charitable purposes.

A particularly important aspect to buying organic chocolate is its sugar component. The American sugar industry is one of the worst agricultural actors in the country, polluting and degrading the sensitive wilderness areas of south Florida and the Mississippi Delta. Organic sugar production is much more environmentally sound. Newman's Own sources their sugar from organic farms in Mexico and Paraguay. Perhaps the competition from abroad will force the American sugar industry into more responsible, sustainable methods.

Some brands are twice blessed: They produce organic coffee that is *also* Fair Trade certifie and/or shade grown. Soleil Levant coffee, from Switzerland-based La Semeuse, is organ coffee grown according to Fair Trade standards in Colombia, Peru, and Indonesia. It available from www.CafeLaSemeuse.com in both whole bean and ground forms. Café Mam a Mexican coffee producer that sells only shade-grown, organic, Fair Trade-certified coffe from www.cafemam.com. Coffees are all triple-certified (organic, Fair Trade, and shad grown) at www.cafecanopy.com.

ORGANIC COFFEE

Coffee, the world's second-largest traded food commodity after grain, is also one of the mo chemically treated. Many producing countries have few or no regulations on spraying and th use of the most powerful chemicals, including DDT, Diazinon, paraquat, and activ ingredients from Agent Orange. I don't believe that total conversion of all convention farming to organic farming is feasible or desirable, since judicious use of the right pesticid is necessary to keep crop yields high and prevent further encroachment on wild lands. But th unregulated coffee industry is doing great harm to the environment and farmworkers with i excessive use of these chemicals for the sake of profit only. By choosing organic coffe you're cutting down on the use of these synthetic chemicals in the global environment at time when their use is out of control. See Sources for a list of roasters that produce organ coffees.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE

Economic development is a double-edged sword. On one hand, greater wealth leads greater consumption, and to a heavier drain on resources. A poor peasant won't be able afford disposable diapers for her six children, so she'll wash cloth. But, on the other hand statistics show that greater economic development leads to smaller families. A small number of consumers, all enjoying better health care, creature comforts, and education, is more humane approach to conservation than sustained poverty is.

Currently, most coffee is grown, picked, and processed by subsistence-level workers i bleak conditions. In the 1980s, when coffee experienced a burst of popularity worldwid Third World governments encouraged their peasantry to invest their lives in coffe production. Many farmers in the poorest parts of Central America, South America, Africa, ar Southeast Asia were lured into the industry by the promise of a better life. But whe overexpansion led to a glut of coffee beans in the late 1990s and early 2000s, they ended u deep in debt, burdened with products that cost them more to produce than they could earn b selling them. The rush to production had also eroded their land and deforested the countryside. They were worse off than they were before coffee came into their lives.

Fair Trade organizations stepped into this devolving situation with a sensible solution: growers would agree to raise better-quality beans in an environmentally sensitive way, the the organizations would help them start cooperatives, guarantee them a higher set price fo the product, and market it to wealthy connoisseurs in developed countries. Branded Fa Trade coffee would provide those consumers with a premium product that was produced in more environmentally responsible way than the lesser product they'd previously chosen. Wi win. One company dealing only in Fair Trade coffee is Mountain View Coffee Roaster (www.mountainviewcoffee.com).

Product and sourcing information about Fair Trade products in the United States is listed www.transfairusa.org, and names of firms and individuals registered with Fair Trad certifying agencies worldwide are at www.ifat.org. A list of companies whose products are a Fair Trade-certified is at www.globalexchange.org. A wider listing of companies that deal goods that are produced using Fair Trade principles can be found www.fairtradefederation.com, though not all are certified.

One issue the Fair Trade movement takes very seriously is child labor. Many of th commodities with which Fair Trade organizations are involved, like coffee, cocoa/chocolat bananas, and sugar, are often produced through the use of exploitative child labor practice In the worst cases, this child labor is modern-day slavery. A consumer's decision to purcha a Fair Trade-certified product assures that that purchase price does not support a produc who employs those egregious practices.

Latin American nations are far and away the largest participants in Fair Trade program Guatemala leads the way in Fair Trade coffee production, followed by Costa Rica, Mexic and Colombia. All of Asia produces 15 percent of Fair Trade coffee, and Africa 10 percen Vietnam, whose farmers plunged into the coffee business with substantial World Bank an government support, has been among the worst stewards of the land, shortsightedly clearin huge swaths of jungle for high-yield, low-quality coffee that quickly saps the land o nutrients. Fair Trade represents a 58 percent increase in wages, but only a 1 percent increas in product price to retailers, according to an October 2001 PricewaterhouseCoopers repor The consumer pays about $1 per pound more.

SHADE-GROWN COFFEE

Shade-grown coffee represents the smallest segment of the sustainable coffee market, and th one most susceptible to corruption. With so many assertions and claims being touted b producers, roasters, and retailers about sustainability, the need for accountable certifyin

agencies is great. A study commissioned by The Nature Conservancy, in cooperation with Th Summit Foundation and several other concerned groups, found that widespread use of th terms “shade-grown” and “bird-friendly” by firms with only a few trees or trees of all th same species on their farms was watering down the meaning of those terms. This is problem, even with the existence of two recognized international certifications, Rainfore Alliance’s “Eco-OK” for shade grown, and Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center’s “Bir Friendly” seal.

Water

A recent ad campaign pokes fun at people who missed great investment opportunities becaus they didn’t see the potential in a timely idea. To illustrate the point, there’s a flashback to th 1970s. A possible investor responds to an entrepreneur with the comment, “Who would bu water in a bottle, when perfectly good water is free?” Modern viewers laugh to themselve knowing that bottled water now represents the fastest-growing segment of the beverag industry. More than half of Americans drink bottled water regularly, and it represents a $3 billion industry worldwide, with nearly $10 billion of that in the United States.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) conducted a four-year study of bottle water purity claims, and found that bottled water “was not necessarily safer than tap water But the perception among consumers is that it is. As a private chef, I’ve cooked in hom where I was not only expected to cook *with* bottled water, but to cook *in* bottled water. Sin the sweet flavor of water becomes an essential part of the flavor profile of any dish mad with it, the culinary sense of making soups, stocks, and sauces with the best-tasting water self-evident. But I defy any gastronome to distinguish vegetables boiled in quality tap wat from ones boiled in bottled water. With the exception of certain highly distinctive miner waters, most bottled water imparts virtually no flavor to foods cooked in it. Even sprin water, defined as water that rises from underground to the Earth’s surface under natur pressure, seldom bears any noticeable difference from filtered tap water in this regard. Y the plastic containers for bottled water continue to pile up in landfills (few deposit systen include noncarbonated beverages).

The environmental effects of the bottled water revolution ripple out from the source of th water. Trucking water, which is heavy, requires large amounts of gasoline and diesel fue Shipping of water across continents and oceans burns up oil that would never be needed consumers simply turned on the tap. Along the way, the trucks, cargo ships, freight train and delivery vans leave oily wakes, many of which run off into fresh waterways with th very next rain. Ironically, consumers of bottled water are adding to the pollution of ou country’s fresh water. Petrochemicals, used in the manufacture of plastic bottles, and th disposal of those bottles after one use, compound the pollution. The least a consumer can d is to choose bottled water that comes from a local source, minimizing transportatio pollution.

Even the marketing of bottled water adds unnecessary ecological impact. Every billboar magazine page, and flyer promoting these products adds to the needless pollution generate in printing, distribution, and litter. Until now, tap water needed no promotion. Now, competes with plastic-clad rivals to quench Americans’ thirst.

CULINARY USES FOR WATER

There's no denying that water has flavor. Its taste can range from sweet and pleasant mineral-laced to sulfuric and, in many cases, chlorinated. In some cases, bottled water ha valid culinary value. Broths and stocks benefit from water of utmost purity. Water, served a a beverage, should taste great. But sensible consumers will taste their own tap water, passe through a filter, before deciding that it cannot be delicious. Even the Culinary Institute o America, America's preeminent culinary college, uses tap water for its fine preparations.

I've never worked in a professional kitchen that used bottled water for cooking. An despite easy access to bottled water at no cost, most of the chefs I've worked with drink ta water as a beverage. Perhaps I've been lucky, working in cities like New York and Bosto where the flavor of tap water is good. But even when I worked in San Diego, where hig mineral content gave the water a different taste than I was used to, I quickly adapted, an joined my fellow cooks in drinking filtered tap water as a matter of course. Cooks, by th way, drink an enormous amount of water during a ten-hour shift. If the thousands of gallo consumed by us taste-a-holics over a year all came in ten-ounce bottles, we'd have generate mountains of useless plastic waste.

The flavor of certain foods, such as soups, stews, and broths, is so tied to the water use that if filtered tap water doesn't taste excellent, another source may be needed. I wouldn make a consommé with water that had any undesirable taste or smell. Try to buy from th nearest source available. But make sure you try filtering the tap water yourself first. Th Brita tabletop water filter I use practically eliminates the taste of chlorine from treate municipal water. For a comparison of widely available water filters, check ou www.waterfiltercomparisons.net.

SOME SUGAR ISN'T SO SWEET

People of conscience around the world are taking steps to slow the damage agriculture ha been doing to waterways, estuaries, lakes, seas, and oceans. Consumers can stand up and b counted in the fight to protect Earth's water, whether by stirring Fair Trade unrefined can sugar into their coffee or bulking up their salad with cabbage instead of water-intensiv lettuce.

An excellent example of the effects of conventional agriculture on the environment may b found in the Florida Everglades. This area includes fresh and saltwater rivers, lakes, pond sawgrass marshes, small tree islands, sloughs, mangrove swamps, open prairies, rockland and offshore coral reefs. The Florida Everglades are also the largest remaining subtropic wilderness in the lower forty-eight United States and are home to wading birds, grassland birds, alligators, crocodiles, tropical fish, crustaceans, and mammals, among others. They ar also home to fifty-six endangered or threatened species, four national wildlife refuges, tw national parks, and one national marine sanctuary. This fragile and complex environment ha shrunk to less than half of its original size in the past hundred years because of th encroachment of the sugarcane industry.

This industry enjoys federal quotas on sugar imports and subsidies while the wading bir population has fallen 90 percent in the last twenty years. The destruction of this ecosyste from nearby farms is caused primarily by water diversion to the very thirsty sugarcane cro

and from chemical runoff that contaminates the Everglades' water supply. Nitrogen an phosphorus fertilizers used on sugarcane fields pollute the Everglades, causing algal bloom and declines in productivity in the aquatic ecosystems. In addition to being polluted, th water in the rivers, streams, wetlands, and marshes is diverted to the agricultural fields, wi the help of federally supported drainage and flood control projects and cheap water prices.

Like reasonably priced prescription drugs, Fair Trade sugar, that is raised responsibly, mu be purchased from Canada. It's available from www.lasiembra.com, www.levelground.com and www.marquisproject.com. American-produced organic sugar, called "evaporated can juice," has become available here, and is a good second choice. It's available online fro www.wholesomesweetness.com.

FARMING OUR DRINKING WATER TO DEATH

Irrigation flushes water through the soil, washing away nutrients and prompting the farmer apply more chemical fertilizer. The manmade water flow also helps pesticides flow into th nearby rivers and streams and enter the groundwater supply. In the United States, the Sier Club describes agriculture as the largest source of water pollution. According to an April 200 NRDC Report, agricultural operations are among the top five sources of groundwat pollution in California. And in a state where the groundwater amounts to six times th volume of all the surface water reservoirs combined, groundwater pollution is a problem. Th EPA has also detected seventy-four pesticides in the ground-water of thirty-eight state Contaminants found in groundwater also tend to persist in the environment for hundreds possibly thousands of years if they are not mediated. Pollution is not the only consequence heavily irrigated agriculture. Erosion is also a by-product.

Alfalfa is one of the most water-intensive crops grown, along with rice, sugarcane, an turmeric. It is in fact the most water-intensive crop grown in the state of California. Althoug alfalfa does maintain soil health, prevent soil erosion with its extensive root system, an provide wildlife habitat aboveground, it uses approximately one-quarter of California irrigation water. It also covers more land than any other single crop in the state. Alfal cultivation is not handled very well; 26 percent of this water-intensive crop is grown California's southern deserts, and most growers use the inefficient and wasteful floodin irrigation technique, although better ways to water the plant are available. This water-cost crop is also of low value and accounts for only 4 percent of the state's farming revenues. addition, 70 percent of the alfalfa grown goes to feed dairy cows, whose manure is thought threaten 65 percent of California's drinking water. And the Central Valley dairy farm produce as much waste as a city of 21 million people.

One of the least water-needy crops is sorghum, a drought-resistant cereal and the fifth mo important crop in the world, behind wheat, rice, maize, and potatoes. A number institutions, including the Hermitage Research Station in Warwick, Texas Tech Universit Texas A&M University, and the University of Missouri, are studying the drought-resista properties of an Ethiopian strain of sorghum. They have found a few "stay-green" traits th allow it to survive on very little water. These traits retard the onset and rate of leaf deat and affect transpiration rates and nitrogen levels in the plants, allowing the leaves to surviv longer in drought conditions. Other "dry crops" are peanuts and corn.