

Introduction

THE GREEN REVOLUTION, which began in the 1960s, did not cure world hunger. But it did transform food production into an industry, and allow for the consolidation of small farms into what have become the large agribiz corporations. While the abundance of cheap food that resulted did nothing to alleviate world hunger, it did allow the human population to grow far in excess of the planet's carrying capacity.

The Green Revolution achieved all of this by making food production extremely dependent on fossil fuels. The globalization of food production during the 1980s, 1990s, and on into the new millennium has finished the job of demolishing localized agriculture. Globalization has given us access to exotic foods and crops that may be out of season in our locale, but it has done so by increasing the vulnerability of food security. If global food shipments were to stop tomorrow, we would no longer be able to feed ourselves.

The Green Revolution and the globalization of food production were fostered by the availability of cheap, abundant hydrocarbon energy in the form of oil and natural gas. The fertilizers we feed our crops are generated from natural gas, and the pesticides that protect our monoculture crops from devastating infestations are derived from oil. We are dependent on the energy of oil and natural gas to seed our crops, maintain them, harvest them, process them, and transport them to market.

The intensive practices of industrialized agriculture quickly strip the soil of nutrients and deplete easily accessible water supplies. As a result, the need for hydrocarbon-based inputs must increase, along with increasingly energy-intensive irrigation. Without hydrocarbons, much of the world's farmlands would quickly become unproductive.

Yet hydrocarbons are a nonrenewable resource, and growing evidence indicates that world hydrocarbon production will peak around 2010, followed by an irreversible decline. The impact on our agricultural system could be catastrophic. As the cost of hydrocarbon production increases, food could be priced out of the reach of the majority of our population. Hunger could become commonplace in every corner of the world, including your own neighborhood.

The solution is to relocalize agriculture. We need to rebuild our local food production infrastructure. Agribiz corporations are not going to do this, and their client governments refuse to recognize the problem. It is up to us to resuscitate localized agriculture through the development of a grassroots movement. This book will give you a glimpse of the efforts needed to relocalize food production, and will provide you with contacts for cooperatives and organizations in your area that are already working towards this goal.

If we can build a grassroots relocalized agriculture movement, then we may be able to cushion ourselves against the coming decline of hydrocarbon production. Given a sustainable agriculture, our population would be able to decline with a minimum of hardship until our numbers are below the carrying capacity of the planet.

In that regard, we are talking about the ultimate diet plan, and this is the ultimate diet book.

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