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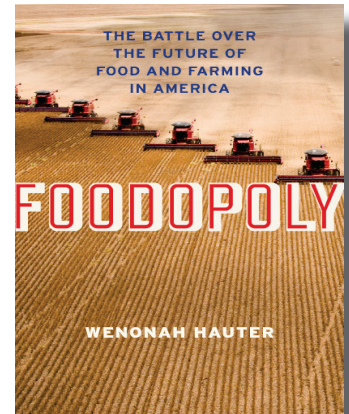
# FOODOPOLY

The Battle Over the Future of Food and Farming in America

by Wenonah Hauter

“A forceful argument about our dysfunctional food system...the author’s message is clear, and the graphics pack a punch that hammers it home.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“[A] meticulously researched tour de force...deserves a place on the shelf beside the burgeoning journalistic explorations of the dangers of the current system.” —*Publishers Weekly*



“If we don’t confront and change the consolidation and corporate control of our food system, only a very small percentage of people will benefit from the good food movement. We can’t shop our way out of this mess.”

—Wenonah Hauter

As the executive director of Food & Water Watch, Wenonah Hauter is one of the nation’s leading healthy food advocates. In her new book, *Foodopoly: The Battle Over the Future of Food and Farming in America*, she contends that the local food movement is not enough to solve America’s food crisis and the public health debacle it has created—instead, Hauter takes aim at the real culprit: the massive consolidation and corporate control of food production, which prevents farmers from raising healthy crops and limits the choices that people can make in the grocery store.

Hauter has gathered statistics and stories to back her argument that the United States is in a food crisis, caused by government deregulation and by consolidation and control of the food supply by a small number of powerful corporations. She delves deeply into the many deep structural problems with our food system and makes the case that it will take political action to reform it. Through meticulous research, Hauter presents a shocking account of how agricultural policy has been hijacked by lobbyists, driving out independent farmers and food processors in favor of the likes of Cargill, Tyson, Kraft, and ConAgra. Not only has deregulation and the weakening of antitrust laws led to a significant reduction of competition, it has failed to allow the consumer to benefit from the economies of scale achieved by larger production facilities. The surviving firms have used their wealth to capture the political system in order to rewrite the regulations for their benefit and have persuaded governments to subsidize their irrigation costs with publicly funded water projects; successfully pushed for the enactment of the Cuban sugar tariff, which directly led to high-fructose corn syrup becoming the sweetener of choice; and weakened oversight by federal bureaucracies, preventing the USDA from testing meat for contamination before and during processing.

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**Foodopoly** chronicles the battles over farm and food policy through the experiences of dozens of people—from farmers to the scientists who created the industry of genetic engineering and the proponents of free trade. Examining farming at the turn of the 20th century until today, Hauter investigates the consolidation of the food chain from crop seeds to retail stores and traces how the people who grow our food, and consumers, have been cheated and manipulated by agribusiness and the leading food companies. She explores how the evisceration of anti-trust laws has dramatically increased consolidation among food and agricultural related companies, which, along with the growth of big box stores and the marketing of junk food, has perverted how food is sold and marketed and what people eat. Hauter also calls attention to the inherent cruelty to animals in confined animal feeding operations and the pollution of the environment that is part and parcel of the factory farming of cattle, hogs and chickens. She challenges the biotechnology advances that have led to the genetic modification of food crops and exposes large-company practices that are changing the organic food industry.

But **Foodopoly** notes farmers aren't to blame for the corruption of the food system, and instead takes a critical look at agribusiness and the corporations who benefit from making Americans sick and obese. Hauter makes the case that while direct sales between farmers and consumers at farmers markets and CSAs is great for the small percentage of people it benefits, it will take a wholesale revamping of the structure of the food system to create a healthy food system that benefits most Americans and is ecologically sound. **Foodopoly** lays out the case that we need to build the political power to challenge multinational corporations like Monsanto and Walmart, the junk food industry and the other economic and political interests that have promoted a range of bad policies that have impacted our food system—from deregulation of farm policy to free trade. Simplistic solutions will not change a food production system gone awry.

In the end, Hauter illustrates how solving this crisis will require a complete structural shift, a grassroots movement to reshape our food system from seed to table, a movement that has the commitment and foresight to build the political power necessary to change the way food is produced, marketed, distributed and sold—a change that is about politics and economic change, not just personal choice.

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**Wenonah Hauter** is the Executive Director of Food & Water Watch. She has worked extensively on food, water, energy, and environmental issues at the national, state and local level. She has an M.S. in Applied Anthropology from the University of Maryland. Wenonah owns an organic family farm in northern Virginia that provides healthy vegetables to over five hundred families in the Washington, D.C. area as part of the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program.

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