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The End Of Food



Synopsis

Paul Roberts, the best-selling author of *The End of Oil*, turns his attention to the modern food economy and finds that the system entrusted to meet our most basic need is failing. In this carefully researched, vivid narrative, Roberts lays out the stark economic realities behind modern food and shows how our system of making, marketing, and moving what we eat is growing less and less compatible with the billions of consumers that system was built to serve. At the heart of *The End of Food* is a grim paradox: the rise of large-scale food production, though it generates more food more cheaply than at any time in history, has reached a point of dangerously diminishing returns. Our high-volume factory systems are creating new risks for food-borne illness, from *E. coli* to avian flu. Our high-yield crops and livestock generate grain, vegetables, and meat of declining nutritional quality. While nearly one billion people worldwide are overweight or obese, the same number of people—*one in every seven of us*—*can't* get enough to eat. In some of the hardest-hit regions, such as sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of a single nutrient, vitamin A, has left more than five million children permanently blind. Meanwhile, the shift to heavily mechanized, chemically intensive farming has so compromised soil and water that it's unclear how long such output can be maintained. And just as we've begun to understand the limits of our abundance, the burgeoning economies of Asia, with their rising middle classes, are adopting Western-style, meat-heavy diets, putting new demands on global food supplies. Comprehensive in scope and full of fresh insights, *The End of Food* presents a lucid, stark vision of the future. It is a call for us to make crucial decisions to help us survive the demise of food production as we know it. Paul Roberts is the author of *The End of Oil*, which was a finalist for the New York Public Library's Helen Bernstein Book Award in 2005. He has written about resource economics and politics for numerous publications, including the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Harper's Magazine*, and *Rolling Stone*, and lectures frequently on business and environmental issues.

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Customer Reviews

Food shouldn't be handled like other market economies and if it continues to do so, the system will self-destruct. With detailed information and extensive anecdotal evidence, Roberts provides an intriguing account of food that works well in illustrating the evolution, the problems, and the subtleties of today's food industry. Unlike other food-writers, his assessment of the food industry is not entirely scathing but rather recognizes the inability of many within the industry to make significant changes. William Dufres is thorough in his delivery and excellent with his tone, timing, and emphasis during Roberts' more complicated prose (of which there is plenty). His quoting voice doesn't always match up with the speaker in terms of projection and personality. He maintains his rhythm and projection for most of the production with less than a handful of vocal shifts in the recording. A Houghton Mifflin hardcover (Reviews, Apr. 14). Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An indispensable book. . .the best analysis of the global food economy you are likely to find. —Michael Pollan
Everyone's got to eat, and this spellbinding book makes it clear why that may be a problem. —Bill McKibben

The End of Food follows on Paul Roberts' End of Oil. Ok, so this guy seems to be finding a lot of ends of things, so isn't this just an exaggeration? Sadly, no. With the same comprehensive, reportorial style as his fantastic The End of Oil: On the Edge of a Perilous New World, Roberts delivers a compelling and chilling view of where things are headed in the world of the food all of us eat every day. Nuances, details, linkages and causalities are all explored dispassionately and fairly. You might think of this book as just another apocalyptic view of the world. There are plenty of dark views to be had on the bookshelf, to be sure. But End of Food is as complete, solid and factual as End of Oil. I read End of Oil when it came out in 2005. Many of its observations, predictions, and revelations, were dismissed by many as overblown and sensational. Some were difficult to

understand and accept. But three and a half years later, his observations are widely accepted. End of Food has the same quality -- one can hardly complete this book without having a deep and important understanding of one of the most basic elements of the human race. This is a must-read book for anyone who would like to peek into the future -- and take some actions now that will benefit not just the environment, but your health and well being. Roberts has done it again.

Excellent work. Very informative and nicely written. Easy to read, fun to pursue and very enlightening. I learned a tremendous amount about our food system and how it works which makes it easier to understand some of the difficulties we are encountering. Highly recommended to anyone with an interest. That would be any of us as we all eat, don't we.

I have purchased more than 2 dozen copies of this title and given them to friends, politicians and food industry people. A balanced and often scary analysis of the global food system. From water, to industrialization to disease to hunger and obesity Roberts covers it all. Exceptionally well written. No time for reading ---- get the audio book! Just read it!

An insightful, analytic, unbiased view of the food economy as it exists today.

This is a most thought-provoking book. I was introduced to it through an interview with the author on NPR and was intrigued because he had written The End of Oil a few years ago and was pretty much spot on about what has transpired. Food - its production, consumption, history, etc. - is so well-covered in this book that I can never, ever think about food in the same light, or not think about it for that matter.

Anyone who has read Michael Pollen will want to read this book. It is as thought-provoking and disturbing as Pollen's "Omnivore's Dilemma". Paul Roberts is making it clear that the current state of the food supply is unsustainable and without action, the human race will soon run into trouble. Read this book!

The author writes clearly about a potential major global problem. The book is not the last word on the subject of world food supplies but provides a comprehensive base for further study.

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