

Food Ethics

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Do you love Organic food?

- Why do you love Organic food?



Organic???

WHAT DOES ORGANIC REALLY MEAN?



FRUITS & VEGGIES

are grown without:



synthetic fertilizers



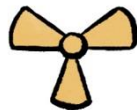
sewage sludge



pesticides



genetic modification



ionizing radiation



FARM ANIMALS

are raised without:



growth hormones



non-organic feed

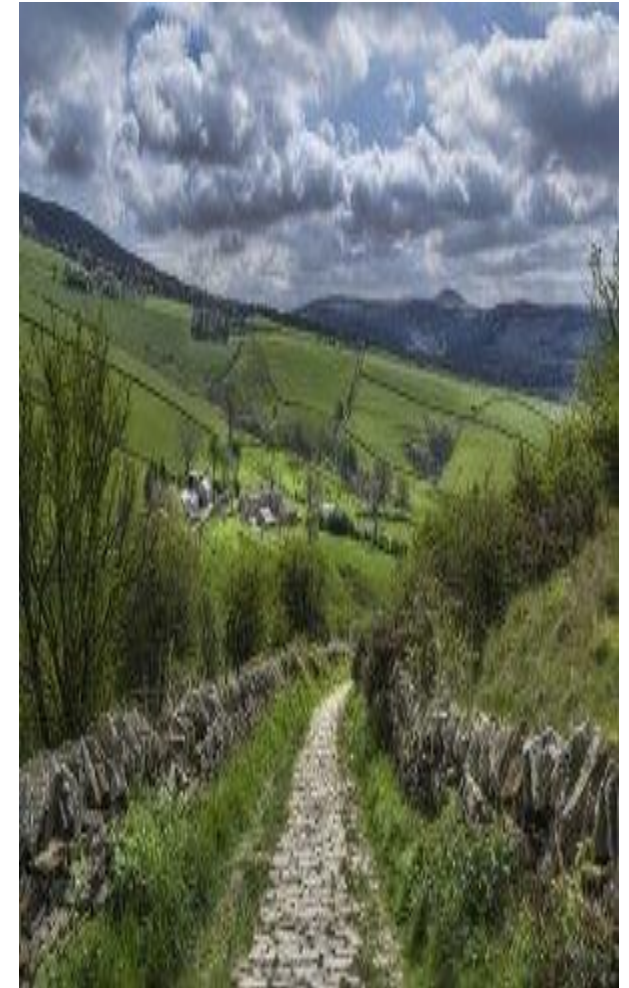


antibiotics

sources: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service, National Organic Program, Economic Research Service, National Standards Fact Sheets, organic.org, Whole Foods Market website

SAVING THE PLANET

- Some people are committed to eating 'organic' food.
- They believe that **industrialised farming methods, involving widespread** use of chemical pesticides and artificial fertilisers, wipe out wildlife such as birds, insects and wild flowers, destroy the soil, and are unsustainable in the long run.
- This concern to protect the natural environment is an **ethical commitment**



Ethics- ANIMAL WELFARE?

- **Are you vegetarian?**
- Why don't you take meat?
- If their decision was driven by the simple fact that they don't like the taste of meat, it is not an ethical position.
- If they follow a vegetarian diet because they think that meat-eating involves unacceptable suffering for the animals which are reared for food, then their reasons are **ethical reasons**. They think that it is wrong to eat meat.



Food Ethics

- **Food ethics** is an **interdisciplinary field** that provides **ethical** analysis and guidance for human conduct in the production, distribution, preparation and consumption of **food**. ...
- Both **food** and **ethics** are expansive concepts and practices, therefore it is important to be clear about what '**food ethics**' means.

Main areas in food ethics

In fair food production and consumption practice

Main areas in food ethics

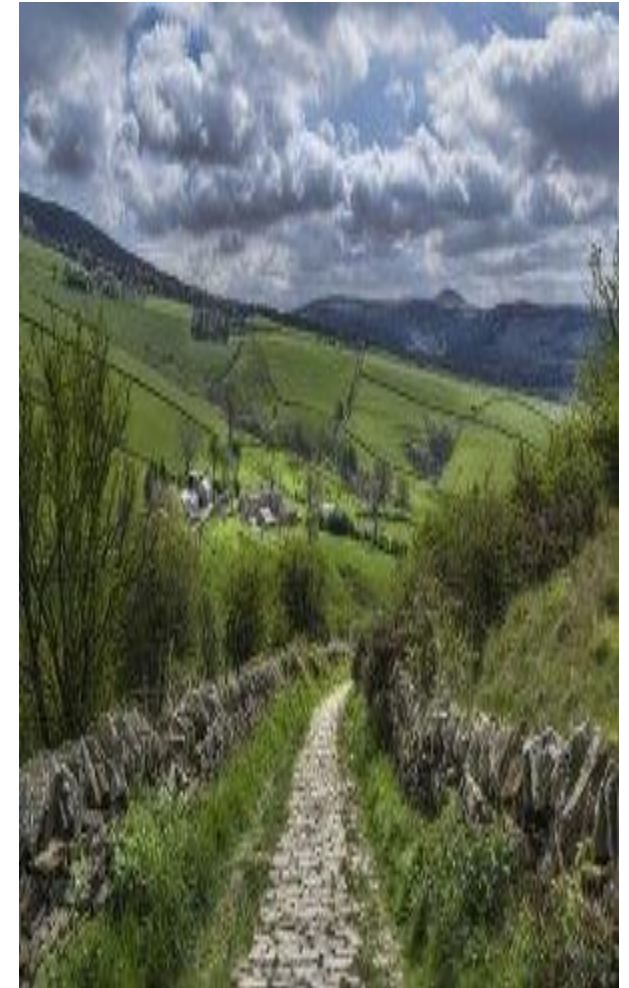
- **Food security** (food for all)
- **Food safety** (non-contaminated food)
- **Nutritional values** (health, modified foods like functional food etc.)
- **The production history** (Ethical questions raised by production practices and conditions in the food chain)
- What about taste?

Food And Ethics

- **Ethical eating** or **food ethics** refers to the **moral consequences** of food choices, both those made by humans for themselves and those made for food animals.
- **Common concerns** are damage to the environment, exploitive labor practices, food shortages for others, inhumane treatment of food animals, and the unintended effects of food policy.
- (Example: Next slide)

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HEALTHY EATING

- Many people are increasingly worried about the **rising levels of obesity** and other harmful effects which they attribute to the consumption of processed foods and additives.
- There is an ***ethical*** concern, not just for their own health but for the health of people generally, especially that of the young.
- They may advocate stricter regulation or clearer labelling to tackle the problem.



fresh foods versus processed Foods

- A hot topic of food ethics focuses on the use of **fresh foods versus frozen and processed options**.
- This decision often stems from the growing concern about the health and well-being of the population eating processed foods more frequently than fresh foods. **Obesity, diabetes, cancer**, and a variety of other diseases have been linked to processed foods, yet many restaurants continue to serve them due to the lower price tag.
- **A restaurant choosing** to cook only with fresh ingredients, even if it means a slightly lower profit margin, is making a decision based on food ethics.
- Deciding to use fresh ingredients is deciding to value the health of the customer above all else, and that's a prime example of **an ethical food decision**.



What makes these choices **ethical** choices?

- They are defined by our ***values*** (what we think is *good*) and our ***principles***/morals (what we think is *right*), in order to redirect our thinking.

Reason /logics not to follow the food ethics

Many people do not take any of these positions. They may have various reasons for not doing so. **For example, they may:**

- Dispute the facts about animal suffering, and argue that good animal husbandry can ensure that animals raised for food have good lives.
- Argue that modern industrialized farming methods are essential to **feed an ever-growing world population and promote human well-being.**
- Contest the need for regulation and argue that **people should be free to make their own choices about what they eat.**
- Claim that 'fair trade' is not really fair – that farmers and workers in developing countries do not receive enough of the benefits; or they may believe that fair trade entrenches inefficient farming practices, and a free market economy is more likely to raise people out of poverty in the long run.
- **These too are all *ethical* positions. So we cannot avoid ethical choices, even if we make them unthinkingly.**

Level of ethical choices.....

- **Ethical choice is reflected in every level of life, such as**
- **INDIVIDUALS** cannot avoid ethical choices whenever they go to the shops to buy food.
- **BUSINESSES** are presented with ethical choices whenever they decide what to buy and sell, how they source their products, what prices they pay and what prices they charge.
- **GOVERNMENTS** cannot avoid ethical choices about whether or not they should intervene in the market to deal with concerns about human health, animal welfare, environmental protection or trade justice.

To be continued.....

History of Food Ethics

- Moral concern with food intake is as old as morality itself. In the course of history, however, several ways of critically examining practices of food production and food intake have been developed.
- Whereas **ancient Greek food ethics** concentrated on the **problem of temperance**, and **ancient Jewish ethics** on the **distinction between legitimate and illicit food products**, early **Christian morality** simply refused to attach any moral significance to food intake.
- Yet , during the middle ages food became one of the principle objects of monastic programs for moral exercise .

History of Food Ethics

- **During the seventeenth and eighteenth century**, food ethics was transformed in terms of the **increasing scientific interest in food intake**,
- while in the **nineteenth century the social dimension of food ethics was discovered**, with the result that more and more attention was given to the production and distribution of food products.
- **Because of the increasing distance between the production and consumption of food products** ever since, the outstanding feature of contemporary food ethics is its reliance and dependence on labeling practices.