

## Fertile ground

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*What is the future of food? Is it dystopic, utopic or something else? Is it palatable, accessible to all, nutritious and/or produced through ecologically sound methods? Who will hold the power to control our food futures?*

Currently, the global food system<sup>1</sup> is the “single largest driver of environmental degradation and transgression of planetary boundaries” responsible for over 30% of greenhouse gas emissions with industrial agriculture contributing to worldwide soil degradation, water scarcity and biodiversity loss. At the same time, unhealthy diets are now posing greater risk to morbidity and mortality than unsafe sex, alcohol, drug and tobacco use combined<sup>2</sup>. Our bodies are stressed. Our environment is stressed. It is not difficult to see how the two are interrelated. What will be the legacy of our actions or inactions today for our future ancestors?

Author Gyorgy Scrinis of *Nutritionism: The Science and Politics of Dietary Advice*, warns that the world's largest food corporations now agree with food activists that ‘the food system is broken’, which is setting the stage for total corporate control of every sector of the food system<sup>3</sup>. One only has to Google ‘billionaires buying farms’ to see what Naomi Klein calls ‘disaster capitalists’ poised to profit from future global food shortages. Instead of food being a human right, it is a weapon of control for economic gain in the same vein as when the USA withheld food aid from developing nations in the 1970's unless they submitted to birth control policies, with Henry Kissinger (then USA Secretary of State) famously stating “who controls the food supply controls the people; who controls the energy can control whole continents; who controls money can control the world”<sup>4</sup>.

Cue sinister laugh and meme.

These current realities are writing the script of dystopic fiction for our future, by profiting from human rights and natural resource exploitation. However, it is not too late to close this chapter of history.

The future of food is fiction. It is fertile ground for a story we collectively write together, limited only by our imagination and our understanding of climate emergency realities and how the production, distribution and consumption of food impacts our lives now and beyond. This future we co-create hinges upon how we strike a balance between human and planetary systems and where we place our priorities in the next three decades – environmental health or economic development.

How? While food systems are complex, food is something we interact with every day thus presents numerous opportunities to influence systemic change.

We can bolster our food literacy as if it was a second language by learning with and from others across cultures and generations, and making this knowledge-share publicly accessible.

We can reconnect storylines of food with place and people, through land acknowledgement and healing practices, food sharing and connecting with community.

We can resist and challenge dominant food system narratives and myths sold to us by the food corporations, such as that food is cheap, aesthetically flawless, conveniently sourced with unlimited choice wherever you are at any time of the year.

We can invest in amplifying the work of small-scale and local food production through our consumption choices and advocacy.

We can collaborate by sharing our time and unique skill-sets to organisations working to advance local food justice and/or global food sovereignty, helping to ensure that every person has the right to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound methods.

We can eat less/waste less by eating more nutritious and ethically sound food products and eat on plates instead of out of wrappers, boxes and plastic packaging.

Our future generations are counting on us.

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1. The food system is a complex web of activities, processes and infrastructure involved in feeding a population including production, harvesting, processing, transport, packaging, governance, preparation, waste, etc.

2. Willett, W., Rockström, J., Loken, B., Springmann, M., Lang, T., Vermeulen, S., Garnett, T., Tilman, D., DeClerck, F., Wood, A., Jonell, M., Clark, M., Gordon, L. J., Fanzo, J., Hawkes, C., Zurayk, R., Rivera, J. A., De Vries, W., Majele Sibanda, L., ... Murray, C. J. L. (2019). Food in the Anthropocene: the EAT–Lancet Commission on healthy diets from sustainable food systems. *The Lancet*, 393(10170), 447–492. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(18\)31788-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(18)31788-4)

3. Gyorgy Scrinis' provocation at Fair Share Fare's Recipe for Disaster, Science Gallery Melbourne, 2019.

4. Kissinger, H., National Security Council. (1974). *The Kissinger Report: NSSM-200 Implications of Worldwide Population Growth for U.S. Security Interests*.