



All illustrations created by Anna Loveday-Brown

Editorial

Industrialized food production: the base of the junk food system

There is no more potent symbol of the almost absolute control wielded by the international agri-food system (from landgrabbing to retailing), than **the factory farm**. These industrial complexes cause extensive pollution and disease in entire regions and emit huge amounts of greenhouse gases, all in order to produce food destined for the poor: **“cheap” meat of dubious quality, whose true costs are never measured**. This system is imposed on us, on humanity, and represent in one crisis **the sum of multiple crises**. In the almost endless list of calamities caused by factory farms, the genetically modified soy bean monoculture – farmed with pesticides and then used to feed imprisoned animals – means that everything returns to the same pockets **at a harsh cost to the planet**. However, the people are organizing and having more and more conversations and debates in an attempt to comprehend this together. This is very subversive, because our **collective memory**, and continuing to produce our own foodstuffs, according to our own **peasant traditions**, represents essentially the most fundamental basis for **our autonomy – allowing our peoples, with all our ways and wisdom, to persist, and even to cool the earth, and attain lives of justice and dignity in the present and into the future**.

GRAIN



In the spotlight

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Cheap meat? A deceptive price

A soaring percentage of the meat and dairy products that are consumed today come from **factory farms**. Livestock are raised indoors and fed with high-protein animal feed, mostly produced with soy-beans and maize, complemented with vitamins and antibiotics to avoid the spread of disease in the overcrowded industrial facilities. Every day **family farms are forced out of their livelihoods** while big corporations increase their control of meat production all around the world. From whatever angle we look at factory farming, the outcomes are alarming. This intensive way of producing meat is systematically spoiling the planet, endangering biodiversity, exploiting workers, jeopardizing human and animal health, abusing animals and undermining the survival of rural communities and family farmers. Despite this, the **consumption of industrial meat is increasing everywhere**, as big corporations invade international markets with meat products at a deceptively low price. Many consumers need to change the way they eat – **choosing local products and diminishing the amount of meat in their diet**. Concurrently we should call on our governments for a radical change in national policies and international agreements, with the **inclusion of the right to food sovereignty at all levels**.

2011
International Year of Forests

6 – 11 February
World Social Forum – Dakar, Senegal

8 March
Women International Day

14 - 18 March
Fourth Session of the Governing Body
of the **International Treaty on Plant
Genetic Resources for Food and
Agriculture** - Bali, Indonesia

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Who we are

In the last years hundreds of organizations and movements have been engaged in struggles, activities, and various kinds of work to defend and promote the right of people to Food Sovereignty around the world. Many of these organizations were present in the Nyéléni Forum 2007 and feel part of a broader Food Sovereignty Movement, that considers the Nyéléni 2007 declaration as its political platform. **The Nyéléni Newsletter wants to be the voice of this international movement.**

Organizations involved: Development Fund, ETC, FIAN, Focus on the Global South, Food First, Friends of the Earth International, Grain, Grassroots International, IPC for food sovereignty, La Via Campesina, Marcha Mundial de las Mujeres, Oxfam Solidarity, Real World Radio, Roppa, The World Forum Of Fish Harvesters & Fish Workers, Veterinarios Sin Fronteras.

Now is the time for Food Sovereignty!



The European machine, an example

The European Union (EU) currently imports **over 75% of its animal feeds**. Many of these are used in intensive farms which produce low-quality products – such as meat, milk and eggs. Some is commercialized within Europe and some is dumped on the international market.

When creating the European agriculture policy in 1962, the EU made a decision to protect its markets for grain but not for animal feed (cereal substitutes, oil and protein crops) – allowing the big animal feed producers (the United States at the time) to export cheap feeds to Europe. While European feed production decreased, industrialized systems were applied to animal rearing which became very dependent on protein feed imports (mainly soya) from overseas. After a US export embargo on soy in 1973, **the EU politicians became aware of this dependency and tried to introduce an oilseeds levy**; but it was refused by the USA, the European oilseeds lobby and the GATT (the predecessor of the World Trade Organisation).

The growing control of transnationals as soya producers, processors and exporters (now mainly GM soy from South America), as well as the domination of supermarket chains **has ensured the continuation of this system** – leading to an increasing concentration of meat and egg production around major ports, or in other low-cost areas in Europe - such as Eastern Europe.

There is an opportunity in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in 2013 to put livestock back on the land and give preference to grazing and rotation of leguminous crops on European soils. This means reversing the industrialization and concentration of meat and dairy production – and promoting the number of multi-functional sustainable farms, farmers and farm workers. Food Sovereignty offers these solutions – and can bring European livestock farming back into balance.

For more info contact the *European Coordination Via Campesina* - www.eurovia.org

The beginning

Factory farming began in the 1920s soon after the discovery of vitamins A and D; when these vitamins are added to feed, animals no longer require exercise and sunlight for growth. This allowed large numbers of animals to be raised indoors year-round. The greatest problem that was faced in raising so many animals indoors was the spread of disease, which was combated in the 1940s with the development of antibiotics, added since then to animal feed too. Business found they could increase productivity and reduce the operating costs by using mechanization and assembly-line techniques. <http://www.idausa.org/facts/factoryfarmfacts.html>

Factory farms: an environmental calamity

The scale of **environmental devastation caused by factory farms is huge and varied**. Intensive animal breeding requires ever-growing quantities of water, animal feed, energy and chemical inputs¹. The concentration of thousands of animals creates an unmanageable amount of waste. The manure that is used as organic fertilizer in smaller holdings, becomes a **dangerous pollutant**. In many pig factory farms for example, the waste is dumped after being mixed with water in lagoons and then sprayed on croplands. This blend contains antibiotics and metals from animal feed², which contaminate the air, water and soil. The **impact on human health is obvious**: the ongoing dioxin crisis in Germany³, the spread of Salmonella caused by contaminated eggs, the current outbreak of swine flue or of mad cow disease few years ago are clear examples. Furthermore factory farming contributes largely to **global warming** – it is responsible for 18% of total greenhouse gas emissions⁴ - in particular carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, which in addition are harmful gases for those living or working close by. The damage of factory farms is wider still if we consider the indirect consequences. To guarantee the fast growing rate of livestock, intensive farms import and use of **massive quantities of cheap protein-based animal feeds**, mainly produced with soy-beans and maize. Soy monoculture production - especially in Latin America - is one of the main causes of deforestation, loss of important wildlife habitats, intensive use of GMOs seeds and pesticides. Rural communities and indigenous people are evicted from their territories by the agribusiness which produces soy beans.

The social impacts of the meat business

The corporate takeover of the meat industry is **accelerating**. In United States for example in 1985 the top four pork-producing companies accounted for 32% of the market; by 1998 they controlled over 56%; and by 2006 that had risen to 63%. Corporations often control the whole process of production – from raising the animals to processing the meat, and distributing the final products. **This vertical integration of the meat chain production makes it easier for factory farm corporations to push traditional family farms out of business**⁵. Moreover as a result of their growing power, big business can lobby to prevent the implementation of regulations to protect human health and the environment from the damages caused by factory farms. In addition, the concentration of the meat industry in the hands of big corporations promotes the alarming reduction of livestock's genetic diversity and the **loss of traditional breeds**; for example currently industrial pig production relies on only five breeds. As in agriculture, the trend towards raising single adapted varieties increases the risk of susceptibility to disease and diminishes livestock's resilience⁶.

Factory farms are not even a fair and safe place to work. Workers are often exposed to **unhealthy conditions**: regular inhalation of toxic gases and dust and use of chemical products and physical labours that may cause temporary or permanent traumas⁷. Furthermore the employment of undocumented persons and underage workers is a commonplace, to the point that Human Rights Watch has described workers' conditions in many of these industrial facilities as *systematic human rights abuses*⁸.

From North to South, Big Meat is advancing

Despite all these negative aspects, intensive meat production is **increasing everywhere**. As for many other commodities, big corporations from the North have started moving their businesses to poorer countries where they can produce more cheaply. In addition, companies from the **South** are using their capital to set up new factory farms. A large number of meat companies based in the South have grown **into fully-fledged transnationals**, with their own aggressive overseas expansion strategies. The global food system is managed by these corporations, and corporate strategies define all investment flows. The **role of governments** is mostly to help their companies to navigate these markets, whether by signing bilateral trade and investment agreements or by launching diplomatic missions to overturn import restrictions. What all

1 - *What's feeding our food?* FOEI 2008 www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/livestock_impacts.pdf
2 - In United States additionally it contains growth hormones
3 - After this event, in Germany they have started an action against industrial animal production, learn more at www.gegen-massentierhaltung.de
4 - *Livestock's Long Shadow*, UN FAO, 2006 <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.HTM>
5 - For more info <http://www.pigbusiness.co.uk/>
6 - *What's feeding our food?* FOEI 2008
7 - <http://www.rel-uita.org/>
8 - *Blood, Sweat, and Fear*, Human Rights Watch 2005, www.hrw.org/reports/2005/usa0105/usa0105.pdf



these investment flows amount to is more industrial meat: more factory farms, faster assembly lines and more fast food. **The cost to people and the planet is devastating**⁹.

Soya, the Latin American trap

In the last forty years, the area under soybean cultivation has **increased rapidly** in the world; Latin America entered strongly in the production of oilseeds starting in the eighties and nineties, quickly occupying the number one position for production and commercialization. In fact, in the last decade, soybean cultivation has continued to soar in Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay: between 2002 and 2008, these countries increased the area devoted to the crop by 20, 50, 80 and 1000%, respectively¹⁰. Today, Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay are second, third and fourth countries in terms of soybean production, with China, India and the European Union as its main customers, which acquire soya mainly to prepare animal feed (and secondly as biofuel). In this soybean chain, the main Latin American producers have **became subordinate exporters to developed countries**, increasing **their dependence** on them. This development has been to the detriment of traditional crops for feeding the local population, has increased deforestation of native forests and the Amazon jungle, and in all cases, led to the concentration of land in the hands of a few landowners, causing the **displacement** of peasants and small family farmers. In addition, this has created and accentuated the process of **denationalization** of land, and reduced employment for rural workers. The increase in soybean cultivation has led to **social and environmental impacts**, due to the use of GM monocultures, promoted by biotech giants like Monsanto. The soybean crop not only tends to erode the soil, but is combined with biotech packages that include extensive use of highly **toxic herbicides** such as glyphosate.

9 - Seedling, October 2010 <http://www.grain.org/seedling/?id=699>

10 - Radiografía del agronegocio sojero, Narbondo y Oyhanctabal, 2009 <http://www.redes.org.uy/category/publicaciones>

Good meat!

Integrated small farms, which breed local livestock, are much more efficient, healthier and better for the environment.

Cattle, sheep and other ruminants have the unique **capacity to turn pasture into proteins for human consumption**, as milk and meat. Farmers also use the manure to make **healthier, living soils***

The negative contribution to global warming associated with meat production is mainly caused by the fertilisers used in the vast monoculture plantations for industrial animal feed, as soy-beans for example. On the contrary through **sustainable pasture management carbon is stored as humus in the soil and contributes to its fertility**. Each ton of humus in the soil captures about **1.8 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere**** . Additionally traditional family farms guarantee the endurance of **local breeds, conserving biodiversity** and reducing the risk of disease transmission.

* - Via Campesina, *Small scale sustainable farmers are cooling down the Earth*, 2009 <http://viacampesina.net/downloads/PAPER5/EN/paper5-EN.pdf>

** - Anita Idel, *The Cow is not a Climate Killer*, 2010 (only in German, English translation planned for 2011)

Voices from the field

Short stories from America, Africa and Europe, resistance and alternatives: the international struggle against factory farming.

Small scale poultry in Kenya, a story of struggle

Biashara Jane Kathure of INADES, Kenya

Local chicken farming is the only livestock rearing that African women and children **have full control over**. I have seen poor women in dry rural areas **sustain their family through the rearing of indigenous chicken**. Local chicken farming can promote food and economic security for poor families. Farming also raises social status as a woman feels more important in the community when she can feed her kids and bring them to school.

Currently still over 80% of chicken meat consumed in Kenya comes from local chicken farmed by **small scale farmers**. But six years ago the government promoted cross breeding of indigenous chicken with exotic chicken in a programme to upgrade local chickens, and now we have many hens from the area where the programme was promoted which refuse to brood, therefore no chicks. Some hens have also lost motherly instincts and abandon their chicks. **This is a slow way of wiping out the indigenous gene pool**. It means too that small farmers will be eliminated as they **cannot afford to buy chicks** from hatcheries. Therefore the rich continue to get richer by swallowing the poor peoples' sources of income.

Traditional farmers are **trying their best to save the indigenous breeds**. Some have decided to become breeders of local chicken and they are selling the chicks to other farmers. In Makueni for example, MR Pius Makau of Kyemole farm keeps over 800 chickens for breeding only. Farmers have also **put pressure on weak policies** that aim to classify local chicken as wild birds and they have succeeded at it, now in fact local chickens are recognized in the policy as domesticated birds. Women's groups engage in local chicken keeping as one of their activities and this helps in

reproducing indigenous breeds, even if they lack the skills to manage it well.

Smithfield in Mexico: environmental and health devastation

Octavio Rosas Landa, Asamblea Nacional de Afectados Ambientales, Mexico

Since 1994, the year the *Free Trade Agreement with North America* was enacted, the Valley of Perote, situated in eastern Mexico on the border that divides the states of Puebla and Veracruz, has become home to one of the **most harmful agribusiness projects** that exist throughout the country. In this valley, home to approximately 30 thousand people, the American multinational company Smithfield Farms (the largest pork producer in the world and called Granjas Carroll de México in our country) began to acquire land and then **to install modules to breed and fatten pigs on a large scale** (approximately one million per year). For 15 years they have been responsible for the **depletion of aquifers** in the valley, for the **pollution of the soil, air and water** and for major damage to the **health** of the population. In fact, this unhealthy situation contributed to the outbreak of the **swine pandemic flue** (then called Influenza A1H1) in April 2009. However, the **people took action**. Since 2006, the inhabitants of various communities (Chichicauautla, La Gloria, Alchichica, among others) began a struggle primarily to prevent the spread of more factory farms and then to stop the legal and political repression launched against the residents by the corporation and the governments of Puebla and Veracruz. So far, the communities struggles **successfully stopped the construction of more industrial pig farms in the region**, but the damage caused by the company still remains unpunished, while the

villagers seek the solidarity of other peoples in struggle in Mexico and other parts of world to stop this criminal enterprise. **The struggle has becoming global.**

Meat production to feed or to starve?

Ole-Jacob Christensen, farmer in Norway

Humans have cultivated land for **10,000 years** - almost as long as that we have bred animals for our pleasure, for their traction strength, or for their most important function - to feed us. **Ruminants transform grass and scrub into meat, milk and manure.** On our small mountain farm in Norway, our dairy cows go out into the forest or mountain every morning during the summer period, and return in the evening

with full belly and udders. This allows us to grow **other things** (such as hay, vegetables, potatoes, fruits etc..) **on the arable land.** **Modern farming has turned this principle upside down,** and feeds animals with food that could feed people directly. The rate of concentrates (grains and soy) in the diet of an average cow now exceeds 40% of the total amount. Pigs and poultry bred in factory farms eat nothing but that; even salmon farming uses 3 to 4 kilograms of sea fish to produce one kilogram of salmon. 40% of cereals and 75% of soybean farmed today is processed as industrial animal feed. In this way, they lose between 60 and 80% of their nutritional value. **Modern farming does not feed people, it starves them.**

The world in words

From Copenhagen to Cancun, the crayfish boogie

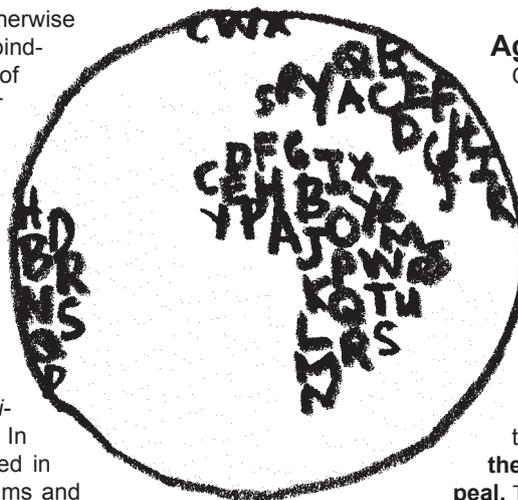
The Cancun text was little more than a revised version of the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, that had been widely considered a **failure.** The positive feedback to the Cancun agreement seems to have been caused by the general low expectations before the meeting and **the fear of a collapse of the UN Process altogether.** There is strong evidence that the Cancun agreement **takes us backwards** rather than forwards. One of the key characteristics of the otherwise insufficient Kyoto Protocol is that it had legally binding targets. As we come up to the first deadline of 2012, 17 nations will almost certainly breach their commitments to reduce emissions by 2020 by 5% compared to 1990. However, the fact that they signed **legally binding targets** at least opens up the possibility of legal challenges and a more effective incentive in future. By contrast, the Cancun agreement effectively kills off the Kyoto Protocol and replaces it with a pledge system of insufficient voluntary commitments. **Bolivia was the only nation to oppose the agreement.** Its bravery came to a large degree from the mandate it received at the *World Peoples' Conference on Climate Change* - held in Cochabamba in April 2010. In December, social movements and NGOs gathered in Mexico and organized successful alternative forums and initiatives. We should continue on this path and mobilise on a scale that has never been done before **to stop the spreading of false solutions!**

Part of this article is freely extracted from Nick Buxton's article, December 2010, the original is at <http://www.tni.org/article/cancun-agreement-stripped-bare-bolivias-dissent>; to learn more about the false solutions, refer to the *Nyeleni Newsletter Num1* www.nyeleni.org

Violence, a way of maintaining control over women

Many events took place on the 25th of November to celebrate the *international day for the elimination of violence against women.* **Violence against women is structural** - it is an inherent feature of the patriarchal and capitalist systems. It is the highest expression of inequalities among men and women: it is transversal; that is, it cuts across all social

classes, cultures, religions, and geopolitical situations. On the 25th, the World March of Women took the streets of Brazil to denounce all kinds of violence against women and to demand the enforcement of public policies to guarantee equality. According to the 2010 Map of Violence, conducted by the Instituto Sangari, in Brazil a woman is killed every two hours. 40% of these women are between 18 and 30 years. More info at <http://www.marchamundialdelasmujeres.org/news/mmfnews-item.2010-11-25.2807232362/en>



Agricultural landgrabbing in Mali

On the 20th of November a *Forum on agricultural landgrabbing in Mali* was held in Kolongotomo. Many traditional farmers from all over the country came together to analyze the current situation in Mali. The Forum concluded with an **appeal to the Malian government.** The participants recalled that land, water, forests and all Mali's natural resources are an inalienable national heritage; they urged the Government to initiate a **political dialogue through a national roundtable** on the issue and they established a **committee to monitor the recommendations of the Forum appeal.** The document is available at www.cnop-mali.org/IMG/pdf/Appel_de_Kolongo_final.pdf

Fisherfolk celebrate the World Fisheries Day

On the 21st of November with the occasion of the *World Fisheries Day*, hundreds of fishermen and women organized actions all around the world. The Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) set up a demonstration to urge international financial institutions to cancel Pakistan's debt and demanded that the money saved would be used for the rehabilitation of people displaced by recent floods. The leaders of the movement used this occasion to explain once more how fishermen in all areas face similar problems and how their livelihoods everywhere is in danger. More info <http://www.pff.org.pk/node/288> - Photos at <http://www.demotix.com/news/513889/world-fisheries-day-celebrated>

Next edition on biodiversity and farmers seeds!

Send your contributions - news stories, photos, interviews - to info@nyeleni.org by the 12th of February!

To read, listen, watch & share

- *What's feeding our food?* Friends of the Earth international, 2008 www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/livestock_impacts.pdf
- To learn more on *Big Meat in the South*, read *Seedling* http://www.grain.org/seedling_files/seed-10-10.pdf
- To learn more on factory farming watch *Pig Business* at <http://www.pigbusiness.co.uk/>

- *A Viable Food Future*, published by the Development Fund, Norway; the report is based on many other reports and presents how small-scale ecological food production can feed the world, cool the planet, preserve the environment and create jobs and livelihoods for billion of people www.utviklingsfondet.no/viablefuture/
- *The Coca-Cola case*, documentary awarded at the Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLIFF 2010) in Toronto, <http://films.nfb.ca/the-coca-cola-case>

For reports and more references www.nyeleni.org

One does not sell the earth upon which the people walk. Tashunka Witko, 1840-1877

