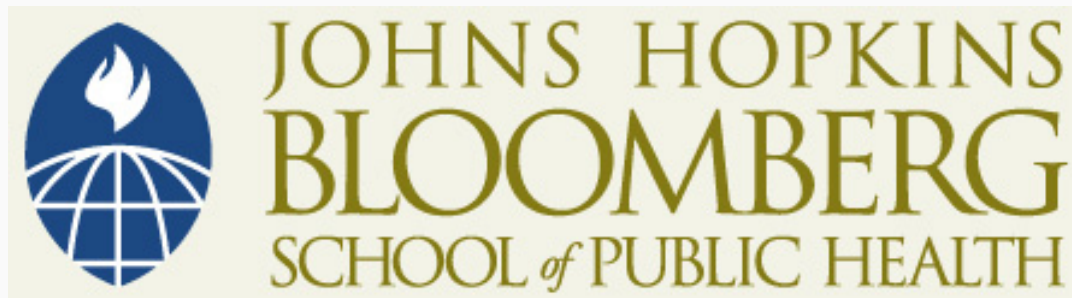


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Module 4

Food Production: Social, Economic, and Policy
Considerations



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Eating as a Moral Act

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Center for Livable Future

Brother David Andrews, CSC



- Former Executive Director, The National Catholic Rural Life Conference
- Peace and Justice Coordinator, The Congregation of Holy Cross
- Board member, consultant, advisor: Heifer International, Community Food Security Coalition, National Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, Organization for Competitive Markets, International Catholic Rural Association, International Federation of Adult Catholic Rural Movements, World Food Summit, International Summit for Sustainable Development, World Trade Organization, Agribusiness Accountability Initiative, Sacred Food Project, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Domestic Policy Committee

Outline

- Ethical Considerations for Eating as a Moral Act
- Food Production and Food System Issues to Consider
- Actions to Achieve Moral Eating



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Section A

Ethical Considerations for Eating as a Moral Act

Ethical Frameworks

- There are a number of ethical frameworks with differing grounds
 - Utilitarian ethics: pragmatic, practical, what works
 - Religious ethics: based on “being in love”—lovable as basis for responsibility
 - Ethics grounded in reason: intelligent, reasonable—truth as basis for responsibility
 - Ethics grounded in feelings and values: beauty and goodness as basis for responsibility
- I don't see them necessarily all as unrelated. My integration is of faith-based, values-based, and rights-based analysis.

Eating Is a Moral Act

- In 1997, I began a campaign called Eating Is a Moral Act, asking eaters to think about where their food comes from, how it is produced, with what effect on the environment, society, the climate, workers, animals, cultures
- This approach questioned from a moral perspective the directions of industrial agriculture and endorsed sustainable agriculture as a moral priority. I suggest we all can look at our knives and forks as levers for social change. They are instruments of ethics.

Faith Based Ethical Frameworks

- The Sacred Food Project's eight principles
 1. Growing food in ways that protect and heal the web of life
 2. Humane treatment of animals
 3. Protecting the integrity and diversity of life
 4. No one should go hungry

Faith Based Ethical Frameworks

- The Sacred Food Project's eight principles
 5. Fairness towards and empowerment of workers
 6. Responsible and ethical forms of business
 7. Food as an aspect of spirituality
 8. Reflection on our actions and impacts

Values-Based Ethics

- Organizations like Heifer International have a values-based approach in their cornerstones
- The cornerstones
 - Passing on the gifts
 - Accountability
 - Sharing and caring
 - Sustainability and self-reliance
 - Improved animal management

Heifer's Values-Based Ethics

- Passing on the gift
 - Gender and family focus
 - Genuine need and justice
 - Improving the environment
 - Full participation
 - Training and education
 - Spirituality

Rights-Based Ethics

- Many recognize that although faith-based and values-based approaches differ in their grounding, they can provide the basis for common efforts
- These common efforts can find common ground in a rights-based approach that can link secular and religious on specific advocacy efforts
- An advocacy effort based on food, farm, and ecology can be an effective channel for common action and common advocacy
- Rights bearers can challenge duty bearers to fulfill their obligations

Rights-Based Approach

- Articulates a framework that is seen as universal, enshrined in international law or domestic laws and procedures of fairness

The Right to Food

- The right to food is a human right, protected under international human rights and humanitarian law. It has been authoritatively defined in general comment No. 12 of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ...
 - “The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement.”

Right to Food Is a Civil Right

- The right to food is a right to a good of order. People have the right to define their own food and agricultural system.
- In some countries this right is enshrined in their constitution
- Most countries in the world officially recognize the right to food

Eating as Ethical

- Eating is related to particular goods
 - The quality of the food—whether it causes health or illness, individual well-being
 - The moral choice is between healthy choices and unhealthy choices
- Eating is also related to the goodness or morality of systems—this goes beyond particular choices to supporting a system