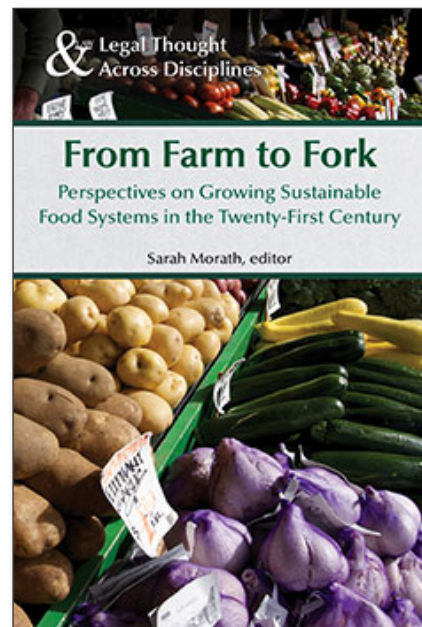


Presenting a 360-degree view of challenges in the U.S. food system, from farm to fork

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Review of *From Farm to Fork: Perspectives on Growing Sustainable Food Systems in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Sarah Morath. (2016). Published by University of Akron Press, Ohio. Available as paperback and ebook; 312 pages. Publisher's website: <http://www.uakron.edu/uapress/browse-books/book-details/index.dot?id=7bcff14d-52b9-4cdf-ad40-eac470eb8674>



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From Farm to Fork is a compilation of various essays organized around three overarching topics: an overview of the food system with all its

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¹ The views reflected herein are solely those of the author and do not constitute the opinion of the government.

complications, views from within the food system, and the federal and local policies needed to move the U.S. to a more sustainable food system in the future. The thoughtful organization of the chapters around these three areas contributes to the book's readability and digestibility.


Another asset of the book lies in its multifaceted and comprehensive nature. Chapters address numerous aspects of the food system, including the funding mechanisms present in the farm bill, the struggles of securing stable and equitable land access, the role of the consumer within community supported agriculture (CSA) models, the plight of food system laborers who work under unfair conditions for poverty-level wages to feed the U.S. population, and the health and environmental

consequences of ubiquitous pesticide dependence. The contributing authors also address and seek to define terms such as “social sustainability” (framed in one chapter as the answer to the question “How can we meet the needs of the present without diminishing opportunities for the future?” [p. 18]). Subsequent chapters seek to chart a path toward achieving the goal of social sustainability by proposing the creation of “the law of food, farming, and sustainability” (p. 125), suggesting structural changes to the current industrial food system, breaking our chemical addiction to pesticides, and implementing food policy audits to assess how we are starting to transform local food systems.

From Farm to Fork features well-known authors such as Marion Nestle (exploring how farm bill policy affects health outcomes), Susan Schneider (calling for a reconsideration of agricultural law and the development mechanisms to move us toward sustainable food policies), Jason Czarnecki (proposing a bridge from the mode of industrial agriculture to “new agriculture avenues” via direct marketing opportunities that also consider small-scale and organic farmers), and Maya Angelou (cleverly advocating for a 12-step approach to breaking our chemical addiction to pesticide use). The blend of multiple environmental and food systems scholars’ voices makes *From Farm to Fork* an excellent book

for use in any introductory level food, agricultural, or environmental law and policy course.

Although comprehensive in its analysis of food systems, *From Farm to Fork* lacks a chapter dedicated to the treatment of livestock in the United States. Any thorough investigation into our farming and food systems practices must include scrutinizing the way billions of animals are slaughtered for food in this country every year.² Yet any mention of animal welfare is fleeting or tangential to the other discussions at hand. *From Farm to Fork* could have benefited from a chapter devoted to the gaps in regulating agricultural animal welfare as well as proposals for reform. A discussion of social sustainability is incomplete without an adequate consideration of how the current industrialized modes of production in the concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) (Hibrar, 2010) system impact animal health, human health, and environmental health. The book also could have benefited from including a conclusion chapter to tie together all the featured themes and leave the reader with final thoughts for forward movement.

Despite these shortcomings, *From Farm to Fork* is a useful introductory text for anyone reading about food systems work for the first time. It details current research in the field from which even seasoned scholars could benefit and learn. 

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² Red meat production in the U.S. totaled 49.3 billion pounds (22.3 billion kg), including beef production of 25.8 billion pounds (11.7 billion kg), hog slaughter of 112.1 million head, and sheep slaughter of 2.32 million head (USDA NASS,

2014a). In 2013, 8.52 billion broiler hens were slaughtered to produce 50.6 billion pounds (22.9 billion kg) of meat; turkey production totaled 7.28 billion pounds (3.3 billion kg); and egg production totaled 95.2 billion eggs (USDA NASS, 2014b).