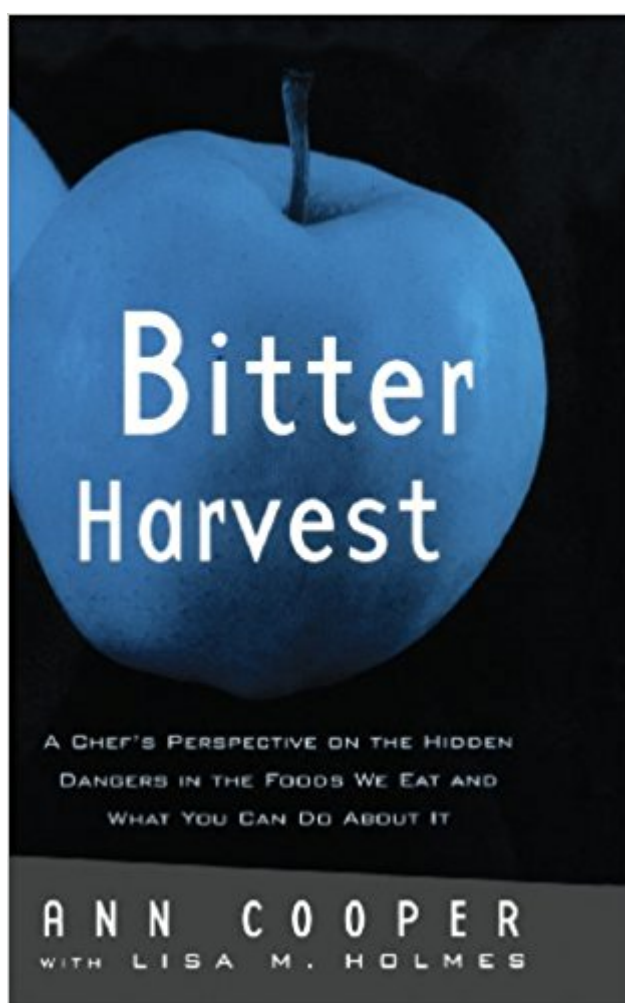


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# Bitter Harvest: A Chef's Perspective On The Hidden Danger In The Foods We Eat And What You Can Do About It



## Synopsis

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## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Trained by European chefs who favored exotic dishes, Cooper (A Woman's Place Is in the Kitchen) spent two decades preparing restaurant meals "without accounting for seasonality or a sense of place." After attending the Chefs Collaborative 2000 Conference five years ago, she was inspired to rethink many of her assumptions and food choices. Not only did she begin to seek out locally grown, organic produce, she became increasingly interested in the pernicious role of agribusiness in controlling and altering our food supply. Here she discusses what she has learned about the use of pesticides and hormones in agriculture, the addition of harmful chemicals to processed foods, and the loss of biodiversity through the bioengineering of seeds and plants. To counter these environmentally damaging trends, Cooper shows how farmers, cooks, and concerned-citizen groups are striving to grow and market food that is sustainable, safe, and healthy. An appendix of resources offers the reader ways to learn more about sustainable agriculture and environmentally sound practices. Recommended for public and academic libraries. Dillse Heidmann, San Marcos, TX  
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"Bitter Harvest is a passionate, engaging text that exhibits years of research and fact-gathering."-  
Gastronomica, Fall 2001 "Part expose, part consumer guidebook, this carefully researched and

readable work highlights the connections between the food we eat and the conditions of its production. In doing so, it offers practical advice on how the average shopper can contribute toward both a healthier food supply and a more sustainable environment.."-E (Westport), Allentown Call, James E. McWilliams, April 2001 "Recommended for public and academic libraries."-Library Journal "To counter these environmentally damaging trends, Cooper shows how farmers, cooks, and concerned-citizen groups are striving to grow and market food that is sustainable, safe, and healthy. An appendix of resources offers the reader ways to learn more about sustainable agriculture and environmentally sound practices. Recommended for public and academic libraries.."-Ilse Heidmann, San Marcos, TX ""Bitter Harvest offers some fascinating reading about the history of agriculture and the politics of food and power.."-The Oregonian

Sad thing is, this keeps popping up as an issue, what is happening to our precious supply of fabulous fresh foods, that truly sustain and delight. Even if poor, you can enjoy a fabulous dish of fresh steamed green beans just off the vine. My grandparents were "poor", no money but they were farmers and enjoyed lots of good things that sustained life, joy, peace and hope. It is truly disgusting to think 80 percent of fresh chicken has salmonella and who knows what else and so many do not know how to protect themselves from getting sick on it. Everything in the supermarket case looks pure and perfect, cool and fresh. Oldways preservation in Cambridge has kept up the searching spotlight and many chefs are well informed but work so hard, they have little time to educate the public. Thank you Ann Cooper for your experience and insights! Sally LaRhette

A must read for all those interested in where our food comes from and who has been controlling its production. Frightening and enlightening.

Bitter Harvest is a wonderful book. It highlights the importance of natural foods vs. the artificial foods we eat. However, this is a distinction NOT between junk food and vegetables, but agribusiness vegetables and local organic vegetables. It turns out that, in search of the maximum profit, the massive agribusinesses engage in practices that make vegetables much less healthy, and, in some cases, toxic. Since allowing land to fallow and regain its nutrients reduces profits that could be generated from using that land, agribusinesses use the same land over and over again, and pump it full of chemicals to try to restore the nutritional content of the soil. This is not some wild claim, it is simply how agribusiness works according to their own information. As a result, many vegetables are becoming less healthy and less nutritional. For instance, a USDA report comparing American

broccoli between 1975 and 1997 shows that it has decreased in many important nutrients: broccoli in 1997 had 53% less calcium, 20% less iron, 38% less Vit A, 17% less Vit C, 35% less thiamin, 48% less riboflavin, and 29% less Niacin than 1975 broccoli. Additionally, food that is transported loses nutrients over time. Our vegetables travel an average of 1500 miles. Unfortunately, thanks to NAFTA and GATT, our vegetables can be toxic. Mexico currently does not ban at least 6 pesticides that are banned due to health effects in the USA. Why does this matter to us? We get most of our off-season vegetables from Mexico: 97% of tomatoes, 93% of our cucumbers, 95% of our squash, 99% eggplant, and 85% of our strawberries. We are eating the poisons Mexico allows in its food. The news is not all bad, and this book is largely a celebration of life, food, and nature. Above all, it stresses the need to find food sources that don't use the damaging practices of agribusinesses and are not far away-local organic farms. According to Consumer Reports Jan 1998 issue, "organic foods consistently had the least toxic pesticide residues." Similarly, it is more nutritional. Organic Corn has 20 times the calcium and magnesium of store corn. There are many more nutrients and vegetables listed. And so, to question an earlier reviewer, who found it "really hard to figure out why any of it matters"--are you concerned about eating poisons and pesticides? Are you concerned about declining nutrient levels in our vegetables? If you are, then this book matters. In fact, it is difficult to imagine anything mattering more than what we eat and the damage it may cause.

This book focuses on sustainability, safety, and nutrition in the food we eat. There are a lot of players that have an impact on the food that shows up in the grocery store: agribusiness, the government, seed companies, chemical companies, and farmers. This book focuses on the interplay of these groups and the impact they have on our food. Organic farming is featured heavily throughout. Some highlights include: Turkeys are now bred to be so large that they can no longer mate and need to be artificially inseminated. Chicken is consistently infected with salmonella and the "solution" in your bagged chicken contains bleach. Beef cattle are fed antibiotics, not because they're sick, but so they grow faster. rBST hormone is being used to reduce corporate costs and put small milkers out of business. Nutrition in fruits and vegetables has been declining since the 70's because of corporate farm practices. Out of season produce is burning up tons of fossil fuels and imported produce may be treated with pesticides that are illegal in the United States. A lot of good political stuff here about the food industry. Giants like Monsanto and ADM throw their weight around with resulting negative impact on the safety and nutrition of our food. This was written in 2000 when the national organic standards were still in a state of flux. Since then they have passed, it would be interesting to hear whether or not the author finds them satisfactory. Recommended for Parents,

teachers, students, farmers, or anyone with an interest in the food industry.

Thank you Ann Cooper and Lisa Holmes! If you really believe "you are what you eat", this book may scare you into ACTION! This book was suggested to me by a parent of one of my son's friends, and I am so glad it was. Though sometimes "text bookish", this compilation of information really makes you stop and think about what you eat and what we feed our families. I found the historical information to be very insightful and the suggestions for how to offer healthier choices were terrific. The resources listed in the back of the book were nuts and bolts suggestions that answered the question, "now what do I do?" With recent "Mad Cow Disease" scares, and ever increasing rates of cancer, heart disease, etc. this is a fabulous resource for helping people to think about small ways to make changes in what we put in our bodies every day. READ IT!!

This book provides a candid explanation of how our food is produced in this country. You'll learn about sustainability. It's not an easy read, but then again, it's not an easy topic

This book should be read by every parent in America who goes to the grocery store and buys food. We have become a nation of "put it in the basket" buyers. This book cuts to the core of what is wrong with American food. KUDOS for a job well done.

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