

Poverty and obesity

Government



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Many people believe the American government to be corrupt and run by people who do not deserve the positions they are in and while this may be true, there are bad facts that point in their direction when it comes to certain things. One of those things includes the epidemic of obesity ultimately linked to poverty caused by the government and the food industry that is run by the government as well. Over a short amount of time the American government managed to sink their claws into the food industry, turning it into something it should never have become and making farmers poor in the process.

As the government digs into the industry more and more, it makes things worse for farmers and consumers alike, which is why the government should not be allowed involvement in the food industry as a whole, including production and sales. The government's involvement in the food industry is more extensive than some might think, from reading the "Omnivore's Dilemma" by Michael Pollan he shows how they are involved and why their involvement has caused so many problems.

Take this quote for example about the changes in food over the years and how dieting has become so popular: "So violent a change in a culture's eating habits is surely the sign of a national eating disorder. Certainly it would never have happened in a culture in possession of deeply rooted traditions surrounding food and eating. But then, such a culture would not feel the need for its most august legislative body to ever deliberate the nation's "dietary goals"—or, for that matter, to wage political battle every few years over the precise design of an official government graphic called the "food pyramid."

A country with a stable culture of food would not shell out millions for the quackery (or common sense) of a new diet book every January. It would not be susceptible to the pendulum swings of food scares or fads, to the apotheosis every few years of one newly discovered nutrient and the demonization of another. It would not be apt to confuse protein bars and food supplements with meals or breakfast cereals with medicines. It probably would not eat a fifth of its meals in cars or feed fully a third of its children at a fast-food outlet every day.

And it surely would not be nearly so fat (Pollan 2-3). " Pollan is trying to explain that the government has made it so people believe the portions they are eating and the fast food they allow themselves to consume is healthy for them, that it will allow them to maintain a healthy weight. This is not the case, as portions are much larger in America than anywhere else in the world. This is one of the reasons obesity has become such an epidemic, or as Pollan likes to call it, a nationwide eating disorder.

Now, that may explain how the government is involved in the control of portions but how are they involved with poverty and it becoming the cause of obesity? The government has created a nationwide deficit, causing our country to owe trillions of dollars to other countries for reasons unknown to us while still giving aide to other countries in need, instead of helping their own people. This has caused poverty to raise, jobs to decline, and cheap food being the mainly bought item at grocery stores. Cheap food is not always good food though; because it is made with the one ingredient the government has also regulated farmers to grow – corn.

Corn is a fattening ingredient, that is proved enough from them feeding it to beef cows who's digestive systems were not made to eat it. The cows become slaughter weight much faster, from cows that used to be slaughtered at four or five years, they are now being slaughter for meat at a measly fourteen months. Pollan found this out by speaking with a farmer named Rich Blair who explained to him that, "" In my grandfather's time, cows were four or five years old at slaughter," Rich explained. " In the fifties, when my father was ranching, it was two or three years old.

Now we get there at fourteen to sixteen months. " Fast food, indeed. What gets a steer from 80 to 1, 100 pounds in fourteen months are tremendous quantities of corn, protein and fat supplements, and an arsenal of new drugs (Pollan, 71). " This is borderline animal cruelty, as they are force feeding these animals unhealthy feed and this feed transfers over to our bodies when we consume their meat. Corn, a crop that the government is forcing farmers to grow so they can keep their farms, is the ingredient that is causing obesity in humans and animals alike.

Beyond the government's involvement in the obesity and poverty epidemic, they are causing other health issues by allowing the USDA to sell these tainted products to American people, not caring that it is causing heart problems, weight issues, and death. Using the fast food industry as an example, who are the major purchasers of corn and corn products, the USDA (a branch of the government) allows a certain amount of ingredients that could potentially kill you if you consumed enough of them.

The Chicken McNugget is the biggest example of this, using Pollan's research as an example, there are 38 ingredients in a nugget but the deadliest one is

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one called tertiary butyl hydroquinone which is a type of butane derived from petroleum and it is used on the nugget to preserve its freshness. From the Omnivore's Dilemma, " According to A Consumer's Dictionary of Food Additives, TBHQ is a form of butane (i. e. , lighter fluid) the FDA allows processors to use sparingly in our food: It can comprise no more than 0. 02 percent of the oil in a nugget.

This is probably just as well, considering that ingesting a single gram of TBHQ can cause " nausea, vomiting, ringing in the ears, delirium, a sense of suffocation, and collapse. " Ingesting five grams of TBHQ can kill (Pollan 113-114). " This is a sickening fact to learn about; especially considering it is in something as simple as a chicken nugget, which is no longer derived from chicken. The government has caused more issues in the food industry than they have good, creating an epidemic of over eating causing obesity, making larger portions seem healthier when in reality they are just trying to get rid of their surplus of corn.

Poverty is also rampant and in part because the government has so much control over the food industry, farmers are poor and cannot grow things that are not regulated, this causes our food to be poor as well. While the prices of this garbage rises and jobs start declining because less and less people are needed to work on farms (if they can be called that these days) people's pockets become empty because they must spend it on the cheapest food they can. This food is not filling or nutritious which makes us eat more of it, coming full circle back to the cause of obesity and the fact that the government has entire control over what we eat.