

Wal-mart essay essay sample

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Every day people are overwhelmed with the option of where to shop. Does one prefer to support locally owned businesses or national chain mega stores? Popular chain stores seem to be the one stop shopping destination busy people prefer. So, is it going to be Meijer or Wal-Mart? This is a decision Americans in the Midwest must make. If Wal-Mart is the preferred destination for one stop shopping one may want to weigh some important factors before making a choice. Consider the impact that Wal-Mart has on the nation. Also consider the decision that has to be made about choosing to buy either organic foods or processed foods. Finally, consider the impact that Wal-Mart has on food market control. Although very different topics, they all have one thing in common, food.

Back in the day, a man named Sam Walton started Walton's five and dime in Bentonville, Arkansas which started him in the retailer business. Eventually he opened the very first Wal-Mart in nineteen sixty two in Rogers, Arkansas. That is twenty eight years after Meijer had started in Greenville, Michigan. Meijer coined the modern supercenter concept the same year that Sam Walton opened up Wal-Mart Discount City (not a supercenter). Wal-Mart did not discover the supercenter concept, they copied Meijer; Along with taking that idea, they were also taking jobs from America and sending them to China. Businesses in today's society no longer care about quality anymore; all they long for is making a profit. Times have changed from the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties, from the customer care to the profit. Food is essential to life, without it, nobody would be alive today.

People want food that not only tastes good but is also cheap and fast.

However, it may not also be the best choice to go with food that is produced

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cheaply and fast. Smith (2005), from PBS Frontline, tells the story, In Circleville, Ohio, population 13, 000, the local RCA television-manufacturing plant was once a source of good jobs with good pay and benefits. But in late 2003, RCA's owner, Thomson Consumer Electronics, lost a sizeable portion of its production orders and six months later shut the plant down, throwing 1, 000 people out of work. Thomson's jobs have moved to China, where cheap labor manufactures what the American consumer desires — from clothing to electronics — and can buy at “ everyday low prices” at the local Wal-Mart... This is little consolation to the unemployed workers back in Circleville, Ohio.

Steve Ratcliff, a long-time worker at the Thomson plant puts it simply: If you want these low prices, then you go buy your products from Wal-Mart. But what does that actually do for this country? It's putting people out of work. And it's lowering our standard of living. That's the bottom line. Ironically, for Ratcliff and his former colleagues, there are new jobs coming to town. In a patch of farmland right next to the vacant Thomson plant, Wal-Mart has broken ground on one of its new Supercenters. But the Wal-Mart jobs will represent a steep cut in pay from the \$15 to \$16 an hour workers made at Thomson, and a far cry from the pension, health care, and job security benefits that have long been the norm in manufacturing. (para. 1, 14-15)

That just shows how Wal-Mart operates, by shutting down competitors, or teaching the suppliers who do not follow their rules a lesson. Companies that do not listen to those rules, Wal-Mart will drop like a hot potato and will find someone else to replace.

An example of this is Rubbermaid; According to a documentary on Wal-Mart, the cost of Resin had just recently gone up, forcing Rubbermaid to increase the price at which suppliers buy their products. Wal-Mart refused, and dropped all but one or two brands of Rubbermaid to show them what can happen when one does not comply with them. Rubbermaid then started losing money because of what Wal-Mart did (“ Is Wal-Mart Good for America). Wal-Mart quickly realized that production is much cheaper in China. This resulted in many companies moving their production to china in order to maintain business with Wal-Mart causing many Americans to lose their jobs. “ Of Wal-Mart’s 6, 000 global suppliers, experts estimate that as many as 80 percent are based in China.” (PBS Frontline, 2005, para. 5)

This shows why so many companies are now moving overseas, because they are either being forced to, to have cheap labor costs, or because the Chinese will work hard for 25 to 50 cents per day. Manufacturing Companies here in the United States that pay their workers anywhere from twelve to sixteen dollars an hour. That is an eleven to fifteen dollar difference. This does not even take into consideration all of the benefits American workers receive. The companies do not really care about quality anymore; they care about whether they are making a big profit for themselves each year.

Now both Wal-Mart and Meijer carry Organic and Processed foods. Yes, one is by far cheaper than the other, and even though it may say the food contains healthy ingredients, it is chemically processed, while the organic food is made naturally with no pesticides. Although genetic modification has quick results, this process is too recent to know the long term consequences of its

use. “ In addition, many of the claims made by the companies have now been shown to be false. For example, a recent study by the Soil Association shows that GM crops do not increase yield. Another example is a frost-resistant cotton plant that ended up not ripening.” (IDEA, 2009, para. 2) According to this information, Genetically Modified food might not be the best route to go. In the example of the cotton plants, they may have changed the genes to become frost resistant; but in doing so they cut off the cotton’s performance to ripen, rendering it useless for the farmer.

Therefore, causing the farmer to lose money because he bought the genetically modified seed to help him when frost became a problem, yet by not ripening, it kept him from being able to pick the plant and sell it. It is unnatural to change any genes, and it is not in God’s plan to make these types of changes. He made everything the way it is for a reason, says Galatians 5: 13 “ You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.” (New International Version, 1997) That verse shows God wants us to be free and explore the world, but not to explore too much with the genes of food, because one thing changed, other things could also change for the worse (for example adding a gene to make a cotton plant frost resistant did not end up ripening because of another gene added).

God made everything for a reason, by changing something one will not receive the full benefits of a fruit to the body as the temple of God. 1 Corinthians 3: 16 says “ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (NIV) If one

changes what is not meant to be changed, he/she is only sinning against God. Yes we may have free will, but when it comes to genes, everything benefits us differently; once you change the genes you lose that benefit. Despite the lack of knowledge of the long-term effects and the negative effects of Genetically Modified foods, some still believe it is not only un-harmful but also beneficial. “ The changes caused by selective breeding have been just as radical as current modifications. Wheat, for example, was cultivated, through selective breeding, from an almost no-yield rice-type crop into the super-crop it is today.” (IDEA, 2009, para. 3)

This quote explains how Genetic modification is natural, and is still perfectly good to speed up the process of adaptation to the climate the product is grown in. Some believe the modifications are just changes that will eventually happen to the product later on down the road; the scientists are just giving the new and improved product as what the public wants now rather than in 10 years. In today’s, world people want things fast, just showing all the more reason for Genetic modification and why it makes sense; it’s something for scientists to do, and it makes the customer happy when they can get food year round. With the pace of society today, everybody wants products now, fast, and super cheap. Even though people try to negotiate prices with Wal-Mart no matter if it is processed food or organic food, Wal-Mart does not budge on their price. If you want to sell at Wal-Mart it’s their way or the highway, and in today’s economy it would be Wal-Mart’s way, because that is where a large population shops at. This is why so many are turning to the cheaper solution of Genetically Modified foods.

Most people do not know how many food companies there are in the United States and worldwide that control the production and selling of different types of food. All in all there are a grand total of four different companies that control seventy five to ninety percent of the global grain trade. Those four companies are the group of Archer Daniels Midland Company, Bunge, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus. “ Every day, the 30, 000 people of Archer Daniels Midland Company turn crops into renewable products that meet the demands of a growing world.” There are more than two hundred and fifty plants that convert corn, wheat, and cocoa into food products, animal feed, and also for energy uses. (Archer Daniels Midland Company, 2012, para. 1)

“ In approximately 40 countries you can find Bunge: originating oilseeds and grains from the world’s primary growing regions and transporting them to customers worldwide.” Bunge makes anything from mayonnaise to fertilizer for the farmers who grow the corn who sell it back to Bunge who then mills it for food processors. (Bunge Company, 2012, para. 2)

“ Cargill is an international producer and marketer of food, agricultural, financial and industrial products and services.” (Cargill Company, 2012, para. 1) Beginning in 1865 this private company employs 142, 000 in sixty six different countries. They are an economic and environmental source to be reckoned with, helping customers succeed through collaboration and innovation. (Cargill Company, 2012, para. 1)

“ Louis Dreyfus was founded in 1851 and actively participated in the development of grain trading. The Group has since expanded its expertise to a wide variety of commodities and participates in various diversified

businesses.” This company invests in forests for production of carbon-neutral energy supply; fueled by solar, geothermal and wind resources. (Louis Dreyfus, 2012, para. 1)

Each of these four companies are all similar to each other. For example, they all deal with corn and the production and transportation of it to granaries.

Three of the four companies state how many countries throughout the world that they do business in, showing how big of a global food market economy they are a part of. All of the companies also say a quick something about how they are in the community helping those who need help. For example, some send employees to a needy neighborhood and have them help pass out food, or help clean up a park or even help rebuild a broken down house that someone does not have the means to build because of their economic stature. “ Those four companies have provided their own infrastructure as well as seed, fertilizer, and crop financing... The ‘ big four’ own more than half of the soybean solvent extraction plants in Brazil, and account for a much larger percentage of the country’s total installed crush capacity of thirty nine million tons a year.” (Soy in South America, 2009, page 532, para. 4)

Big companies rule their divisions of food because of their size and most importantly because of the money they have. Because of their money they can pretty much do whatever they want wherever they want because they make money. People see that and think they would be a good company in this country because it brings jobs and boosts the economy. This can be seen from Wal-Mart to Organic and Processed foods; to the ‘ big four’ who

control the world's grain trade. At the beginning of this paper the reader was presented with a question: Wal-Mart or Meijer? Should one shop at a store like Wal-Mart that cuts its prices in half by producing their products in China and using genetically modified food? Or should one chose Meijer whose prices might be a tad higher but produce locally and keep quality in their products. This is up to you to decide.

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