

Supermarket or farmer's market essay sample



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I have been questioning the nutrition and health value of supermarket foods for the past few years because of the growing number of people suffering from obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. I have come to the conclusion through research that the foods that are manufactured for high production have less nutritional value and are overall unhealthy and unsafe for the environment as well as for the consumer. So what is the alternative? The term Organic Farming was first introduced in the 1940's to describe an alternative to large production farming which is often referred to as Chemical Farming or Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) foods. Chemical Farming has affected the health of the consumer, the livelihood of the farmers and producers of non-GMO foods, ultimately compromising the overall nutritional value of our daily food consumption.

Genetic Engineering technology is the act of altering or disrupting the natural blue prints of living organisms resulting in gene-foods to be sold for profit. This technology breaks down fundamental genetic barriers by randomly inserting genes of non-related species by use of viruses, anti-biotic resistant genes, and bacteria. This process alters the genetic code and then is passed on to offspring through heredity. There are over sixty million acres of GE crops in the United States being actively cultivated and up to 500, 000 dairy cows are being injected with growth hormones. The danger of this active and growing industry is that the products are unpredictable causing hazards for human health, the environment, and the economy.

Studies show that these foods have a low nutritional content resulting in higher rates of chronic disease, nutrient deficiencies, and over eating. In 1989, a common dietary supplement genetically engineered killed 37

Americans and permanently disabled over 5, 000 others with a fatal blood disease. It was not until after this incident that the Food and Drug Administration pulled this supplement off the shelf. In addition to the hazards of GMO foods, large farming industries have turned to using toxic pesticides and herbicides. In doing this, pests and weeds will emerge to being resistant to these chemicals resulting in stronger, more toxic chemicals to be made and used. The problem with that is the toxins that are going into the foods are being consumed by you and me on a daily basis.

Another drawback of this type of food production to consider is the effect it has on the local farmers and producers of organic foods. Ultimately these mass production food companies are putting the traditional family farmers out of business. Organic farmers are those that farm without using GMO or any kind of GE in production of their crops along with not using pesticides and herbicides. Instead, the traditional way of farming is implemented, turning topsoil and rotating crops to control pests and weeds. This has been the way of farming for the past 12, 000 years. The implementation of corporate dominated agriculture has driven most of America's family farms off the land. In 1993 the U. S. Bureau of the Census stopped counting farm residents because there were so few left. The total number of farms in the United States has decreased from 6. 5 million in 1935 to around 2 million in 1997. With the continuous use of Genetically Engineered processing, crop yields are in a decline, water irrigation is limited, soils are eroding, and drinking water supplies are increasingly being contaminated by agricultural runoff. Twelve to thirteen billion pounds of nitrate chemical fertilizers and poisonous pesticides are being applied every year to America's farmlands.

Overall, organic farmers struggle to keep their farms in production with what is being handed to them from the toxic environment produced by the industrialized food production system.

In addition to the health and environmental hazards of GE foods, this food production system plays a huge role in politics and capitalism. GE is said to be the latest tool in the participation of transnational food giants and chemical companies to maximize their profits and maintain control of the food chain. In speaking of control, government agencies are the local farmer's biggest obstacle for success. These agencies create policies that favor large industrial farms and cause unnecessary hurdles for the family farmers. Americans are told of policies that will help farms succeed, but ultimately these policies help to drive cost down for the consumer. It is a matter of what the consumer feels is acceptable to eat at a price they want to pay. The industrialized food production system wants large production at a low price and in the meantime the actual value of the food we eat is declining.

Large farming industries using genetic engineering to produce larger quantities at a faster pace is polluting the environment, destroying topsoil, and has prompted an epidemic of obesity, heart disease, cancer, and hormone disorders. And to add to the health and environmental dangers, government agencies regulate and control the success of the family farmers who are struggling to give you and me a safer, more stable product.

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