

Eric schlosser

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Halleigh Benner Dr. Wiley English 701 Section 21? Contaminated Meat Every Step Of The Way Eric Schlosser's book Fast Food Nation, Michael Moss' article The Burger That Shattered Her Life and the documentary Food Inc. all come together to inform people on the facts about the food industry's contamination issue.

The food industry has many slaughterhouses and meat packing industries in the United States. People never think about where their meat has come from, how it is prepared, stored, or made. Unfortunately, the sanitation of our meat from where it starts to when we eat it is appalling. Many farms now raise livestock in mass groups in dirty environments, they gather into unsanitary slaughterhouses to be killed with unsanitary utensils, methods, and machinery, the meat gets combined with other meat in filthy meat packing industries, and is then packed away for us to eat. Farms should raise cows how they used to be raised, consumers should make healthier and wiser decisions on their choices of meat, people need to demand better food safety standards by re-introducing Kevin's law. The industry doesn't want you to know the truth about what you are eating, because if you knew then you might not want to eat it, but now the truth is revealed. Our farm animals such as chickens and cattle are not raised how they used to be raised.

In the documentary Food Inc. many farmers would not let the camera crew inside the chicken houses, but one woman that was interviewed did. Carole Morison said, " I understand why farmers do not want to talk because the big companies that they are controlled by can cut pay. Companies control everything about what the farmers do but Carole also stated, " It is not right what is going on and I made up my mind that I am going to say what I want

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to say, it doesn't matter anymore something has to be said. " The documentary showed that her chicken house was full of dust and feces everywhere. The mass amount of chickens cooped up close together couldn't escape from the unsanitary environment. Many chicken farms are exactly like her's.

Carole said, " This isn't farming anymore, it is mass production. The spread of disease is more likely within these mass production chickens because Carole informed us, " Antibiotics are put into the feed, but the bacteria builds up a resistance and the antibiotics don't work anymore. " Cattle are not any different than the chickens. The documentary Food Inc. showed viewers that feedlots contain hundreds of cows that stand ankle deep in their own manure all day long. If one cow has a disease such as, E. coli then the others will have a higher risk of getting the disease as well.

The unhealthy sanitation of our food even begins when the cows and chickens are alive in their environment that they are being raised. The environment of slaughterhouses where the livestock is killed is horrific and disgusting. To hide these sickening scenes, most slaughterhouses are simple buildings with no windows to see inside. In the book Fast Food Nation, the author Eric Schlosser put on knee high boots because his host from the slaughterhouse said, " Tuck your pants into the boots, we'll be walking through some blood" (Pg. 169). Walking through deep puddles of blood is unhygienic. If one cow's blood is infected and is then mixed with other blood that is gathered into puddles on the ground; workers have to walk through

the puddles and it can contaminate machines, utensils, or other meat that is being worked on by the puddles being splattered.

Bacteria grows and spreads in moist and humid conditions. Eric Schlosser states, “ The kill floor is hot and humid. It stinks of manure. Cattle have a body temperature of about 101 degrees, and there are a lot of them in the room” (Pg. 170). Bacteria thrive in these places and can be harmful to us in the long run. The process of how our meat is made is unhealthy.

The article *The Burger That Shattered Her Life* by Michael Moss stated, “ Slaughterhouses have the potential for contamination every step of the way” (Pg. 3). It all begins with the removal of the hide from the cows. *Food Inc.* the documentary brought up a great issue that shows the viewers that when cows come to these slaughterhouses, their hides are caked with manure. To begin, hides must be removed carefully to keep the manure off of the meat but with the commotion and the speed of the slaughterhouse process, this causes high risks of the meat being contaminated with feces. Workers and inspectors from the article *The Burger That Shattered Her Life* say, “ Much can go wrong, workers slicing away the hide can inadvertently spread feces to the meat, and large clamps that hold the hide during processing sometimes slip and smear the meat with feces” (Pg.

3). Next before transferred to the meat packing part is the gutting station, where the intestines are removed. Eric Schlosser from *Fast Food Nation* said, “ I see: a man reach inside a cattle and pull out their kidneys with his bare hands” (Pg. 170). After a person reads this statement from Eric Schlosser, it will make people wonder if he washed his hands before he put them back

into another cattle. More than likely the worker didn't because of the speed that the process is going. These careless actions that can be prevented can spread E.

coli or other diseases to meats that could cause an entire factory to contain it because of the mixing of meat in the meat packing process. Trimmings in the meat packing industry get mixed with other meat from different slaughterhouses within the United States. For example in the article *The Burger That Shattered Her Life*, " Ms. Smith's patty contained trimmings from a slaughterhouse in Uruguay" (Pg. 4). Mixing meats from different slaughterhouses is not a good idea, because their regulations could be completely different, especially a slaughterhouse from a different country. Grinding contaminated meat can leave diseases on the machine and spread to other mixed meats that are being mixed in the same grinder.

Not mixing meats and sanitizing machines and utensils, every slaughterhouse's meat can become Grade A. Cattle and other farm animals such as, chickens and pigs should be raised traditionally, in a grass pasture with enough room for them to run around and not having to stand in their own manure. A farmer in the film *Food Inc.* agreed, " Having cows in a pasture; they eat and fertilize the grass, the cycle is better for the environment and for them. " The healthier the animals begin their life the more likely; their meat for us to eat will be healthier and not contaminated. The only problem with this solution is that people in this world today are more worried about money and how much they can receive. The more cattle

and chickens farmers can raise in the shortest amount of time is better for them and the company, that they are controlled by.

Many mass production farmers do not worry about their consumer's health because it is sometimes seen as the consumer's own responsibility. Consumers have the ability to choose which meat they want to buy depending on where the meat has come from. They can choose meat that was produced locally or they can read labels to trace back to a preferred and trusted factory and or company. Consumers could also buy their own cow of their choosing and have it butchered for their selves personally. However, many people do not have the time to go into detail to find out where their meat has come from, especially many do not have the money to buy their own cow and have it butchered. Another solution is to reintroduce Kevin's law for E. coli contamination.

The people have the ability notify the congress to enforce food safety standards and re-introduce Kevin's law. According to the documentary Food Incorporated, " Kevin's law would give back to the USDA the power to shut down plants that repeatedly produce contaminated meat. For Kevin's law the government is trying to fix this problem with expert inspectors but it will take a while for these experts to be hired and the process to expand everywhere in the United States. Therefore, meat contamination and getting rid of unsanitary utensils, methods, and machinery will decrease at a slow rate. In addition, in the documentary of Food Inc. it was stated, " People that ridicule the food industry can be charged because the food industry has different

protections than other industries do. For example, Oprah Winfrey was sued by a Texas cattleman for demeaning a food product and for the loss of profit.

Mass amounts of people need to stand up to this unfair “ protection” over the food industry. One person cannot do it; many have to create a movement. Enhancing food safety programs will benefit our lives. In conclusion, our future’s health is ultimately at stake and people need to do something to change it. The sanitation of our meat starts from the environment that the livestock lives in and takes a domino effect until their meat ends up on our plates to eat. Surprisingly people have to worry about the food sanitation in the United States, and it is sad to realize that people have to be worried about the food provided in our country. However, this issue can be resolved.

Solutions such as, livestock being raised in a healthy environment by the traditional way, consumers can make better choices for their selves, and they can also stand up for the rights of being able to eat meat without worrying. Change in the food industry will change our health for the better.