

Environmental science



_____ Lab 5: Food Systems Introduction: “ The Problem: Money is power. Perhaps more than any generation that has come before us, we understand the deeply-rooted reality of this short phrase and its universal meaning for every human being living on this planet. It follows that wherever large amounts of money collect, so also new centers of power form. The latest historical manifestation of this is the modern corporation. As trillions of dollars accumulate in the corporate sphere, we witness the growing power of corporation to shape the world as they see fit. This power is not limited to controlling the face of our own government through consistent, record-breaking, campaign contributions, but also the fate of millions of people and the planet itself through jobs, resource exploitation, pollution, working conditions, energy consumption, forest destruction, and so on. Make no mistake, these new power centers are not democracies. We don’t vote for the CEO’s or the policies (unless we are rich enough to be significant shareholders, who are informed enough to know what’s going on, and compassionate enough to care about more than just personal profit), yet our destinies are increasingly left in their hands. The Solution: As these power centers shift, we must shift our own voices if we wish to be heard. As citizens, on average, we might vote once every four years, if at all. As consumers, we vote every single day with the purest form of power ... money. The average family spends around \$18, 000 every year on goods and services. Think of it as casting 18, 000 votes every year for the kind of world you want to live in. Unfortunately, as difficult as it is to find good, solid information on candidates during an election year, it’s often even harder to find good, solid information on corporations. Our current laws are so lax, that half of the time we can’t even figure out which brands belong to which

companies (they don't have to tell us), much less have any idea of what their business practices look like. For the past seven years, [Ellis Jones has] dedicated [himself] to researching this very problem by compiling a database of every reliable source of information available on corporate behavior, and synthesized the information into a single report card grade for every company. The result is [the Better World Shopping Guide]. Use it to reclaim your true vote. Use it to build a better world." For this lab, you will be using Ellis Jones' website (<http://www.betterworldshopper.org/>) to consider the products that you purchase based on a set of pre-determined issues shown below. Products and/or companies are awarded a letter grade (A through F) based on their performance on these issues. " The Issues: Human Rights: sweat shops, third-world community exploitation, international health issues, economic divestment, child labor, worker health & safety records, union busting, fair wages, fatalities, democratic principles. The Environment: global warming, toxic waste dumping, rainforest destruction, pollution, recycling, renewable energy, eco-innovations, sustainable farming, greenwashing, resource conservation. Animal Protection: humane treatment, animal testing, utilization of alternatives, factory farming, animal habitat preservation, sustainable harvesting, ecosystem impacts. Community Involvement: volunteer efforts, local business support, sustainable growth, family farms, donations, nonprofit alliances, campaign contributions, paid lobbyists, political corruption. Social Justice: class action lawsuits, unethical business practices, government fines, cover-ups, illegal activities, transparency, harassment, discrimination based on race, gender, age, sexuality, ability, religion, ethnicity." Work Cited: Jones, Ellis. 2008. The Better World Shopping Guide. Canada: New Society Publishers. Pre Lab: Fill <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-science/>

changes this with basic policies needed. Ethically conscious. Organic Valley. Built on green and ethical considerations for the environment. Jell-O. Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. The food also may be bad for health. Fast Food Noodles and Company B - Changes corporate values for green sustainability and adds and changes this with basic policies needed. Ethically conscious. Organic to Go. Built on green and ethical considerations for the environment. McDonalds. Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. The food also may be bad for health. Gum& Mints n/a Meat Products / Meat Alternatives Hilshire Farm B - Changes corporate values for green sustainability and adds and changes this with basic policies needed. Ethically conscious. Organic Prarie - Built on green and ethical considerations for the environment. Oscar Mayer - Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. The food also may be bad for health. Soda Honest Tea B - Changes corporate values for green sustainability and adds and changes this with basic policies needed. Ethically conscious. Stanza Organic Cruz. Built on green and ethical considerations for the environment. Coca Cola. Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. The food also may be bad for health. Supermarkets King Soopers F - Isn't environmentally or ethically cautious. Doesn't provide customers or employees with ethical considerations. Whole Foods. Built on green and ethical considerations for the environment. Wal-Mart. Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. Considered unethical with employees. Water Aquafina B - Changes corporate values for green sustainability and adds and changes this with basic policies needed. Ethically conscious. Biota. Built on green and ethical considerations

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for the environment. Arrowhead. Not looking at social or green responsibility and not cautious in changing policies. The water may also not be filtered.

Lab: Food Inc. How much do we really know about the food we buy at our local supermarkets and serve to our families? In Food, Inc., filmmaker Robert Kenner lifts the veil on our nation's food industry, exposing the highly mechanized underbelly that has been hidden from the American consumer with the consent of our government's regulatory agencies, USDA and FDA. Our nation's food supply is now controlled by a handful of corporations that often put profit ahead of consumer health, the livelihood of the American farmer, the safety of workers and our own environment. We have bigger-breasted chickens, the perfect pork chop, herbicide-resistant soybean seeds, even tomatoes that won't go bad, but we also have new strains of E. coli—the harmful bacteria that causes illness for an estimated 73, 000 Americans annually. We are riddled with widespread obesity, particularly among children, and an epidemic level of diabetes among adults. Featuring interviews with such experts as Eric Schlosser (Fast Food Nation), Michael Pollan (The Omnivore's Dilemma, In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto) along with forward thinking social entrepreneurs like Stonyfield's Gary Hirshberg and Polyface Farms' Joel Salatin, Food, Inc. reveals surprising—and often shocking truths—about what we eat, how it's produced, who we have become as a nation and where we are going from here.