

Chapter 5

The Land, and the food we eat.

As we have already seen there is a shortage of land! but where has it gone ?

People are beginning to notice that fewer and fewer acres are available for cultivation by the small to average farmer. The average farmers are bought out by mass producing farms who must cultivate only one crop to meet increased competition and make (ever decreasing profits). Farms are either large cattle farms or farms growing trees or one crop. Fewer and fewer acres are under cultivation to support more and more people. In short we now have Corporate farming.

Farmers are heavily subsidised, yet they still have to take out large loans to buy the stock, machinery, grains and fertilisers, or to rent more and more land. Once again the interest rates pile on the pressure to meet the loan payments of a loan or mortgage over 20 to 25 years or lose their farms, paying back up to three times (and considerably more) than they originally borrowed, and of top of this they must make profit.

In turn the feed producer must make 6%, the fertiliser seller must make 7%, the machinery salesman must make 8% and eventually the banks make 300% or 400%. Production is increasingly mechanised and corners are cut and a mass produced philosophy, to get through the days months and years takes over, until the very point of producing healthy food to feed people has vanished.

One of the most interesting revelations of the history of this problem came from Howard Lyman the grain and animal producer who used to supply MacDonald's with beef. He gave evidence in one of the most courageous and disturbing trials now famously known as the McLibel case.

(see <http://www.mcspotlight.org/case/index.html>)

And specifically <http://www.mcspotlight.org/people/interviews/lyman.html>

Here is a part of what he has to say taken from his interview contained within the website of Helen Steel and Dave Morris (McSpotlight), who had to defend their claims against McDonalds.



[So would you say the whole meat industry is consumer or industry driven?](#)

“ I think it probably started out as being consumer driven and then it got to the point where it is public relations driven. If you look at it right now, to get the consumption of beef up the price has to go down. The cheaper the price becomes the greater the abuse on the environment, on our health. So right now I think that we are in a big catch 22, where we have a dog chasing its tail and everybody wants to point at everybody else for being part of the problem. But the only way to stop it is for the consumer to take it off of their court. When that demand is not there, then we will see the site of welcome.

He continues with the associated problems of this type of farming which is particularly disturbing



[So, could you just give us a bit of a picture of what your farm was like before?](#)

“Sure. My farm in Montana had 7000 head of cattle, er 12,000 acres of crop, 30 employees, 7 combines, 20 tractors 30 trucks and I was buying \$1,000,000 worth of chemicals a year. I started out that farm

which was a small, organic dairy farm, and er went to Montana State University, I got a city degree in agriculture and bought into that thing that said earn a better living through chemistry and I came home and took that information, took that small organic dairy farm built it into an agribusiness. We ended up eliminating the birds killing the trees, turned the soil into something that looked like we had imported it from Mars. I'll have to tell you that the 20 years on my farm on my chemical addiction was in my opinion totally wrong.”



And what made you realise that something was wrong?

“Well, the thing that really brought it to the fore-front was in 1979 when I ended up paralysed from the waist down. The doctor told me that I had a tumour on my spinal cord, it was on the inside of the cord, I had less than a one chance in a million. When somebody gives you the odds of one in a million it really gets your attention. That was right after I had to admit that we had eliminated the birds, killed the trees, my brother had died of Hodgkin's Disease, which we found caused by dioxin from the weed spray we were using 245T better known as Agent Orange in Vietnam. All of those things forced me to take a look at what I was doing when I was flat on my back fully believing that I would never walk again and I had to admit that er I had done some things to that farm that were not very good.”



So what specific evidence have you given in the McLibel trial?

“Well, the McLibel trial is an interesting thing. This is really not McDonald's being put on trial, this is corporations being put on trial, and what I attempted to do is basically put food production of animals on

trial. What we are doing. It's not what we know about what is happening out there, it's what we know that isn't so".

“Most people have no understanding at all that animals are being fed to animals, have no idea that we are feeding arsenic to chickens, that we end up recycling manure back through the animals...”

“People have no understanding at all that animals are being fed to animals, have no idea that we are feeding arsenic to chickens, that we end up recycling manure back through the animals, that we feed them cement dust. What I attempted to do in the evidence that I gave is to give people an understanding that they could go on the internet and take a look and bring it up and take a look at it and say, "I didn't know that, I didn't know they scraped up manure and fed it back, I didn't know that they fed paper to animals, I didn't know that they fed cement to animals". Those are things that I saw, those are things that I did and what I attempted to in the testimony I gave is put the industry on trial. Half of all the antibiotics produced in the United States today are put down the throats of animals. That's a phenomenal amount, and most of us don't know that. Most of us have no idea in the world who produced their food or what they used on it, what it will do to us, the environment or the animals. That's what I attempted to make clear in the McLibel trial.



What do you think apart from these specific things, what do you think the McLibel trial is really about?

I think the McLibel trial really is about, "How do people exercise their freedoms against corporations?". Most people look at it and think that this is a trial of two activists against a large multinational. That's not the case. What we're looking at, what we're talking about, is freedom, all of our freedom, and

whether it can be usurped by multinational corporations. Right now we have governments that are doing the bidding of multinational corporations and they are in fact the government of the world. Can they totally intimidate individuals? Can they remove our rights and freedom? That's what this trial is all about. This is the most monumental event that will happen in my lifetime.

The trial will not be decided in the High Court, the trial will be decided in the court of public opinion. That's what it's all about and that's why it's so important that what happens there gets out to the people, that they understand what they are trying to do in the closet and it gets out there and we put the bright light of public opinion on it. It makes no difference what the judge rules. What makes the difference is, "Will the people accept Multinational Corporation's ability to go out and totally dominate human freedom". That's what it's about, and I think they picked the wrong place, the wrong time and the wrong group and I think it's going to come back and bite them big time, because I think people look at it and say no multinational corporation should have the right to say what I can or will do in my freedom of speech."

I have reproduced a large part of Mr Lymans interview (with links that hopefully will work) as he is a farmer who started out believing that the "Byological cycle of life" under his farming methods was correct, humane and safe but over time changed this view.

A further problem with these new methods (in terms of the last 4000 years), is that even in America, the worlds topsoil is disappearing. It's disappearing because trees are not soaking up the extra rain water. The infiltrating rain into the soil and subsoil, filters through and reaches the water table below, so causing the whole water table to rise and a flood pool emerges over the fields, which evaporates and

leaves a salty residue, so ruining the land. A further cause concerns the amount of chemicals poured into the soil.

This does not just kill weeds but everything including the earthworms and grubs and insects which fertilise, aerate and recondition the soil fit for a new crop. Organic growth does not decompose naturally and so further contaminates the soil. This produces hard ground in the next year which of course needs even faster ploughs and heavy machinery to cut into the hard ground.

The reduced thinner layer of topsoil which is of course lower in depth every increasing year, has been washed away, by “floods” and rain.

This is not just the rainforest or third world regions who are of course starving to death (not having large supermarkets to fall into and collect food, even if they could pay for it, and notwithstanding that the increasing size of warehouse food markets is one of the dogs chasing their own tails, according to Mr Lymans analogy)

In America the topsoil has eroded from 7 feet, down to a few inches.

“Top soil is the fertile upper layer of soil without which almost nothing will grow. It is essential for life and yet it is being eroded at an alarming rate through over use and denaturing due to the over-use of fertilizers and pesticides.

In the 20th Century alone, the US has lost half its topsoil and 7 billion tons a year continue to be eroded. Its structure has been so distorted that wind and water can simply carry it away. With luck, topsoil is replenished at a rate of 2.5 centimetres every 100 years.

Some 85 percent of top-soil loss is attributed to livestock rearing. Around the world, topsoil is being eroded at rates 16 to 300 times faster than it can regenerate”

<http://www.vivausa.org/activistresources/guides/planetonaplate1.htm>

The chemicals introduced to provide protein and vitamins are introduced into the water system and food chain and people wonder why they have increased cancers, diseases and all kinds of illnesses afflicting them. A favourite crop is Agent Orange also used to kill the Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Iraqis to name a few victims. The crops and the meat in turn are lacking in goodness which people then find they are experiencing vitamin deficiency, and popping pills and supplements.

Agricultural colleges and government agencies receive chronic underfunding to investigate the causes, as in effect the problem is bigger than they can cope with and it would mean admitting that the loan and credit, and mortgage funding of farming is producing quantity not quality (a massive understatement).

Of course overproduction means exporting is increased and with free trade, markets have to be opened up where they would be normally resisted and this means a trade war, and in turn colonisation or in turn again, armed conflict which in turn needs more credit to fund.

The desire to overproduce is of course triggered by spreading credit to provide a boom, but as credit (debt with interest attached i.e. the entire money supply) MO/M4 multiplier effect is pumped out, the interest to repay it is of course requiring more credit or money than is in existence in the economy, so that the debt exceeds the money supply. And as the money supply is less than outstanding debts, all the debts can never be repaid. Of course they can be repaid if more money is produced, but then the credit has more interest it never ends. Farmers are under pressure to produce by what methods necessary pay their next mortgage payment or lose their livelihoods.

To find the extra money the farmer needs cheaper grain, which now has to be produced artificially (a hybrid) as science has to introduce a species which will exist in the new hardened ground. And as this new species will not reproduce itself with as much success, farmers are having to buy seed every year to grow a crop.

New strains of seeds and crops which are genetically modified, are designed because normal seeds will not grow in the contaminated land, with its low soil content, and at the rate this is increasing, we will soon be eating the equivalent of crops as tough as wire, producing food which tastes like cardboard. Interfering with the market, and the debt loan system, which farmers cannot escape from is out of the question though, so eat up and don't complain.

Rents are higher for farmers as landlords need to fund their loans but both do not realise that there is not enough money to go around and will have to take out new loans at interest, as do the machinery salesmen the grain and feed suppliers.

If the crop is bad, and "bad" is relative since over the last 80 years food has been losing its protein as the topsoil loses its goodness. The farmer compensates by buying expensive fertiliser, which in turn he hopes will produce a fantastic crop, which on harvesting is never quite enough to pay for his mortgage, and on and on.

Interest is driving efficiency but not quality, in fact it is producing food we cannot eat.

We are not told we cannot eat it, as this would effect profits.

Cancelling chemicals and introducing a rest period for topsoil (leaving a field fallow), or the wisdom of the seven year cycle to allow the land to rejuvenate itself will probably produce overproduction, but it

will sure taste good and will not poison you. This is the difference between taking care of the land and killing it.

How ? stop producing loans with interest, which is the small problem, which causes huge effects in our way of life.

Speaking on the recent G8 summit in Edinburgh at the beginning of July 2005, the most powerful men in the world of essentially, men with no real power at all, compared to nature George Monbiot relates the following.

"Cooney's work was augmented by Harlan Watson, the US government's chief climate negotiator, who insisted that the findings of the National Academy of Sciences be excised from official reports.(4) Now Joe Barton, the Republican chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, has launched a congressional investigation of three US scientists whose work reveals the historical pattern of climate change. He has demanded that they hand over their records and reveal their sources of funding.(5)

Perhaps most pertinently, the official policy of climate change denial, like Lysenkoism, relies on a compliant press. Just as Pravda championed the disavowal of genetics, so the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Times, the Daily Mail and Daily and Sunday Telegraphs champion the Bush team's denial of climate science. Like Pravda, they dismiss it without showing any sign that they have read or understood it.

But climate change denial, like Lysenkoism, cannot last forever. Now, as the G8 communique shows, the White House is beginning to move on.(6) Instead of denying that climate change is happening, it is denying that anything difficult needs to be done to prevent it. The other G8 leaders have gone along with this.

Faced with the greatest crisis humanity has ever encountered, the most powerful men in the world have meekly resolved to "promote" better practice and to "encourage" companies to do better. The R-word is half-mentioned twice: they will "improve regulatory ... frameworks."(7) This could mean anything: most of the G8 governments define better regulation as less regulation. Nowhere is there a clear statement that they will force anyone to do anything to stop destroying the conditions which sustain human life.

Instead they've agreed to "raise awareness", "accelerate deployment of cleaner technologies" and "diversify our energy supply mix". There is nothing wrong with these objectives. But unless there is regulation to reduce the amount of fossil fuel we use, alternative technologies are a waste of time and money, for they will supplement rather than replace coal and oil and gas burning. What counts is not what we do but what we don't. Our success or failure in tackling climate change depends on

just one thing: how much fossil fuel we leave in the ground. And leaving it in the ground won't happen without regulation.

They agreed to support energy efficiency, which would be a good thing if it didn't rely on a "market-led approach". Otherwise, they will cross their fingers and place their faith in a series of technofixes, some of which work, and some of which cause more problems than they solve. They will study the potential of "clean coal", which so far remains an oxymoron, and accelerate the burial of carbon dioxide, which might or might not stay where it's put. They will promote "carbon offsets" (you pay someone else to annul your sins by planting trees or building hydroelectric dams) which have so far been a disastrous failure.(8) They will encourage the development of hydrogen fuel cells, which do not produce energy but use it, and the production of biofuels, which will set up a competition for arable land between cars and people, exacerbating the famines climate change is likely to cause.(9) Not bad for six months of negotiations.

We can't blame only the Americans. While Bush's team has been as obstructive as possible, the UK has scarcely been doing the work of angels. Like Bush, Blair will contemplate anything except restraining the people who are killing the planet. **While the UK produces 2.2% of the world's greenhouse gases, the companies which extract the fossil fuels responsible for over 10% of global emissions are listed on the London Stock Exchange.(10) One of the reasons they find London attractive is that, thanks to our lax financial regulations, they are not obliged to reveal their potential greenhouse liabilities to investors. Far from doing anything about this, Blair complains that our financial rules are "hugely inhibiting of efficient business".(11)**

Our problem is that, just as genetics was crushed by totalitarian communism, meaningful action to prevent climate change has been prohibited by totalitarian capitalism. When I use this term I don't mean that the people who challenge it are rounded up and sent to break rocks in Siberia. I mean that it intrudes into every corner of our lives, governs every social relation, becomes the lens through which every issue must be seen. It is the total system which leaves no molecule of earth or air uncostered and unsold. And, like Soviet totalitarianism, it allows no solution to pass which fails to enhance its power. The only permitted answer to the effects of greed is more greed.

I don't know how long this system can last. But I did see something in Scotland last week that I hadn't seen before. At the G8 Alternatives meeting in Edinburgh and the People and Planet conference in Stirling, climate change, until recently neglected by campaigners, stirred fiercer emotions than any other topic. People are already mobilizing for the demonstrations planned by the Campaign against Climate Change on December 3rd. (12) I saw a resolve there to make this the biggest issue in British politics. If we succeed, the new campaign will crash head-on into the totalitarian system. But as more people wake up to what the science is saying, it is not entirely certain that the system will win".

<http://www.monbiot.com/>

Notes (for Monbiot, chapter continues after)

3. Myron Ebell, 3rd June 2002. Email sent to Philip Cooney. Leaked and published in Harper's magazine, May 2004.

4. Andrew C. Revkin, *ibid*.

5. Richard Monastersky, 1st July 2005. Congressman Demands Complete Records on Climate Research by 3 Scientists Who Support Theory of Global Warming. The Chronicle of Higher Education. <http://chronicle.com/daily/2005/07/2005070101n.htm>

5. Richard Monastersky, 1st July 2005. Congressman Demands Complete Records on Climate Research by 3 Scientists Who Support Theory of Global Warming. The Chronicle of Higher Education.
<http://chronicle.com/daily/2005/07/2005070101n.htm>
6. The G8 Summit, 8th July 2005. The Gleneagles Communique.
http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/PostG8_Gleneagles_Communique.pdf
7. ibid.
8. See The Transnational Institute, 30th June 2005. Hoodwinked in the Hothouse.
<http://www.tni.org/reports/ctw/hothouse.htm>
9. See George Monbiot, 22nd November 2004. Feeding Cars, not People. The Guardian.
<http://www.monbiot.com/archives/2004/11/23/feeding-cars-not-people/>
10. Henderson Global Investors, June 2005. The Carbon 100. Henderson, London.
11. Quoted by Patrick Hosking, 13th June 2005. The Business. New Statesman.
12. <http://www.campaigncc.org/>

For anyone wanting to see ice caps melting over time, log onto to any environmentalist site, specialising in the polar regions, or better still the governments own satellite images, they are well aware of what is going on. Above you can check the Mclibel website and view cattle with mad cows disease, and chickens eating each other in disgusting conditions.

For all those who possibly see Nuclear energy as the way forward have a look at the following, remembering that Einstein said “nuclear energy, one hell of a way to boil water”

The website below reveals how Chernobyl was unstable long before it blew and here’s a small part of it

“The explosion on 26 April on the fourth reactor released 100 times the amount of radiation of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki put together.

The Chernobyl accident led directly to the deaths of 30 workers at the reactor site, caused the hospitalisation of hundreds of others and exposed about 6.7 million people to radiation fall-out, according to the World Health Organization”

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2965375.stm>

Birth defects from Chernobyl are also far in excess of official figures. Babies born without arms or legs, but smiling, not knowing its condition are some of the terrible sights I have witnessed.

And depleted uranium is also going to effect woman and babies born in Iraq, as of course of every soldier who went there and every Iraqi, living there, see websites below.

www.cadu.org.uk

<http://www.dailykos.com/story/2005/2/23/155046/944>

<http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/print.asp?ID=3041&Pictures=Off>

Nuclear reactor problems are still happening today on April 18th 2005, the first reports of a leak came from Sellafields 3 Billion Euro Thorp Plant. When the equivalent of 83 tonnes of uranium and plutonium dissolved in nitric acid leaked, and it was forced to close. This effected Ireland, and it has been contaminating Ireland as well as Cumbria, Lancashire and Scotland for over 20 years. The owners do not live anywhere near it, only the insignificant peasants are affected. There are growing worries that this site like others will become a part of the war on terror by the Irish government as it is a terrorist's potential attack waiting to happen.

<http://www.rsf.ie/> Saoirse online (PDF)

Whether it is the food we eat or the fuel we require, decisions are taken on cost analysis of profit, and the best way to separate people from owning their own resources and turning them into utilities they do not own, or control is to close all access to any possibility of people owning their own source of clean fuel.

The fishermen of Antrim and Down, and West Scotland are concerned at the lack of Salmon, but the continued nuclear pollution (as other forms) are taking the heritage of this ancient culture away.(instead

of thousands of Salmon, (fishing to eat) only a few appear, and the knowledge of why this is so, is being ignored. Whilst farming and European laws are turning to heritage protection, ultimately these ancient arts are losing their power. This is endemic throughout Europe, in its festivals (Spain France etc), as not protecting the land removes its strength, and heritage alone cannot appreciate this, it is way beyond legislation protection, it is a way of life. What is it doing to the people who live north of London.

However the folk of Europe, need to protect this way of life from Corporations, who looking through profit tinted spectacles will never get it, its not for sale, and if you try to sell it or buy it, it simply disappears in any case. It is ironic that the Roma of Europe, who are still without a country (as they are being forced to accept a single place), could teach the civilised world what it has lost. Their critics point to crime and racketeering, but they could survive without this, and reveal a beauty modern living has stifled, which also has crime and racketeering on its more sophisticated level.

The corporations who own them will follow any ludicrous process to keep profits or production at full steam. The problems for the planet are vast, but taking control of the fuel of money which belongs to us, treating it with respect, is the beginning to controlling most of the other problems we face.

Controlling the source of capital (money, then human and infrastructure) is urgent, as is the deteriorating state of the planet.