

Contemporary Issues in Food Supply Chain Management

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Contents

Preface

ix

Part 1: The supply chain – problems and dilemmas

- | | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1 | Defining Food and the Implications for Food Supply Chains | 2 |
| | Jane Eastham | |
| 2 | The Changing Consumer and the Emergence of Eco-consumption | 32 |
| | Natalia Rohenkohl do Canto, Marcia de Barcellos, Jane Eastham and Luis Kluwe Aguiar | |
| 3 | Traceability: An Essential Mechanism to Underpin Food Integrity | 50 |
| | Louise Manning | |
| 4 | Supply Chains and Horizontal and Vertical Integration:
Coordination through the Food Industries | 66 |
| | Jane Eastham | |

Part 2: Food security and sustainability

- | | | |
|----------|---|------------|
| 5 | Food Resources and Human Evolution | 90 |
| | Anne Eastham | |
| 6 | Land Grabbing and Land Imperialism: Historic and contemporary perspectives | 114 |
| | Louise Manning | |
| 7 | The Global Economy: Food Security | 130 |
| | Luis Kluwe Aguiar | |
| 8 | Alternative Production Systems: Moving away from Farming the Land | 145 |
| | Andrew M. Beacham, Jim M. Monaghan, Luis Kluwe Aguiar and Jane Eastham | |
| 9 | Alternative Food Production: Nanotechnology in Agri-food Applications | 167 |
| | Frank Vriesekoop, Yongqin Wei, Renato Grillo and Hao Liang | |

10	The Role of Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture in Food Security and Resilience	185
	Luís Kluwe Aguiar and Jane Eastham	

Part 3: Case studies and new areas of research

11	Rural Land Use in Conflict? Energy and Food in the UK	198
	Jonathan C. Cooper	
12	Food Miles versus Lifecycle analysis: GHG – way to go!!!	204
	Jane Eastham and Simon Thelwell	
13	Current Challenges for the Pick Your Own Market – Health and Prosperity	212
	Gabriella Parkes and Lucy Gilbert	
14	British Foods and the Emergence of Local Food Initiatives	221
	Andy Swinscoe, Eddie Andrew and Jane Eastham	
15	Brexit: An opportunity for the UK to give more priority to nutrition related health in agricultural policy?	228
	Philippa Griffiths	
	Index	235

List of tables

1.1: Types of format in the retail sector	14
1.2: The major UK retailers. Extracted from multiple IGD sources 2016	16
1.3: Retail pricing strategies	17
1.4: growth of specialist shops	19
1.5: Food service formats and segments	21
1.6: Food service formats and characteristics	23
2.1: Barriers and opportunities to eco-innovation, the intellectual framework.	41
3.1: Technologies of value in food, food ingredient integrity and provenance traceability	58
4.1: The principles of Lean	78
4.2: The eight sources of muda	78
5.1: Time line	112
6.1: The discourse of land acquisition	119
7.1: The shifts of food and drink culture	132
7.2: Food waste hierarchy typology	141
8.1: Types of PA technologies	154
8.2: Variability in agricultural production	155
8.3: Summary of terminologies	159
10.1: Undernourishment around the world, 1990-2 to 2012-4	189
14.1: Categories for 2016 and 2017 food and farming awards	222

List of figures

1.1: European levels of concentration throughout the food supply chain	10
1.2: DEFRA, 2016 UK supply structure	11
1.3: Market channels to food service and independent non mainstream retail	26
2.1: Innovation and eco-innovation	34
2.2: Seuring and Müller's (2008) model	35
2.3: A model of sustainable supply chain management practices	36
2.4: Range of products	38
2.5: Eco-barrel building	39
2.6: Econatura's supply chain	39

4.1: Supply chains	75
5.1: LGL extent of European ice cover and vegetation zones	93
5.2: The Abri Blanchard calendar	100
5.3: Hut reconstructions at Pushkari, Ukraine, showing the use of skins as durable coverings	103
5.4: Hohlefels flute	106
5.5: Middle Stone Age fish trap type as used in 21st century Vietnam	107
5.6: Afgan shepherds with sheep and goats, the Pastoral way of life	108
7.1: The food problem and classic food security model	140
8.1: The Long Island City rooftop farm, part of Brooklyn Grange Rooftop Farms, New York	147
8.2: The world's first commercial rooftop glasshouse, the Ahuntsic glasshouse, located in Montreal, Canada, operated by Lufa Farms Inc.	148
8.3: Li Sun Exotic Mushrooms grow a wide variety of mushrooms in a railway tunnel in Mittagong, Australia	150
8.4: The vertical farming system of Sky Greens, located in Singapore, uses rotating stacked trays of plants to maximise light exposure	150
8.5: The GrowUp Urban Farms system combines an aquaponics system housed in a reused shipping container with a vertical farming setup above	151
9.1: Schematic structure of nanoemulsion, solid lipid nanoparticle, micelle & nanoliposome	170
9.2: Chemical structure of the β -cyclodextrin molecule (a) and the schematic illustration of drug-CD inclusion complex (1:1)	173
12.1: The Global Goals	210
13.1: Which groups caused the most problems	214
13.2: Reasons for visiting a Pick Your Own Farm	216
13.3: Strategies used to overcome impacts of poor weather by 60 PYO farms	217
13.4: Strategies used to reduce impact of theft	217
14.1 Andy Swinscoe and his cheeses	225

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Preface

We live in a globalised world, however much the Brexiteers and Trump voters wish it were not so. Though that's hard to see on the food front as we concentrate on the daily job of feeding ourselves and our families—trying to eat healthily, safely and with pleasure. Yet every day we eat this globalised complexity. The most modestly stocked food cupboard and fridge will have foods that come from the four corners of the earth and will have passed through the hands of the giant corporations at the apex of the industrialised food system—the few companies (fewer and more gigantic by the year) who have near total control over the trading of seeds and grains, bioengineering research and the production of meat, grains, oils, etc. They're there in our kitchens: the ready meals and ready to pour sauces, as well as the staples: sugar, corn and wheat flour, vegetable oil, potatoes, salt, beans, tuna, ketchup, cola, curry powder...

In my early days as a food journalist I wrote a column called Food Biz for an American food magazine. I monitored all the business media for stories about the food industry in the *Economist*, *FT*, *Business Week*, *Wall St Journal*, *Forbes*, etc, etc. That was at the urging of my financial journalist husband, sceptical of me making food the focus of my journalism. If you're going to do it, he said, then follow the money. It was good advice and my Food Biz years were an education. Writing the column gave living, day-by-day substance to what I'd seen in my early research into why the pesticide aldicarb (now banned in the EU and USA) was being used on the potatoes I was feeding my baby and why it was getting into the water supply where I was living. It showed me the power of industrial food production as a money-making enterprise first and last.

Over the past thirty-five years the increasingly concentrated industrialized food system has not only become immensely profitable but has also influenced what we eat by pushing to the margins the reality of food as health, food as culture, food as social glue, food as pleasure. But we need to have those discussions because food is not just another commodity. How it's produced, traded, shopped for, cooked and eaten shapes our world... and us. As this book so brilliantly illustrates.

Sheila Dillon, presenter of BBC Radio 4's The Food Programme

