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July 27, 2009: Food Inc.

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Title: Food Inc.

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7/27/2009—I saw a film on Sunday that I recommend for everyone, Food, Inc. The film is a thoughtful expose of the food industry. It is really more journalism than propaganda. Predictably the main villains are Monsanto and its patented, genetically modified soybean (now about the only soybean grown in America) and the meat packing industry, with its cows standing in their own feces and thus risking your health. Yet, the hero of the film is in large part WalMart, whose higher food safety standards are beginning to force a retreat from the use of human growth hormone in the food supply and whose organic purchases are making that sector profitable. Propping up corporate greed is the stupidity of a public farm policy that subsidizes corn production so that corn is sold for less than the price of production, thus wasting taxpayer money, spurring the over use of corn in feed for cows to the detriment of our health and adding calories everywhere in the food chain. At the end of the film are suggestions. Eat seasonal, organic and local. But the larger message is, buy from industries and companies that respect animals, workers and the planet. One thing Hallowed Secularism has to think about is the overall economic organization. Between Food, Inc. and the recent book, Cheap, by Ellen Ruppel Shell, we see the necessity of sustainable economic patterns. I am enough of a capitalist to think the market will address these issues, but only if prices reflect true costs. That will require intervention, for example a carbon tax.