

## **10 ways to create a better World**

### **1) Don't shop at supermarkets**

The biggest single challenge facing mankind is climate change, and a major contributing factor to climate change is food transport. 40% of all road freight is food...the average item on a supermarket shelf has travelled over 1000 miles...lorries continually circle the M25 waiting for a mobile call telling them which supermarket needs a 'just in time' delivery...for every calorie of iceberg lettuce flown in from Los Angeles, 127 calories of fuel are consumed. In a year, a typical family of 4 will emit 4.2tonnes of co2 from their house, 4.4tonnes from their car, and 8tonnes from the production, processing, packaging and distribution of the food they eat. As well as causing severe environmental damage, the pollution caused by supermarket-generated traffic is a major contributor to rising levels of asthma and other respiratory diseases.

### **2) Don't shop at supermarkets**

Six companies are responsible for over 80% of UK food retailing. This control over the food chain allows supermarkets to determine the price they pay to farmers, with farmers forced to take that price due to there being no other buyer left in the market place. These price-setting powers, together with the requirement by supermarkets that farmers either supply them on a large scale or not at all, are behind the continuing industrialization of agriculture. Big farms are getting bigger to survive while small farms are going bust, leading to prairie farming monoculture and a continual decline in land-based employment.

### **3) Don't shop at supermarkets**

Due to public pressure, the UK now has some of the highest farm animal welfare standards in the World. This inevitably makes it more expensive to produce pork, chicken etc here than in countries with lower standards. So the supermarkets, who joined in the calls for a more humane British agriculture but whose first and last concern is profit, now source large amounts of the meat they sell from abroad, produced under conditions which would be illegal in this country. In an attempt to disguise these double standards the supermarkets lie to their customers; it is standard practice for products carrying 'Union Jack' or 'Produce of the UK' stickers to have been processed/packed here but for the pig/chicken/beef/lamb to have been reared abroad.

### **4) Don't shop at supermarkets**

People can only eat so much food, so logic dictates that shopping at supermarkets puts village shops and high street stores out of business. Every supermarket that opens results in a net loss of 200-300 jobs, as a whole network of local shops and their suppliers is destroyed. Whereas money spent in independent shops tends to stay in the local economy, supermarkets act as giant vacuum cleaners by sucking money out of an area and putting it into the bank accounts of distant shareholders.

### **5) Don't shop at supermarkets**

Due to the vast distances that supermarket food travels, the time it takes to make that journey, and the need for the product to be stacked on a shelf, dropped into a trolley and fitted with a barcode, supermarket food is encased in far more packaging than is used by local production and distribution networks. It was also the supermarkets who dictated that the returnable bottle disappeared; returnables only work on a regional basis, not the national and international scale of the supermarket. All of this leaves an ever growing waste mountain, much of which is multi-material (eg cardboard stuck to foil and wrapped in plastic) and therefore impossible to recycle. This means it

must be buried (to pollute the soil and water) or incinerated (to pollute the air), the cost of which is met by the taxpayer not the supermarkets.

#### **6) Don't shop at supermarkets**

Government policy on major issues which affect all our lives (road building programmes, development on greenfield sites, health and safety standards for foods) is dictated not by the public interest but by big business. And it doesn't matter who you vote for; many MP's have vested interests in supermarkets and political parties rely on supermarkets and their suppliers for political donations (i.e. bribes).

#### **7) Don't shop at supermarkets**

In their never ceasing quest to drive down prices paid to suppliers and so increase profits, supermarkets are increasingly sourcing the food they sell from the developing world where wages are low, working conditions poor, and pollution laws non-existent. This leads to countries who can barely feed themselves seeing their best agricultural land producing food for UK supermarkets at rock bottom prices.

#### **8) Don't shop at supermarkets**

It is often claimed that supermarkets increase choice, yet the reality is that they only do so when it suits their global view of the World. It is quite easy for a supermarket to put 15 different brands of margarine on the shelves of all its stores. However, why is it that although there are 2,300 apple varieties and 550 pear varieties in the National Fruit Collection, you can only chose from a small handful of each in the supermarket? Because profit maximization on a national scale dictates that the supermarkets tell farmers to grow two or three varieties in large enough quantities to supply all their stores. The result of this is more use of chemicals (less varieties equals greater threat from pest and disease) and a subsequent loss of wildlife and threat to health.

#### **9) Don't shop at supermarkets**

The continual priority given to shelf life and uniformity of size/colour/shape over taste has resulted in supermarket food being a bland imitation of what food can and should taste like. How many top chefs shop at supermarkets other than when paid to do so in the adverts?

#### **10) Don't shop at supermarkets**

It is the long distance haulage of livestock, bought about by the insistence of supermarkets on using a small handful of mega-abattoirs, which was a major contributing factor to the spread of foot and mouth disease in 2001. The arrival of a succession of new animal and plant diseases in the UK is directly linked to our warming climate, to which the long distance haulage of food is a major contributor. As we sow, so shall we reap.



WyeCycle, founded 1989.



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