

## **Review: Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture**

By Andrew Kimbrell (Ed.)

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Andrew Kimbrell (Ed.). *Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*. Washington DC: Island Press, 2002. 384 pp. ISBN 1-55963-941-5. Recycled, chlorine-free paper.

There are times when modernization does much more harm than good. What has happened in the "progression" of agriculture can be described as controversial at best, and, as the title states, fatal at its worst. The search for bigger, better, and perfection in our agricultural products has resulted in the weakening of genetic pools, extinction of a number of varieties of fruits, vegetables, and livestock that were available to us in the early 20th century, a massive use of chemicals, pesticides and hormones as well as "warehoused" livestock. This, along with the takeover of factory farming, has brought agriculture, our food supply, into a tragic situation that those before us could never have imagined.

*Fatal Harvest* discusses all of this along with the grassroots movement that has started to try to correct or reverse this situation as much as possible. Examples include the surge of the organics market and the steps some small farmers are taking to meet the new consumer demands of safe, chemical free, and humanly raised foods, along with the daily struggles between those who want healthier foods and farms and those whose bottom line is production, no matter what the cost, be it to the animals, humans, or environment.

Through a variety of articles and beautiful photography, editor Andrew Kimbrell has put together wonderful documentation about the plight of agriculture today, in a simple but informative format that anyone can easily understand, whether you're involved in agriculture or just curious.

Look for the "Agrarian Eye" sidebars. These nicely explain, in short paragraphs, the good and bad practices that can be found in farming today. Also note how many of the various agricultural industries have been dominated by only a few of the large corporations, pushing the small farms out of sight and out of business.

If you are unfamiliar with the tailspin that today's agriculture industry has taken, and the fight to keep the family farm alive and our food source healthy, along with those who are trying to preserve our agriculture

heritage, *Fatal Harvest* is an excellent introduction. It will open a door to the realities of "modern agriculture." And if you are aware, it can help you to understand just what you can do to counteract some of what is happening before it becomes too late.

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