

Food for Food Space - The Corrupted Practice of Increasing Food Prices

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Have you ever been to the grocery store and wondered why the prices of the same food product can change drastically in price from month to month or even from week to week? Clearly this is an odd phenomenon, how can the price of food change so much? How is this even determined by grocery stores and why is this happening? There are certain foods needed for each of us individually, some of us may have very particular diets and dietary needs, since this is the case what does one do if the price of the foods they need increases so much that they can no longer afford to buy it? These are all important concerns which effect every single one of us. Even if you can afford to buy the food you need for now, can you expect to have the same access in the future? How about next week? There are no guarantees to having the right to access food as humanity and this is a problem which has widespread consequences if we do not change this fact. So who is responsible for determining these increasing food prices? There are many players, or gamblers really, who are responsible for doing this. These corrupted players are corrupted governmental agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, corporations and also Wall Street.

The Food and Agricultural Organization or the FAO is responsible for determining and setting the global food price index. This is a pricing index which determines the price value that certain food products will be priced at. It is a guideline that all of the countries of the world are forced to adhere to, regardless if they agree or not. Despite this fact of limited choice as a country, community or even a culture, the countries of the world are forced to subscribe and pay to be subject to these rules and regulations of the FAO. Yes, countries have to pay to become a part of the United Nations and also these criminal gangs such as the FAO, the reason why some of them participate is for either political or economic reasons. Governments of certain countries believe that if they become a part of these organizations that they will receive relief or assistance from the funds which they have, they believe that they can make a difference in their communities by complying with these organizations. What happens in reality is something far different.

So what are some of the trends which the FAO are setting for the world to follow? Basically, they want all of the prices of food to increase across the world, making food eventually a privileged commodity for only those who can afford it. According to the FAO the food price index has been on somewhat of a continual rise over the matter of months for the year 2011 with some minor fluctuations. In June 2011 averaged 234 points which is 1 percent higher and 39 percent higher in June 2010. In several different categories there have been increases in prices, but others have only minimal spikes in price.

The FAO Initiative on soaring food prices states that in December 2010, the food price index rose above its 2008 peak. *They even say that food prices will likely remain volatile.* When they say it will remain volatile does this mean that they expect difficulties and low food surplus? How can they determine this if food sources constantly waver according to their own research? If food prices are essentially unpredictable and can only be measured by prices and statistics then how are future outcomes determined? There must be some aspect to this overview and their food initiative that is not out in the public or not readily apparent according to the information that they have public.

Does the FAO actually work with large scale corporations and give them write offs? If so why do they state the importance of helping individual farmers, do they actually do this or what criteria do small scale farmers world wide have to adhere to in order to receive assistance

from the FAO? When they say in their initiative that efforts need to be made to strengthen the resilience of small farmers to future shocks and to improve food and nutrition security over the long term, how do they truly accomplish this? *Typically the response is more monitoring, more rules, and even more regulations and price hikes for farmers themselves.* What is food security anyways do they actually mean securing food surplus in general for worldwide populations? If this was the case then why do the food supplies depend on monetary supplies as well especially in countries where money has little to no value since so few people can actually thrive in a third world economy?

On October 16th the FAO had a poster on their website for World Food Day with the theme for the year 2011 being “Food Prices- From Crisis to Stability.”



These organizations really do see our food situation as a crisis worldwide, or at least they are suggesting that there is a scarcity for everyone. Instead of offering suggestions for making a change globally they ask for donations or simply create a cheap poster. I personally do not think that the worldwide agency that is supposed to be supporting individuals everywhere is being very proactive in changing the framework or the very core of our attitudes towards food creation and consumption. Changes happen mostly from an intellectual and deep rooted core that develops from knowledge and practice, not from donations and corporate sponsors alone. If monetary avenues are the only way we expect to create this change, then we are glossing over the wider points that attitudes and practices should be investigated as well. Notice that the image of the poster from the FAO shows the food prices as a stock market chart. Monetary value is the focus of food prices, it shows financial competition when food prices are mentioned.

The FAO and governmental organizations treats food resources as a commodity which can be bought and sold on Wall Street. It is a financial tool for them only, the subject of business and finance, not treated as a necessity for the survival of humanity. I am sure that there are plenty of you who have never even heard of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the

United Nations, let alone even thought about what they may be saying about world hunger. There is a reason for this and the reason is very straight forward, they do not want people to be educated about the lack of honest efforts to resolve world hunger by global governments. They do not want their actions to be taken seriously or even recognized by people across the world because they really are not doing anything to resolve the crisis in the first place. Again, the solution which governments come up with is to take more money from people who are already working and slaving in the economic system, those people who have to “earn” their right for food on a daily basis. The “solution” is nothing but a money making scheme for those who are foolish enough to believe that the government will ever make any real effort to solve these problems.



When you look at this image of the FAO, what do you see? What do you think the intended message is meant to convey? Obviously it is not promoting an image of abundance and food sustainability. The ground is parched and the symbol is creating a chaotic and destructive appearance over this unhealthy ground with the wheat scattered all around. The motto of the FAO is “Fiat Panis” which means in Latin let there be bread. Notice that they didn’t choose another type of motto, maybe something that would have said something about let there be food obviously is saying something completely different. The reason why they keep their motto and their advertising to strictly wheat is because of the historical legacy of wheat being associated with wealth and upper economic castes. Only wealthy people in the past were able to buy bread, especially in Europe, for this reason they stick to the image of wheat since it attaches a historical legacy of scarcity, lack and economic hierarchy over food which limits food access for humanity. They promote the ideas of scarcity and hierarchy in order to continue profiting off of the falsity of food scarcity, which they have created and upheld themselves.

Food prices are artificially determined, they are created to limit access to food, not to make it more accessible. The reason why food is expensive is because of the greed of corrupt governments and corporations. Rather than wanting to make the world a better place for humanity by supplying affordable, healthy nutritious food for the entire planet, they engage in price fixing and stock market manipulation for their own economic gain and greed. Food

doesn't have to be expensive and in fact, food as a resource is far more abundant than people realize. It is only our own definition of what food is that keeps our mindsets limited in understanding what is accessible in our own local environments. Also we as individuals can easily make some basic food at home by having a garden or by learning how to make food from scratch from basic ingredients. These skill sets have been largely forgotten over the years since humanity has been forced to spend most of their time dedicated to work and other economic demands. In the past it was common to share knowledge of sustainability and basic food production which was done in the home. This is an art form which has been treated now as a hobby but in the past basically everyone either knew how to cook or garden, or a combination of both.

Now people feel more comfortable to let grocery stores and corporations supply the food for them. Exhaustion has become the standard of life for most people so they do not take the time to focus their efforts in creating their own food supplies and meals. The fate of food and food access has been put in the hands of these relatively unpopular and mostly unknown organizations such as the FAO and other food corporations. If you take some time to delve into the manner in which these organizations talk about their purpose and their goals it is clear that they are only interested in profit and economic trends around food. No solution whatsoever is offered, only economic demands and requests which the general populace is forced to be responsible for. A great example of this is to look at their own website and read how they talk about food price trends: <http://www.fao.org/worldfoodsituation/foodpricesindex/en/>.

By evaluating this webpage you can gather from the language around food surplus and food prices that the FAO organization values economic competition and price fluctuation. They clearly accept and invite this economic valuation rather than trying to move away from it and focus on offering solutions to actually ending world hunger as an issue. Does this seem logical and fair to you? The budget for FAO for 2012-2013 was US \$1,005.6 million. They made US \$1.4 billion from contributions in 2012-2013. Where did this money go? How was it spent? You would think with that amount of money, plus all of the contributions they have made over the years they could have solved world hunger many times over by now. How can this be? This simply does not make sense, to cover the expenses of the organization's infrastructure should be minimal but this organization like many other governmental organizations works in a way similar to a corporate structure. They profit off of having an issue to pretend they are resolving. If they were to eliminate the issue then they would no longer have an excuse to take money and make money off of the many countries which they pretend to serve. The point here is to perpetuate the issue, to continue to support the damage, not to solve the crisis. In fact, they seem happy to have a food price crisis worldwide.

According to the FAO the food price index is "a measure of the monthly change in international prices of a basket of food commodities. It consists of the average of five commodity group price indices, weighted with the average export shares of each of the groups for 2002-2004" ([fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). The language around food has turned into a conversation about commodities, it is treated as something to be bid on and bought by those who can pay for it.

How can this be good for anyone? When we look into the language around the treatment of food as a commodity we can clearly see that the values are completely distorted and focused around greed only "The FAO Food Price Index* (FFPI) averaged 154.1 points in December 2015, down 1.5 points (1.0 percent) from its revised November value, with international prices of all the food commodities used in the calculation of the Index falling, except for sugar and oils. Over the full year, the index has averaged 164.1 points, nearly 19 percent less than in 2014, marking the fourth consecutive annual decline" ([fao.org](http://www.fao.org)). For those of you who may know, the prices of stocks can be manipulated artificially and can be corrupted.



This has been proven in the past many times with the numerous scandals of Wall Street in the past. It seems illogical to allow the treatment of food to be measured by the stock market and by purely economic values. *If we allow the possibility of price manipulation and economic greed to be the main treatment of our access to food then surely, there will be many people who will suffer.* The vast majority of humanity to date struggles with economic inequality and also lives paycheck to paycheck, especially in the United States of America. The FAO claims in their mission statement that their main goals are to eradicate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; the elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all” (fao.org). Clearly their mission statement is contradictory since they mention ‘driving forward of economic...progress’ if you read between the lines it is clearly an admission that they serve corporations and economic interests only. It is a very sneaky and dishonest way to admit that they only care about the prices and profits which come from food production when they state their mission in this way. As long as there is money to be made, there will be no focus and effort to eradicate world hunger as they claim since economic progress is the obvious goal here.

The language and communication around food and world hunger needs to shift away from that of the current economic and greed focused culture set by dishonest organizations to that of one more human and practical. Instead of adding a price tag to food and creating competition in the marketplace we should put more effort into making food widely accessible without a monetary valuation attached to it. We can justify doing this by having widespread education of food cultivation and teaching more people how to grow gardens and to cook at home. These are efforts which can be done right now, there is a detailed plan Food For Food Space which I have written which proposes how to use the resources we have already such as buildings which have not been rented or sold for many years which can be converted into hydroponic gardens to supply local communities with fresh produce.

Jobs and economic stimulus can be easily created if business and property owners were given incentives to make this conversion of their spaces possible. The costs are very low and the possibilities are nearly endless if society were to engage in this conversation. There are already some urban gardening projects showing how to use wall spaces and small community spaces to grow food with very little effort involved in the process. Not only are these projects helpful to the local community, they also give people a chance to engage in opportunities which have a positive focus and give hope to those who are living in squalor. To invite people to participate in their local communities gives tremendous confidence and healing to people especially when they have felt scarcity and suffering due to poverty. There are numerous success stories from urban gardening communities where people have positive experiences and are given new perspectives in which to engage in life in a more healthy way.

We as individuals and communities can do far more to improve the environment around food than those who are claiming ownership over it such as the FAO, Wall Street and other corporations. If we feel that there are criminal activities happening around fixing the prices of food, turning it into an exclusive commodity, then we must make our best efforts to fight this corruption in an active and dedicated way. If food rights are violated for humanity, then our survival as a species is put at risk. This should never be allowed in any circumstances since the dangers are great for everyone. I encourage everyone to make proactive efforts to combat this blatant greed and corruption and take back our global resources for the benefit of all of humanity. Food access is a basic human right. Food is also a source of pleasure and it also shapes the landscapes of our human communities and cultures. It is up to each one of us to protect this sacred and valuable resource so that all people can have access to what they need to survive. We must secure and take back food not just for the current generations of humanity but also for the future as well.

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