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ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY BY TIM
LANG, DAVID BARLING, MARTIN
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Food Policy

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Tim Lang
David Barling
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Review

"In Food Policy: Integrating Health, Environment, and Society, Tim Lang et al. analyze and effectively illustrate the increasing complexity and tension between environmental and social-ecological issues and their connections to food policy. In doing this they provide copious evidence of the shortcomings of contemporary food policies across the globe. They identify problems and discuss solutions that would move global food policy toward an 'ecological public health' model that acknowledges food as an important intersection of society, economy, and culture." -- Michael J. Miller, Agriculture and Human Values

About the Author

Tim Lang has been Professor of Food Policy at City University's Centre for Food Policy in London since 2002. He was appointed Natural Resources and Land Use Commissioner on the U.K. Government's Sustainable Development Commission in 2006. He is a regular advisor and consultant to the World Health Organization at global and European levels. He has been a special advisor to four House of Commons Select Committee inquiries (food standards [twice], globalization and obesity). In 2005-06, he chaired the Scottish N.H.S. Executive's Scottish Diet Action Plan Review. In 2005-08, he worked on the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) 'Food Supply in the 21st Century' programme. He is a Vice President of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health and a Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health. He is co-author of 'Food Wars', 'The Atlas of Food' and 'The Unmanageable Consumer'. David Barling is a Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Food Policy at City University London. His research focuses on: the governing of the agri-food sector and of the food supply in relation to sustainability; and the politics of food standards setting at global, EU and national (primarily U.K.) levels. He has written numerous book chapters and journal articles on food policy. Externally, his appointments include: the expert advisory panel for the U.K.

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For over half a century, food policy has mapped a path for progress based upon a belief that the right mix of investment, scientific input, and human skills could unleash a surge in productive capacity which would resolve humanity's food-related health and welfare problems. It assumed that more food would yield greater health and happiness by driving down prices, increasing availability, and feeding more mouths. In the 21st century, this policy mix is quietly becoming unstuck. In a world marred by obesity alongside malnutrition, climate change alongside fuel and energy crises, water stress alongside more mouths to feed, and social inequalities alongside unprecedented accumulation of wealth, the old rubric of food policy needs re-evaluation. This book explores the enormity of what the new policy mix must address, taking the approach that food policy must be inextricably linked with public with public health, environmental damage, and social inequalities to be effective.

Written by three authors with differing backgrounds, one in political science, another in environmental health and health promotion, and the third in social psychology, this book reflects the myriad of perspectives essential to a comprehensive view of modern food policy. It attempts to make sense of what is meant by food policy; explores whether the term has any currency in current policy discourse, assesses whether current policies help or hinder what happens; judges whether consensus can triumph in the face of competing bids for understanding; looks at all levels of governance, across the range of actors in the food system, from companies and the state to civil society and science; considers what direction food policies are taking, not just in the UK, but internationally; assesses who (and what) gains or loses in the making of these food policies; and identifies a modern framework for judging how good or limited processes of policy making are.

This book provides a major comprehensive review of current and past food policy, thinking and proposing the need for what the authors call an ecological public health approach to food policy. Nothing less will be fit for the 21st century.

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