



## **Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism**

*Marion Nestle*

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## Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism Marion Nestle

Food safety is a matter of intense public concern, and for good reason. Millions of annual cases of food "poisonings" raise alarm not only about the food served in restaurants and fast-food outlets but also about foods bought in supermarkets. The introduction of genetically modified foods—immediately dubbed "Frankenfoods"—only adds to the general sense of unease. Finally, the events of September 11, 2001, heightened fears by exposing the vulnerability of food and water supplies to attacks by bioterrorists. How concerned should we be about such problems? Who is responsible for preventing them? Who benefits from ignoring them? Who decides?

Marion Nestle, author of the critically acclaimed *Food Politics*, argues that ensuring safe food involves more than washing hands or cooking food to higher temperatures. It involves politics. When it comes to food safety, billions of dollars are at stake, and industry, government, and consumers collide over issues of values, economics, and political power—and not always in the public interest. Although the debates may appear to be about science, Nestle maintains that they really are about control: Who decides when a food is safe?

She demonstrates how powerful food industries oppose safety regulations, deny accountability, and blame consumers when something goes wrong, and how century-old laws for ensuring food safety no longer protect our food supply. Accessible, informed, and even-handed, *Safe Food* is for anyone who cares how food is produced and wants to know more about the real issues underlying today's headlines.

## Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism Details

Date : Published March 25th 2003 by University of California Press (first published 2003)

ISBN : 9780520242234

Author : Marion Nestle

Format : Paperback 366 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Food, Nonfiction, Science, Health, Nutrition, Politics, Food Writing



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## **From Reader Review Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology, and Bioterrorism for online ebook**

### **waits4thebus says**

Like reading an academic paper - hard to get through at times - but very thorough. Two organizations (big business & government) that only care about each other. Where does that leave us? Alone and fending for our own safety when it comes to food. Time to plant a garden and raise chickens.

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### **Sharon says**

While the information was informative and clearly researched, the waffling and blabbering bored me by about 20%. I managed to stick it out for 2/3rds of the book ...and that was torture! ... Maybe it was that my prior food education has already provided me with said knowledge on the topic....but the book was rather drawn out and boring...

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### **Erica says**

If you want to take Fast Food Nation to another level.....This book is more difficult to read, and much more scientific, but reveals how our country handles the food industry.

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### **Dara says**

I normally really enjoy Marion Nestle's writing, but this was really dry and unengaging; it took me two tries to get through.

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### **Theresa says**

The corruption uncovered in every industry I've ever read it about is usually not too shocking to hear about. But what happens when you learn about corruption in an industry that effects everyone as eating and food are biological imperative functions for life. Eye opening would be a description that barely scratches the surface.

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### **Wendy says**

I also used this book for my exhibition. This books takes both sides. They reveal the greatness of GM food and the negatives too. This books talked about how genetically engineered food which is how GM food is produced, saves money and times. It is also stated that it also improves the health of the environment. The

bad thing about GM food is that a lot of the food are not labeled which "GM food". This is a problem because some people are allergic to the chemicals that are in gm food and if eaten, they will get an allergic reaction. This book is really organize and highly recommended to people who plan to do an exhibition on genetically modified food next year.

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### **Rae says**

The government agencies that are supposed to guarantee safe food are so convoluted and bureaucratic that rarely, if ever, are effective procedures agreed upon. The food groups that lobby the Congressmen that we elected are so greedy and powerful that no one stands up to them. Decisions about what is done to the food we voluntarily put in our mouths are made without consulting us as consumers.

I am angry. I am frustrated. I feel helpless. I lost sleep. I am somewhat scared. All because of this book.

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### **Tim says**

Despite the obligatory, tripartite subtitle, this book is really two long essays stapled together (bio-terrorism merits only a few paragraphs in the conclusion). Nestle describes them as outtakes from her earlier book, Food Politics which I haven't read, but they're both sharp and well-argued. I picked up the book for work to read her history and analysis of America's fractured food-safety inspection system, but her take on GMO foods is also a must-read.

Her basic take on the GMO controversies is that the somewhat speculative debate about "safety" is occurring because bio-tech corporations have closed off other debates about legitimacy and democracy. She makes a strong case that the lack of mandatory labeling of GMO foods in the marketplace is both a democratic outrage and a strategic blunder on the part of the bio-tech industry. Interesting stuff.

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### **Beth says**

Whoever knew that food safety could be interesting?!?!

Another incredibly informative book from Marion Nestle. I was especially interested in the chapters about food biotechnology (GMOs, if you will) and how it's not JUST a question of science (though she goes into the science) but also a sociological and moral issue. In fact, I believed that GMOs were safer than I thought after reading this book, BUT also thought that they should still be labeled.

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### **Anthony Faber says**

The sordid tale of food regulation in the U.S. I like her take on the whole GMO thing. The original was written in 2003, so the figures are dated, but there is an epilogue that does a bit about bringing it up to date.

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### **Chris Wilkinson says**

A disturbing look into the policies and politics that surround our food system, and how legislation favors the special and business interests before our individual health. Outbreaks of contaminated food have become more common, and there's no mistaking why: there is a vested interest in the status quo as it is cheap and profitable.

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### **Dr. K Reads says**

Every summer we have a major food born outbreak that kills and sickens thousands. This year it was Cargill ground turkey. Why? Higher temperatures in the summer serve to accelerate e-coli growth in an environment where food processing, handling, packaging, transportation, or cooking methods are compromised. After reading this book you will have a good understanding the issues are and how we get from turkey, to ground turkey, to the ICU. This book is very well-researched and serves as an excellent reference on the subject but don't expect any titillating stories - Marion is an academic.

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### **Christine says**

really well researched, as always. but difficult to get through. reads more like a text book than her other books.

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### **Elise says**

Subjectively I wanted to give this book 3.5 stars because I personally didn't enjoy it as much as "Food Politics." However, objectively it was as good, just not on a subject I am as interested in, so four stars it is.

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### **Naomi says**

As the commentary period on new U.S. federal regulation for greater food safety with fruits and vegetable agriculture is underway, and following the 2011 law approving greater food safety regulations, Nestle's book is both timely and in need of revision. Readers should always be aware that what was true in 2009, when the latest edition of the book was published, may have been addressed. The larger issues that Nestle addresses, about the politics of food safety, remain persistent: issues of democracy, choice, environment, alleviating hunger, and corporate responsibility. Labeling laws for GMO products are only one of the ways that politic is expressing itself, and would be a good, as it increases transparency and accountability, although also presents great difficulty, given how our current food production framework makes it almost impossible to prevent GMO material showing up across food production. GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) is part of HACCP, and this preventative approach, identifying potential problems in food production, is something Nestle covers. Similarly, the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe program educates food service workers on

identifying and preventing potential food borne illness. Greater transparency and accountability of agribusiness, greater scientific education and understanding among the public, and greater scientific and precautionary principles applied to national and international food production and regulation is everyone's business.

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