Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health (California Studies in Food and Culture)

Marion Nestle
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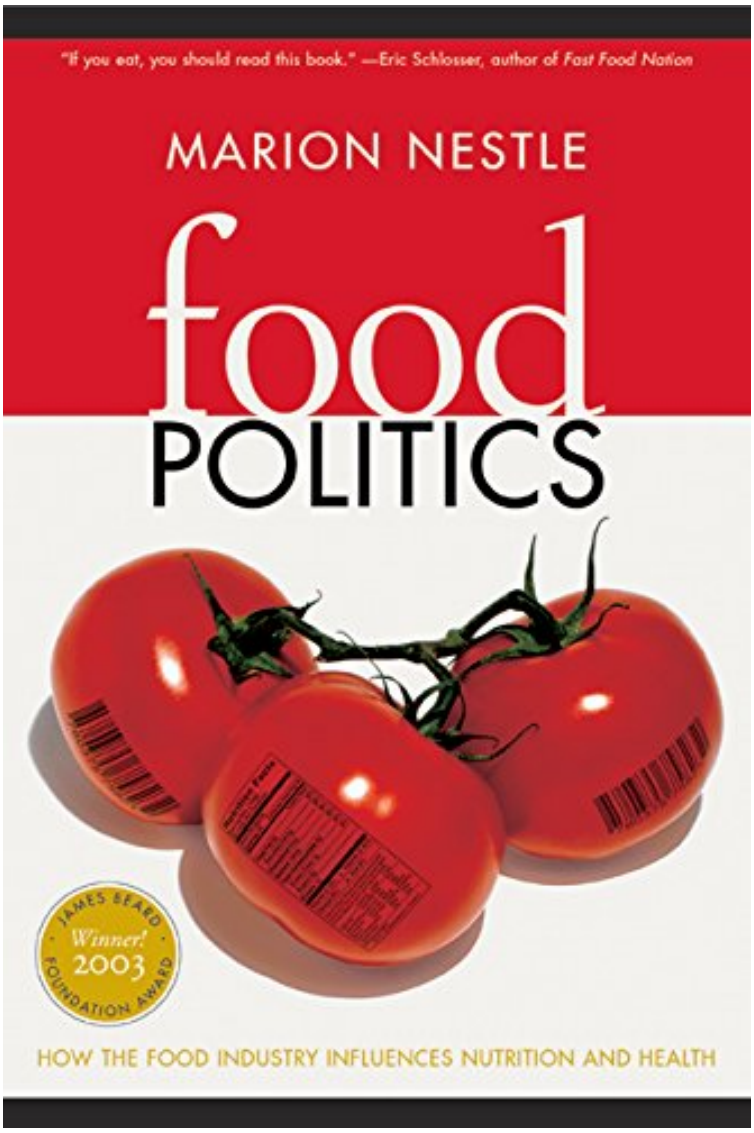

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Marion Nestle : Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health (California Studies in Food and Culture) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health (California Studies in Food and Culture):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Class BookBy MaineGirlThis book was required for one of my

classes. I loved it. It explained to me all the politics behind what rules govern the foods we eat. It has gotten me fired up to help make a change and create awareness in addition to given me the knowledge on how to go about trying to make certain changes in the laws. I recommend this book to everyone!24 of 26 people found the following review helpful. A Well-Documented Book, A must read for everybody who eatsBy Non-Redneck in a Redneck StateI found this book to be very informative about the political workings of the food industry. I agree with several other reviewers that it is a little dull and in an factual style (kind of reminds me of a history book. However I like that kind of reading, so it doesn't bother me.)This book's basic premise is that the food industry's purpose is to sell as much food as possible. The food industry doesn't care about its consumers and encourages them to eat more than they need, produces lots of useless, cheap, junk food, and will do whatever it can within the political system (mostly legal, but sometimes illegal. The author documents one such example of price collusion) to set up an environment that is the most favorable to its interests.The book documents how the FDA, Congress, and government agencies are influenced by the food industry. It provides details about the food industry's lobbying, studies and research grants funded by various segments of the food industry, the food industry's attempts to gain brand loyalty though school contracts, conflicts with the school lunch program, and attempts to maximize sales through bonuses for the schools. It chronicles the rise of the supplement industry and their involvement with the FDA.The author does seem to have a somewhat leftist agenda in the last chapter in giving recommendations; but with that exception, I thought the overall tone of the book was neutral and strictly documentary. It's good solid book which people who are interested in their health or the American food industry should read.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Fantastic book, big impact on my eating habits and my life!! If you eat, you should read this.By DannyThis is a wonderful book by nutrition expert Marion Nestle. Reading it really change my life. The information within this book really opened my mind to what is really happening, not just what I learned in undergraduate university nutrition classes.Please read this. Borrow from the library if necessary, but I purchased it and highlighted so many great thoughts so I could show others.If you read any book about health or nutrition, make this the one. (Then read the China Study, by T.Colin Campbell)

We all witness, in advertising and on supermarket shelves, the fierce competition for our food dollars. In this engrossing exposeacute;, Marion Nestle goes behind the scenes to reveal how the competition really works and how it affects our health. The abundance of food in the United States--enough calories to meet the needs of every man, woman, and child twice over--has a downside. Our overefficient food industry must do everything possible to persuade people to eat more--more food, more often, and in larger portions--no matter what it does to waistlines or well-being.Like manufacturing cigarettes or building weapons, making food is very big business. Food companies in 2000 generated nearly $900 billion in sales. They have stakeholders to please, shareholders to satisfy, and government regulations to deal with. It is nevertheless shocking to learn precisely how food companies lobby officials, co-opt experts, and expand sales by marketing to children, members of minority groups, and people in developing countries. We learn that the food industry plays politics as well as or better than other industries, not least because so much of its activity takes place outside the public view.Editor of the 1988 Surgeon General's Report on Nutrition and Health, Nestle is uniquely qualified to lead us through the maze of food industry interests and influences. She vividly illustrates food politics in action: watered-down government dietary advice, schools pushing soft drinks, diet supplements promoted as if they were First Amendment rights. When it comes to the mass production and consumption of food, strategic decisions are driven by economics--not science, not common sense, and certainly not health.No wonder most of us are thoroughly confused about what to eat to stay healthy. An accessible and balanced account, Food Politics will forever change the way we respond to food industry marketing practices. By explaining how much the food industry influences government nutrition policies and how cleverly it links its interests to those of nutrition experts, this pathbreaking book helps us understand more clearly than ever before what we eat and why.

.com In the U.S., we're bombarded with nutritional advice--the work, we assume, of reliable authorities with our best interests at heart. Far from it, says Marion Nestle, whose Food Politics absorbingly details how the food industry--through lobbying, advertising, and the co-opting of experts--influences our dietary choices to our detriment. Central to her argument is the American "paradox of plenty," the recognition that our food abundance (we've enough calories to meet every citizen's needs twice over) leads profit-fixated food producers to do everything possible to broaden their market portion, thus swaying us to eat more when we should do the opposite. The result is compromised health: epidemic obesity to start, and increased vulnerability to heart and lung disease, cancer, and stroke--reversible if the constantly suppressed "eat less, move more" message that most nutritionists shout could be heard. Nestle, nutrition chair at New York University and editor of the 1988 Surgeon General Report, has served her time in the dietary trenches and is ideally suited to revealing how government nutritional advice is watered down when a message might threaten industry sales. (Her report on byzantine nutritional food-pyramid rewordings to avoid "eat less" recommendations is both predictable and astonishing.) She has other "war stories," too, that involve marketing to children in school (in the form of soft-drink "pouring rights" agreements, hallway advertising, and fast-food coupon giveaways), and diet-supplement dramas in which manufacturers and the government enter regulation frays, with the

industry championing "free choice" even as that position counters consumer protection. Is there hope? "If we want to encourage people to eat better diets," says Nestle, "we need to target societal means to counter food industry lobbying and marketing practices as well as the education of individuals." It's a telling conclusion in an engrossing and masterfully panoramic exposeacute;. --Arthur BoehmFrom Library JournalNestle (chair, nutrition and food studies, NYU) offers an expossbquo; of the tactics used by the food industry to protect its economic interests and influence public opinion. She shows how the industry promotes sales by resorting to lobbying, lawsuits, financial contributions, public relations, advertising, alliances, and philanthropy to influence Congress, federal agencies, and nutrition and health professionals. She also describes the food industry's opposition to government regulation, its efforts to discredit nutritional recommendations while pushing soft drinks to children via alliances with schools, and its intimidation of critics who question its products or its claims. Nestle berates the food companies for going to great lengths to protect what she calls "techno-foods" by confusing the public regarding distinctions among foods, supplements, and drugs, thus making it difficult for federal regulators to guard the public. She urges readers to inform themselves, choose foods wisely, demand ethical behavior and scientific honesty, and promote better cooperation among industry and government. This provocative work will cause quite a stir in food industry circles. Highly recommended. Irwin Weintraub, Brooklyn Coll., NYCopyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From The New England Journal of MedicineAs stated in the introduction, Food Politics is about how the food industry influences what we eat and therefore influences our health. It discusses the history of dietary advice and guidance in the 20th century; governmental and regulatory practices; the effect of marketing on nutritional recommendations, food access, and choice; and the promotion of dietary supplements. The book is hard-hitting, revealing, and bound to provoke controversy. I encourage my colleagues in nutrition, food, and health to read this book, not because I agree with all of Nestle's views, but because I believe she has captured issues that deserve debate and is forcing us to consider how others might view them. She challenges us to consider the political environment in which the science of food and nutrition exists. A strength of the book is its style: Nestle tells us a series of engaging and surprising stories and gives us a lively presentation of the politics, as she perceives them, of advice on diet and health during the past century. Nestle clearly states her biases in the preface and in the introduction to each section of the book. Readers should not skip these statements, because they help separate the facts from the author's perceptions and allow readers to judge whether the facts are in accord with her interpretations. Another strength of the book is the rich set of resources Nestle has brought to the task. She examined a vast array of government documents to find key items, but her sources go well beyond these official records. They are augmented by her personal experience in influencing nutrition policy, which is revealed as the story unfolds. The text is rich with quotations and with illustrations used in the promotion of food or dietary recommendations. She does not provide a separate reference list but, rather, cites her sources in footnotes. Because the quotations are not fully placed in context or characterized with names in the text, it is difficult to evaluate whether they are used appropriately. Nestle characterizes the culture of the food industry as one that promotes an "eat more" message. She interprets many actions taken by government, industry, and nutrition professionals as supporting this culture and feels that nutrition advice has failed to promote an "eat less" culture. Most readers will find themselves agreeing with her arguments in many of the cases presented, such as the promotion of soft drinks in schools, but will wonder why she minimizes successful examples of appropriate messages, whether "eat more" or "eat less." For example, the Dietary Guidelines Advisory committees of the 1990s should be applauded for developing an appropriate message advising consumers to eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The 2000 committee should be praised for recognizing that the message on alcohol in the 1995 guidelines was being misinterpreted to mean "consume more alcohol" and for changing the text to correct the problem. Likewise, the 2000 committee decided to define what is meant by low, moderate, and high fat and grappled with emerging data indicating that a low-fat diet is not the most appropriate recommendation for everyone. I thoroughly enjoyed reading Nestle's account of the effort by the National Cattlemen's Association to stop promotion of the Food Guide Pyramid. Ultimately, however, she misses the key lesson learned, since the organization probably did more harm than good to the image of meat in a healthful diet. This fascinating, well-told story is an interesting illustration of how an "eat more" message can backfire. The system undoubtedly deserves criticism, and Nestle is generous in providing it, but it will improve only when we learn what can work better. Throughout the book, Nestle reports connections among the food industry, lobbying groups, and government officials and describes how the food industry sponsors professional societies and meetings, hires consultants, and creates advisory groups. The strong implication is guilt by association. Bringing these associations forward for discussion is important, and in her book Nestle describes professional connections she herself has had with the food industry and how she has disclosed the connections or has mitigated their influence. It is extremely valuable that the author has raised this issue; however, she offers little help to the nutrition community in thinking through the relevant criteria for addressing potential conflicts of interest and the issue of disclosure. What have professional societies done that works well, and what might work better? When corporate funds are used to create a program for nutrition research and education, how do we evaluate the appropriateness and value of that program? What constitutes appropriate disclosure? As a community of scientists, we need to understand and reveal the types of bias we all bring to decision making. I hope this book will encourage that discussion. This book is thought-provoking, and I recommend

it. I do not see all the issues in the same way as Nestle does but would welcome an open discussion of the important issues she raises among my colleagues. Barbara O. Schneeman, Ph.D.