

Resource Review

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Book Review of Regenerative Farming and Sustainable Diets: Human, Animal, and Planetary Health

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This book, *Regenerative Farming and Sustainable Diets: Human, Animal, and Planetary Health*, edited by Joyce D'Silva and Carol McKenna, includes a diverse author's perspective on the failures of the current industrial food system and provides suitable alternatives for a green future. The book draws on insights from the landmark 'Extinction or Regeneration?' conference, organized by Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) and held in London in May 2023. Bringing together scientists, policymakers, farmers, and activists from across the globe, the conference set the stage for wide-ranging discussions on the future of food and agriculture. These debates flow directly into the volume, which links themes of farming, sustainable diets, and planetary health, all anchored by the conference's central question, i.e., extinction or regeneration? And this stark choice between the two remains the heart of the book.

In this book, the editors and contributors analyze the Industrial Revolution as a significant contributor to the global crisis, playing a central role in climate change, biodiversity loss, food scarcity, and the systematic agony of sentient beings. The book is structured *across six parts and thirty-four chapters by diverse authors spanning science, policy, activism, and farming. The volume can be taken as a blueprint for a wholesome change in food production and consumption.* The editors reflect how the failures of industrial farming to ensure food security, protect ecosystems, or uphold justice for producers and consumers align food systems transformation with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) (pp. 26–27).

D'Silva and McKenna's edited book argues plainly and with urgency that food is the master variable connecting climate, biodiversity, public health, and animal welfare and that any credible pathway out of today's polycrisis runs through a rapid shift to regenerative production and healthier, chiefly plant-based diets. The six-part architecture is clear and effective, and the contributions range from Earth system science and epidemiology to finance, business strategy, and farmer testimony (pp. 1–2).

In the first part of this book, Lymbery calls for a global framework of SDGs that integrates food, climate, and animal welfare, which are essential to the food system (pp. 5–11). This framework serves as a narrative tool, reframing food not as a secondary concern but as a fundamental limiting factor (p. 7). Further, Schutter, Clement, and Jacobs keep the lens wide, centering power and poverty within a crisis-prone system. The authors examine how the modern food system's concentration, livelihood pressures on small farmers, and global trade disparities worsen power imbalances and vulnerability (p. 13). These arguments propose agroecology as a transformative solution for sustainability and power redistribution (pp. 17–19). Fotiou and Norbert-Munns tie the transformation to the SDGs and institutional capability. Their 'food systems futures' surveys examine plausible trajectories and their lock-ins according to the author's viewpoint, 'food system is not just part of the problem, but an essential part of the solution to some of the world's most pressing challenges' (p. 22). This provides potential ideas for accelerating the attainment of the SDGs through agrifood system transformation. Leach, writing with fresh memory of COVID-19, shows why pandemic prevention cannot be siloed from land-use and livestock policy. To effectively prevent and prepare for future pandemics, Leach proposes the 'One Health' approach, which prioritizes equity, justice, and the well-being of humans, animals, and the environment (pp. 39–41). Collectively, this part is strong on agenda-setting, listing all of climate change, biodiversity loss, antimicrobial resistance, malnutrition, and zoonoses, while appropriately treating diet, production, and equity as coupled variables that must be addressed together.

The second part of this book examines the interconnected components of the food system, land use, and biodiversity, highlighting the urgent need for change. Richardson and Fritzboeger fill the gap between identifying interdependent global challenges and giving practical directions very well. *The scientific basis of their focus on Earth system science is evident in the fact that isolated*

solutions will not address multifaceted climate issues. In contrast, the scenarios offered by the World Resources Institute and the EAT-Lancet Commission can be viewed as roadmaps to making the world a more sustainable place (p. 48). Lal's viewpoints are masterful in presenting soil as a climate buffer, biodiversity substrate, and human security asset, and it quietly supplies the agronomic undercarriage for later claims about regeneration (p. 52). Collectively, this part supports a 'soil-first' interpretation of the book, highlighting that without carbon-rich, functioning soils, neither yield stability nor ecosystem repair can be achieved.

The third part of this book shows the connection between human health and sustainable diets. Kassam synthesizes the evidence on plant-based diets and non-communicable disease with admirable economy. The most significant risk factor for ill health worldwide is unhealthy diets, which account for 11 million deaths each year. These diets are characterized by excessive intake of sodium and processed foods and inadequate intake of healthy plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes (p. 69).

The fourth part of the book discusses animal health and welfare. Broom's 'one biology' approach connects welfare with sustainability, rejecting the lingering idea that ethics are an optional bolt-on (p. 107). Webster examines the moral and biological basis of animal sentience, and the Buddhist teaching's five-level system of classification of sentience is proposed to explain why we must become morally responsible to living beings. Webster contends that our obligation of care is not to avoid suffering but to foster a good quality of life, opposes the anthropocentric perspective, and urges toward sustainable and compassionate relations between humans and animals and with the environment (pp. 116–121). Safina extends the concept of culture to non-human animals, defining it as behaviors that are learned, shared, and transmitted (pp. 123–125). He emphasizes the importance of cultural cohorts among all living beings, particularly highlighting how cultural knowledge plays a crucial role in avoiding extinction vortexes (p. 126). Taking this trio together shifts the book from 'welfare compliance' to 'design constraint'. If sentience is real, and culture is significant, then production models must permit the species-typical lives to be lived, not merely cruelties avoided at the margins. The success of that section lies in moving the normative baseline, and humanity becomes structural.

The fifth part of the book deals with regenerative farming and agroecology. It focuses on the future of farming as Vandana Shiva identifies nine principles, including that humans are part of nature, not separate; humans are not separate from other species; and all levels are interconnected; and so forth. These principles pave the way for the attainment of nonviolent food and farming (p. 131). A normative claim that finds practical echo in André Leu's account provides a clear picture of regenerative agriculture with definitions, different movements, and success stories. This provides the foundation for the importance of regenerative. Watkins writes as a farmer about biodiversity, cattle, and stewardship. According to the author, sustainability without money is not possible, as he argues for profitable regenerative farming that protects all fellow beings on the planet (p. 149). Amir and Kassam make the case for regenerative farming without the use of farmed animals. According to the author, 'conservation agriculture' will deliver significant environmental and economic benefits by offering higher, more stable yields, reduced input costs, and increased farm productivity (pp. 171–173). If earlier parts of the book justify why to change, this part shows how, across multiple pathways rather than a single recipe. In this part, the authors are more optimistic about regenerative farming. This part highlights that while pathways for regenerative farming often blend traditional techniques, there is a noted

absence of a clear scientific pathway and a bypassing of sustainable agricultural technologies in its discussion. According to Tshilidzi Marwala's point of view, scientific frameworks and technological solutions are needed to optimize and expand traditional regenerative methods, thereby defining clearer, more effective future food systems (Marwala, 2024).

The sixth and the last part of the book is sensibly subdivided into the financial architecture, food business, and changing minds and policies. Clapp traces how the financialization of the food system enables a few corporate sectors to dominate the world food system, shaping everything from farm choices to political priorities (pp. 188–189). Mitchell et al. note how the Green Revolution affected the food system and the environment. This gives holistic frameworks to prevent cherry-picking (p. 233). The final cluster addresses capabilities and politics. Anderson points out the driving force theories, such as food sovereignty and food democracy, for agroecology and food transformation (pp. 246–247). The conclusion points out the potential of food system change for human, animal, and planetary health.

From the reader's perspective, the book's strengths lie in its breadth, accessibility, and interdisciplinarity. The authors reject the false trade-off between agronomy and ethics. Soils, boundaries, and biodiversity are treated as hard constraints. Arguments in this book connect the crucial dynamics of environmental problems in agriculture and the food system. Further, the six-part choreography is pedagogically strong, combining scientific research, policy analysis, ethical reflection, and practical case studies. Most importantly, the inclusion of indigenous perspectives, smallholder experiences, and business voices ensures diversity. Along with this, the mixture of voices, including the UN system, economists, veterinarians, farmers, and community leaders, is not decorative; it keeps the book from becoming either technocratic or purely polemical. The Tanzania and farmer essays give the theory friction and credibility. However, in this book, the heavy emphasis on plant-based diets may overshadow nuanced debates on sustainable animal farming in specific cultural contexts. Further, the multiplicity of voices is enriching but can sometimes lead to overlap and repetition.

Overall, the book's major strength lies not only in its collection of ideas but also in its serving as a user manual for attaining regenerative farming and sustainable diets for human, animal, and planetary health. *Therefore, the book is very relevant and will be of considerable interest to scholars in environmental studies, food policy, and political ecology, as well as to policymakers and practitioners engaged in sustainable agriculture. It is well suited for adoption in graduate and advanced undergraduate courses on food systems, development studies, and environmental governance. Its accessible language and interdisciplinary scope also make it appealing to general readers concerned with food justice and planetary health.*

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Reference

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