



Future of Food: State of the Art, Challenges and Options for Action

A review by Bhuvanya Balasubramaniam

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Future of Food: State of the Art, Challenges and Options for Action is a compilation of very broad topics depicting sustainable global food production, its economic, social and environmental implications and the future ahead. The articles have been contributed by authors from all over the world and hence it is hard to assign an overall character to the book. At the same time, the sheer variety of the articles in the book gives the reader a good overall picture of not just the diversity of the topic but also the global situation. The authors and editors of this book are an interesting group of people with diverse backgrounds and professions ranging from researcher, journalist, historian, economist, anthropologist, etc. They have added to the true global depiction of the subject at hand, along with specific articles and case studies from regional levels such as Africa and South America as well as country level such as India, Sri Lanka, China and Brazil.

The book indeed gets the reader's attention with its well-structured, clearly distinguished sections on "Where Do We Stand?", "Challenges Ahead" and "What can we do?" that helps in easy comprehension. The well-structured delivery of information further extends into the articles compiled in the book as well. Having said that, this book will do more justice as an appetiser in introducing someone to the complex world of global food production. This in turn raises a further question as to what extent can it get the reader involved since it clearly is not intended for hard-core subject specific researchers. Being an appetiser, it could have been more engaging with its presentation, especially with more visualization of the information. The only article with any visualization in the whole book is a case study from the Tarim river basin, China. Within the book certain articles discuss the political aspects of sustainable food production

and get caught up with the bureaucracies of the political institutions, which does not help much in getting and retaining the attention of the reader. Unlike the past, today books also have the responsibility to reach out to the reader and induce maximum engagement, in addition to transmitting knowledge. Reader engagement and inspiration cannot be overemphasized in the realm of sustainable food production where it struggles to expand its boundaries into the mainstream domain.

It is appreciable that the book covered almost every imaginable aspect of sustainable food production and situations have been elucidated at different levels as well, ranging from the broad insight at the sophisticated governmental/ institutional level to the raw reality of the subsistence farmers. But having covered the topic of fisheries, the book might as well have covered the topic of animal husbandry. Nevertheless, for a keen reader the book can serve as a great starter into the complicated world of sustainable food production.

Information about the author:

Bhuvanya Balasubramaniam is pursuing her master studies in International Food Business and Consumer Studies at the University of Kassel in Germany. She holds a bachelor in food technology, along with a work experience of 15 months at Jayanti Group, India.